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Painting in Waiting
Prelude to a Critical Philosophy of History and Art

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ABSTRACT. This essay investigates the idea of a painting in waiting by importing the idea of waiting into a critical philosophy of history and art. There is of course no one thing meant by *waiting*. It can mean to pause, hesitate, linger, falter, or to anticipate with trepidation or hope. But it can also mean to serve as once ladies-in-waiting served in courts, or as waiters once stood in readiness in restaurants, perhaps to the point of Sartrean nausea, fully prepared to accommodate the needs of others. The very idea of waiting prompts many thoughts, as it is meant to: of the relation of theory to action, of servitudes and freedoms, but of main concern here, of what waiting has to do with paintings that are imageless or blank or with books whose pages are not yet written.

L'avenir, par définition, n'a *point* d'image. L'histoire *lui donne les moyens* d'être *pensé.* (Paul Valéry, *Regards sur le monde actuel* (1931))

It is wise to follow a perfect epigram with a telling example. So here is one, drawn from Cervantes 'last work of 1617, *The Trials of Persiles and Sigismunda.* A pilgrim poet tells of a wealthy *monsignor* in Rome who has the most curious museum in the world. It is a museum of the future

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comprising empty tablets awaiting persons illustrious enough to be painted. Two inscriptions indicate the persons to come: poets who through their works will declare the coming of a great political leader, in this case, Constantine. One poet is Torquato Tasso*;* the other Zárate*.* But when we learn that Tasso is named for his madness and the other for his lack of talent, something suddenly about this museum seems awry. Won't painters die of starvation waiting for the poets? Will any political leader live up to the poet's promise? And if a painting in waiting were ever to be completed, wouldn't it necessarily enter a museum of the present, there anxiously to compete with the unsurpassable masterpieces of the past?

This essay investigates the idea of a painting in waiting by importing the idea of waiting into a critical philosophy of history and art. There is of course no one thing meant by *waiting*. It can mean to pause, hesitate, linger, falter, or to anticipate with trepidation or hope. But it can also mean to serve as once ladies-in-waiting served in courts, or as waiters once stood in readiness in restaurants, perhaps to the point of Sartrean nausea, fully prepared to accommodate the needs of others. The very idea of waiting prompts many thoughts, as it is meant to: of the relation of theory to action, of servitudes and freedoms, but of main concern here, of what waiting has to do with paintings that are imageless or blank or with books whose pages are not yet written.

My interest in waiting stems from my current book project which begins with the very idea of beginning and seems then to keep beginning to throw doubt on any ending that suggests the final completion of the task. I

stand by those who say that writing a book is as producing a painting, where finishing, in another astute observation by Valéry, is only ever a stopping on the way. Painting, like writing, has long been construed as an endless task of patience and preparation, of repeated beginnings in the face of false starts, a constant trial and error between *what has been*, *what is*, and *what could be*, allowing Valéry one more quip of quite some modernist wit, that "the future is not what it used to be." It is the patience and preparation that I import into the idea of waiting for a future that, without regret, could be different from how things have been and are today.

To set the scene, I begin, as my new book does, with the thought experiment that Arthur Danto devised to open his *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace* of 1981. The experiment itself began with an anecdote drawn from Kierkegaard: about an artist who, when asked to depict the biblical passage across the Red Sea, did no more than cover a surface over with red paint and, evidently needing to explain, remarked that the Israelites had already crossed over and that the Egyptians were already drowned. From this, Danto devised his famous lineup of *red squares*, asking us to engage a passage of thought by which we come to know what art essentially *is* when nothing but blank red squares are all we are given to *see*. One evening some years ago, when I naively asked Danto why there were so few representations of the Red Sea Passage in the history of painting, he answered back quick as a snap that perhaps the subject had been too easy for artists to tackle had all they needed been a canvas and red paint. Beyond the wit, the question as to what more is needed for art to be art beyond a blank

canvas and red paint preoccupied him as a philosophical project for fifty years. It led him to an emancipation narrative for the artworld, to declare art's end with a call to freedom aimed at exposing a politics of exclusion in the world as a whole. It was his emancipation narrative, drawn from his use of the Red Sea anecdote, that inspired me to my own book.

My forthcoming book, titled *RED SEA-RED SQUARE, Picturing Freedom-Liberating Wit,* is a *Passagenwerk* about passages of life, thought, and art. It offers a genealogy of freedom and an anatomy of wit to suggest with a wry smile that there is no picturing of freedom without also the liberating of wit. But what sort of wit is at work if it yields a picture with nothing to see? Seeking the many who have used the Red Sea anecdote to make much more than an anecdotal point, I draw from the work of Danto and Kierkegaard, but also Giacomo Puccini, the French poet and playwright Henri Murger, and William Hogarth. Strange bedfellows to be sure, until we discover their different contributions to what around 1800 came to be a concept standing for a life known as *la vie de bohème*. What, I ask, had the concept of bohème to do with an exodus that left the Israelites having crossed and the Egyptians drowned? We know what Moses had to do with monotheism, but what with the history of the red monochrome wherein artists and thinkers sought to picture freedom and liberate wit? This question rewards me with my *rote Faden*, in part by explaining why, of all colors—*Farben*—the *Faden* had to be red.

For this essay, it suffices to report only on one version of the Red Sea anecdote of consequence in post-revolutionary France, when the punchline

was revised to say not that the Egyptians had already drowned, but that they were still *yet* to come—*Ils vont venir*. When, then, it was asked what would come to France when the Egyptians arrived, everything turned on what was meant by *the Egyptians—Egyptiens*. Was France eagerly awaiting the import of a wisdom of the once great empire of the Pharaohs or in horror for the so-named *lesser-Egyptians* who, through extraordinary confusions of history, theology, and myth, were and long and falsely believed to have travelled as vagabonds in divine punishment all the way from the biblical Red Sea? Viewed on the path as undesirable emigrants, these *lesser-Egyptians* picked up many names *Gypsies, Zigeuner*, and in France, *les bohémiens*, meaning that they were seen as having come from the German lands of Bohemia without right of passage. When, then, they arrived in Paris, many demanded that they be swept away as though a plague upon the streets, and strikingly under the rubric of *La Bohème*. But what had this *la bohème* to do with the artists living *la vie de bohème?* And why did Puccini's *La Bohème* open with a painter trying but failing to paint a Red Sea—*Questo Mar Rosso*? As intriguing as these questions are, it is enough to note only the confusion of the passage of the *lesser-Egyptians* with the other migration from the Red Sea, of the sometimes named *Red Jews*, partly misnamed for their alleged shame in never having shed themselves of the idle worship of idols inherited from their enslaved ancestors. If some believed that the red of the Red Sea signified the blood of the drowned Egyptians, others eagerly spread the red paint to the Jews who, for centuries

thereafter, were declared incapable of understanding what freedom in the Promised Land really meant.

The Jews of exile and diaspora would be declared many times *False Prophets*, architects, as Kant would put it, of their own fate, for having wrongly waited for freedom's promise. Without paradox, to wait wrongly meant both a waiting too long and a not waiting at all. For assuming they knew too much or, worse, trusting too well what the future would bring, they were said to have foreclosed the possibility of their prophecy changing with the times, rendering it redundant for the future or as an outdated prophecy of the past. Leaving space for history to play its proper part encouraged the critics of false prophecy to propose a waiting game on corrected terms, where, at the center of the game, facing the future meant making only a limited claim upon it.

The present essay focuses on the limit in the claim, how "by definition," as Valéry put it, the claim has been brought to articulation in a critique via a negating demand that the canvas of the future be left blank, unpainted, or withdrawn from sight. While this is my focus, I retain in the background the thought of a waiting room of blank red walls where the red marks, from one perspective, a bloody history of oppression and tyranny, but from another, the blood that promises life and freedom.

When I first began thinking about waiting, I erred in believing that, as a philosophical motif, it had been insufficiently addressed. But soon I found it everywhere, in proverbs such as "time and tide waits for no man" or in the *hesitant openness* brilliantly theorized by Siegfried Kracauer in *Die*

Wartenden. And then in the endless endgames of waiting for only God knows what in the dissonant theater of the absurd, influencing Joseph Kosuth to his picturing of all that *nothing* means if written onto a black surface, which, had there been a musical score, would surely have been performed as John Cage's *Waiting* of 1952. And then the countless images and stories about people in transit, or standing in queues, or living in some sort of witness protection program, as suggested by Walt Whitman in his poem about the *fog* of the *mockings and arguments* of the *linguists and contenders*: "Both in and out of the game, and watching and wondering at it," he wrote, "I witness and wait." Or T. S. Eliot's waiting between "Birth, copulation, and death, That's all the facts." Or the lonely waiting game of Dr. Seuss in "The Places You'll Go":

> Everyone is just waiting.
> .... I'm afraid that some times
> you'll play lonely games too.
> Games you can't win
> 'cause you'll play against you.

Offered as an antidote to expose and halt the conceits of false prophecy and false positivity, many have engaged what I think about as a *philosophical furniture art*, so that, with chairs in rooms with bare walls, one may ask after the true posture of waiting: whether it is an active standing, an in-between sitting, or a resigned lying down. Many have declared waiting as hard a task as living an emancipated life; perhaps it is the same task. One

difficulty, *apropos* Nietzsche's untimely thoughts, turns on the phenomenology and hermeneutics of subjective time, consuming the mind with fearful feelings that one's past is one's future, or that the future will never come, turning one's life into a lying down in an empty cask or hollow coffin. Another difficulty, *apropos* Kafka, turns on how sitting or standing *before the law* has meant waiting for the equality promised by the idea of justice, while cognizant of the lack of perfect justice in the reality that is always already ours. A third difficulty, *apropos* Beckett, is whether every waiting is a waiting *for*. Is it possible to wait in an intentionless mental space for nothing as though one's mind was or has become a blank canvas? But when we say that we are waiting for nothing, don't we mean a nothing in particular, where we know not for what we wait specifically, or that we are conscious of waiting for something but cannot put our finger on what it is? Can one wait as an existential mood, and would we say there was a benefit to being in this mood if the mood yielded no more than a *mere* or *bloßes* nothing?

Waiting has submitted to necessarily impossible instructions, to stop short but not too short, to believe but not with false conviction, to doubt but not so as to lead to the impotence of inaction, to risk and improvise but not for their own endless sakes. It's been invested with healthy and unhealthy skepticisms between procrastination and leaping, stasis and movement, forgetting and remembering, idle satisfactions and the idyll of contemplation. It's been made into a lost and found office, sometimes colored with all the blandness and alienation of the reduced *Grau* of

Goethe's *alle Theorie*, but thereafter rescued as a twilight zone for a threshold experience with all the hues of life returned. Spatially, the waiting room has conceived as nomadic and monadic, fourth walled yet not windowed, if this would tempt anyone to forget the inside of their mind by focusing only on the offerings coming from the outside. Temporally, it's been invested with sustained thoughts of eternity or of the *here and now*, or with transformational glimpses of messianic truths, revealed and concealed, seen darkly or in the light, given and withheld in discourses of speech and silence. And then there are all those tragic-comedies made from the frustrated waitings in games of power or submission, or from the daily waitings for the traffic to move, for a dentist to call you to the chair, for the executioner's blade to come down, or for Wagner's operas to end, or for potentially didactic lectures like my own never properly to begin.

Subtitling my own essay by reference to a *prelude*, I have in mind what Nietzsche achieved by prefixing his *Philosophie der Zukunft* with a *Vorspiel*. By the prefix, he aimed to undercut the conceits of those who had pictured the future not as a sketch of limited norms or principles, but with too dangerous a positivity of speculative content. Nietzsche aimed to *prelude* readers into *precluding* a blind enthusiasm for a *new man* who would arrive naked and emancipated with a pure ego, to reoriginate in a rebirth the lost spirit of humanity against those who, populating the streets, were described as living with a false egoism defined by petty bourgeois self-interests. If a new person for the future was to arrive, the message would better come from the *stuttering* mouth of a Zarathustra, Moses, or ironic

Socrates, allowing Nietzsche to declare with a mouth half open of his having "learned to wait—thoroughly" but only, he then added, for *myself— aber nur das Warten auf mich.*

To "wait for myself" meant, for Nietzsche, the conquering of one's impatience to prove one's honor in a duel or one's inclination to live in the ease of forgetting the present as though, suddenly timelessly, one assumed a Christ-like posture of being *not of this world*. Surveying the long nineteenth century, Nietzsche looked to *die Kinder der Zukunft* who, listening to *die Zukunfts-Sirenen des Marktes,* were taken in by the foolish hopes piped out by the *rat-catchers*: that one's miserable enslavement would soon pass if only one was prepared *from this day to the next* endlessly to wait *for something to come from outside.* He described how this waiting could lead to a feverish thirst until, jumping up as a *triumphant beast,* one proclaimed oneself already free. He warned against falling prey to the antiquated reflections of those who, gray-haired, offered only a poison to misconstrue "the doubting drive, the denying drive, the waiting drive, the collecting drive, the disintegrating drive —*der anzweifelnde Trieb, der verneinende Trieb, der abwartende Trieb, der sammelnde Trieb, der auflösende Trieb."*

He further considered a mass exodus in Europe of workers whose situation was not of possibility but of impossibility, reasoning that their social sickness, far from being cured, was only falsely being consoled by leaders whose self-interests favored, contrary to their words, the perpetuation of injustice. If once a futurity of vision had liberated a people from one sort of slavery, the new Europeans had entered another, a new

Sklaverei to a promise of principles or ascetic ideals that had nothing to do with living life now, or to a submission to a world-history that construed the present only as an ever-fleeting stage toward a not-yet existing future.

Nietzsche's critique was shared by many, including Richard Wagner, and this despite the strong case that Nietzsche made against him. Looking for a model not of conceit but of courage, Wagner had concluded his treatise on the *artwork of the future* with a striking image for the emancipated mind of both artist and the German *Volk.* Rather than following the proud and haughty Egyptians into the Red Sea, one should borrow, he had insisted, the courage of the Old Israelites who had shed their skins as enslaved beasts of burden by crossing over. Crossing over, one would become a person of true pride, able to sing in the new land the authentic *Volklieder* of praise of the *Minne-* and *Meistersinger.* To look back to the Old Israelites was by these times around 1848 a very familiar way to praise the Old Testament that had led to the New, so as to condemn then a society overrun by a modern Jewry which, not keeping up, had turned the true pride into the false pride that had once led Yahweh to drown the hardhearted Pharaoh of the Egyptians. But when, then, the case was made against Wagner, one complaint hoisted him high on his own petard: that so capitulating to false pride, his own words and works had increasingly evidenced insufficient courage to think in a truly emancipated way.

Yet long before any case was made against Wagner, the perpetuation of unfreedom and injustice concealed behind loud claims to the contrary was diagnosed as a pride of superiority, even a hard-headed *trumpery* cast

over a society by those who exhibited every sort of failure to wait. To exhibit *every* sort of failure is, one would think, quite a feat for a single individual, hard to fathom until, we might think, today—but then perhaps the always-today. Many are presently discussing *trumpery via* the authoritarian personality or the one-dimensional man, and the analysis fits scarily well. But I'm interested in the particular hubris of impatience to which waiting has always been offered as the antidote. To speak of an antidote is to seek a cure for a sickness, but where the cure must prevent itself becoming part of the problem. And this prevention is done through the labor of the negative, as when one *stops short* of letting injustice have the last word. In the nineteenth century, the historian Macaulay said that Francis Bacon would have been a second Moses had he been better able to wait. But always worse were the tyrants who, in oppressive regimes, made citizens wait in lines strung out day after day by false promises.

This brings me to an old joke from the Soviet Union, about a queue where everyone waits the first day for the promised bread. As the promise decreases, persons are sent home according to their value to the society: the lowest first, the Jews, then women, then non-party members third, leaving the party-faithful to stand alone, only to discover on the fourth day that no bread will arrive. And the punchline coming from the most bitter mouth: "you see, the Jews have all the luck!" If, now, we add to this joke Kant's anecdote about the doctor of speedy cures, our message is almost perfectly delivered. For consoling every patient *von Tag zu Tag* with promises of imminent recovery, the doctor is outwitted when a new patient turns up

complaining of the most fatal illness of all, *Ich sterbe vor lauter Besserung*! The word *lauter—louder—*is repeated endlessly in the critique of false prophets, but the usual English translation—"I'm dying from *sheer* recovery" picks up also on one connotation of the word *sheer,* that all that glitters in a house painted white is not gold.

In the waiting game, even when our thoughts in an *essai* or *Versuch zur* lead to something *beyond [Jenseits]* or *infinite [Ewig],* they cannot forgo the mediated labor of history's time and tense. Nor can they forgo the preparation that tends more to unseat than unsettle expectations as to what freedom and justice really mean. But where in this labor does one begin?

In his museum of the future, Cervantes used the word *tablet—tablos*—to allow his readers to consider not only blank paintings, but also books with empty pages. He had in mind not the art-history of artists and writers filling in their tablets with visions of the Garden of Eden or the afterlife of heaven and hell, but the *Tabula Rasa* tradition that, raising questions of *innatism,* had asked whether at birth a child's mind was empty, or, with Plato, full of forgotten remembrance, or what it meant, as for Locke, to await first experiences from which then one abstracted the first *ideas*. Before Locke, Aristotle in *De Anima* likened the naked mind to an *unscribed tablet,* inspiring many thereafter, including the German Idealists, to refuse a mind conceived of as a passive container awaiting external stuff to fill it up. In a popular essay on the human vocation, Fichte added the word *mere—bloß* —to the *empty pages—leere blätter—*to capture the mind that falsely suspends its capability to engage reason as a practical activity of

mediation between the outer and inner. Hegel differently called upon the empty pages to mark the "periods of happiness" which, lacking the requisite antagonism, meant that nothing in the world-history was happening. In this use, the empty pages represent the *unhistorical present* without consequence for spirit's advance of reason into the *future.*

To say that the history of empty pages is today full to the brim would be no exaggeration. Long before one could see empty paintings in the modern museums of the twentieth century, one could read about them as witty and serious *ekphrases* of the pen. Consider just the examples from seventeenth century experiments, inspiring those of the *Tabula Rasa* tradition to negotiate the terms of modern science through emblemata and *parerga:* the blank tablet in Otto van Veen's *Theologicae   Conclusions,* Robert Fludd's cosmological black page *ad infinitum,* and Saavedra Fajardo's blank canvas on an easel, where with "the pencil and colors of art," he saw persons "born without any manner of knowledge … being left to draw the lineaments of Arts and Sciences on [their minds] as on a blank Canvass." Or Cornelius Gijsbrechts's issuance of the back of a framed painting as part of the *trompe l'oeil* tradition, where the deception implied by the term *trompe* encouraged the wit of inversion that later inspired Jacques Derrida to reveal the philosophical import of the parerga shown as a gap or emptiness in the frame.

Waiting has often been called upon to sustain the dialectical arrest of time deemed essential to artworks that await a history to unfold for their interpretation or social truth content to come to timely and untimely

articulations. Adorno wrote of the *afterlife* of artworks in a reception room caught between a refusal and a wanting to be understood. Mostly, however, the waiting served for him as an antidote to a contrary conceit. "The greater the artist," he wrote, "the stronger the temptation of the chimerical. For, like knowledge, art cannot wait, but as soon as it succumbs to impatience it is trapped." He unpacked the thought by exposing the vanities in Aldous Huxley's not so brave world or anywhere else where he saw a reconciliation effected through extortion, or an *angedrehte—*translated as a *trumped-up—* realism of utopian phantasy. He described the counterfeit of positivity that concealed the suffering of people, but refused to let the suffering, as the trace of humane content, serve as a guarantee that in the future the counterfeit would be exposed. The idea of suffering was not to be pocketed as a safe possession alongside life's accumulated wares. Sustained as remembrance, suffering opened up an *insight* through negation into the falsity of an art that had renounced all difference in the name of a social reconciliation with what exists for *sight* in the *here and now*. Writing about a jazz performed by the white men of Paul Whiteman's orchestra, he found that nothing was allowed to exist any longer that was not *like the world as it is*. He saw this jazz capitulating to one-dimension, to a *false liquidation,* the more it forced gestures toward a different world to *disappear* from the *picture*. The greater the success of this liquidated art, the more the refused gestures were placed into safe-keeping in an art of an uncompromising *image-less image* awaiting a world that coming tomorrow might not be the same as today. Whenever endorsing the erasure of appearance, Adorno

stressed the capability of artworks to refuse a mimetic verisimilitude to the *what is*, retaining thereby a utopian, even messianic, *mimesis in waiting* for the *what of the not yet*. This stress tallied with a modernist aesthetic theory favoring blind spots, gaps, limits, and profiles, variously theorized under the rubric of *die Bildlichkeit der Leerstelle* or the *absurd* or *dissonant disabling of representation.* But it also played into the waiting game, as exemplified, say, as an aesthetic of psychological *intensification*, where, in Arnold Schönberg's *Erwartung*, the woman's *moment* of torment is drawn out to the extreme. Or as an endless frustration in his *Von Heute auf Morgen*, when *der Mann* strikes out at *die Frau's* siren-song by asking: "*Glaubst du wirklich*—Do you really think you can scare me through pictures of the future—*erschrecken durch Zukunftsbilder*—which [only] alienate me coming from your mouth?"

Consider next how the disabling of representation has come to correspond to a limited political provision of ideals, principles or norms, limited because the provision stops short of the design or color that would count as the filler or substance of the desired realization—*Verwirklichung.* A single passage is most helpful, drawn from an interview between Habermas and Michael Haller published in 1991 as *Vergangenheit als Zukunft, Das alte Deutschland im neuen Europa.* Discussing what philosophical theories can and cannot accomplish, Habermas criticizes the tendency of arguments to become both highly improbable or heavily presuppositioned. (Modifying Max Pensky's translation), the passage reads:

> The 'emancipated society 'is in fact an Ideal that suggests misunderstandings. I prefer to speak of the idea of the undamaged intersubjectivity. This idea can generally be derived [or won] from the analysis of necessary conditions for communication [for reaching an understanding/consensus]. It signifies something like the appearance of symmetrical relations of a free reciprocal recognition amongst communicatively acting subjects. Of course this idea must not be pictured into the totality of a reconciled form of life and cast into the future as utopia. [*Die Idee darf allerdings nicht zur Totalität einer versöhnten Lebensformen ausgemalt und als Utopie in die Zukunft geworfen werden.*] It contains nothing more, but also nothing less, than the formal characterization of necessary conditions for the not-anticipatable forms of a non-damaged life. 'Socialism, 'likewise ought never—and this well might be the greatest *philosophical* mistake of this tradition—to have been conceived of as the concrete whole of a determinate future form of life. I have always said against this: 'Socialism 'is useful only for referring to the quintessence of necessary conditions for emancipated forms of life, about which the participants *themselves* would have to reach an agreement.

Putting aside the conversation demanded of a good socialism, let me note Habermas's negating terms, of what is not damaged and not anticipatable, as echoing Adorno's image of a damaged life lived at so catastrophic a moment that Adorno would declare life perhaps as perhaps no longer liveable at all. Habermas chose less the critical path of strategic exaggeration, while yet refusing any turn of the negative into an empty

positive, and this in recall of Hegel's description of the greatest philosophical error, when an ideal of truth or freedom is posited as a timeless, merely or unmediated formal or *a priori* ideal. Or when, according to Hegel's critique of the one-sided monochromatic formalism from his *Vorrede* to the *Phenomenologie*, one speaks wrongly of the absolute as a night when *all cows are black.* Hegel criticized those who "start straight off with absolute knowledge, as if shot from a pistol," or those who dogmatically affirm what they think they already know, thereby precluding the dialectical labor of thinking *through* our concepts, which would lead to a truthful knowing. Working through the past in the present for the sake of a better future, one should never then assume to picture the future as a *reality* before its time.

Everything turns on the picturing. Hegel used the term *ausgemalt* in his *Vorrede* to his *Die Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* to pick up on meanings ranging from *imagining*, *envisioning*, *intensifying,* but also *picturing* and *painting* by means of *sketch*, *design*, and *color*. There is too much to say here about how Hegel connected his critique of *monochromatic formalism* to his declaration from the *Philosophy of Right,* that philosophy, coming too late, pictures the form or *Gestalt* of life that has receded into the past *mit Grau in Grau*, allowing in the gathering clouds of twilight the Owl of Minerva then to begin its flight. (I treat this connection in detail in my book.) Let it be suffice to pose an intriguing question as to why Hegel made philosophy do its *picturing* not with a *mere-bloßes Grau*, but instead by

reference to a monochromatic technique that for centuries had gone by the description *mit Grau-in-Grau.* I will return briefly to this question below.

When Habermas described the future as coming to appearance, he used the term *Vorschein* to suggest an intuitive *glimpse* or *sketch* of a future awaiting its actual appearance—*Schein.* To wait for the future was for him to acknowledge the cognitive limits in the coming to "appearance of symmetrical relations of a free reciprocal recognition amongst communicatively acting subjects." The waiting was offered without guarantee that the *Schein* comes as hoped for or expected. Refusing the guarantee countered the conceit of anyone who thinks the *totality* of a *reconciled form of life* can be cast in advance. Avoiding the conceit, he *pluralized* the forms of a future that is not anticipatable, and issued *necessary* formal conditions that together are not *sufficient*. Only if philosophy retains its commitment to necessary conditions that stop short of reaching sufficiency does the picture remain *critical*. This is key to the entire argument. For set between necessity and sufficiency is the space for history (the mediation of reality or the concrete), a space wherein one might be given signposts toward freedom, even a form or some principles, but where still a future normatively *forecast,* even *predicted,* must not trip over into false prophecy. In this picturing, the formalism is necessary, but it is not enough.

Danto maintained a comparable critical gap when offering his definition of art. If the definition was to accommodate a radical pluralism of art's appearance, one could not close the concept down according to what

art had been or now was in the present. Specifying the necessary conditions that art must have *meaning* and *embodiment*, he refused to substantiate the conditions in any way that would restrict how art might come to appearance, even to the point where art might come, as in conceptual or abstract art, somehow to no appearance at all. Wanting to keep the future open, he brought his philosophy of art into accord with his philosophy of history, the latter having been written to liberate claims of history from substantive totalitarian conceits. Once the liberation was philosophically in place, all the hard work and choices for persons or artists began (as for Israelites having crossed the Red Sea).

Habermas used the term *allerdings*—of course—in a sentence that insisted on not *picturing* the reconciled form of life. One wonders whether his *of course* signaled a repetition of what philosophers have long done when maintaining that they ought never to step over the line as an antidote to what politicians do, and arguably must do, if it is true that nobody with a quiet or stuttering voice wins votes. This brings me to the pressing question, whether the waiting game should or can really preclude philosophers getting their hands dirty. Before Marx's Feuerbach theses or Sartre's plays of dirty hands, Heine quipped that a philosophy of a history of life made, as by Kant, from formal principles alone would suffer from having neither history nor life. A practical philosophy without the mediation of practice renders a philosophy of principles empty, or, as Goethe put it, *bloßes* gray. For freedom, it is not *enough* to be guided by the pure form of lawfulness or respect. But as soon as we think about practice, are we not involved with

social conditions that are, can, and should be painted not merely with color but also design? Do we not use the paint brush to blot out false visions? Many have said, going back to Socrates, that philosophy has not the task or tools to paint, and that painting does damage the more images play into the hands of those with the *louder* sophistic voices. So a strategic silence becomes the name of the game, a game of essential *reserve,* that becomes as a result a non-*picturing* picture of freedom. In this respect, waiting picks up on one of the oldest thoughts in the books, of the guardian who stands not armed at the gate, but as a biblical shepherd or the thinker who sits on the walls of the polis, looking both in and out.

When Kracauer described the modernist alienation of the urban waiting room*,* he pictured people in gray suits standing unaware of each other, though with a common fate. He saw an *emptying out* of all relations of attachment. Their autonomy awarded by modern rationality situated them between the extreme of an empty timelessness and the extreme arbitrariness of daily existence. After this, he worked through every through every sort of inclination to take *short-circuits* or *shortcuts*, encouraging a waiting equal to the always *perhaps* in critical theory: *Übrig bleibt vielleicht nur noch die Haltung des Wartens,* he wrote. He saw waiting as a *zögerndes Geöffnetsein*—a hesitant openness—which, he added, had *allerdings* a sense that was difficult to clarify. The *of course* brought waiting to the heart of the thought that matters like freedom and wit cannot be made fully explicit without erasing precisely what is to be explained. Not wanting to explain waiting away, all the questions then remained open as questions-in-waiting.

In a similar waiting room, one hears the voice of Charles Sanders Peirce, not because of what he said about the firstness of redness, but because, in his essay on "how to make our ideas clear," he separated the doubting that serves one from the self-defeating doubt by reference to a state of hesitation. He described the *hesitancy* when, in a in a railway station, one passes the time reading advertisements on the wall, engaging fantasy or entertaining oneself as to where one might alternatively travel. He made the hesitancy serve his enquiry, when images and thoughts come and go slowly and quickly until one reaches a belief on the basis of which one can commit oneself —and act.

Many critical film theorists have drawn with great insight from Kracauer's essay, but not, I believe, to read David Lean's classic British wartime film *Brief Encounter*. The film is about a waiting room at a railway station where two lovers meet and part, experiencing an interruption of the truth that hell is other people when mostly women gossip with words that flow as pointlessly as the watery tea. Being at once a safe and unsafe space, the waiting room mirrors in a dialectical play two more spaces: the home of a marriage temporarily interrupted and a borrowed, prefabricated space interrupted when the lovers try to consummate their desire. Were one to view this film only along Tolstoy's lines about the happiness and unhappiness of families, accompanied by Rachmaninoff's music, one might overlook what Adorno captured so well in his *Minima Moralia*, when he described a public rooflessness of a city rained on by bombs coming ruthlessly to penetrate the private home, so that the homeliness became in

reality a war-ridden homelessness. With Kracauer, Adorno wrote that however comfortable the appearance of the interior space, it has become emptied of meaningful relations of communication or design, cut now from prefabricated models to produce a *tabula rasa* for modern disenchanted occupants. For Adorno, adultery was less the issue than a marriage contract that had done away with the possibility of what he termed an *Intermezzo der Freiheit.* Drawing from the French *nostalgie du dimanche*, he envisaged a couple or an entire family feeling homesick in the false sea of satisfaction of weekend days. Like Marx before him, he saw a contradictory anxiety: a guilt implicit to the emerging modern work ethic: that, when not at work, one feels as though one were merely idling one's time away; but second, a sheer exhaustion at spending one's free time not living the moment, but wishing that the workday tomorrow would be a day as free as today. Adorno turned many an intermezzo of freedom into bored chords of a modernist unfreedom (what Walter Benjamin described as "the lined interior of boredom") to be rescued for married couples only by the hope of a little infidelity to the contradiction that was turning their lives to a *bloßes* gray.

This brings me to a final example, the waiting room of a modernist home that contains a painting, back to front, that shows all *and* nothing. Much has been written about Beckett's *Endgame,* in and out of relation to his *Waiting for Godot*. Readers have focused on the waiting game, which, without a winner, asks whether the beginning and ending only keeps everyone where they always are, suspended like the "hung verdicts," sometimes catastrophic, of human history. Stanley Cavell finds Nietzsche's

last man who "would rather take the void for his purpose than to be void of purpose," but also Camus's rescue of a humanity in its relinquishing of its aim to play God. Christoph Menke has more recently read the game as a negotiation of an emancipation narrative, writing about the promised freedom as *un-plotted,* so that the lordship-bondage dialectic or the telling of a joke can find no resolution, only an expiration in sheer exhaustion. He reads *Endgame* "as a play about the end of play," but the play specifically of aesthetic strategies that leaves the faltering struggle for liberation always only in a *deuce.* The *faltering* is evidenced in every crippled gesture of a blindness or deafness that is reinforced, in my own reading, by the many pauses and hesitations written into a script that stops and starts with all manner of disconcerting and liberating puns of rhythm and rhyme.

Everything in Becket's *Endgame* counts in a waiting game that tells you that you are damned if you do and damned if you don't, including the opening stage directions of a *tableau* of a philosophical furniture art that Beckett insisted shouldn't be overlooked. "Bare interior," his list begins, followed by "Grey Light." Now observe his inversions that name the objects last: "Left and right back, high up, two small windows, curtains drawn. Front right, a door. Hanging near door, its face to wall, a picture." The instructions continue: "Front left, touching each other, covered with an old sheet, two ashbins. Center, in an armchair on castors, covered with an old sheet, Hamm." Until finally we read, "Motionless by the door, his eyes fixed on Hamm, Clov. Very red face."

What has a gray room with a red face to do with a picture which, face to wall, is not turned around even when Clov takes it down in order to replace it with a clock threatening to set off an alarm clock, and an alarm following his declaring that the pill box is now empty of pills to kill the pain? Much has been asked about the picture. Does the not-showing matter more than the not-seeing? Does any member of the family know, or did they ever know, what it showed, if ever it showed anything (after *Corinthians*) face-to-face? Did it once show the time when God was not dead or before God's back was turned on humanity? Or did it only ever have a backside, making the back the front? Or if once a family portrait, did it face the wall like a punished child? Or because whoever designed it found no way to finish it? Or was its point only ever to raise such philosophical *questions* as *questions in waiting*, so that when the answers came, the questions were immediately replaced, like Cervantes's paintings-in-waiting, by new ones that were forever the same ones?

A predecessor episode from Walter Scott's *Woodstock* shows, amidst old furniture, the narrator Wildrake stumbling over "*several paintings in massive frames, having their faces turned towards the wall.*" When one is turned around, we are introduced to *the* idea *of* how one looks into a painting to anticipate *the future* as a way to unburden oneself of a terrifying and sometimes terrorizing past. Is there or can there be this unburdening in Becket's play? Or is the fact that the picture is not turned around indicative of the fear, as Menke suggests, that, were we to turn it around, we would only find an artist or thinker so committed to failing to paint, that all we

would see would be a waste comparable to the waste that comes from the ashcan, where even the oldest joke in the world cannot be delivered. "Nothing is funnier than unhappiness," Nell remarks from the ashcan to bring out the comedy of the tragic truth that if this family has obliterated its happiness, then indeed *nothing* is the funniest unhappiness of all.

To make more of the wit that is meant to liberate nothing from nothing, recall the moment when Clov picks up the telescope to take a view through the window. I hear here an echo of Achilles '*red-faced* gaze over the *wine-dark sea* to the glory that never dies. With no more glory on the horizon, Hamm and Clov negotiate each day as a repetition of *any other day*. *Looks like it,* says Clov. In reading the play, Adorno noted the repeated inversions that turned the *anything* into a *nothing on the horizon*. Lowering his telescope, an exasperated Clov declares: *What in God's name would there be on the horizon?* Hamm answers: *The waves, how are the waves?… And the sun?… But it should be sinking.* Looking again, Clov sees nothing, provoking a *damn the sun*, allowing Hamm to presume the night to have arrived. Clov denies this, remarking not once, but twice, and with increasing intensity that it is still gray. *Gray … GRRAY!*

One direction of interpretation would be to unpack the relation of the wine-dark sea to the Red Sea from which so many have produced intoxicated visions of the past and future of rising and setting *suns* that are also rising and setting *sons*: from Moses to Christ To Mohammed. Here, however, it is more relevant to observe how, in the gray room tinged with red, Adorno stressed the *colorlessness* of a modern wit that was as

damaged—*beschädigt*—as the modern selves trying but failing to deliver it. Looking through the telescope, Clov frightens Hamm with the word *gray*, though quickly corrects himself, *a light black*. Adorno saw the correction as smearing the punchline first delivered in Molière's *L'Avare.* Adorno had in mind the spat staged between the miserly *master* Harpagon and his *servant* Jacques. Jacques asks what color a casket is, whether it's *a certain color* and whether such a color can even be named. He suggests *red*, to which Harpagon replies *No, gray*, leading Jacques to oblige him with *gris-rouge!*

Here, in my view, is the *grey-red* of an older *monochromatic* palette of painting *mit Grau in Grau,* which, applied to wit, allowed early writers like Molière and Cervantes to use the marrow in the bone to deliver a wonderfully digestible and indigestible humor. Adorno remarked that Beckett's genius was precisely to have sucked the marrow from the bone, leaving, we may say, nothing but a mere gray grit that kept the family, in Beckett's words, always in "the middle of the steppe."

In the middle, we are compelled back to my own beginning for this essay and to the very first lines of Beckett's play when Clove *tonelessly* says: "Finished, it's finished, nearly finished, it must be nearly finished" and then after a pause, "Grain upon grain, one by one, and one day, suddenly, there's a heap, a little heap, the impossible heap," so that, toward the end, we learn that "all life long you wait for that to mount up to a life." A mountain waiting to be made from a molehill, made from mere grains, can make much ado about a gray grit, which, when interrupted by a single reference to red, allows Hamm with *modesty* to say that nothing gets one very far, but still

that this *nothing* is *better than nothing*. Asking after the possibility of something's being better than nothing, Clov turns what perhaps is the red shame in his face into the red (sea) of a horizon that gestures toward the only *possibility* left: that the future will not be as things stand today.

I have merely scratched the surface of a picturing of freedom that is liberated by wit. But I give the last laugh literally to the French philosopher Hélène Cixous who, when face to face with the horrifying head of Medusa, sees a woman, as though for the first time, declaring her freedom with words that draw us back to the first song of the sea. "Ah, there's her sea," she writes: "But look, our seas are what we make of them, opaque or transparent, red or black." If the seas are what we make of them, then making is also our freedom to rewrite the history handed down to us, only a tiny part of which I have told here, so that we may begin again in a room, which even if painted gray has a single red line: a horizon of possibility that *nobody* who still has a will to be *somebody* can do without.[2]

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[2] An earlier version of this essay was printed in German in a Festschrift for Christoph Menke; Thomas Khurana, et. al. eds. 2018. Negativität Kunst, Recht, Politik. Suhrkamp: Frankfurt-am-Main. I thank Julia Peters for detailed comments, as well as the many audiences at lectures with whom I had the opportunity to discuss the themes.

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(Non)Identity: Adorno and the Constitution of Art

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ABSTRACT. It is a well-known and fairly appropriate view that Adorno's aesthetic theory is extensively concerned about difference. It asserts nonidentity as centerpiece of both art's structure and its genuine achievements. In order to grasp this notion, the paper refuses the view that Adorno regards art's nonidentity in terms of an abstract negativity. Instead of being radically opposed to conceptuality and rationality, art achieves a critical and reflexive identity by a transgressive *integration* of the coercion of identity. Thus, the paper will reconstruct Adorno's argument for both the damaged character of art and its emancipatory potential in opening up the relationship between identity and nonidentity. I will underline that the inherent evocation of identity must be understood as a reflexive shift of the artwork's formal character, which embraces and appeals to the recipients' active engagement with a work of art.

1. Introduction: What is Art's Negativity?

Adorno's theory of art is closely connected to his overall philosophy, which is centered around his critique of identity thinking. In his major works Adorno shows evidence of the universal hegemony of identity, both in philosophical reasoning and in social history, especially since capitalism has

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evolved (cf. Adorno 1973, 146). Identity thinking results from conceptual subsumption and from the exchange of commodities, which posits identical values onto discrete items. Thus, identity socially and conceptually ensures that everything can be made entirely commensurable to instrumental reason. In contrast to this, art is committed to sensuousness. It is stated to be resistant to identity thinking and to defend nonidentity.

But how can these notions of nonidentity, and of art's critical potential be grasped? Adorno's aesthetic theory is frequently construed as opposing art not only to identity thinking, but to rationality and conceptuality, altogether. Hence, art's potential would consist of revealing individuality beyond identity and unscathed by concept. But once a reading of Adorno is presupposing this opposition of art and identity, it easily invokes a rather abstract term of negativity, losing touch of the issues at stake. If we presuppose the rigidly negative stance of art, we are just reassuring identity thinking ourselves by making an utterly abstract ascription to art's constitution and meaning. Furthermore, Adorno does not claim that all conceptual or rational thinking is affiliated with the distortions of identity thinking. Both, suggesting an abstract negativity of art and reducing rationality to instrumental reason easily encourages inappropriate critiques of Adorno's theory.

For example, Albrecht Wellmer misconceives Adorno's critique of identity thinking as withdrawing to a utopia beyond conceptual reason and even *beyond history*. He deems Adorno's critical approach "the latest form

of a theological critique of the earthly vale of tears" (Wellmer 1991, 63).[2] But does art really amount to a theological critique of history, according to Adorno? Does it provide access to radically singular beings that resist identification? In this paper, I will refute these notions of art's abstract negativity and the suggestion that art is simply 'the other' of identity and conceptuality. Instead, as shall be shown, art deals with the entanglement of identity and nonidentity and with the twist of progressive and regressive forms of conceptual reason.

I will first develop the connection of art and society. After that, I will illuminate the consequences that Adorno draws from this connection with regard to aesthetic organization. This discussion of identity and nonidentity will then lead me to some concluding remarks on the status of art's recipients and their acts of approaching and engaging with art.

2. Art and Society

Nonidentity is an exceedingly important category for Adorno. But rather than being a simple category it is regarded to be a dialectical notion. So it is basically connected with its opposite, identity. Debating on art's critical impact Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory* underlines identity as being crucial to art's striving for nonidentity: "Aesthetic *identity* seeks to aid the

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[2] Rüdiger Bubner is drawing on the very same interpretation in his critique. Hence, being committed to a 'theological' and 'transcendental' idea of aesthetic truth Adorno is regarded to miss the importance of aesthetic experience (cf. Bubner 1989, 13–16; 30–34).

nonidentical, which in reality is repressed [...]." (Adorno 1997, 4; my emphasis)

At this point, we could take aesthetic identity to be the somehow circular solution of how art resists identity thinking: Being solely an identity within itself, an artwork would be a radical singular being, which simply cannot be identified from the exterior. Nonidentity would thus lead to a radical individual.

But in fact, Adorno *insists* on the inevitable dependence of any singular being on the mediating operation of concepts. Nonidentity is not opposed to thinking but it is its *telos*. Accordingly, Adorno is aware that art's potential will not be exhausted by claiming nonidentity, but that it is dialectically intertwined with identity. Besides, he indicates that certain menaces of identity thinking reappear in art. Art evades neither identity nor society; but, as per Adorno, art is capable of critically working through this involvement.

Adorno elucidates that identity and nonidentity are internal matters that art has to deal with. According to a famous claim, artworks are crucially coined by their 'double-character' being autonomous arrangements *and* social products (cf. Adorno 1997, 229). Following Kant, Adorno stresses that art's significance is tied to its being an end to itself. But at the same time every artwork is basically connected with forms and elements that have a social context and history. However, for Adorno the sociality of art is not merely founded by the factual social origin of an element, but by its mediation, by the way the elements are organized and connected to each

other. As the *organization* of human life is deeply flawed in capitalism, art proves to be tied to society by facing the problems and contradictions of organizing itself: "The unsolved antagonisms of reality return in artworks as immanent problems of form. This, not the insertion of objective elements, defines the relation of art to society. The complex of tensions in artworks crystallizes undisturbed in these problems of form […]" (Adorno 1997, 6). Within an artwork the immanent problems of form concern the relation of the particular elements or impulses and their organizing unity. It is exactly here, where the problems of identity get into view again.

3. Organizing Identity?

For Adorno organization primarily applies to an artwork's form, which is in turn conductive to the singular elements. These elements get expressed and supported when the tensions of their demands are organized. This is done by articulation. As Adorno states: "Articulation is the redemption [Rettung] of the many in the one." (Adorno 1997, 190)[3] At the same time, aesthetic articulation is not independent from mastery of nature, which is dominant in society. The unsolved tensions of reality pertain to the integrity of aesthetic form. Form is the only way to articulate the many, nonidentical impulses. And form is deeply connected to domination, because any organization

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[3] The concept of redemption hints at the issue that aesthetic form has an eminently social and ethical dimension for Adorno. I will refer to this dimension without explicitly discussing the notions of truth and justice, which are nonetheless crucial in this context. For further elaboration see Kreis (2011).

implies its own affirmation. "Art's affirmative element and the affirmative element of the domination of nature are one in asserting that what was inflicted on nature was all for the good." (Adorno 1997, 160)

So, how could art ever escape domination within its own constitution, let alone establish resistance to identity thinking? Being aware of art's inherent entanglement with mastery, Adorno shows that the only way out is to take the way in: to intensify identification within art. As it is not possible to simply follow or express a primordial self-identity of nonidentical moments, artworks themselves have to handle the mechanisms inherited from identity thinking. "Whereas art opposes society, it is nevertheless unable to take up a position beyond it; it achieves opposition only through identification with that against which it remonstrates." (Adorno 1997, 133) Though any artwork is singular, it finally "must absorb even its most fatal enemy – fungibility [Vertauschbarkeit]; rather than fleeing into concretion, the artwork must present through its own concretion the total nexus of abstraction and thereby resist it" (Adorno 1997, 135).

To elucidate how this attains success, Adorno introduces the idea that any artwork is a force field [Kraftfeld]. The particular demands of individual impulses and the opposite tendency to organize a comprehensive unity have to be grasped as being intertwined within a process. Thus, particularity and unity are no separated movements, but *constitutive moments* of one and the same process. According to Adorno, this implies that aesthetic organization finally incorporates both arranging and abolishing its overall unity. An artwork does not simply stage nonidentical elements struggling against

universal identity thinking. It rather exposes its own unity and identity as being contradictory in itself. This tension-filled exposition is what Adorno calls art's *objectivation*. It relates art's constitution to the tracing of its inherent contradictions.

4. Experiencing and Articulating Art's Tensions

Even given that art identifies with its most fatal enemies, like domination and fungibility, this does not result in a repetition of mastery and reification. Instead, by elaborating their contradictory identity, artworks yield objectivation.

> No matter how much spirit may exert domination in art, its objectivation frees it from the aims of domination. In that aesthetic structures create a continuum that is totally spirit, they become the semblance of a blocked being-in-itself in whose reality the intentions of the subject would be fulfilled and extinguished. Art corrects conceptual knowledge because, in complete isolation, it carries out what conceptual knowledge in vain awaits from the nonpictorial subject-object relation: that through a subjective act what is objective would be unveiled. (Adorno 1997, 113)

In contrast to the widespread criticism that Adorno's theory solely concerns ontological questions about artifacts (cf. Bubner 1989; Rebentisch 2013),

I'd like to argue that objectivation [Objektivierung] decisively embraces the spectator and her experience of the artwork. In order to elaborate this I will capture two major issues of the passage cited above.

First, the aim of objectivation is the unveiling of something objective through *subjective acts*. As a consequence, while the argument just arrived at the *artwork's* contradictory identity, we are now pushed to involve subjective activities. To reach objectivity as it is for itself one cannot skip or delude the approaches of the subject, which however are always one-sided, if not oppressive. There is no way but working through subjective approximation.

This is why Adorno, secondly, gives a contradictory and rather puzzling remark about the involvement of subjectivity: In the face of the overall organization of an artwork "the intentions of the subject would be fulfilled and extinguished" (Adorno 1997, 113). Adorno does not vindicate a sheer overwhelming and overcoming of the subject – as some modern theories of the sublime would do. We rather have to concentrate on the *relation* of subject and object: Through its objectification art is capable of surpassing and criticizing domination, because for Adorno objectification implies the mutual transition of the contradictory identity of the artwork and the contradictory identity of the spectator's activities.

Both sides are concerned with the very same tensions in approaching a self-identity of an individual being – as the artwork 'aims' at giving shape to individual impulses and the spectator attempts to construe the puzzling aesthetic object and to understand its genuine, or even global, claims. Being

at once fulfilled and extinguished, subjective engagement with art shares the dialectics of an artwork's inherent form. As I explained before, aesthetic organization aims at articulating singular impulses. Yet, to achieve this, the organizing structure finally would have to extinguish itself, too. Its identity is contradictory, because on the one hand it aims at establishing free comportment and on the other hand its structure is always set and determined *before* this process could take place. Debating on this problem Adorno writes:

> Artworks are such only in actu because their tension does not terminate in pure identity with either extreme. On the other hand, it is only as finished, molded objects that they become force fields of their antagonisms; […] Artworks' paradoxical nature, stasis, negates itself. The movement of artworks must be at a standstill and thereby become visible. (Adorno 1997, 175)

This last sentence is important. Art's paradoxical nature finally has to become visible. It opens towards the living experience of the spectators and it is up to them to actualize the force field of antagonisms. In Adorno's theory living experience involves imitating and interpreting the artwork and ideally both activities coincide. Aesthetic experience requires attentive and finally conceptual engagement with the artwork's dynamics and antagonisms: "[I]f finished works only become what they are because their being is a process of becoming, they are in turn dependent on forms in

which their process crystallizes: interpretation, commentary, and critique." (Adorno 1997, 194) Thus, art does not dismiss conceptuality, it rather culminates in its conceptual reconstruction and interpretation. Likewise, objectivity is not reached by abstracting from the subject but requires the full energy of subjective effort and engagement.

Yet, interpretation does not subsume the dynamics of an artwork to a subjective, or universal concept. Instead, the subjective activities are reflexively guided and corrected by *identifying themselves* with the tensions of the artwork. "Even an authentic relation to the artwork demands an act of identification" and for this reason, the spectator is committed to "relinquish himself to the artwork, assimilate himself to it, and fulfill the work in its own terms" (Adorno 1997, 275).

To conclude, the conceptual part of interpreting the artwork's dynamic through subjective acts has to be intertwined with assimilation and imitation of this dynamic. (Non)Identity appears to be a relation *between* artwork and spectator. However, the dynamic within the artwork and within the subjective approach towards it demands that conceptual articulation has to avoid its own closure. Art is challenging spectators to constantly re-arrange their own comportment: the relation of conceptual articulation and relinquished imitation of the artwork. If identity becomes an open process of re-arranging relations in this way, nonidentity flashes up as a reflective instant of identity.

As Christoph Menke has pointed out, aesthetic judgments adapt to their object (the artwork) by interrupting themself (cf. Menke 1991, 142-

153). As I tried to outline here, another perspective is worth considering as well: If no single interpretation could ever fulfill the artwork, it is up to the manifold interpretations to interrupt and contradict each other for the purpose of unfolding the artwork as a *force field*. Elaborating this force field implies the negotiation of the social tensions which are embedded in the artwork. It further implies a transformation of subjects, objects, and of how their interrelations are framed in current society. The developing of interpretations brings out the manifold relations between parts and whole. Art thereby opens up new ways of considering the demands and faults of organizing – aesthetically and socially. Hence, reflecting and transforming relationality finally turn out crucial for grasping art's critical impulse.

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Photography, Digital Technology, and Hybrid Art Forms

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ABSTRACT. There are a growing number of digital arts connected with photography, however it remains unclear how to identify and appreciate the products of these arts, given the philosophical disagreement that kinds, such as Light Field Camera (LFC) images, attract. To account for the different ways that photography may manifest itself in digital arts, I develop a classificatory framework, based upon Jerrold Levinson's account of "hybrid art forms", in order to distinguish between different types of arts that have evolved or involve, or are influenced by, other arts. Using this framework, I look at a range of examples from contemporary art, including the works of Loretta Lux, Richard Kolker, and Stan Douglas, to demonstrate how to appropriately identify and appreciate the following: arts and hybrid arts, involving photography, that pre-exist the digital age which have evolved to incorporate digital technology; new digital hybrid arts that involve photography; and digital arts that are influenced by photography. In doing so, I aim to establish a framework that will enable viewers to appropriately identify and appreciate future developments in the digital arts.

1. Issues of Identification and Appreciation in the Digital Age

There are a growing number of digital arts connected with photography however, it remains unclear how products of these arts should be identified

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and appreciated, given the philosophical disagreement that these kinds attract. For instance, in 2012 Lytro released the ground-breaking "Light Field Camera" (LFC). The camera captured the direction of light as it hit the image sensor, from which the light field was reconstructed by software. This technology enabled viewers to refocus and change the viewing angle of LFC-images once taken. Although the images were made using photographic technology, discord exists pertaining to whether the images are photographs and should be appreciated as such. Benovsky (2014) for instance, proposed that, due to their dynamic nature, LFC-images are not photographs but digital sculptures. For Benovsky, a photograph is the result of necessary decisions that the image producer makes regarding framing, aperture, shutter speed, and focal length. These necessary decisions imbue photographs with narrative powers as the compositional techniques enable the image producer to manage the attention of viewers to convey messages (Benovsky 2014, p. 730). As these necessary decisions are made by the viewer of LFC-images, rather than the producer, Benovsky suggested that the images are not photographs but digital sculptures, given the viewers dynamic, self-determined interaction with the work (2014, p. 731). By contrast, due to his permissive "New Theory" of photography, Lopes can categorize LFC-images as photographs. For Lopes, a photograph is a product of mark-making processes, used to produce an image, that took input from a "photographic event", or the registration of light on a photosensitive surface (2016, p. 81). Hence, given that LFC-images originate in a photographic event, which is output in digital mark-making

processes, for Lopes, they are photographs.

Both theorists have different premises for basing their conclusions on, yet both approaches have value, given that viewers do engage with LFC-images dynamically and that digital photographic technology is used to generate the images. Hence, it is not clear that either approach sets the precedent for the appropriate categorization and appreciation of the works. Specifically, if viewers identify LFC-images as either a form of digital sculpture or a form of photography, then they will fail to appreciate how sculptural and photographic practices have been combined in an original practice to afford the viewer a new kind of aesthetic experience. Hence, only by correctly identifying the nature of such digital works, will viewers be able to adequately appreciate them. Furthermore, given that such arts are continually developing, as for instance, in 2018 Lytro discontinued its LFC products and viewing platforms while Apple developed their iPhone cameras and software to enables users to alter the depth of field of images once taken (Conditt 2018), the issue of appropriate identification and appreciation of digital arts connected with photography is particularly pressing. As such, to account for the different ways that photography may be manifested in digital arts, I will develop a classificatory framework, largely based upon Levinson's account of "hybrid art forms" (1990, p. 26-36), to distinguish between different kinds of arts that have evolved or involve, or are influenced by, other arts. In doing so, I will demonstrate how to appropriately identify and appreciate the following: arts and hybrid arts, involving photography, that pre-exist the digital age which have evolved to

incorporate digital technology; new digital hybrid arts that involve photography; and digital arts that are influenced by photography.

2. A Classificatory Framework

In order to develop my classifactory framework, I will first examine Levinson's account of hybrid art forms. Levinson proposed that "an art form is a hybrid one in virtue of its development and origin, in virtue of its emergence out of a field of previously existing artistic activities and concerns, two or more of which it in some sense combines." (1990, p. 27) To account for the different reasons that agents adopt hybridization as an artistic strategy, Levinson identified three types of hybridity: juxtaposition, fusion, and transformation; and distinguished between two sorts of overall effects that hybrid artworks achieve – "integrative" and "disintegrative" (1990, p. 35). Fusion and transformation hybrids instantiate integrative effects as the different arts that form the artwork, in these categories, become indistinguishable, creating a richness and complexity for a new common, artistic end. While juxtaposition hybrids instantiate disintegrative effects as the different arts that constitute the work, in this category, are discernible from one another leading to a lack of cohesion that is necessary for the aesthetic significance of the work as a hybrid. Although juxtaposition hybrids tend towards a disintegrative effect, the whole is the focus of the work rather than the individual constituents. Examples of hybrid arts in this

type include collage, and also "Combines", which were initially created in 1954 by Rauschenberg (Schimmel 2005, p. 211). In this particular hybrid kind, arts are juxtaposed, including sculpture and painting, to elevate the status of the ordinary objects that are incorporated into the works. Additionally, I propose that certain kinds of overpainted photographs are juxtaposition hybrids. For example, since 1989 (Heinzelmann 2008, p. 87), Gerhard Richter has overlaid photographs with abstract painterly interruptions, creating a disintegrative effect, which is crucial to the meaning of the works (Schneede 2008, p. 196).

By contrast, in Levinson's fusion and transformation categories, the different arts form an integrative effect so that "some *essential*, or *defining* feature of one or both arts is challenged, modified, or withdrawn" (1990, p. 33). In the case of hybrid arts in the fusion category:

> …the objects or products of two (or more) arts are brought together in such a way that the individual components to some extent lose their original identities and are present in the hybrid in a form that is significantly different from that assumed in the pure state. (1990, p. 31)

Such hybrid arts include opera, concrete poetry, and cliché verre. Works of cliché verre are created by drawing, etching or painting on transparent supports which are exposed on photosensitive surfaces, thereby synthesizing imaginative manual mark-making techniques with photographic practice, as for example in Frederick Sommer's work *Paracelsus* (1957), to challenge

one of the defining features of photography and depict fictional entities, and to challenge some of the defining features of manual arts that typically exhibit drawn or painterly facture. Additionally, I suggest that particular kinds of overpainted photographs fall into the fusion category. For example, in Pierre et Gilles' practice, photographs taken by Gilles were enlarged and meticulously painted over by Pierre, resulting in an integrated form that idealizes the subject (Turner 1994, p. 54).

Levinson claimed that whilst works in the transformation category are closer to those in the fusion, they differ as the "arts combined do not contribute to the result in roughly the same degree." (1990, p. 32) He used the example of kinetic sculpture to illustrate this, suggesting that "the result could not reasonably be called an instance of dance, even in the extended sense – though of course it might be so *metaphorically*." (1990, p. 33) In this case then, Levinson proposed that dance transformed sculpture. Before continuing, I will suggest some amendments to these categories as, given that Levinson stated the different arts that are hybridized in the transformation category do not contribute to the same degree, prima facie it appears that Levinson expected that the arts combined in the other categories contribute in equal measure. This idea however, is not persuasive considering that, for example, a large painting may juxtapose a small section of collage work, as in many works of cubism (Ades 1986, p. 12). Resultantly, for my framework, I suggest that in all hybrid categories the contribution of different arts is variable. Accordingly, as the premise for Levinson's transformation category was based on the variability of the

degree of contribution from different arts, I propose that the third category contains cases in which one or more, of the central practices of one art have been altered by the incorporation of a central practice (or practices) from another art. To clarify and demonstrate what this entails, I will use the example of an art which in the 19th century was called "Composition Photography" (Talbot 2017, p. 144). This was also termed "Combination Printing" and is an early form of composite photography that was practiced by Pictorialist photographers who sought to blur the boundaries of photographic and painting practice.

In 1869, Henry Peach Robinson published *Pictorial Effect in Photography* in which he encouraged readers to study paintings for their "picture construction, light and shade, emphasis, focus and perspective rendition" (Harker 1989, p. 134), and advocated that photographers take on the conventions of painting. Accordingly, and controversially, Robinson created many combination prints, such as *Sleep* (1867), by combining multiple negatives to create one composite image, constructing the image in a way that reflected the construction of a painting's composition. The results idealized and imaginatively reinterpreted reality, which was a consequence of adopting the principles of painting to transform photography which, as *standardly* practiced entailed exposing one negative to yield an image of one spatiotemporal scene. Considering the norms that govern the common use of the photographic medium is key to appreciating works of composite photography, but so too is the deliberate disruption of the way that photography is standardly practiced by incorporating painterly techniques.

Moreover, reading Robinsons' work in this way undoubtedly enhances the viewer's appreciation of the work as whilst critics objected to visible signs of Robinson's photographic process, such as shadows that were inaccurate, "Robinson expected viewers to take his labour-intensive procedures into account when they looked at his pictures" (Talbot 2017, p. 158). This then, is an example in which one art, photography, has been transformed by another, painting. Treating transformation hybrids this way, I believe, preserves Levinson's initial aim but articulates it without the stipulation that the other hybrid categories equally mix different arts.

My amendment to several of the principles behind Levinson's account does not however, entail any salient changes to the distinction that Levinson made between transformation hybrids and cases where one art has influenced another. Although I have stipulated the conditions for transformation hybrids differently to Levinson, I suggest it must still be the case, as Levinson proposed, that "some *essential* or *defining* feature" of the art is challenged (1990, p. 33). As I outlined in the case of composite photography, the defining feature of photography that is challenged, by adopting painterly techniques, is the depiction of one spatiotemporal scene. Some photographic practices however, have been influenced, but not transformed, by painting. For instance, Jeff Wall's photographic work *Picture for Women* (1979), echoes the composition of Manet's painting, *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère* (1881-2) (Campany 2011, p. 5). While, given the foregoing, Wall's work may appear to be a plausible candidate as a transformation hybrid, none of the essential or defining features of

photography have been challenged, because although Wall staged his image for picturesque, dramatic effects, his image was otherwise taken according to standard photographic practice. Wall's work was designed to be hung on a wall, as paintings usually are, but the hang of a photograph however, does not constitute one of its essential or defining features. Instead, Wall's photography was influenced by painting, specifically the mode of picturing, tableau, which Manet reinvigorated through his paintings. Taking painting practice into account, will be of some benefit to appreciating Wall's pictorial aims however, it is not necessary to consider the ways that Wall deviated from photographic practice because rather than challenging any of the essential or defining features of photography, Wall instead adapted photographic practice to reflect a particular mode of picturing that is associated with painting.

As it is beneficial, for appreciative practice, to identify whether a work belongs to a particular hybrid kind, or whether a work was created in one art that has been influenced by another art, it is also beneficial to identify whether a work belongs to an evolved version of a pre-existent art. For instance, the advent of digital photography did not signal a new art, a hybrid art, or even a practice influenced by other arts. Digital photography instead, represented an evolution of photography because the practice of organizing, recording, and reproducing patterns of light from an object, using photo-sensitive mechanisms, to create an image was fundamentally the same as in analogue practice. Although the different materials and methods used in analogue and digital photographic processes may result in the alteration of

some of the defining features of photography, such as the constitution of the image through pixels rather than film grain, this represents an evolution of this defining feature, given that the facture of the photographs surface remains largely imperceptible, due to the use of photographic technology. Digital photography then, represents a development of photography rather than a new art, and only on occasion is the digital nature of the medium salient, as for instance in Thomas Ruff's *jpegs* (2007) series, and to be contemplated in order to adequately appreciate the work.

With this, the classificatory framework, for distinguishing between different types of arts that have evolved or involve, or are influenced, by other arts, is established: *Evolving arts*, are those in which some aspect of a pre-existent practice is developed or expanded on, while the essential or defining features of the art are retained, by incorporating newly developed materials and/or techniques. *Arts that are influenced by other arts*, are those in which the practices of an art are adapted so that the resultant works reflect the properties of other arts. *Hybrid arts* are those in which the essential or defining features of an art (or multiple arts) have been juxtaposed with, or challenged by, other arts.

3. Digital Arts and Photography

Having now developed a classificatory framework that can be adopted to appropriately identify and appreciate digital arts connected with

photography, I will examine cases of such arts, that may otherwise prove problematic, to demonstrate the benefits of using this framework. While it may be tempting to assert that, given the increase in new technological materials and techniques, there are more hybrid arts in the digital age (Maynard 2000, p. 17), it seems that many digital hybrid arts are however, continuations and evolutions of pre-existing arts (Skopik 2003, p. 271) and hybrid arts. For example, Loretta Lux has created digitalized overpainted photographs that, I suggest, like the works of Pierre et Gilles, belong to the fusion hybrid category. To create her digital works, Lux photographed her subjects, usually children, and then digitally erased the background and substituted in one which consisted of her own painting, or photographs that she retouched to appear painterly. She also altered the photographs of the children in subtle ways to produce what she described as "imaginary portraits" (Stoll 2004, p. 70), as she attempted to create "a reality that differs from what I find in memory and imagination" (Stoll 2004, p. 70). Lux's combination of painting, which is associated with the imaginary, and photography, which is associated with memory and reality, aided her intention to represent and explore the qualities that children in general possess, such as awkwardness, rather than the portrayal of a particular child (Hart 2005). Specifically, by utilizing painting to modify one of the defining features of photography, Lux depicted types, rather than particulars. Furthermore, by using photo-editing software, Lux conflated the production and post-production stages of photography to create a synthesized whole that would not be so well integrated had she used analogue techniques.

Lux's use of digital technology entails difficulty in discerning one medium from another, which further distorts the reality, and enhances the meaning, of her work. Taking the digital nature of Lux's work into account aids the viewer's appreciation of it, however this is not a new hybrid practice as there is an established, corresponding practice of literally painting over photographs (Warner Marien 2012, p. 39).

Although Lux's digital overpainted photographs do not belong to a new hybrid art, some hybrid arts are new in virtue of the fact that digital technology has enabled agents to join two pre-existent arts in a new practice, that would not previously have been possible to realize. For example, I propose that it is most appropriate to recognize and to appreciate LFC-images as belonging to a new hybrid art, given that by using digital technology one of the defining features of photography, the static nature of the image, has been challenged by one of the defining features of sculpture, the dynamic nature of the viewer's interaction with the work. Respectively, other new hybrid arts have been developed using techniques that, prior to the digital age, would have been impossible. For example, Richard Kolker, uses computer generated imagery (CGI) to create three-dimensional scenes, which he then "photographs" using a virtual camera, that "follows the same rules as the real one: film size, aperture, shutter speed." (Soutter 2013, p. 107) Given however, that no actual photographic event takes place, the works most plausibly belong to a new hybrid art, that may be called "Virtual Photography", in which digital imaging techniques are used to render virtual scenes, and to simulate the resources and techniques of photography. In this

case then, photography has transformed digital imaging.

Photography has however, influenced rather than transformed some digital arts. For example, Stan Douglas created his "Discrete Cosine Transformations" by "reverse engineering" the digital photographic process (Smith 2018, p. 88). Specifically, influenced by the fact that digital cameras transform light into code to produce an image, Douglas created software and hardware that allowed him to produce a code for an image, which he created by entering data for frequencies of amplitude and colour, that was then printed on canvas. Douglas said his process was based on JPEG compression and that he was "manipulating the kinds of harmonic interactions that essentially undergird all digital images." (Smith 2018, p. 88) Given that Douglas harnessed digital imaging technology to create images that were, in some sense, created in accordance with digital photographic practice, these works seem like plausible candidates as transformation hybrids. However, JPEG compression is not an essential or defining feature of digital photography. Moreover, Douglas did not combine two existent arts, but developed a new practice which he designed to break the rules of realism in photography and encourage viewers to "look at images as objects that are in front of them" (Smith 2018, p. 91), by creating images with no referent other than the data entered by an agent, rather than data derived from light waves and input via photosensitive mechanisms. Whilst Douglas' work is clearly influenced by digital photography, he has not created photographs nor hybridized two arts to make these works. Yet it is profitable for viewers to consider how the nature of digital photographic

image processing influenced the development of Douglas' practice.

There are some kinds however, that have an uncertain status. For example, "Computational Photography" comprises processes including High Dynamic Range (HDR) imaging, which entails that the "camera takes multiple pictures at different exposure levels and seamlessly stiches them together to produce a composite image that retains optimal detail in both the brightest and the dimmest areas." (Fineman 2012, p. 203) Photographic composites, as I have highlighted, are frequently created by incorporating painterly practices. For example, in the mid-19th century Gustave le Gray combined negatives of the sea and sky to create composites that expressively captured the best light and detail of each (Fineman 2012, p. 203). However, HDR imaging is not closely aligned with this practice, as the premise of HDR imaging is not to compose an image, as one creates the composition for a painting, but to create an image in which all the photographed objects are clearly visible. Although it has been a norm of standard photographic practices, until recently, to capture one spatiotemporal scene in one photographic exposure, HDR is now a standard shooting mode on most smartphones and given the proliferation of photographs taken using these devices, it may become a norm of photography to create composites that reflect different photographic events but that capture a scene literally in its best light. Unlike other kinds of photographic composite imaging, the techniques and practices of HDR imaging do not involve the interpenetration of techniques and practices from other arts. Hence, viewers will not profit from appreciating these works as

hybrids, or as photography that has been influenced by the properties of another art. Instead, HDR imaging may be an evolution of photographic practice.

4. Conclusion

In order to adequately appreciate developing digital arts connected with photography it is important for viewers to distinguish between those that are an evolution of existing photographic arts, digital arts that are influenced by photography, and digital arts that hybridize photography. Some hybrid arts, including "Light Field Photography", are new in virtue of the digital technology that is used to create the works and as with other new and developing hybrid arts, at present these tend to be transformation hybrids, however this is likely to change as digital arts further develop. Thus, what I hope to have established here, is a framework that will enable viewers to appropriately identify and appreciate these future developments in the digital arts.

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Strategies of Irreproducibility

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ABSTRACT. In this paper I focus on the topic of reproducibility (and irreproducibility) of aesthetic experience and effects, distinguishing it from the traditional subject of artifact reproducibility. The main aim is to outline a typology of the various kind of irreproducibility of aesthetic experience and to draw some implications for the aesthetic discussion concerning contemporary art.

Depending on the type of artwork, we can define the difference (or the "ratio") between aesthetic experience in the presence of the artwork and aesthetic experience in its absence, that is, in the presence of its reproductions or documentations. For instance, in an easily reproducible painting the difference between experiencing the real artwork or its reproduction could be considered relatively small, while the difference between real experience and reproduction would be high in a complex room-filling installation. This ratio could depend on ontological, material, or practical reasons and could also depend on the technological means of reproduction and documentation.

In conclusion, following Groys (2017), I will suggest that the application of different "strategies of irreproducibility" testifies the urge to escape the replicability of aesthetic experience and the desire to generate forms of uniqueness and exclusivity in the fruition of art, and could therefore be seen as one of the reasons why art today is strongly based on documentations, installations or performative events. You really need to make the real effort to queue up and attend them, no substitute would be otherwise possible.

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1. Introduction: Are We Really in an Age of Total Accessibility and Reproducibility?

We all know at least since the famous "artwork" essay by Walter Benjamin, that reproducibility made possible to overcome the cult of the unique and original object in favor of its "exhibition value", mass diffusion and circulation, and we know how he celebrated "for the first time in world history, technological reproducibility emancipates the work of art from its subservience to ritual." And today, we live in a time of extreme accessibility and extreme reproducibility. Technologies are generators of "presence in absence" and artworks could be enjoyed in absence in an almost limitless way.

Accessibility of reproduction means, on the other side, the end of the "cult value" of the artwork, which also means a less urgent need to experience original artworks in their presence. Tourist visiting Florence, Italy, to make a very trivial but clear example often seem to be completely satisfied to contemplate the replica of Michelangelo's *David* in front of the Palazzo Vecchio, sparing the long entrance queue for the Accademia. Their argument probably goes like this: if we consider the sensorial and aesthetical effects of an object on the viewer (not the originality of the unique work), then we should say that this replica reproduces in a substantial degree its aesthetic effects and experience in the viewer. Moreover, the David's replica was placed a bit more than a century ago

exactly there where the original work was placed more than 500 years ago according also to Michelangelo's wishes, therefore someone could support the provocative claim that we have a more authentic experience of Michelangelo's work by looking at the replica in the original context.

Of course, we are talking here of the reproduction of "aesthetic effects" or of "aesthetic experiences" on the viewer, not of reproduction of the artwork as an object. Even before Benjamin artwork essay, this issue was famously discussed in the so-called "facsimile-debate" at the end of the 1920s in the Hamburg art journal "Der Kreis". This debate was sparked by historian and curator Alexander Dorner, who was a provocative defender of the use of facsimiles in museums and of the importance to recreate in them the real sensorial "atmosphere" of the artwork. According to Dorner, it was more important to give to a museum visitor the feel of the artwork in its original context by setting up the right historical environment, doing complete restorations or even re-creations of the object through facsimiles, and avoiding the cultic display of old fragments.

Notably Erwin Panofsky, without taking sides, touched this point as he distinguished in his essay "Original and Facsimile-Reproduction" (1930) between *Echtheitserlebnis* (experience of being in front of the authentic object) and *Sinnerlebnis* (experience of the sensorial effects conveyed by the object). He acknowledged that taste of the day favored *Echtheitserlebnis* – that is, seeing, experiencing, and maintaining the "unrepeatable organic singularity" of the material artifact - over *Sinnerlebnis*, the experience of sensing what he - interestingly for today's perspective - called the

"conceptual form" of art (that is, art which is not necessarily beholden to its materials). This made clear that the problem of originality and reproductions of artifacts is to be distinguished from the problem of accurate reproduction of the sensorial effects on a person, showing how the shift toward a higher centrality of the sensorial dimension means not only a movement toward "exhibition value" of the artwork (in Benjamin's sense) but also the importance of sensorial accessibility, that is reproducibility and diffusion of the aesthetic experience as such.

This becomes more relevant since we live in a time of extreme accessibility and reproducibility, that is, we mostly become acquainted with cultural products (specifically artworks, but basically with most facts in the world) through media, that is through reproduction and documentations. Even though one visits lots of exhibitions and sees thousands of artworks in his lifetime, nevertheless he probably comes in contact with most artworks in absence, through documentations and reproductions. One would think that this lead to a further consequence, namely that we probably produce and create cultural artifacts following reproducibility, that art would be made and to be highly accessible, documentable and to be diffused and circulated.

The aim of this paper is to offer a different perspective on this assumption, arguing that a drive to resist reproducibility is consistent with many currents within contemporary art innovations. This drive is similar to the traditional Romantic aspiration to authenticity and uniqueness, but manifests itself also through a particular combination in which artworks

don't renounce to their aesthetic impact, to their circulation through the production of documents and text around them, but at the same time resisting the possibility to be consumed in absence through reproductions.

Ideally, in fact, we could replicate anything (that is, have a reproduction) with a high-level degree of similarity, but in reality this rarely happens: we don't have real-size copies of the David of Michelangelo in every school, we don't even have real-size reproductions of paintings in our textbooks or on our screens. And if we take examples of other contemporary art forms, like performances, things get even worse. If a teacher talks to his students about Viennese Actionism or Fluxus, he doesn't call a group of actors in the classroom in order to perform or re-enact some performance, I can only show them pictures or videos. So, we actually live in an age of wide documentability, not necessarily of reproducibility. A very good replica of the David is also not easy, it is necessary to travel to see the one in Florence, while, for example, a good reproduction in original size of a two-dimensional painting like the Mona Lisa is not difficult to get.

Already this example shows a difference in effort and complexity on how artistic medium could be reproduced. In other words, between original and reproduction there is not the same degree of transfer of aesthetic experience. A painting could be easily reproduced in a catalogue, an art-history book, a poster or a website. By contrast, the difference between looking at a sculpture and looking at its two-dimensional picture on a page is more significant (in this case we would need a material replica like in the David's example). This difference in aesthetic impact becomes bigger if a

medium-sized image of a book is not depicting a medium-sized object, but a huge canvas or an installation like Anish Kapoor's Leviathan. We can write about it, we can document it with pictures, but how much of the aesthetic experience of being in front of it are we able to convey through the usual means of reproduction?

2. The Presence/Absence Ratio of Aesthetic Experience

These differences in degree of experience's reproducibility, and its dependence on the art medium, becomes a relevant point considering that today most people are acquainted with artworks mostly indirectly through documentation and visual reproductions. We could therefore formulate a "ratio" (or a proportion) between the aesthetic effect in presence of the original artwork and the effects conveyed through its usual reproductions in absence.

The presence/absence ratio of a classical painting like the Mona Lisa is low, since its aesthetic qualities could be satisfactorily obtained with a high-quality reproduction. Someone could even suggest that observing a high-resolution reproduction (like in Google Art Project) guarantees a superior aesthetic impact than trying to look at the small original painting behind the thick bullet-proof case, the protective railing and the wall of selfie-taking tourists. Bringing to light what Benjamin called the optical unconscious means enhancing the aesthetic experience through means of

reproduction, the ratio would be even smaller as the experience in presence would be poorer than in absence. If people want to make a trip to see the Mona Lisa is because they desire to be in presence of the original. That's why people do selfies when they are in front of it, turning their back to the painting: there is no real interest in closely observing the painting, which is already well known. Being in presence and testimony this fact is the real point: the selfie-stick, so to say, is the present-time tool of choice in the preservation of the "cult-value", not in its deep and contemplative meaning, but rather in the impulse to pay tribute to an object possessing a magical aura.

Differently, the reproduction through a small replica or the photographic documentation of the 45 feet inflatable ballerina by Jeff Koons (2017) gives only in part the looming experience of the huge figure seated among New York's skyscrapers: the presence/absence ratio tend to be necessarily higher. This ratio could become even higher when artworks are defined not only by things, but by processes. On one hand, for traditionally time-based works this would not be problematic, since they are per definition reproducible artifacts and events per definition (like movies, music pieces, books, theatre plays). Among material objects, we have unique artifacts like traditional artworks (painting, sculptures), and reproducible artifacts, like books but also all industrial design's products. Art based on processes and events, on the contrary, have been traditionally defined by reproducible things (theatre plays, music scores). Not-reproducible events have rather been considered a feature of historical

events, that could not be reproduced, but only, at most, re-enacted, like people staging the siege of the Bastille during the French Revolution. But contemporary art has since the 60s ventured exactly in this realm of not-reproducible one-off events, like performances and activities that are meant to be spatio-temporally unique, and could therefore only be re-enacted or documented in texts, video excerpts and pictures.

This fact is particularly relevant today: on one side, almost anything in contemporary art can be an artwork, but, on the other side, only a small subset of things is used to represent and document artworks (namely, multimedia objects, pictures, videos, texts, semiotic entities). We receive most of our cultural awareness from this small subset of things. This constitutes an interesting cultural bottleneck in which artworks can be conveyed (in their absence) through reproductions with a different degree of loss of aesthetic experience.

In the history of avant-garde artists often attempt to escape mass reproduction and commodification of their artworks through a refusal of objecthood and a negation of aesthetic value, which means also to escape a "low" presence/absence ratio. An example of this tension are all cases of "Dematerialization" (as defined by Lucy Lippard at the end of the 60s) and also of conceptualization. They all could be read as an effort to depart from the idea of art-making as production of objects and to subtract the artwork to its material reproducibility in an age of rising image consumption. However, de-materialized art and conceptual art still have a "low" presence/absence ratio, not because they are easily reproducible (it is difficult to reproduce a

conceptual or ephemeral artwork), but because also their aesthetic effect in presence (the numerator of the presence/absence ratio) is low. In order to escape easy reproducibility, conceptual, minimal or de-materialized art sacrifice also aesthetic experience in presence.

This intentional withdrawal from the visible and the aesthetical consisted in the abandonment of art's aesthetic dimension and its "reduction to nothing", to a "zero point" (quoting Lucy Lippard 1968), an "aesthetics of silence" (Susan Sontag 1969).

3. Strategies of Irreproducibility

While dematerialization and conceptualization aimed a withdrawal from the aesthetic dimension, the so-called post-conceptual turn (Osborne 2017) witnesses on the contrary a return to its centrality, in some cases in form of a marked spectacularization. Nevertheless, the need of escaping reproducibility is in many cases still present. But, then, how could a return to the aesthetic dimension also avoid a return to a reproducibility in absentia of the aesthetic experience, namely to a low presence/absence ratio as in classical artworks? My hypothesis is that there are possible ways to produce artworks that need to be experienced directly and whose aesthetic effect can only be indirectly documented. What we then have is unreproducible aesthetic experience, which is given when aesthetic engagement in presence is maximized, but at the same time reproducibility of this engagement is

minimized. In other words: visibility without reproducibility. But how is this done? As an answer, we could interpret wide areas of contemporary art practices as the implementation of various "strategies of irreproducibility" of aesthetic experience. In other word, we could draft a typology of all kind of aesthetics practices that are characterized by a "high presence/absence ratio", such as:

1) Focus on unique events and performativity, that is, temporal unicity. Performance is a time-based art and, contrary to other performing arts, such as theatre or music concerts, is often irreproducible, not being the execution of a repeatable script, but leaving only memories in the viewers and a trail of documents in form of critical texts, videos and pictures. It is possible to re-enact a performance, but still this would not only meet substantial difficulties (as for having the same performers or artist doing it), but in some case this is practically not possible: Anne Imhof's performance Faust (winner at the Venice Biennale in 2017), was a one-off event with specific performers in a specific place. Either a person had the possibility to attend it, or that experience is lost for her.

2) Spatial uniqueness, for instance concerning site-specificity of artworks. In a similar fashion to installations, these works are conceived to be enjoyed in a specific place and context with which they interact. Copies or replicas are basically impossible since they would need to be placed in the very same natural or urban context

3) Experience complexity: Installations, which are works situated in museum or exhibition spaces could a) present complex display of objects,

documents, or performances, b) envelop the visitors in an immersive audio-visual environment and in a sensorial atmosphere (like Dan Flavin's or Olafur Eliasson's works), c) actively interact with them (all cases of "relational" and participatory art). All these factors make possible for installations to be only partially documentable through recordings, pictures and texts, and deny the possibility to reproduce the original aesthetic effects to those who were not able to attend.

4) Multisensoriality: Inclusion of non-optical and non-acoustic sensorial element, for instance use of multimodality in atmosphere creation: smell, touch, taste. We could consider this also a specific case of immersive creation of an installation where the exhibition space is transformed in a sensory landscape, like in Hicham Berrada's *Mesk-ellik* (2015-2019), a series of glass terrariums in which artificial half-light alters the circadian rhythm of exotic flowers and make them release their fragrance during the opening hours. Since olfactory reproduction is not a usual alternative in documentation, the aesthetic experience also in this case is basically limited to the attending public.

5) Material factors could also constitute a pragmatic limit to usual means of reproduction, such as scale. While the Mona Lisa could be reproduced in its true dimensions, more difficult would be to have a similar reproduction of a huge over 5 meters wide Barnett Newman's canvas. Gigantism in modern sculptures and installations (as in works by Anish Kapoor, Richard Serra, and many other contemporary artists following the trend of "scaling up" artworks for spectacular effects) makes their aesthetic

impact partially irreproducible, allowing to be contemplated only in presence.

6) Imposed or legal limitations to reproduction. Not allowing to record or take pictures during an exhibition – as in the case of some Tino Sehgal's performances - could be seen as an artistic strategy to give value to the actual experience (or to the limited edition of its official documentations). Similarly, many contemporary video-art works can mostly be experienced only during official viewings and are only documented by photographic stills or short excerpts. You can buy or rent a movie, but you can't do the same if you want to fully watch, for instance, Pierre Huyghe's 20-minute film *Untitled* (*Human Mask*), 2014: it is necessary to attend an official screening. As is the case of many recent video-artworks, not only it is impossible to buy a commercial copy of a video-artwork (you would only be allowed to acquire the very expensive artwork rights to own a limited copy), but bootleg copies, YouTube reproductions or illegal download are basically non-existent. Video artists like Huyghe and many others are interesting cases of artists that are very much obsessed in controlling every instance of full screening and exhibition of their work (see Balsom 2017).

7) We could include in this list also some uses of the traditional domain of art documentation, in particular in all art practices in which something actually has already happened outside the exhibition space, in a difference place and time, such as an ethnographic research, a reportage, a project of social engagement and also performances that were never meant to be exhibited (E.g. Simon Starling's, *Autoxylopyrocycloboros*, 2006). All

what we have are traces in form of documentations presented as installation, archive or learning spaces for the public. In this case, art is even irreproducible for the primary exhibition space, documents and archive are only a metonymy, a trace of something which could have been experienced only by the subjects involved in the artistic activity, if at all. Documentations and archival installation in the museum are only a part of the artwork, they are a trace that indexically points to a transient event that happened out there.

An analysis of the different kind of aesthetic irreproducibility could be further extended. My suggestion is that the presence/absence ratio correlates with a crucial mechanism of contemporary art practices and also with the acceptance of those practices in the most experimental domain of today's artworld. Maybe this is also the reason why we do not see many paintings in contemporary art exhibitions (and if so, only if inserted in an installative context). Moreover, it is not a coincidence if in this decade the first prize at the Venice Art Biennale went mostly to performances that where in some case site-specific works: Tino Sehgal in 2013, Adrian Piper in 2015, 2017 Anne Imhof, 2019 the performance Sun&Sea (Marina) at the Lithuanian Pavillon. Anne Imhof's Faust was unrepeatable and at the same time enjoyed vast diffusion through social media (mostly Instagram), which shows how highly involving aesthetic experience in presence could go side by side with vast indirect documentation, generating a high presence/absence ratio. All traces, texts, and documents that are produced by critics, curators and the public itself not only testimony of the difficulty

to reproduce and convey the aesthetic experience, but they have a crucial role in the cultural diffusion of the artworks itself. Media and documents don't weaken the value of the unique artwork, in this case, they enhance it. This becomes a strategy in which information and documentation on print media, television, online etc. could only hint to the kind of aesthetic experience that has been produced in an exhibition, but cannot really reproduce it. High documentability with low reproducibility (of aesthetic effect) or, in other words, highly involving aesthetic experience in presence and vast indirect documentation, assure again the aura of unicity of the artwork.

4. Conclusion: Documentation without Reproduction

The analysis of the varieties of divergence between experience in presence and experience in absence should be mapped out in a more systematic way. Beside all hypothesis concerning the reasons behind irreproducibility, the interesting theoretical point is the philosophical question of the varieties of irreproducibility, the analysis of how much of the direct aesthetic experience is left out in the network of reproduction and documentations.

If we accept the idea that there is a strive toward irreproducibility and that there are strategies to do that, a further point concerns the reasons of all this. What are the motivations behind this effort to non-reproducibility? And why, on the other side, documentation and circulation of information about

art events and exhibition are so important? I suggested that a reason see irreproducibility as form of resistance against commodification. Reproduction wound not be a way of liberation or democratization of aesthetic experience (according to Benjamin's suggestion), but rather, along the Adornian critique, a tool of the culture industry. On the other side, culture industry, according to Adorno, could also be at the hearth of the strive for uniqueness and authenticity of aesthetic experience, as a way to create value through scarcity and exclusivity. A similar interpretation is the sociological view popularized by Pierre Bourdieu. According to this view, strategies of irreproducibility could be seen as a manifestation of cultural distinction, where artworks could only be again the object of contemplation by relatively few individuals that have the cultural and financial capital that is necessary to have in order to be able to enjoy events, performance, travel for screenings and vernissages and so on. Nothing you could do by buying a magazine or searching the web. Moreover, museums and biennials need attendance, and focusing on irreproducible art could stimulate this kind of "art pilgrimage" compared to art that can be easily documented and reproduced.

We could see here a development in the artworld of what in the 90s economists called the "experience economy", the shift of the market from product to experiences, events, spectacles.

A more sympathetic view is the one expressed by Boris Groys (2017), according to which artists became less and less concerned with the productions of things and shifted toward processes and documentation

around those processes. As Groys wrote, the shift toward documentations, installations and processes in contemporary art shows the need to present art as close to "real life", but it is something that is happening right there ("museum has ceased to be a space for contemplating non-moving things. Instead, the museum has become a place where things happen") What we have is a fusion of art and life, which shows how contemporary developments follow an aspiration that was present since the origins of avant-garde in the early 20th century, which is at the same time an overturning of Benjamin's argument of reproducibility as transforming art in a vehicle of political communication: not the work of art should move toward its spectator, but the spectator should be mobilized to go toward the art event. Contemporary "participatory" and activist art is exactly about this direct inclusion of the public in types of experiences that are not to be consumed passively at a distance, but require total involvement of one's own cognitive, emotional and perceptual resources.

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Plato's Images: Addressing the Clash between Method and Critique

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ABSTRACT: In Book X of the *Republic* Plato develops a structured criticism of the images of painting, in order to denigrate, by means of analogy, the cognitive value of poetry. Yet Plato persistently employs verbal images at points of utmost importance with regards to his philosophical aims. In the face of Plato's critique of the image, his methodic use of images can seem paradoxical: critique and method point to opposing directions with regard, especially, to the cognitive value of the image. This article examines two accounts, drawn from the existing literature, which may seem to resolve the inconsistency between Plato's critique of the image and his method. Evidencing that both of these accounts are in error in ways that affirm the inconsistency, the article aims to defend an alternative account that can lead to its proper resolution.

1. Introduction

In Book X of the *Republic* Plato develops a structured criticism of the images of painting, in order to denigrate, by means of analogy, the cognitive

value of poetry. It is due to this criticism that the history of iconophobia and iconoclasm traces their intellectual lineage to Plato. Yet Plato persistently employs verbal images in the dialogues—rather than rational argumentation—at points of utmost importance with regards to his philosophical aims.[2] Admitting to being smitten by images (*Republic* 488a1–2), Plato recurrently devises an image precisely where the interlocutor's understanding is at stake and instead of giving a straightforward definition of the terms examined. These images are explicitly treated as educational, teaching devices or as devices that can facilitate comprehension, while Plato repeatedly defends his use of images when an argument is difficult to prove, when there are no proofs and evidences and, generally, when there is lack of clarity or adequate knowledge on a matter. The *Republic* is admittedly no exception to this method: some of the most powerful and memorable images of philosophical discourse are given in the dialogue that purportedly manifests Plato's hostility towards images.

In the face of Plato's critique of the image, under its standard interpretation, the methodic use of verbal images is puzzling, paradoxical: critique and method certainly seem to point us to opposing directions with

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[2] The targeted class of verbal images includes a host of figurative devices (analogies, similes, metaphors) that Plato groups under the genus of *image* (eikon) to the extent that they trade on likeness and guided visualization. For a discussion of Plato's use of "eikon" in relation to such devices, see Pender 2003.

regard, especially, to the *cognitive value* of the image.[3] Before we are led to assume (with Robinson 1953, 233 and Murdoch 1998, 462) that a philosopher of this magnitude, theoretically obsessed as he was with the world of images, failed to notice or was not bothered by an inconsistency in his own stance towards the image, it is merited that we attempt to resolve the inconsistency. This article aims, in the first instance, to assess two relevant accounts that can be drawn from the existing literature and which may seem to provide such a resolution. Both of these accounts hold on to the inferiority of the painted image that the critique foregrounds, but then, in rather opposing terms, call for a revision of the nature and/or function of Plato's images that, if judged merited, would resolve the inconsistency.

According to the first account, discussed in Section II, the images of painting that the critique targets are indeed cognitively mute and pernicious to the soul, but the verbal images belong to a different class. They fall under the class of *true* images, along with the images that dialectic aims eventually to construct, i.e. the *logos* of philosophy. From this perspective, it is only a category error that can lead us to claim an inconsistency between Plato's critique of the image and his methodic use of verbal images.

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[3] The issue can and indeed has been raised with regards to Plato's criticism of poetry and the dialogical form of Plato's philosophical exposition. And while dialogical form faded out in philosophical discourse, imagery invoked by figurative devices is used throughout the ages by philosophers, often adopting the same ambivalent stance detected in Plato, i.e. persistently using images but also mounting a harsh critique against them (pertinent cases are philosophers of the British Empiricist tradition, such as Francis Bacon, Thomas Hobbes and John Locke). For that reason, Plato is an ideal test-case for an approach to this theoretical issue, being the matrix of a paradox with continuing relevance for the understanding of the role of images in philosophical discourse.

According to the second account, discussed in Section III, there is no category error in our thinking of the verbal images but also *no inconsistency* between critique and method: the verbal images and the images of painting fall under the same class but also, despite appearances to the contrary, the former can be seen to bear the *same cognitive limitations* as the latter. From this perspective, there is obviously no clash between critique and method: the critique states and the method manifests the image's definite lack of cognitive value. So, if there is a certain function that Plato's images are meant to serve in the context of the dialogues, this should be presumably looked for in their aesthetic and/or affective capacities, which the critique indeed affirms rather boldly.

Through our analysis we will evidence that both of these accounts are in error and that the reasons for which they are in error actually affirm rather than resolve the inconsistency between critique and method. It is thus our aim, in the closing Section, to defend an alternative account that can lead to a proper resolution. The presumed inconsistency between critique and method is upheld, we will argue, within the bounds of a widely endorsed but still *myopic* reading of Plato's critique of the image that demands revision. Affirming the cognitive function of the verbal images, on the basis of just those traits of the image that the critique highlights, we will evidence that Plato's theorizing of the image and his methodic use of verbal images (a) are fully consistent and (b) point to an overall conception of the nature of the image and its cognitive value that is more lenient and more elaborate than the one that has been attributed to Plato—in the philosophy of art and

beyond—on the basis of a rather crude reading of the critique in Book X. In effect, through a structured understanding of the method, we will defend an alternative reading of Plato's critique of the image that seems to be merited and resolves the apparent inconsistency between critique and method.

2. An Attempted Resolution through a Division of Mimesis

Acknowledging that Plato's own image-making is in tension with his critique of images, James Risser (2013) has attempted a reconciliation through "a reconsideration of the now classical treatment of imitation (mimesis) in Book Ten of the *Republic*" (249).[4] Being grounded on a scrutiny of the terms of that treatment, in the light of relevant insights in *Cratylus* and the *Sophist*, the suggested reconsideration foregrounds a threefold division of mimesis: mimesis as replication; mimesis as false resemblance; and mimesis as true resemblance. From this perspective, Plato's own images are allowed a different value than the images of painting targeted in Book X, not because of their different medium but because, due to their internal traits, they fall under a different class—the class of true images (*eikones*) rather than the class of false images (*phantasmata*), where painted images fall. So, it is only a category error, it seems, that would lead

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[4] Plato's "image-making" in Risser's analysis seems to concern predominantly the artistry of the dialogues and the accounts he gives regarding different objects of inquiry. It seems appropriate, however, to extend the argument to the verbal images, which are themselves part of the artistry of the dialogues and which are also aimed to give an indirect account of targeted objects of inquiry.

us to claim an inconsistency between Plato's critique of the image and his own ample use of images towards cognitive ends.

Whereas the division that Risser draws is merited by Plato's overall treatment of mimesis, still we need to scrutinize the verbal images before we can accept their suggested classification. In order to proceed to such scrutiny, let us first be clear on the terms of the division that Risser draws. What should first be clear is that, from the three suggested kinds of mimesis, only the latter two concern images: in *Cratylus* (432a–d) Socrates makes it rather clear that the image is marked by an *ellipsis*, i.e. that if a mimesis were to copy every aspect of its object so as to replicate it in its entirety, then that mimesis would cease to be an image. It is, thus, a mark of images that "they are very far from having qualities which are the exact counterpart of the realities which they represent" (432d).

It follows that both the second and the third term of the division that *do* concern images, as the *Sophist* (233ff) makes clear, bear the ellipsis that marks images. Both true and false images, that is, fail to reproduce some aspects of their objects: they are essentially selective, as they present their objects under specific dimensions at the exclusion of others.[5] The definitive difference between true and false images, then, is that the former, but not the latter, are accurate, while being selective: they present the qualities that their object bears under the selected dimension(s), with a certain completeness but also without distortion (235d). Consider, for example the case of

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[5] This has implications concerning the expression of knowledge, as becomes rather clear in the *Seventh Epistle* (342a–b and 343d–c). See Ringbom 1965, 103–4.

sculpture—a kind of visual mimesis that can have, according to Plato, both true and false instances. A piece of sculpture is clearly an image and not a replica of its object, as it can only present the external, formal properties of an object at the exclusion of its internal properties or its constitution: sculpture can reproduce form and possibly colour but is, in any case, limited to the dimension of space. A piece of sculpture will then be a true mimesis if it presents the spatial, formal properties of its object with completeness and accuracy, i.e. without altering the latter's form and the true proportions of its parts. As Plato notes in the *Sophist* (235b–236a), this is not the case in big sculptures, where the maker needs to distort the true proportions of the original for the sake of beauty. If the sculptor held to the true proportions, "the upper parts would appear too small and the lower parts too big, on account of the fact that we see the ones from afar and the others from nearby" (235e–236a). So, in order for a big sculpture to be true to the eye and beautiful, it needs to be false: it needs to be a *phantasma*, an appearance of likeness, rather than a true likeness.

It is rather clear from the critique of painted images in Book X of the *Republic* that they fall under the category of false images. It is also clear that, unlike sculptures, they do so by necessity.[6] Like sculptures, the images of painting can only reproduce the spatial, formal properties of their objects as well as their colour; but, because they are two-dimensional, their likeness

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[6] Risser seems to think otherwise, as also Tate (1932). See, however, Keuls (1974, 118) and Janaway (1995, 115–7 and 170, n. 46) on the reasons for which such a stance is not merited in the light of Plato's analysis of painting.

to the original can only be a rather compromised likeness. On the one hand, the images of painting can only present those aspects of their objects that are manifest from a certain point of view, being, thus, selective *even within the spatial dimension* that they selectively target (598b). On the other hand, to be true to the eye, they need to present those aspects as they appear from the relevant point of view, rather than as they truly are (so the image can only present us with an *apparent* shape and an *apparent* colour rather than with their true counterparts [598a5–b5, 602c7–d4]; cf. Hyman 2006, ch. 5). The painted image, then, is a *phantasma*, a compromised likeness, owing to its inflated selectivity and overall perspectivity. And yet, this compromised likeness masks itself, especially when the image is seen from a distance (as Plato notes with regard to *skiagraphia*; for a discussion see Keuls 1974*)*. When seen from a distance, the painted image has the power to fool us that we are in the presence of its object, in its absence; or—for more minded viewers—it can lead us to make-believe seeing that object and/or marvel at the image's realism, oblivious of the many respects in which the image is unlike its object. Images, that is, have the power to enchant, at the expense of a critical, reflective stance that would allow us to judge the like and the unlike and, thus, to see the image as what it is—*an image*, i.e. a construction that is only a partial likeness (602c4–603b2).

Turning our focus on Plato's own images, we need to reflect: are they true images, like some instances of sculpture can be and as the images—the *logoi*—of philosophy indeed are for Plato (in contrast to the false images of the sophists); or rather they bear the same limitations as the images of

painting do, according to Plato's critique? Risser's analysis, targeting more generally "the artistry of Plato as the writer of dialogues" (253), can seem to favor the first line of response.[7] But we cannot endorse this response merely on the grounds of the fact that those images are used in the context of philosophical discourse (that, for Plato at least, aims at truth); or even under the hypothesis that the philosopher has possibly attained a grasp of the essence of things (i.e. of Ideas), so as to be able to represent such essence in an image. As Plato acknowledges after all, one that is in possession of the truth, may need to use a false image in order to promote good ends, given the limitations of those whom he addresses (*Republic* 414b8–415c; *Laws* 663b–c): a false image may well give a philosophical truth, but in compromised terms that the recipients can grasp. To ascertain under which class of image Plato's verbal images fall, it is thus merited that we consider their internal traits vis-à-vis their objects, bracketing the philosophical acumen of their maker.[8]

Consider, for example, the image of the Sun in the *Republic* (507b–509c). Having explained the difficulties involved in examining directly the idea of Good, of which, anyway, we have no adequate knowledge (505a–

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[7] Risser does not proceed to a scrutiny of Plato's "images"—be they dialogues, accounts, or verbal images—but only focuses on the conception (supposedly of a whole, i.e. of the Idea) that guides their construction. However, the criteria of truth set for images in the *Sophist* are much more demanding than *that*.

[8] It is blatantly true, of course, that the extent to which an employed image will be of cognitive value to the recipient—the extent to which the image will allow him or her to develop appropriately her thought about the image's object—directly depends on the cognitive capacities of its maker, apart from his or her artistry.

506d), Socrates proceeds to talk instead about the offspring of the Good, what is most similar to it and is its image, i.e. the Sun. The description of this image of the Good focuses *selectively* on specific, empirically accessible or verifiable, properties of the Sun (and its relation to the visible realm), that Socrates exploits in order to illuminate by analogy the nature of the Good (and its relation to the intelligible realm): the Sun shines, it illuminates the visible realm, it is the cause of our ability to see and be seen, it empowers or sustains birth and growth. The image, we should admit, is rather forceful. It exploits our conception of the Sun as the ultimate luminous force on which vision and life depend in the visible realm, in order to transfer (in our thought) the same power and relational force to the Good in the intelligible realm.

If we reflect on the analogical device, however, we will notice limitations analogous to those that mark false images. On the one hand, as the images of painting, the image of the Sun bears an *inflated selectivity*: the image is further selective *even within the dimension* that it selectively targets, i.e. the order of the intelligible realm and the relations that pertain to this realm. As there is apparently much of grave importance (*within* the context of the targeted dimension) that the image conceals, Plato devises further images—the image of the Line and the image of the Cave—that correct on the selectivity of the Sun–image, revealing further aspects that a comprehensive conception of the intelligible realm (and of our own cognitive powers) needs to involve.

On the other hand, the Sun–image presents a partial likeness that is

persuasive *when considered from a distance*. If we reflect more closely on the description of the image, it will become evident that there is a host of properties that the Sun possesses and which the description conceals—properties which, if acknowledged, would undermine the seeming aptness of the attempted analogy. For instance, besides empowering vision, the Sun can also blind us, as is indeed acknowledged in the image of the Eclipse (*Phaedo* 99d–e); every living thing is naturally turned towards the Sun, whereas our soul needs education in order to be turned towards the Good (518d–e); even if the Sun has a dependent being, it does not further depend on any other *source of light* to make things visible, whereas the Good seems to require the assistance of the Sun to make things known;[9] and the Sun not only sustains life but it can also end it—a property contradictory to the very notion of the (all positive) Good. In concealing these properties of the Sun through its selective focus, the description of the image remains silent (non-committal) with regard to how things might be with the specified referent, the Good, in analogous respects. Given that there are differences to be noted along some such respects, in concealing those differences the image retains its persuasiveness and seems *deceivingly* apt: it is only when the image is considered from up-close (i.e. when we reflect on it) that we can trace the whole pattern of likeness and difference and see the image for what it is—a construction that is only a partial likeness.

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[9] The progression of knowledge, note, relies—up to a certain advanced point—on the use of the senses, as the Line and the Cave tell us but also Timaeus (47a). See Gordon 1997 for an analysis of this aspect of Plato's thought in relation to his persistent use of verbal images.

But as the images of painting, the verbal image (indeed, any successful figurative device, as has been repeatedly noted in the relevant literature) has the power to *enchant*. Given its directness, its vividness, and our own enhanced power of visual recall (in relation to our rather more limited power of verbal recall; see, e.g., Kosslyn 1980; Worren et al. 2002), the image exerts a special force on our thought, such that, even when we are aware of its partiality, we are prone to think of the targeted object under the image's terms (see, e.g., Moran 1989). Admittedly, although there is much in the rational argumentation of the Platonic dialogues that may escape the reader's attention and memory, Plato's artful images are definitely bound to capture the reader's imagination but also to haunt the reader's thought, long after the rigorous discourse that surrounds them fades-out in his or her memory.

Space does not allow us to evidence the aforementioned limitations of the Sun–image in any other verbal image employed by Plato, but those limitations are there to be traced by a reflective recipient: Plato's different verbal images, one can affirm, fall under the class of false images, along with the images of painting. And they do so for a good reason, rather than because of a deficit in their medium, as in painting: the verbal images *need to bear* the limitations of false images in order to better serve their role in the dialogues, as will be argued in the final section. But if, for now, we trust Plato that this role promotes his cognitive aims, the fact that the verbal images are false images affirms rather strongly the inconsistency between Plato's method and the critique of the image in Book X. According to that

critique, false images suffer from an informative poverty and are pernicious to the soul, so how could Plato use false images in a cognitive project deemed of utmost importance? Plato, it seems, has to err either in his own assessment of the method or in the critique: being mutually exclusive, they cannot both be on the right track. Julia Annas's approach to verbal images, to which we will now turn, indeed supports this line of thought.

3. An Attempted Resolution through the Denial of Cognitive Value

Annas, it should be noted, does not develop anything close to a *theory* about Plato's images. She rather critically examines the images in the context of her analysis of the *Republic* (Annas 1981). But her examination conveys a rather clear stance on the cognitive value of the images—or, rather, the lack of it—and such a stance directly confirms Plato's critique of the image. It is worth examining Annas's approach, as it can be seen to provide a swift resolution to the tension between Plato's method and his critique of the image: if Plato's images have no cognitive value, then they do not really fly in the face of the critique. Of course, it would then need to be explained why Plato used those images. Perhaps he erred regarding their informative capacities, being himself a victim of their allure, which the critique confirms rather boldly. Or, more charitably, despite Plato's insinuations on their cognitive role, the images were perhaps meant to serve a function of an

entirely different sort—an aesthetic or affective function, as indeed some scholars seem to think (see, e.g., Robinson 1953; Tecuşan 1992; Destrée 2012). But before we turn decisively our thought on those other functions, let us first consider whether Annas has given us sufficient reason to doubt what Plato seems eager to confirm, i.e. that the images he employs are meant to serve a cognitive function.

Annas's stance on the verbal images is expressed with some force in her examination of the successive images of the Sun, the Line and the Cave (1981, ch. 10). Examining these images individually but also in correlation, Annas recurrently comments on their resistance to a clear and coherent interpretation. Most notably, the images are said to suffer from *vagueness* or a lack of clarity and precision; for instance, she comments on the image of the Sun (246):

> 'Plato's Good', which he refuses to clarify here, became a byword for obscurity. How can the Good make things known, still less make them be what they are, in a way comparable to the workings of the sun? Plato is putting forward two thoughts, though he leaves them deliberately schematic.

But vagueness is not the only problem that a reader of the images has to face. Owing to their vagueness, the images are open-ended, indeterminate: they open up different possible interpretations at once, all merited, even if from different perspectives. The latter charge concerns the image as a whole as well as its individual elements. For instance, it is rather unclear, Annas

notes, whether the Line (like the Sun) conveys a stark contrast between the visible and the intelligible realm or, rather, whether it depicts "a continuous scale of epistemological achievement" (250); and it is certainly unclear whether the 'shadows' at its bottom end are meant literally or metaphorically—indeed the Cave follows to play at the level of both possible readings at once, thus *overloading* the imagery (256). The different ways in which the same element may function in different images points to a further interpretative challenge noted by Annas. The images that are evidently connected do not seem to neatly correspond or coincide: it is unclear where—or even, whether—the Good falls in the Line, as it presumably should; the Cave does not neatly divide into four sections, as the Line does; 'shadow' and 'belief' seem to suggest different things in the Line and in the Cave, and so on. Annas draws a stark assessment (252):

> The insolubility of this problem is a good illustration of the difficulties that Plato runs into by using images to make a philosophical point. The imagery is apt to get overloaded, as happens with the Line […]. And the detail of the imagery tempts us to ask questions that cannot be satisfactorily answered within the terms of the imagery; if we treat it with philosophical seriousness, the image turns out incoherent. As Iris Murdoch says (*The Fire and the Sun*, p. 68), 'The Theory of Forms, when read in conjunction with the explanatory tropes of the Line and the Cave […] can certainly produce some blazingly strong imagery in the mind which may well in the long run obstruct understanding.'

And she continuous elsewhere (256):

> Once more [Plato] has himself illustrated the dangers in the philosophical use
> of images, dangers which he warns against without seeming strikingly alive
> to […]. [T]he imagery, memorable though it is, has no consistent, overall
> interpretation. Sun, Line, and Cave are philosophically frustrating; they point
> us in too many directions at once.

Plato's images are thus taken to *obstruct* rather than promote understanding.
Whatever Plato's aims might have been in using them, their scrutiny
confirms, for Annas, Book X's critique: it confirms the informative poverty
of the image but also the cognitive harm that it can cause. However, we
should not rush to endorse Annas's conclusion. As Annas does not ponder
on the specific cognitive role that the images were meant to serve in the
dialogues—which could be such as to *justify* their noted informative
profile—her assessment is rather short-sighted.

Let us start with the one charge that is misplaced—as Annas (1982)
indeed seems to acknowledge—and should be disregarded: i.e. that the
images which seem to target the same domain do not correspond or neatly
coincide. As noted earlier, each image bears an inflated selectivity, i.e. it is
selective even within the context of the dimension that it selectively targets:
in the discussed images, this is the order of the intelligible realm and the
relations that pertain to this realm (including our own relation to it). To
correct on this inflated selectivity, Plato sometimes devises further images

that indeed target the same dimension. But it doesn't follow that they target that dimension from *the same perspective*, so that the images could coincide, painting gradually, as it were, a more and more detailed image of their object from *that same* perspective. The connected images are connected because they target the same dimension, but it should be evident (from their context and their content) that they target it from *shifting perspectives*. And if there is a shift of perspective, even a marginal one, we cannot expect an overlap in the aspects that the images conjointly reveal: any effort to superimpose the images will indeed result in hermeneutic puzzles, but this is a misguided effort in the first place (cf. Gonzalez 2016 for an analogous point regarding the Platonic dialogues).

The charges of vagueness and, accordingly, of openness are, however, merited. But still, they do not justify the negative conclusion that Annas draws regarding the cognitive value of Plato's images. For such conclusion to be adequately justified, another premise is needed in the argument, one that Annas does not defend: i.e. that the *specific* cognitive aims towards which the images are geared *demand precision* rather than vagueness. This is a premise of utmost importance, one that we just cannot by-pass, assuming that it is self-evident, as Annas presumably does. The long scholarly literature on vagueness persuades us that the premise is far from self-evident: it alerts us to the fact that vagueness is not an unqualified villain but a two-edged sword, and so a contextual analysis is required before we can assess the cognitive value of a vague representation (see, e.g., Lipman 2009; de Jaegher and van Rooij 2010). Not only there are cognitive

contexts where a vague representation is the only representation that can be had (still better than nothing when there is a pressing need for some instruction); there are also cognitive contexts where a vague representation is the *merited* representation—contexts where a more precise representation that we could possibly devise would flaunt our cognitive aims (and *context* here includes the whole communicative situation).

Consider for instance a small-scale map vis-à-vis a large-scale map (the one being vague in relation to the other). In some contexts a small-scale map may well be the only map that can be had (e.g. because we haven't yet been able to cartograph the targeted terrain more precisely) but, better than nothing, it can still serve general orientation needs, that will in turn allow the targeted users us *to map the terrain themselves* from up-close. In other contexts, where a more precise map may well be at our disposal, the small-scale map may still be the one that it is merited to use. If, for instance, we want to orient a new colleague in the university campus that s/he visits for the first time, we better give him or her a vague sketch with the main landmarks rather than a detailed map of the campus's Daedalic twists and turns. The rough sketch is easier to process and more effective for the given orientational purposes, as it avoids the clutter that would be confusing to a newcomer. *Mutatis mutandis* what holds for vagueness also holds for openness: an open, indeterminate, representation may well be the representation that it is merited to use when (as in the case of Law, for instance) there are just too many contingencies that cannot be easily foreseen or accommodated beforehand, but still it is imperative that we give

some directives to the targeted recipients; or when, apart from giving directives, we aim further to activate the recipient's thought—when we aim to activate his or her rationality (see, e.g., Endicott 2011; Waldron 2011; Lanius 2019). It is no accident, note, that the post-modernist theorists which called for the *emancipation* of the reader, favored strategies of literary writing that foster interpretative openness and indeterminacy (see, e.g., Hutcheon 1988).

Now, it takes a little thought to confirm that all the contextual variables that merit the use of vague and open representations are present in the communicative context where Plato's images appear.[10] Rather briefly: the images are addressed to recipients that are yet to find their path in the realm of philosophical knowledge, so they are meant to provide them with a first vague orientation in that realm, before they are exposed (through rigorous rational discourse) to its cumbersome twists and turns. Further, given the complexity of each relevant object of inquiry, but also its internal connections to any one of the many different areas that Plato targets even within the same dialogue (from education, to epistemology, to psychology, to politics, to art), the images need to be vague enough to accommodate the yet unforeseen contingencies that close rational examination will reveal. And last, but not least, Plato aims above all to activate the recipients'

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[10] That is so, even if we want to doubt what Plato admits through Socrates, i.e. that he lacks an adequate or precise understanding of certain targeted issues, which would thus make the use of vague images merited. In other words, the use of vague images seems to be merited in the given context, even if Plato had the sort of understanding that would allow him to devise more precise images.

rationality or thoughtfulness—he aims to turn them (actually, us) towards critical thinking and this noble cognitive aim requires that the images resist a closed neat interpretation. In accordance with the maieutic method, the images need to be such as to challenge us, like Socrates's gadfly (*Apology* 30e–31b). And indeed, they are.

It follows that Annas's negative assessment of the cognitive value of Plato's images needs to be rejected. When the specific cognitive aims that the images are meant to serve are taken into account, as they should, the cognitive value of the images becomes manifest. In the same sleight of hand, the inconsistency between Plato's critique of the image and his methodic use of images is, again, affirmed. Yet, a resolution *is* possible. But that resolution requires a radical turn of thought regarding what, in the first instance, gave rise to the seeming inconsistency—the widely endorsed but still myopic interpretation of the critique.

4. A Merited Resolution

To recap, we have not been given good reason to assume that Plato's images are radically different from the compromised images of painting; and we have not been given good reason to assume that Plato errs or is dishonest when he suggests that the images can be cognitively beneficial to those whom he addresses. Plato's images, as was noted, indeed can be seen to serve a cognitive function, given the specific context of use and the

cognitive aims that pertain to this context. Moreover, and importantly, they can be seen to serve a cognitive function *not in spite of* but, rather, *due to* being limited in aforementioned ways. That is, they can develop our thought (as Plato wants it to be developed) owing to their inflated selectivity, their overall perspectivity, their vagueness and their openness.

On the one hand, the inflated selectivity of the verbal images can be seen to perform a *framing* function toward the targeted conception of their objects (see, e.g., Moran 1989; Camp 2009; for Plato, see Pender 2003; Collobert 2012). The image's selective content aims to *focus our attention* on salient aspects concerning that which is abstract and hard to conceive distinctly (at least for one that is not versed in abstract thought); or, in other instances, it aims to bring succinctly to the fore the salient properties of that which is too complex to *experience* distinctly and comprehensively (as is the case, for instance, with the image of the Ship of State [*Republic* 488a–489d] that targets the concrete domain of political rule).[11]

On the other hand, the perspectivity of a verbal image entails a perspectival structural organization of its parts (see Hyman 2006, 75–77), and this dimension of its content can be instructive regarding the cognitive achievement that pertains to philosophy, according to the *Sophist* (253a–d). Departing from the thought, already highlighted in the *Republic* (476a4–7), that Ideas "manifest themselves everywhere in association with actions, bodies and one another," it is presented as philosophy's task to unravel this

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[11] In the *Critique of Judgement* (§49) Kant nicely frames this insight with the concept of the *aesthetic idea*, formed through the poetic image.

complex pattern of intelligible relations (e.g. relations of compatibility, of participation, of difference). Given the epistemic project assigned to philosophy but also the pedagogical direction of the Platonic dialogues, there is a pragmatic consideration that makes the use of perspectival images merited. Even if the philosopher has attained a complete grasp of all the relations pertinent to a given subject of inquiry, so as to be able to represent them in a complex description, that description (as the descend of the philosopher to the Cave nicely illustrates [516e3–517a6]) would be hard to follow for one that is yet to be philosophically illuminated, as indeed Socrates's interlocutors are. A pattern of salient relations, however, is what an image can give us with economy and boldness through its structure. The image can function, that is, as a structural map, a map that helps us to mentally navigate a specific cognitive domain from a particular merited perspective (as well as from further apposite perspectives in the case of connected images), giving us a rough glimpse of the different salient relations or connections that pervade it. The cognitive outcome of this synoptic perspectival representation is that it allows the recipients a first *vague* orientation in the targeted domain from a merited perspective. Rational discourse then needs to follow (and indeed follows in the dialogues) to unpack individual elements of the domain, for which we already have a *vague sense* of their "coordinates" from an appropriate rational standpoint.

Further, the openness of the image (that pertains, note, to all analogical or figurative devices) encourages thoughtfulness, as noted earlier:

it encourages an explorative or interrogative stance, in order to trace, for instance, counterpart properties and relations in the image's target; or in order to affirm how far the analogies can go and where they end. The same holds for vagueness, in addition to its further contextual merits noted earlier. With regard to the Line, for instance, a reflective recipient may wonder: what is the significance of the fact that the middle segments of the Line are equal? And, is the space in each segment uniform or graded, so that possibly some points in that space are closer to the next level than others?[12] The images, when interrogated, stimulate critical thinking that, if carried through, can promote what philosophical inquiry is after—comprehensive understanding or intelligibility (see also Gordon 1997; Collobert 2012). In that sense, and in accordance with the maieutic method, the role of the image is undoubtedly *heuristic*: the image, that is, is not a mental repose before rigorous philosophical examination; it is rather such as to trigger (and thus it probes us to exercise) the reflective, critical stance that is pivotal to such examination.

It thereby follows, however, that the image's heuristic value hangs on a strict condition—one that indeed is highlighted in the critique, if only in

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[12] Annas (1981, 252) complains that questions such as these cannot be answered by the images themselves, which only adds to our confusion. But the complaint is gullible: would we be right to blame a painted image, analogously, for not being able to answer our questions about those aspects of its object that it conceals, through the aspects that it reveals? The questions that may arise are to be pondered, in both cases, via active simultaneous reflection on the image's object and not merely through a scrutiny of the image: the image can only be a springboard for such reflection, that may in turn allow us to develop our thought about the image's object.

the negative: i.e. that the image is approached with a critical rather than a passive stance. We need to be acutely aware, that is, that the image is just that—*an image*, i.e. a construction that is only a partial likeness; and we need to stand towards the image with the critical mind that this awareness demands. For Plato, this is the condition *sine-qua-non* of cognitive integrity: the condition that allows us both to avoid deception and to gain any cognitive benefit in our encounters with an image, given its inherent partiality and incompleteness. And Plato, alert as he is to the risk of enchantment that images foster, manifests responsiveness to this risk: the seemingly redundant announcement that an image will be used—which, despite stating the obvious, persistently precedes the articulation of verbal images—is a crucial reminder that the image *is only an image*, encouraging us to assume the right epistemic stance towards it.

Method and critique thus seem to manifest a consistent, *unitary* conception of the nature of the image:[13] of its distinctive traits and of its perils. So how can they depart so radically on the dimension of the image's value? It should be evident by now that the image, under Plato's unitary conception, is Janus-faced: i.e. it can have a positive and a negative cognitive effect, depending on its context of use—the specifics of this contextual dependence (relevant to who represents what, for what purpose,

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[13] The general term used from here onwards concerns the image as falling under the class of visual false mimesis, according to Plato's criteria. We defend more extensively the idea that Plato's method and his critique manifest a consistent unitary conception of the image in K. Bantinaki, F. Vassiliou, A. Antaloudaki, A. Athanasiadou (forthcoming).

and, importantly, to whom) being illustrated by the method and the theory respectively.

The impression of an inconsistency in Plato's overall stance towards the image has been the result of a persistent but erroneous reading of Book X, as offering a diagnosis of the value of the image *tout court*—it does not. Let us not forget that Plato critically turns on images in Book X in order to create an image of poetry, i.e. an analogy that has poetry as its target—in the wider context, note, of the *quarrel* between philosophy and poetry (607b5–6). As all images, this one also fosters selectivity, incompleteness, and needs to be approached reflectively to properly assess its scope.

The real aim of the critique of the image that Book X provides is apparent once we approach the critique with a structured understanding of the method: rather than a diagnosis of the overall capacities of the image, it is meant to provide a contextually-geared critique of its cognitive value. And we should admit, once the permissiveness of Plato's overall conception of the image is acknowledged, a rather insightful one—bringing Plato in line with contemporary analyses of the conditions that govern the cognitive value of representation, in both art and science.

Plato, we are convinced, is not an iconoclast—he does not present in Book X a polemic of the *medium* but only of a certain *use* that we may make of the medium. Under this light, it becomes obvious that the history of philosophy needs to correct an error.

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Aesthetics of the Earth.
Reframing Relational Aesthetics considering Critical Ecologies

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ABSTRACT. This paper explores the works of Martinican writer and philosopher Édouard Glissant, focusing on his conceptions of *poetics of relation* and *poetics of the earth*. In doing so, we will critically revisit the notion of Relational Aesthetics as introduced by French curator Nicolas Bourriaud in 1998, tweaking the concept towards a materialist, more-than-human and post-colonial outlook. In proposing an *Earthly Relational Aesthetics* we will use Glissant's critiques of colonial capitalism and engage with a "materialism of encounter" capable of accounting for a poetics immanent to specific situated and earthly, that is, historically informed and materially active, modes of sensation. Drawing on Glissant's postcolonial writings, we suggest to trouble Western philosophical discourses on aesthetics as continued processes of colonization.

1. Introduction

In this paper, we aim at reframing the debates around Relational Aesthetics, as initiated by curator Nicolas Bourriaud in 1998. In doing so, we will mobilize a *differential materialist perspective*, particularly regarding

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ecological and (post-)colonial entanglements of earth-bound relations, experiences, and bodies as it appears in the works of Félix Guattari, Donna Haraway and Édouard Glissant. Through their writings, we will argue for a conception of *Earthly Relational Aesthetics* that is speculatively productive as well as critically situating – and that is therefore of special importance for our present age. For contemporary aesthetics to have any political purchase, we deem it necessary to expand their limited scope in several ways: regarding more-than-artistic aesthetic practices, a critical view on art institutions, and a conception of sensuous experience that does no longer remain as anthropocentric as is the case in most strands of aesthetic theory.

With the notion of *Earthly Relational Aesthetics* we suggest to take material differences and specific matters of concern into account that are rooted in concrete geopolitical configurations, that are situated, sited and relation-specific, historical and transmaterial. While a more classic conception of aesthetics attempts to attach sensuous experience to the perceiving subject (both in classic aesthetic theory and phenomenology) an "aesthetics of the earth", the way Glissant (1997a) uses the term, suggests a trans-individual, multi-relational earth-boundness; in other words an entanglement of sensuous material bound to specific locations that have been appropriated by and inserted into the globalized movements of capitalist value extraction – a key dimension of Glissant's critical thought. In his philosophical and poetical writing it is not environment plus subject, but a more-than-human encounter within a materially concrete land, which gives rise to an aesthetics of the earth through which perceptual

experience arises, as "a passion for the land where one lives" and from where a "poetics of relation" can take form (Glissant 1997a, p. 151). Drawing on Glissant's postcolonial writings, we suggest to trouble Western philosophical discourses on aesthetics as continued processes of colonization.

2. Relational Aesthetics and Guattari's Aesthetic Ecosophy

Nicolas Bourriaud's book *Relational Aesthetics* (1998 in French) has been discussed at length and heavily criticized in the aftermath of its publication. Although there are indeed very good reasons to be skeptical of Bourriaud's too optimistic assumptions concerning the art world – such as institutional art being an "angelic program" and actually realizing anti-capitalist forms of sociability, we regard the idea of a Relational Aesthetics worth reconsidering (Bourriaud 2002, p. 36). On the one hand, we deem it fruitful and necessary for a relevant aesthetic theory to shift our focus away from the art-work and towards the productivity of multi-relational encounters generated by artistic practices (or aesthetic practices in a broader sense). We propose to critically investigate Bourriaud's statements such as "contemporary art *models* more than it represents, […] art is at once the object and the subject of an ethic," and "art is a state of encounter" (Bourriaud 2002, p. 18). Thinking of aesthetic practices through a material relationality means to understand them as processes of sensuous emergence

involving diverse agents – which Bourriaud (quoting Althusser) refers to as *dynamic formations* based on a "materialism of encounter" emphasizing a "world[ly] contingency" where all humankind is always "trans-individual" (Bourriaud 2002, p. 18-24). On the other hand, while Bourriaud claims that these encounters are "made up of bonds that link individuals together in social forms which are invariably historical," his emphasis on the gathering of people within the literal framing of art exhibitions overlooks the specific power relations and their stratifying operations permeating the social encounters and their materiality (Bourriaud 2002, p. 18).[3] The challenge we are facing concerns the question of *how* to engage with a "materialism of encounter" that neither anthropomorphizes "matter as social agent" nor denies differences immanent to materialist (earthly) experiences, while altering our conception of the social in order to render it more-than-human.

Bourriaud's relational understanding of certain art projects is strongly inspired by Félix Guattari's philosophical and activist writings on what he terms a *New Aesthetic Paradigm*. This "new aesthetic paradigm" not only fuels Guattari's interest in art but also directly relates to his ecological

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[3] In the context of the Istanbul Biennial 2019, Bourriaud's disregard of power relations has recently intensified in its problematics. Explicitly addressing a more-than-human "co-activity" Bourriaud ascribes to this international art exhibition the potential "to enhance dialogue and mutual commentaries within a hybrid, creolizing, globalizing world that in includes nonhumans". Irritatingly, his supposed ecological turn towards the "phenomenon of the Anthropocene" does not prevent him from calling out for a global "return of humanity, to all the areas we have vacated" (Bourriaud 2019). Due to the temporal disjunction between the time of producing this paper and Bourriaud's curatorial text on the Istanbul Biennial, a more thoroughly critique of his recent more-than-human approach will be undertaken in a future article by the authors.

thinking – a crucial intersection for our development of an *Earthly Relational Aesthetics*. In *Chaosmosis* (1992 in French), from which Bourriaud quotes several times, Guattari elaborates on the entanglements between artistic practice, modes of subjectivation, collective productivity, and environmental ecology:

> Our survival on this planet is not only threatened by environmental damage but by a degeneration in the fabric of social solidarity and in the modes of psychical life, which must literally be reinvented. The refoundation of politics will have to pass through the aesthetic and analytical dimensions implied in the three ecologies – the environment, the socius and the psyche. We cannot conceive of solutions to the poisoning of the atmosphere and to global warming due to the greenhouse effect, or to the problem of population control, without a mutation of mentality, without promoting a new art of living in society. […] We cannot conceive of a collective recomposition of the socius […] without a new way of conceiving political and economic democracies that respect cultural differences. […] The entire division of labour, its modes of valorisation and finalities need to be rethought. […] The only acceptable finality of human activity is the production of a subjectivity that is auto-enriching its relation to the world in a continuous fashion. […] poetry today might have more to teach us than economic science, the human sciences, and psychoanalysis combined (Guattari 1995, p. 20-21).

Guattari's interest in art resides neither in an exceptional creativity of 'the' artist nor an aestheticization of the social, but rather in creative processes of *heterogenesis.* Guattari describes heterogenesis as a set of processes of

collective-relational becoming of different material and social forces, without their interaction assuming any homogenizing or universal character. Heterogenesis is based on irreducible differences while pursuing an ongoing differentiation at the same time (see Guattari 1995, p. 55). Referring to the theoretical context of Guattari's ecosophy, Bourriaud discusses art projects which involve their audiences in participatory ways, whose "substrate is formed by inter-subjectivity, and which take [...] being-together as a central theme" (Bourriaud 2002, p. 15). It is this reduction to human inter-subjectivity within the idealized realm of an allegedly non-exclusive art-space that undercuts the more nuanced and materially differentiated and ecological approach foregrounded by Guattari. Bourriaud conceives encounter only as humanist and thereby universalizing as well as excluding sociality, whereas Guattari's subjectivity is "auto-enriching its relation to the world." Such an ecological approach not only shifts the human subject towards a subjectivity that is always in a state of "becoming-with" but that also conceives of aesthetics as the expressive (poetic) instance through which the entanglement of heterogeneous and diverse relations take form in time and space. In other words, these instances matter in a specific way without forming a closed-off totality.

3. Relational Aesthetics through the Lenses of Different Curries

Bourriaud's most cited examples for a Relational Aesthetics are Rirkrit Tiravanija's projects. Tiravanija became famous in the 1990s, for rejecting the production of traditional art objects, cooking and serving food for exhibition visitors instead. In *Untitled (Free)* from 1992, he moved stock and office furniture of a New York gallery into the exhibition space and set up a temporary soup kitchen in the gallery's storeroom. On a daily basis, he cooked Thai curry distributed to visitors for free during the seven-week exhibition. *Untitled (Free)* is not a work of art in the classic sense but rather creates a *situation* of communal eating. According to Bourriaud, Tiravanija invents "convivial situations" enabling a "friendship culture" in the midst of an economically rationalized world (Bourriaud 2002, p. 32). He considers the "idea of including the other" and the "demand for harmony and cohabitation" to be "essential to the formal understanding" of relational art (Bourriaud 2002, p. 52-53). This assumption became the issue of much criticism. Claire Bishop and others argued that Tiravanija's project – taking place in an art gallery, involving art gallery-goers and thus a privileged and rather homogenous audience – formed a self-affirming elitist community far from being radically democratic and anti-capitalist (see Bishop 2004).[4] And

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[4] In this regard, Liam Gillick's response to Bishop's critique is interesting: "When Bishop asks of Tiravanija's exhibition at the Köln Kunstverein, "Who is the 'everyone' here?", it is quite obviously anyone who wants to walk through the open doors into the free

worse, Bourriaud's theory universalizes this peculiar community denying the modes of exclusion allowing for its occurrence.

However, most critics of Tiravanija ignored a crucial detail that even Bourriaud himself does not account for – leading to fatal effects for a more earthly and not so anthropocentric conception of Relational Aesthetics: Tiravanija actually cooked and offered two different versions of curry; a spicy Pad Thai with ingredients from Thailand and a mild one with spices acquired in the US. While this circumstance was widely overlooked, Lois Nesbitt wrote at the time: "In a subtle critique of Western tendency to stereotype ethnic products, he served both 'authentic' curry made with Thai vegetables and a New York variant made with local products" (Nesbitt 1992, p. 95). We consider this detail crucial because it reveals a more materially and politically complex conception of Relational Aesthetics than the one Bourriaud portraits. What emerges in Tiravanija's *Untitled (Free)* is not a mere harmonic conviviality but also an encounter of cultural differences on the level of culinary habits of taste. These differences contain *multirelational entanglements on a global scale*, including diverse trade-, migration-, and power relations. Tiravanija's work produces an encounter not only of human subjects but of various spices and other eatable matter, taste receptors, tongues and throats used to different eating habits. Actually,

exhibition. […] On my visit, late at night, to Tiravanija's exhibition, I came across exactly the kind of diverse group of local people that she claims to be excluded by the purview of the project. The work was used by locals as a venue, a place to hang out and somewhere to sleep. I doubt that she was ever there." (Gillick 2006, p. 105). In fact, the people joining the free curry meals might have been much more diverse than Bishop suspects based on reports by art critic Jerry Saltz and others.

following Bourriaud's hint at Althusser's materialism of encounter, it is the materiality of food in *Untitled (Free)* that makes a difference in relation to situated forms of sensibility attached to taste and to geopolitical circumstances. The different ingredients generate a material food-continuum that emphasizes the breadth of ecological relations as outlined in Guattari's aesthetic paradigm. If Tiravanija's work proposes a refoundation of politics, it is a refoundation through aesthetic experience which draws on the material differences attached to ecological, that is social, material, and political dimensions. The production of subjectivity at the heart of Guattari's ethico-aesthetics moves through the more-than-human dimensions of both, material and perceptual folds. Put differently, the situation depends on its specific location, in this case, an open gallery space offering free food – usually a setting found in soup kitchens for homeless – in the middle of a Western metropolitan with its own homogenizing taste policies and stratifications. At the same time, Tirvanija points at the materialism of colonial entanglements in a post-colonial era. The circulation of goods exposed in their material traits gives a sense of the circulation of globalized capitalism perforating colonized territories and extracting their tastes.

Rather than reading Tiravanija's two curries as a cynical commentary on the hegemony of Western taste, we argue that the differentiation occurring between the two curries brings to the fore an earthly material-social bond in the practice of eating that allows for a post- and decolonial critique to become part of an otherwise too reductive framing of

conviviality. Moreover, the materialism of encounter resists any anti-historical metaphysics of immediacy. On the contrary, the two curries manifest a bodily encounter with a whole array of specific cultural, historical, and sensuous traits that imprint their traces onto tongues and through indigestion. Without wanting to single out sense modalities, we conceive of Tirvanija's subtle modulation of taste modalities and their differences as an invocation of an aesthetics of the earth that relates various geographical regions through which historical lines of coloniality run. A first conception of an *Earthly Relational Aesthetics* in resonance with Guattari, we suggest, foregrounds a situated materiality of embodied experience that links to geopolitical and historical accounts of colonial capitalism through the sense-activating capacities of matter.

4. Landscape, Earth, Worlding

When Guattari speaks about a "new art of living in society" that needs to be invented, he emphasizes processes of non-individualistic subjectivation as the ground for such an 'art.' Subjectivity, in his view, is similar to what Glissant means when he speaks of "the land where one lives." While Glissant literally talks about the place of inhabitation in a geopolitical manner, we want to link his notions of land and landscape to Guattari's concept of "existential territories" (Guattari 1995, p. 9-16) – however in contrast to Glissant's rejection of the term "territory" as always linked to

conquest (Glissant 1997a, p 151). Existential territories pertain to a subject's specific line of becoming, its trajectory in time and space, while also accounting for the material and "incorporeal universes of value", such as perceptions or affects, informing such a becoming (Guattari 1995, p. 27). Existential territories always move alongside and through these values and thus generate an immanent linkage between what is bound to a specific bodily situation (*earth*), the past that gives rise to this situation (*landscape*) and its potential becoming (*worlding*). An existential territory provides a situated grounding for the production of subjectivity without turning that subjectivity into a terminal identity. Existential territories are always collective. In the following, we will draw on these lines contributing to the production of subjectivity exploring the notion of *landscape* as the place and historical inscription of experience, *earth* as the material and bodily relationality giving rise to a poetics of relation, and *worlding* as its speculative hinge. The basis of this further exploration moves through the very materiality of embodied, situated and more-than-human as well as processual forms of encounter. Existential territory expresses a mooring to a specific time and place as associated with Glissant's notion of land and landscape from which the conception of the subject has to be unfolded for him.

Glissant's writing contains numerous narratives of specific landscapes and their geological as well as biological richness in constant transformation and differentiation. Writing on landscape he proposed a double sense of the notion of chaos, one that "has no language but gives rise to the quantifiable

myriads of them" and one that produces "structural disorder inherited from colonization" (Glissant 1997a, p. 125-126). He explains: "Chaos-monde is neither fusion nor confusion. It acknowledges neither the uniform blend – a ravenous integration – nor muddled nothingness" (Glissant 2010, p. 94). For Glissant, the post-colonial globalized chaos world holds both, potentiality for new subjectivations and for more precise perceptions of the colonial capitalist modes of operation of modernity (to which Western aesthetics belong). Chaos thus acts in two ways: as a disintegrating force and as a space of potentiality resulting from concrete material and historical situations and movements. It is through a relational and more-than-human poetics, that this *chaos-monde* (chaos-world) is expressed. We understand this poetical unfolding as a practice of *worlding* – in the sense of Haraway's definition of the term. She distinguishes her use of the concept decidedly from "Kantian globalizing cosmopolitics and grumpy human-exceptionalist Heideggerian worlding" (Haraway 2016, p. 11). Instead, she associated *worlding* with processes of speculative as well as earth-bound multi-species "story telling for earthly survival."[5] Glissant's pursues a similar *worlding poetics* – expressing the *chaos-monde* as a polyphonic, dissensual *tout-monde* (whole-world). His landscape-writing is not an auctorial description but rather a collective emergence unfolding from this specific landscape. In other words, it is a worlding as becoming-with or co-emergence rather than one of a perceiving subject and a perceived object.

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[5] This is the title of the film with Donna Haraway by Fabrizio Terranova (2016).

In writing about an encounter at Diamond Beach (on the south coast of Martinique), which he describes during the rainy season *hivernage*, emphasizing a "rhythmic rhetoric of a shore", Glissant orients the narrative of landscape towards a social encounter with a speechless man (Glissant 1997a, p. 122). According to Glissant, this man has lost his capacity to speak, because of the violence of coloniality that leaves one bereft of speech. Glissant continues to explore the shore as an emergent landscape in its chaotic composition bearing already minute signs of the coming season, *carême*. There is always already something else, another becoming immanent in the account of a written presence in Glissant's narrative of landscape. He foregrounds the rhythm and movements of bodies, human and more-than-human, that circulate at the shore and remain speechless but are able to communicate through gesture. His encounter with the speechless man evolves over time into a series of micro-gestures that allow both to acknowledge the other "noticing" while not having to express anything else in a "proper" language beyond the "chaotic" landscape they are part of. Communicating with and through the landscape, Glissant opens up the relational ground that is an earth which cannot be detached from its chaotic *worlding* while being tainted by the disruptive economy of colonialism. It is the poetics of the earth, its material state and the inscriptions of the landscape onto the bodies and sensations which express the thoroughgoing entanglements of colonial capitalism with place and language. Glissant asks: "Is there no valid language for Chaos? Or does Chaos only produce a sort of language that reduces and annihilates?" (Glissant 1997a, p. 123) The

historical violence of colonial capitalism is deeply connected to Glissant's narrations of landscape. As Carine Mardorossian explains:

> Glissant's work highlights the ways in which language and history construct, without subsuming, both humanity and the environment, body and land. Inversely, he also shows how in interacting with human beings, the land's specificity codetermines and permeates our identities and representational structures. (Mardorossian 2013, p. 989)

Glissant's development of a material-discursive relationality through landscape and its perfusion with capitalist colonialism requires further unpacking.[6] Instead of merely resisting or lamenting violent colonial condition Glissant proposes: "To return to the sources of our cultures and the mobility of their *relational content*, in order to have a better appreciation of this disorder and to modulate every action according to it" (Glissant 1997, p. 126, our emphasis). His proposition, however, does not mean a return to cultural origins and their restoration. Rather, Glissant – who speaks deliberately of cultures in the plural and their mobility in terms of content – is concerned with remembering what sensations and modes of practice and embodiment are engrained into and emerge from the landscape. The narrative of Glissant's experiential and poetic encounter at Diamond Beach pertains to a profound critique: He calls out colonial capitalism's "product of structural disorder" that "no planning of an ideological order could ever

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[6] For lack of a better word we are using the term "colonial capitalism." However, it should be obvious that any form of capitalism is always colonial at the heart of its structure.

remedy" and juxtaposes it with an "economy of disorder drawn from the landscape's rhythmic, "cyclical, changeable, and mutating" unfolding (Glissant 1997a, p. 124-125). He continues: "this rhythm of the world that we consent without being able to measure or control its course" (Glissant 1997a, p. 124). A language able to deal with this chaos operates by means of a poetics of relation instead of capitalist stratification. It is capable to produce or activate heterogeneous relational content. A poetics emerging from the relational content of cultures deals with the chaotic entanglements of both capitalist structural disorder and unattended emergencies from a part that is immanently present.

It is through the observation of landscape, starting a poetics in resonance with it, that one realizes a thick presence of this specific place through the language of chaos; as a speculative expression of the chaotic *tout-monde* itself. Glissant proposes a poetic worlding *with* and *through* landscape – to complete and open "the relational embodied in the world" (Glissant 2010, p. 13). By observing landscape "what each hopes to see: [is] the earth emerging from the abyss and thickening before oneself" (Glissant 2010, p. 11). This material and sensuous worlding is a speculative, ongoing and decidedly more-than-human *processing of becoming* into which subjectivation is inserted but not detachable from it. Poetics then is never a subjective use of language but rather a processual encounter of different matters and materiality in their co-emergence. The practical imperative of such a worlding is expressed by Glissant in words that make us think of both, Guattari's anti-capitalist ecosophy and of Tiravanija's curry

differentiation:

> To oppose the disturbing affective standardization of peoples, whose affect has been diverted by the processes and products of international exchange, either consented to or imposed, it is necessary to renew the visions and aesthetics of relating to the earth. […] Standardization of taste is "managed" by the industrial powers. […] This trend toward international standardization of consumption will not be reversed unless we make drastic changes in the diverse sensibilities of communities by putting forward the prospect - or at least the possibility - of this revived aesthetic connection with the earth" (Glissant 1997a, p. 148-150).

Glissant echoes the entangled histories of colonization and capitalism, the modes of material extraction and overcoding through standardization of taste. Is it not, we ask, a similar process that drives Tiravanija's two curries and the concern of taste dislodged through an earthly material differentiation? As Glissant writes: "La différence contribue à la fusion aussi bien qu'à la distinction" [difference contributes equally to fusion as well as distinction] (Glissant 2012, p. 101). The earth is not a place of origin but the "land where one lives", an existential territory that one inhabits through a specific "distribution of the sensible" (Rancière 2004) that comes with and through material encounter. An aesthetics of the earth, a material interplay moving across landscapes and through a poetics of relation, requires a landscape and its inscribed geopolitics to resonate with potential worldings of a different future.

5. Conclusion

For Glissant it is *poetics* that enables *a diversified and relational aesthetics of the earth*. Such poetics operate through the potential of the "imaginary allowing us to conceive the elusive globality of [the] *chaos monde*, and to take note of particular details at the same time" (Glissant 1997b, p. 22). Herein Glissant meets Guattari's aesthetic paradigm as well as Donna Haraway's call for a more-than-human "storytelling for earthly survival": Poetic practices are of vital importance, because we (albeit this "we" is never without question) urgently need "a better account of the world in order to live in it well" (Haraway 1988, p. 579). It is poetics, to which Guattari, Haraway and Glissant assign the potential of a better, that is, *situated*, understanding of the world; meaning an aesthetic, epistemic and ethic account that remains earth-bound and incomplete and that thereby resists uniform globalization through Western capitalism – of which the institutionalized artistic and disciplined philosophical modernities are part. Poetics is not a fancy, but a mode of encountering the material and earthly configurations which shed light on the elusive character of the *chaos monde* through specific details, as Glissant writes. These details are what matters historically as much as politically. They are the expressive instances of a felt and experienced embodiment of violence and destruction as well as modes of living in resistance to colonial capitalist modes of capture and

appropriation.

Unlike Bourriaud's anthropocentric and ahistorical notion of Relational Aesthetics, Glissant's Poetics of Relation is not driven by the unifying idealism of "including the other." Quite the contrary, Glissant's concepts of poetics and relation are profoundly postcolonial and do therefore imply a differential *Earthly Relational Aesthetics.* Glissant's Poetics of Relation aspires to an aesthetics of the earth that interrupts the imperative "triumphant voice" of Western systematic science and abstract thinking starting instead from earth-bound material encounters as the relational mesh from which new speculative worldings might arise. We conceive of Tiravanija's proposition of two curries as a speculative invitation for worlding that moves through the earthly materiality of food, the body's capacity to taste and differentiate according to cultural conditionings. This lure for tasteful speculation is both, a hint at forms of globalized capitalist extraction and an encounter of the diverse enabling new modes of encounter that are different from hegemonic narratives. Put differently, *Untitled (Free)* enables a taking account of the constituent relationality of the *tout-monde* – which is precisely what we suggest to call an *Earthly Relational Aesthetics.*

For an aesthetic theory to emerge that is not continuously colonizing quite so much, we suggest to learn Haraway's lesson: there is no other way for us to perceive – including to experience aesthetically – than as situated earthlings with bodies and partial perspectives. Being earth-bound and thereby entangled in specific historical as well as more-than-human

matterings is not a flawed aesthetic theory. Rather it's a "privilege" (see Haraway 1988) that the crafting of theories should benefit from. In acknowledging the multiplicity of irreducible diverse localizations and materializations we can gain an ethically as well as ontologically "better" account of the world. With better, Haraway means a richer, more concrete, earth-bound and situated and less standardized account.

For the future of our preliminary explorations into an *Earthly Relational Aesthetics*, we suggest with Haraway that there is a "risk of listening to a story" (Haraway 2016, p. 132). In other words, there is a risk to not just listen but engage in our writing with stories that can and will never be ours, as white European academics. We ask ourselves, how to build alliances and make encounters with Glissant, which do not turn him into another adversary of the Western enterprise of the philosophy of aesthetics or the global art market. As academics, we think the task of an Earthly Relational Aesthetics becomes a matter of *how* to create modes of listening and encounter that lead to a "thinking in the presence" of a materialist, embodied and situated encounter (see Stengers 2005, p. 996). We are searching for kinds of listening carefully and writing delicately in ways that resist the violence of subsumption and appropriation. We wonder what partial perspectives and precarious engagements with materials and landscapes create a poetics of "response-ability" in the way Haraway defines the term as the "cultivation of the capacity to respond" and the "cultivation through which we render each other capable" (Haraway/Kenney 2015, p. 256). Response-able practices of rendering each other capable are

ethical as much as aesthetic, they allow for encounters to express a concrete situation while undermining any claim to universal truth and certainly yield beyond the cosmopolitical subject of good taste.

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Laughing at Ugly People. On Humour as the Antitheses of Human Beauty

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ABSTRACT: Since antiquity, while beautiful people are loved and admired, the ugly are often subjected to mockery, usually because their defective appearance is often taken to be a sign of a faulty moral character. *Human* beauty, integrating body and character, becomes a norm which deviation from can lead to humor that, in this respect, is in the family of antitheses to beauty. Nowadays none of the major current general theories of humor (incongruity, superiority, and the relief) focus on the, once constant, contrast with beauty, nonetheless still very present in our culture and comic forms. By exploring the reasons why people may laugh at human ugliness, my aim is to relocate the question in the current scenario in order to show how, in these cases, the antitheses to human beauty still operates, finding room within the terms of the explanations offered by contemporary theories. I will also defend the complementarity of such explanations against their pretended rivalry, yet I will address possible counterexamples that help to refine the debate between theories that try to explain the nature of such a complex thing as humor.

1. Introduction: Humor, Beauty, and Theory

Human ugliness sometimes makes people laugh. Since antiquity, ugly people are considered appropriate objects for comedy and mockery, while

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beautiful people are loved and admired. Generally speaking, the contrast with beauty, and human beauty in particular, has played in Western philosophical reflections on humour, from Plato to Rosenkranz at least, an important part in order to explain the roots of humor. For example, in his *Poetics*, Aristotle (1987, 1449a V) defined the ludicrous as "some defect or ugliness which is not painful or destructive". [2] And so, historians of art and aesthetics have recalled how the beautiful and the comic traditionally belong to two radically different orders.[3] On the side of beauty, we encounter what is noble, adequate, and proportioned while, on the side of ugliness, what is low, inappropriate, deformed, and excessive.

Nowadays, however, recent Anglo-American philosophical aesthetics analyses humor mostly in terms of three major general accounts in seeming competition (the incongruity theory, the superiority theory, and the relief from tension theory), which do not focus on the contrast with beauty in order to explain the phenomenon of why sometimes people laugh at ugly fellow human. While this absence could be explained by the decreasing relevance of the category of beauty in aesthetics in general since the nineteenth century, and the interest in explaining humor beyond the scope of ugliness, the issue is nonetheless still very present in our culture and comic

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[2] This quote, as well as all others that come from texts that are referenced in Spanish editions, has been translated by myself.
[3] See the history of the aesthetic category of "the comic" that Valeriano Bozal traces at Bozal, 1997, pp.103-106.

forms, and so still deserves philosophical attention. In this essay, my aim is then to retrieve this old question in the current scenario in order to show how, when laughing at ugly people, the antitheses to human beauty still operates, yet can find room within the varied explanations offered by contemporary theories.

Furthermore, I will also defend the complementarity of such explanations against their pretended rivalry. Since the analysis developed by D. H. Monro (1988) stated this standard classification, the three theories have been thought to be rivals, though recent research contests this common view by arguing that they address different aspects of humor trying to answer different questions, and therefore they are not incompatible but consistent with each other (Linttot 2017; Zamir 2014; Shaw 2010; Smuts 2006). My account will argue then also for the complementarity, particularly, of incongruity and superiority theory in the explanation of why human ugliness makes people laugh sometimes, without excluding the concurrence also of some tension release in the amusement caused by these cases. However, the theories also face counterexamples that I explore in the two final sections in order to suggest a more complex view of the phenomenon.

In this way, I would also like to show that bringing our attention back to this age-old aesthetic question not only benefits the understanding of it but it also may help to refine the current debate between theories that try to

explain the nature of such a complex thing as humor. Being so, before I proceed with my argument, I should make a couple of important remarks on the goals that both this essay and the theories seek.

I do not pretend here to explain once and for all why we find human ugliness comically amusing. This would be a formidable topic too complex and too large to engage in any sort of academic study, much less in a paper of this length; even more so if the very explanatory potential of the theories that I use has been questioned too. For it is true that, as Ted Cohen argues, it should be agreed that none of them can succeed as a *general theory* of *all* humor. Indeed, given the enormous range of potentially humorous things (in life and art), of the context and circumstances that determine whether someone finds them actually funny, and so that virtually no one's sense of humor reaches every humorous thing, the possibilities of any view, and of those in particular, of succeeding as an overarching theory that explains, much less predict, *all* humor are rather hopeless (Cohen 2001, pp. 376-377). And yet I think that it is still worthwhile paying attention to what these accounts on humor have to say about our case and the part played by human beauty since, by capturing what was essential in the views on humor sustained by different philosophers through history,[4] they seem committed

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[4] Although the adscriptions of some philosophers to the different theories is also often controversial, it is affirmed that Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Hazlitt and Kant would have subscribed the idea that humorous things are incongruous, while Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes and Bergson will be representatives of the superiority theory, and H. Spencer and

to offer properties that, necessary or sufficiently, every humorous thing share. Or at least, as Cohen also concludes, "the theories are still worth considering, however, if only as partial descriptions of some humor, especially if it is possible to regard them as three parts of a single theme (2001, p. 379).

2. Human Beauty as a Norm and the Incongruity Theory

Keeping in mind the reservations just expressed, I will start, and deal mostly, with the incongruity theory, since it is widely believed to be the best candidate for a general theory of humor. For one of its most prominent defenders, Noël Carroll, the theory certainly provides useful heuristic for when we try to understand humor.

Carroll summarizes the theory's hallmark by saying that "what is key to comic amusement is a deviation from some presupposed norm – that is to say, an anomaly or an incongruity relative to some framework governing the way in which we think the world is or should be" (Carroll 2014, p. 17). Thus, the incongruity theory can explain the cases when we laugh at ugly people as here humour exploits deviations of human beauty, which can be certainly understood as a norm**.** With Kant (1990, § 16), we can think about

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Freud will be those of the relief of tension theory. For a general account, and now a classic on the issue, see Morreall 1987.

human beauty as a mode of dependent or adherent beauty, that presupposes a concept, and the perfection of the object in accordance with it, for which one must see it as a thing of a certain kind; human beauty is then dependent on a concept of the human being.[5] As the norm is set by the sort of object in question, we can call ugliness some departure that transgresses or deviates from that norm by way of exaggeration, extravagance, or any other way of "denormalization" that shows inappropriate or incongruous.[6]

And this normative character of human beauty is not significantly diminished by the notable degree of social construction, and cultural and contextual variability, that shapes any actual pattern of beauty. Great Italian philosopher, essayist and writer, Umberto Eco affirmed this point when, at the beginning of his *Storia de la bruttezza,* said that beauty and ugliness are always defined in relation to a "specific model" that beauty represents and ugliness departs from, and that can be historically tracked through diverse artistic and cultural representations (2007, p. 15).

Since we are dealing with people's appearance, human beauty and ugliness are considered here specific visual qualities bound up with the pleasure or displeasure that their contemplation provokes.[7] However, as

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[5] For a sample of authors that have recently defended human beauty as a dependent one, see Carroll (2001, p.37); Zangwill (2003, p.336); Levinson (2011, p.195).

[6] See Paris, 2017, pp. 142-143.

[7] Their use here must be thus separated from the wider notions that make beauty and ugliness equivalent to aesthetic value, or disvalue.

Kathleen M. Higgins observes, human beauty "is not only skin deep…carries with it an impression that the person is more than an enjoyable image...emerges from a condition of integration that encompasses body and soul, however the latter term is understood" (2001, pp. 104, 105). This does not mean that when judging people's appearance, we cannot separate their physical aspects from their personality or character, but it is difficult to do so. Moreover, we tend to correlate the physical and the moral as if a beautiful exterior was a sign of virtue or moral goodness, and the opposite, as if ugliness was the face of vice and evil. Thus, it can be said, that "our tendency as human beings" is to consider and, consequently, to represent vicious and bad people, our enemies, and "those we must hate" as ugly, deformed or formless, beings, more or less monstrous, demons at a last resort (Eco 2007, 201).[8]

Noël Carroll points out that the corollary of the Kantian view of human beauty is that insofar as we call someone beautiful, we judge them as

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[8] The fact that this tendency is a pervasive one and, as we shall see, very important for explaining why we laugh at ugly people, does not exclude other actual trends. As Alexander Nehamas (2007, pp. 9-10) remarks, physical beauty has often been also considered the deceptively seductive face of evil. Nonetheless, both cultural embedded directions, in principle opposite to each other, can be traced back to classical views, where human beauty was understood as having an attractive physical side but, more importantly, as being a quality of the soul, and so as being superior to the former one. Nehamas recalls as well how in order to escape from the dangers of a delightful appearance that could hide an evil soul, the tradition that comes from Plato and develops into the Christian thought tried to ensure that beauty, when properly pursued, provided a path to moral perfection, aligned with goodness and virtue.

a perfect example of the category of human being. But the opposite goes as well, implying that nonbeauty or ugliness is the imperfect or defective realization of that category; thereby, to represent a person or a group as ugly portrays them as in some way or ways imperfect instances of the concept of the human. Thus, Carroll also notes the association of the ugly, or the monsters, with moral vice and evil, hence ugly people could be seen as "other-than-normal-people", somehow non-human or sub-human in the more extreme cases. These characters are commonly found in the popular genres of horror and humour, whose natural terrain lies therefore within the ugly (Carroll 2001, 37-39).

Designed to be ugly, animalized figures such as people with donkey' ears or rabbit's teeth, as well as the physical deformity of comic types such as clowns make people laugh, as does any other sort of folk who have a naturally odd appearance (for instance, because their heads or noses are too big or too small, or due to other inadequacies we could find in their bodies), since frequently too people take their ugliness to be sign of some intellectual or moral fault. All of them belong to the unfortunate troop of ugly persons, who can be comic-looking because they violate the cannons of human perfection, epitomized by beauty. Taken as weird, anomalous, worse than the average, they can be seen as forms of incongruity in relation to the norm, and so, traditionally suitable for comedy.

3. Conditions for Comic Incongruities

However, as has often been warned, incongruities *per se* are generally neither enjoyable nor comically amusing; ugliness, in particular, is unpleasant[9] and, like other anomalies, can make us curious, or lead frequently to confusion, perplexity, and even fear. For these reasons advocates of the incongruity theory, at least in its most recent and sophisticated versions, appeal to certain conditions under which we can find all sorts of deviations comically funny.

Carroll considers that the situation should not be threatening, or otherwise anxiety producing, as a basic condition for certain perceived incongruity to become comically enjoyed (2014, p. 50). On these conditions rests also, for example, the difference between horror and humour. Both are in the family of the antithesis of beauty, but presented in a context of fear, the monster produces horror and repulsion, while in a context bereft of threat, the result is comic amusement (Carroll 2001, p. 41). Nonetheless, these requirements should extend to cover the absence of any negative emotion or discomfort in the perceiver. This means, as Carroll notes too, that the joke can never be "annoying" but, furthermore, one should not enlist "a genuine problem-solving attitude", in order to enjoy the pertinent

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[9] Panos Paris (2017) has recently defended that deformity does not suffice for ugliness but requires also displeasure.

incongruity for its own sake, as part of an experience of "levity" (2014, p. 50). In this manner, Carroll wants to emphasize that not only must the audience not feel threatened but also that they should adopt enough "comic distance" in relation to the characters involved in the jokes or any other comic forms. By not feeling any empathy or moral concern for those, imaginary or real, characters, we can be retrieved of any worries and anxieties about what happens in the world of the joke (2014, p. 31). More recently, Tom Cochrane has insisted that being cognitively and practically unburdened are the two necessary conditions for the experience of finding something funny; conditions built into the incongruity theory (2017, pp. 51-52).

Like Carroll, Cochrane underlines the cognitive and emotional conditions that mark our attitude when we find something funny. One just needs to be capable of acknowledging which norm is being violated and how, but one should not feel obliged either to change our views or do something about it. Only this attitude can allow us to enjoy the incongruity as an incongruity, simply amusing, just joking.

4. Some Moral Issues

By setting up these conditions, incongruity theory underlines that, as we all know, comic amusement is very sensitive to the identity of the perceiver and

their current mood, the context in which it takes place, and the intention of the jokes or comic forms in general. As a clearly response-dependent phenomenon, humor must thus find the appropriate audience in the proper mood. And if comic amusement relies on the transgression of a certain norm, that audience must know which norm is being transgressed. So, jokes are social: a particular joke only makes sense for those who belong to a group of people who share certain rules, beliefs, dispositions, prejudices, etc.; people who get the joke are part of a sort of more or less lasting community within which it is possible to identify the violated norm, but what we have identified as "comic" conditions would preclude taking that violation seriously.

In our case though the norm transgressed is human beauty and so, insofar as it depends on the category of human being, laughing at ugly people necessarily involves moral issues if to the extent they are ugly, are considered in some way imperfect instances of the concept of the human, other-than-normal-people, worse than the average, even sometimes non-human or sub-human. Therefore, in order to enjoy the joke, particularly the condition of comic distance becomes crucial here, albeit sometimes difficult to adopt.

Traditional comic genres such as satire and caricature offer parodies of human perfection to denounce or ridicule a moral defect through a physical aspect. Typically, in satire the lack of empathy or compassion for

the persons mocked is justified by appealing to a moral function: the denunciation of vice, of reprehensible conducts and other challenges to social order with corrective and repressive purposes. Thereby, satire is meant to portray life's mistakes with the intention of teaching us what is deformed, what is ugly, what we should not do.[10] Satire then confronts individuals with some pattern of behavior, some "moral code" without which it becomes "mere abuse".[11] Given the cultural correlation between ugliness and vice, in satirical works, ugly people illustrate faults like selfishness, greed, hypocrisy, vanity, and so on, with the ultimate goal of preventing them. And because these faults deserve to be amended, even some temperance is to be expected from those whose weaknesses have been exposed. To sum up, as Carroll puts it quoting Molière, "the duty of comedy is to correct men by amusement" (Carroll, 2014, p. 79).

Caricature also deforms human appearance and invents "recognizable types", exaggerating body features aiming to mock or decry a moral fault through a physical characteristic (Eco, 2007, p. 152). Celebrated art historian Ernest Gombrich analyzed how the portrait caricature makes us shrewdly perceive certain features of someone's physical appearance or character by unifying them in a sort of exercise of comparison, condensation, and simplification, which results in the reduction of a

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[10] See d'Angelli and Paduano 2001, pp. 11, 27, and Bozal 1997, p. 104.
[11] See Gaut 2009, p. 247.

person's physiognomy to a formula that cleverly fuses "symbol and likeness in a dreamlike fantasy" making "the identity visible" (1985, pp. 136, 137). Thus, such visible or exposed "identity" conveys the case against someone.

Nevertheless, caricatures are many times expression of the least honorable intentions of comic forms, particularly those based on human ugliness. I mean cases where the deformed figure represents the vicious or evil side of people but also manifests offensive, aggressive, and cruel attitudes against these individuals or, significantly, against certain (national, social, cultural, ethnic, sexual, etc.) groups who are ridiculed through various representations of physical deformation, often animalized, in order to express their pretended moral depravation or infra-human condition. De-humanized in this way, these people are finally excluded from our moral community and have no rights (Carroll 2001, p. 42). The potential list of those derided for the sake of comedy in past and present times would be very long indeed and, at least in Western culture, would include collectives like black people, Muslims, gypsies, homosexuals, women, the disabled, immigrants…. and so many others among which social minorities, the weak, the vulnerable and the marginalized stand out. It is usually claimed that humor is one of the best sources of information about people's actual beliefs and this kind of "immoral" humor not only reveals the perversity of many views, attitudes and prejudices that are in fact more or less explicitly working in society but, by reproducing them, it would also help to reinforce

these norms.

Now, according to the theory, if we laugh at immoral jokes because we find them funny, we are the *appropriate* audience. In our comic case, when ugliness is the correlation of vice or non-humanity, laughing means that we are enjoying their so-represented incongruity by adopting the necessary comic distance which prevents compassion or similar moral concerns. And of course, it is easier to adopt comic distance when, as in the case of corrective humor, one thinks that those persons are actually vicious or evil, that is to say, if one is committed to the beliefs and prejudices that somehow make those people "deserve" to be abused like that. But even if we notice the wicked intention behind such evil jokes and reject those views as immoral, comic conditions could afford that we can still laugh without our amusement being necessary proof of our defective moral character. Against the thesis that defends that being comically amused by immoral humor shows that one endorses classist, racist, homophobic, etc. attitudes, Carroll defends that in fact we can simply *imaginatively* enjoy the wit of the humorist at formally devising the incongruity in question (Carroll 2014, pp. 98-99). From this perspective, being capable of identifying and understanding the relevant background beliefs mobilized in each case, and the way in which they have been manipulated, shows more relevance for comic success than being actually already biased by them.[12] Furthermore,

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[12] See Bergmann 1986.

what is key in order for the pertinent incongruity to be enjoyed is for it to be in the right context and mood, where one can enter the world of the joke and endorse its assumptions somehow *fictionally,* without being disturbed by one's own moral concerns, *as if* no real harm is threatened to those mocked by the joke. This is not to deny that actual harm may very well be inflicted in these cases and, again, that some people could find them funny even so (as one can laugh at the person that falls slipping on a banana peel), being proof of their endorsement of immoral views. The point is though that, given the conditions built in to the incongruity theory, immoral jokes are either funny, because we are capable of adopting comic distance as part of our experience of levity, or are less or not funny at all when we are not.[13] Therefore, immoral jokes could put comic conditions in danger, but the theory sustains that there is no funniness without fulfilling them. Thereby, also when laughing at ugly people, if we cannot overcome our moral concerns, we take the case seriously, and so the joke ends.

5. Other Theories of Humor: Superiority

However, managing to adopt such comic distance and levity does not overshadow the fact that, when we laugh at ugly people, we laugh *at their*

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[13] Along these lines, "amoralist", "moralists" and "immoralists" discuss how ethical flaws may affect comic amusement and interact with its value. See Carroll 2014, Ch. 3.

expense, we make fun *of them* since, to see them as ugly, means to judge them incongruous with the norm, namely human beauty, in the sense that they are imperfect, thereby inferior by this standard that, as insofar as it is dependent on the concept of the human being, carries moral implications. But this is the hallmark of the so-called "superiority theory" which construes "humor as rooted in the subject's awareness of superiority" (Levinson 2006, p. 392). Therefore, superiority theory seems also to provides an important aspect of why we often laugh at human ugliness in which the deviation from the idea of beauty, as dependent on the category of humanity is also key.

Along with the incongruity theory, superiority theory is one of the most extended accounts of humor and one of the oldest too, since it goes back at least as far as Plato and Aristotle. Both theories have been long analyzed as rivals, as they would both try to stand alone when offering a single general explanation of comic amusement. However, as stated at the beginning, fresher research seeks to dismantle the idea that they are competing views by seeing them rather as approaches that aim to explain different things. And so, the theory of incongruity aspires to define the formal object of humor, while the theory of superiority is interested in the affective response that accompanies humor. But it would still not apply to all sorts of humor, since Sheila Linttot (2016) speaks in particular, of the "myth of the superiority theory" to refer to the presentation of the theory as

an essentialist theory of humor. As she states, given that not every kind of humor is the expression of superiority feelings, it is simply impossible to think about it as a theory of all humor. Moreover, it is hard to believe that philosophers of the stature of Plato or Aristotle did not warn that we do not actually always laugh only at the defects and weaknesses of others, although they reflected on the fact that on many occasions this is indeed the case. Lintott concludes that the theory of superiority should then be studied not as seeking to establish necessary and sufficient conditions for all kinds of humor but focused on a humor of a certain kind which ethical considerations normally accompany.

Consequently, both incongruity and superiority theories are not only compatible but can even be complementary if we find some comic amusement that enjoys "a certain kind of perceived incongruity that gives one a feeling of superiority" (Lintott 2017, p. 356), which after all seems to fit the cases when we laugh at ugly people.

Besides, Lintott adds that a reduction of psychic and/or bodily energy via expression in laughter can join the perception of incongruity and the feeling of superiority. This is to say that the "relief theory", a third thesis which has generally been regarded as a genuine rival of those other two, is also compatible with them. This last view was formulated by Sigmund Freud and Herbert Spencer, fathers of the theory, and it locates the essence of the humorous "in the relief from psychic constraint or release of

accumulated mental energy" that the pertinent item occasions (Levinson 2006, p. 393). In order not to stumble upon the possible objections arising from aligning with these authors' particular views of the human mind, a "weak version" of the proposal appeals to the basic claim that humorous laughter involves a release of tension or energy (Smuts 2006), along the lines expressed by Linttot. There are even those who, like Carroll, speculate that the fundamental intuition of this approach is aimed at highlighting the mental experience of releasing cognitive pressures that accompany comic laughter that in the end would be nothing more than a condition of the experience and not so much a definition of the traits of objects that are comical (Carroll 2014, p. 41). In any case, this third account that rather than defining humor, discusses the psychological processes that produce laughter (Smuts 2006) would not be incompatible with the other two theories, just as these would not be incompatible with each other, and the three of them being possibly complementary in accounting for, at least, some comic phenomena.

At this point, without excluding then the concurrence of the release of psychic tension or energy, it seems that the complementarity of incongruity and superiority theories provides important features that, as antitheses to beauty, help to understand what it is in some people's ugliness that we find amusing and why, at least in many occasions.

6. Some (Revisited) Objections

Because, however strong the partnership of incongruity-superiority may appear, it is opportune to discuss some possible objections. These objections have been directed separately at both theories, as they are standardly studied, seeking to demonstrate their respective limits as general theories of humor that supposedly try to explain every example of comic amusement. However, my interest is in revisiting them as they may apply specifically to their explanation of what can make human ugliness funny and so can help to challenge their respective justification of the phenomenon.

We have just seen that the explanatory capacity of the superiority theory has often been noted as being very limited. But even restricted to cases like the one before us, the objection arises that the theory cannot justify instances of self-deprecating humor. Let me consider, first, the work of those comedians who specialize in self-deprecation as would many (ugly) clowns who want people to laugh at their expense and are happily willing to do so. Carroll (2014, p. 64) refers to these kinds of comedians to illustrate that they would be denying the idea that no one likes to be laughed at, which would be the proof of superiority theory, as Roger Scruton has defended. Scruton is a contemporary proponent of the theory of superiority who analyses amusement as an "attentive demolition" of a person or something connected with a person. "If people dislike being laughed at," Scruton says,

"it is surely because laughter devalues its object in the subject's eyes".[14] However, this would not be a counterexample to the superiority theory because it is not just that, as Carroll admits, when Scruton says that no one wants to be laughed at, he means "being devalued in a way no one wishes to be" (Carroll 2014, 64) but also because these comedians offer their imperfections (here, their ugliness) precisely to ridicule, to excite the feelings of superiority in the audience, which assures their shows' success. Thereby, humor remains derisive, as the superiority theory claims.

Self-deprecation humor offers though a harder objection if you are the audience yourself. One can laugh at oneself and it is not impossible that, for example in front of a mirror, one can laugh at one's own ugliness. Lintott says that authors like Morreall would admit that the approach can account also for self-deprecating humor considering that on these occasions we express feelings of superiority "over a former state of ourselves" (Lintott 2017, 348). But Morreall (2013) also considers that at least some people laugh at themselves yet not a former state of themselves, but "what is happening now". This would make the superiority theory unable to explain my laughter at myself, due to my own ugliness, for instance. Insofar as we perceive ourselves as ugly, we perceive our anomaly in relation to a norm of beauty which is not at question, and so we perceive ourselves as inferior to

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[14] See Scruton 1987, p. 168. I take this description of Scruton's proposal as well as his words' quotation from Morreall 2013.

other people, but we are not being devalued in a way we do not wish to be; as a result, this does not give us a feeling of superiority. As unpleasant as it may be to recognize our own ugliness, being able to laugh indicates that we manage to take the same necessary distance from ourselves that we are supposed to be able to adopt from other unfortunate fellows who we might not feel superior to but that, due to their real or pretended "fictionality", do not make us feel pity or compassion.

Finally, another objection to superiority theory could come from caricature that is not mocking and ridiculing but kind and laudatory. Following Gombrich, I said earlier that portrait caricature wittily plays with the deformity of human appearance aiming to show certain features of someone's physical appearance or character; making "the identity visible". And, just as for Gombrich, the success of graphic caricature depends therefore on the mastery of the cartoonist in achieving what he called the "physiognomic expression" through which people's faults but also virtues are exposed (Gombrich 1985, p. 137). Thus, both depend on the ingenious distortion of human appearance but, in amiable caricature, deformity of appearance is not belittling, instead aims at offering deeper insights into the person's character to increase our sympathy (Eco 2007, p. 152). Thereby, no superiority feeling seems to color our comic amusement when laughing at human ugliness in an amiable caricature. However, while derisive caricatures do represent people as ugly, I believe that this is not the case of

kind portrait caricatures. For they will not represent someone as ugly since deformity does not suffice for ugliness but requires also displeasure.[15]

The example though could work as an objection against the incongruity theory. In general, caricature was used by Scruton to deny that perceived incongruities are the condition for comic amusement. Scruton sets the example of a caricature of former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher that "amuses, not because it does not fit Mrs. Thatcher, but because it does fit her, all too well" (Scruton 1983, p. 157). Then, when it comes to *comic* caricatures, we will be laughing then at their congruities, rather than incongruities. In Gombrich's terms, their success depends on their capacity for "making visible" the identity or truth about the person portrayed.

Despite this being so, it remains also true that, as Carroll says in response to Scruton, in the graphic caricature "congruity-as-correspondence-to-the-nature-of-its-subject" is compatible with "incongruity-as-lack-of-correspondence-to-the-appearance-of-its-subject", without which there will be no comic amusement (Carroll 2014, pp. 51, 63). Unlike other sorts of portraits that also capture the truth of the character, Carroll concludes, the discrepancy in the appearance makes the difference here, that is to say, the visual incongruity turns the representation into caricature, on this occasion a funny one.

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[15] See again Paris 2017.

To sum up, the antitheses to human beauty still operates in the terms of the explanations given by both the incongruity and superiority theories of the comic laughter sometimes caused by human ugliness, whose complementarity is useful to explain why. The variety of the occasions when we may laugh at ugly people though allows some exceptions to the superiority theory, which is nonetheless admittedly an account that cannot, and probably never pretended to, work as a general theory of humour. Nevertheless, being more ambitious in this respect, it seems that the incongruity theory could still do the job, as long as its premises were of course correct.

7. The Comic and the Rule

In the terms of the incongruity theory, human ugliness, as the deviation from a norm of human beauty, can provoke comic laughter when perceived by the appropriate audience, in the right mood and fulfilling the comic conditions. Let us recall that, in order to be found funny, the ugly, the deformed, the monster, must be perceived in specific states of mind free of negative emotions or discomfort, unburdened by any possible moral constraints in an experience of levity where no genuine problem-solving attitudes are required and no practical consequences are expected because we are just joking. However, some implications of these conditions can be contested

since they seem to deny humor much actual cognitive and practical impact, at least insofar as it means to change our minds.

For instance, going back to the last example, by telling the "truth", caricatures try to be enlightening (as was also the assumption in moralising satire), yet, no matter how compatible with the visual deformity of the appearance that truth might be, not much efficacy should be expected since under comic conditions things are not taken seriously. Nonetheless, Gombrich pointed out that the truth or "identity" that becomes visible in caricature has an actual impact given how "convincing" it is for our "emotional mind" (1963, p. 139). He also stated that, once exposed, such truth somehow stays with us, in our collective imaginary making caricature very useful for propaganda as well as for criticism and denunciation.[16] But the proponent of the incongruity theory could reply that, however illuminating, laughter in any case will respond to the pleasure of who reaffirms what somehow, they already think. Otherwise it will cause disturbance, and incongruities "designed to disturb" or "intended to be unsettling" come out of the boundaries of comic amusement (Carroll 2014, p. 52).

So, it is not that humor cannot be effective at all, but only in reinforcing the social rules that implicitly reproduces, which thereby remain

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[16] Even if such a truth was not real since "who could disentangle truth from falsehood in such a ludicrous mock portrait?". Gombrich (1985, 135).

unchallenged, while it just allows us to *play at violating* the norms. I warned before that it is admitted that humor accurately reflects what people think or believe, including immoral views. Indeed, Carroll emphasizes that the rhetoric of human ugliness can be "frighteningly effective" in spreading and consolidating prejudices and stereotypes that affect weak and marginalized collectives (Carroll 2000, p. 53), while he also thinks that it can be innocuous for whom is capable of entertaining such immoral jokes in a merely imaginative way (Carroll 2014, p. 116).

In consequence, Tom Cochrane has also defended that probably comedy is the artistic genre that can least influence our attitudes, in spite of the common opinion that often sees it transgressive. As he argues, we can only find something funny if we regard it as norm-violating in a way that doesn't make certain cognitive or pragmatic demands upon us (to defend the norm, or to abandon our norm-commitment); which means that it is not compatible with the conditions for comic amusement that, on the basis of finding something funny, we come to reject some existing attitude despite the fact that "it is compatible with these conditions that humor reinforces our attitude that something is norm-violating" (Cochrane 2017, p. 51). His conclusion simply follows then from the way comic conditions constrain the relationship between humor and the rules. Like at a carnival, humor affords us the enjoyment of rule transgressions but afterwards, everything stays the same.

And Umberto Eco also describes along these lines the relationship between the comic and the rule:

> The comic (where the opposite to the rule is perceived) seems popular, liberating, subversive, because it grants a license to violate the rule. But it grants it precisely to those who have internalized this rule to the point of considering it as inviolable…. Precisely because the rules, even unconsciously, are accepted, violating them for no reason becomes comical. (Eco, 1980a, pp. 282, 283).

But Eco wonders whether among the diverse subspecies of comic amusement some that would sustain a different relationship with the rules could be found, and finds such a way in what another illustrious Italian, Luigi Pirandello (1908), called "humourism". In order to distinguish it from "the comic", which is "the *perception* of the opposite" that presupposes and in fact affirms the rule, Pirandello describes "humourism" as "the *feeling* of the opposite" that goes beyond that first perception, moving us from a plain comic laugh to a perplex, almost bitter, smile that exposes and questions the rule. Pirandello traces the origins of this tradition back to Cervantes' Don Quixote,[17] but also gives examples of an ugly and extravagant appearance.

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[17] "We'd like to laugh at all that is comic in the representation of this poor madman who disguises himself, others, and everything, with his madness, but laughter doesn't come to our lips pure and easy; we feel that there is something that troubles us and hinders us; it is a sense of grief, of commiseration, and even admiration; yes, because while the heroic

He spoke of an old lady "with dyed hair, smeared with who knows what horrible fat, and then crudely made up and dressed in youthful clothes" that makes him laugh because he "*warns"* that she "is *the opposite* of what an old, respectable lady would have to be", until reflection on why she might have wanted to have that look makes him penetrate his first observation and happen to *feel the opposite* which, while still laughing, prevents him from doing so in the same way (1908, 162). The point is, that only on the condition of laughing at her, and making people laugh at her, we can sympathize and feel pity for her, even admiration (Pirandello 1908, p. 186). This is why, as Eco concludes too, in the case of humourism, the ugly person is not, as in the comic, "victim of the rule that presupposes, but represents its conscious and explicit criticism" (Eco 1980a, p. 285). And for this reason, this kind of case constitutes a counterexample to the relationship with the rule that derives from some of the conditions that the incongruity theory builds as necessary to engender comic amusement.[18]

Concerned with our study case, humourism results from the tension

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adventures of that pure hidalgo are ludicrous, there is no doubt however that he, in his ridiculousness, is truly heroic". Pirandello, 1908, p. 165.

[18] These cases also challenge the pleasurable feeling of superiority that we may experience at first over these ugly people. Recalling Pirandello's distinction, Eco further describes how, in this movement that takes us from the comic to the humoristic, "I don't feel superior to and distanced from the animal-like character that acts against the good rules, but I start to identify with him, I suffer his drama and my loud laugh transforms into a smile". Eco 1980a, p. 284.

between two contrary feelings where the anthesis to a particular norm of beauty that defines the comic is not sanctioned but contested and undermined by *feeling the opposite*. In certain representations as in life, the humanity and dignity that the person displays claim for a different concretion of the transcendental category of human being which human beauty depends on. We may say that we still laugh at an incongruity yet somehow, we feel disturbed; disturbed enough to challenge our own views.

Humourism produces a restless laugh because it hovers over the distinction between what is taken as adequate and what is not, with the effect of eroding and so perhaps widening the limits of correctness. Probably, the theories of incongruity and of superiority in particular have underestimated or have not paid enough attention to this sort of effect. Albeit, Carroll concedes that "much humor is transgressive" since "forbidden ideas and emotions are aired" (2014, p. 101). As a matter of fact, humor can be transgressive because, admittedly, there are no limits, and we can laugh at almost everything. But that is not enough to guarantee the relevant cognitive and practical effects unless we see it as an act of empowering people.

Ted Cohen relates anomalous things that are irregular, unusual, unexpected but also often unsettling, yet still funny to the idea of power over something or someone. Firstly, power in the sense of freedom from the linguistic, social, cultural and natural constraints that are the inhibitions of

our normal lives, and that is enjoyed at least in imagination. Secondly, and less commonly noted he says, sometimes humor "bespeaks not power but powerlessness". It happens when "the anomaly has the form of extreme incongruity… truly absurd, genuinely incomprehensible". In such case, Cohen concludes, "one does not imagine oneself with power over anything, and yet one may find humor" (2001, p. 380). For him, we would be in "a mood of acceptance, of willing acknowledgment of those aspects of life that can be neither subdued nor fully comprehended". Although according to Cohen, this is not resignation, I believe that the case of Pirandello's humourism bespeaks of powerlessness yet in a mood of protest and challenge in which we find satisfaction. Thus, this "intertwined feeling of laughter and tears", as Pirandello (1908, p. 186) describes humourism is well located within the limits of comic amusement rather than outside them. Also because maybe the common belief in the transgressive power of humor, confirmed by a long history of censorship, is strong as it responds to the experience that humor very often does not leave things exactly as they are. When certain things are aired, or exposed as Gombrich suggested, even only in imagination, laughter kills fear and foments doubt.[19]

    Seen this way, humourism conducts differently the anthesis of beauty played in the cases when we laugh at ugly people, stretching the

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[19] In these terms, Eco made the monk Jorge of Burgos condemn the subversive character of comedy in his famous novel, *The name of the Rose*: laughter "distracts from fear. But law is imposed by fear, whose true name is fear of God". Eco, pp. 474-475.

scope of comic amusement beyond the limits of the standard justification that the complementarity between the incongruity and the superiority theories gives, helping to manifest the complex nature of humor, and of its relationship with the rules, including human beauty, and to refine the philosophical accounts that try to understand all this.[20]

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The Body Aesthetic

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ABSTRACT. This article is concerned with dance from an aesthetic perspective e.g it looks at dance, alongside painting and sculpture, as a form of art that might be addressed by way of aesthetic categories. Specifically it examines the tension between the sensible and the idea which is at the core of aesthetic thought in the case of dance: how are we to understand the art of dance as a unique configuration of the sensible and the intelligible – with the human body as the sensible fabric, and the ideas that it conveys as the intelligible form? How is the medium, the human body, or more accurately the subject herself, both a phenomenological "lived body" and an "aesthetic object"? This paper attempts to address these questions.

1. Introduction

This article is concerned with dance from an aesthetic perspective e.g it looks at dance, alongside painting and sculpture, as a form of art that might be addressed by way of aesthetic categories. Yet dance, unlike painting or sculpture, does not easily and automatically align with classical aesthetic conceptions, those of the likes of Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer and others. Nor does it easily yield to contemporary theories of art whose paradigmatic object is plastic art. As an art form, dance has its origins in a unique medium: the human body and its movements, a lived body rather than

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inanimate matter such as the painter's canvas or the sculptor's marble. Perhaps this is why dance as a genre, until fairly recently, has been largely ignored by philosophy in general and by aesthetics in particular. As dance brings forth a new set of questions that go beyond what is commonly discussed in aesthetics and philosophy of art. It brings forth the question of the body as a problem that needs to be addressed prior to any attempt to address dance as an aesthetic phenomenon.

Interestingly despite Kant's assertion in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* that the human body is the ideal of beauty and the only form - the archetype (*Urbild*) - suitable to serve as a symbol of moral freedom (§17), aesthetic thought, Kant's included, was hardly ever concerned with the body nor with the question of dance. If we examine the history of philosophy, we see that for Kant it was the beauty of the wild flower or the sublimity of the ocean which served as the paradigmatic objects for aesthetic appreciation. For Nietzsche it was the Pre-Socratic Tragedy or Wagner's operas; for Heidegger it was Trakl's poems or a painting by Van Gogh. In any of these classic texts dealing with art and aesthetics, we will not find an acknowledgment of the unique status of dance or find a discussion of dance in aesthetic terms.[2]

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[2] Unlike other philosophers mentioned here, Nietzsche does give an account of the distinctness of dance, specifically in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, however dance is not discussed in an aesthetic context. More on this see Claudia Crawford, (1998), "Nietzsche's

Perhaps this is not surprising. After all, until the start of the 20th century, dance – like the body – was considered as a dimension of human experience which, despite being essential to an individual's existence, is not what designates her humanity. It was rather the mind reflected in the primacy of Descartes' *Cogito*, which the philosophical subject was to be identified. Dance – thought of as the art form farthest away from language, from conceptual thinking, from philosophy – was left on the margins of philosophical discourse, if not pushed out altogether. However, dance's status changed as a consequence of the rising prominence of the body in 20th century philosophy. And with the emergence of 20th-century philosophy of the body a new philosophical interest in dance emerges, and philosophers such as Alain Badiou (2005), Jean-Luc Nancy (2005), Agamben (2000) and others, as well as critical theorists and performance studies scholars such as Andre Lepecki (2005), turn to address the question of dance. The possibility of thinking the body not through the constraint of the Cartesian *res extensa* but through the phenomenological lived body or the ontological body, beginning with Merleau-Ponty, onwards to Nancy in *Corpus* (2008) – to mention just two of the major landmarks, allow us for the first time, philosophically, to pose the question of the body in dance and the question of dance as an aesthetic event.

Dionysian arts: dance, song and silence". In *Nietzsche, Philosophy and the Arts*, pp. 310-342. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

In this paper I will seek to think dance from an aesthetic perspective, that is, to examine dance in terms and categories drawn from aesthetic thought and to see whether dance can be addressed using these approaches, or whether it is necessary to introduce certain modifications in order to accommodate dance, and if so, what kind of modifications. Furthermore, I argue that the change in the status of the body in 20th century philosophy is directly linked to the novel interest of philosophers in the question of dance.

2. Aesthetics as a Relation between Two Incommensurable Elements: The Sensible and the Intelligible

Aesthetics, as Rancière puts it at the beginning of his book *Aisthesis* (2011), has "for two centuries been the name for the category designating the sensible fabric and the intelligible form of what we call 'art'" (p.x). Rancière sees the particularity of aesthetics as that which designates for us, over the last two centuries, or since Kant's Critique of the Power of Judgment, the sensible fabric and the intelligible form of what we call art. And just to make this definition more tangible, I'll take a few representative examples: Kant, Nietzsche and Heidegger, and examine very briefly how this sensible-intelligible thesis underlies their thought.

According to Henry Allison (2001), the question of the relationship between the sensible and the supersensible, what is commonly designated as

"the nature-freedom problem" is the leitmotiv of Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (p.201). Kant's point of departure in this Critique is the question whether the "the great gulf" (*grosse kluft*) between the sensible and the supersensible, so that "no transition (*übergang*) is possible", could be bridged, as "it should [*soll*] be at least possible to conceive [such union] without contradiction" (KU §II, 5:175) in a way that the two legislations along with their respective faculties coexist in one and the same subject. And it is the power of judgment which provides the mediating concept between the concept of freedom and the concepts of nature and which "makes possible the transition from the purely theoretical to the purely practical" (KU §IX, 5:196). If Kant is the founding father of aesthetics than this act of foundation originates in a motivation to think the sensible and the intelligible together. And to do so with respect to three territories: nature, the work of art, and the human subject (the sensible-intelligible in the subject). Other examples include Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* wherein art is thought as a dialectic product of a struggle between two antagonistic forces, the Apollonian, which represents the intelligible form, and the Dionysian, which represents the sensible fabric, while subsequently in Heidegger's *The Origin of the Work of Art*, the work of art originates in a conflict between two oppositional ontological "forces", World and Earth, which designate respectively matter and the world of meanings.

So the question is how should we translate this aesthetic principle –

that a work of art is a gathering together and a bringing into view of these two antagonistic elements – into a work of dance? Can we understand dance in terms of this unique configuration between the sensible fabric and the intelligible form? Is it possible for the relationships between matter and idea outlined by Kant, Nietzsche and Heidegger to find expression in the relationship between the body of the dancer and the mind? How does the human body – or more accurately the subject herself, who is the medium in a work of dance – remain both a phenomenological "lived body" and an "aesthetic object"?

To address these questions, I'll begin with a first interpretation of this unique relationship between the sensible and the intelligible in art, and I will do so by way of Kant.

3. Kant and Nancy: Art and Signification

Given the vast scope of this question, I will addresses it in preliminary terms using Kant's fundamental distinction in the Third Critique between reflective judgments and determining-cognitive judgments ("x is beautiful" vs. "y is a chair") and the relationship between the sensible and the intelligible each of these judgments embodies.

Prior to the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Kant has been concerned mainly with determining cognitive judgments, whether in an

epistemological context (the first Critique) or in the context of moral judgment (the second Critique). These two types of determining judgments involve the subsumption of a particular under a pre-existing rule or a concept, thereby creating a mental representation (*Vorstellung*) of the object, in the former case, or deciding whether a certain maxim is in accordance with the structure of the moral law, in the latter case. However in the Third Critique, Kant is called on to address a certain "marginal case" and thereby to define a new function of the power of judgment. In the case of the aesthetic object cognition encounters an object that cannot be subsumed under a concept or a rule, as "there can be no rule in accordance with which someone could be compelled to acknowledge something as beautiful" (§8, 5: 215). Beauty obeys no a priori law and hence, it cannot be conceptually determined. In fact, Kant argues that when we judge an object to be beautiful, we cannot explain it by resting on conceptual grounds, since no a priori concept mediates between sensibility and the understanding such as in the case of determining judgments (§6).

The aesthetic object thus presents us with a problem of representation as the sensible intuitions cannot be subsumed under a law of the understanding for the formation of a mental representation. And without the addition of concepts, the object, so represented, is, strictly speaking, indeterminate. Kant does not claim that aesthetic judgment, such as "this is beautiful" or "that is sublime", does not produce knowledge, rather he

claims that the sort of knowledge gained from this types of judgments - "cognition in general" (*Erkenntnis überhaupt*) - is certainly not a form of metaphysical knowledge, as being conceptually indeterminate aesthetic judgment does not broaden our cognition (§9). Aesthetic judgments such as "this is beautiful" or "that is sublime" do not broaden our cognition like determinant judgments, but nevertheless they are not without sense. In a more contemporary formulation, Jean-Luc Nancy argues that "art makes sense outside of sense" (2005, p.20). Art makes sense in a different way and in a different register than the process of signifying. In fact, it is just the opposite. Nancy traces the artist's motivation precisely in the desire to escape the closure and the determination of conceptual signification. To liberate the sensible from the sovereignty of the incorporeal mental representation, to expose the excess of sensibility, and consequently to think about other forms and modes of knowledge – such as "touching" (see *The Muses*, 1994) – rather than cognition of an object. I quote from Nancy:

> A sentence makes sense when it is complete and conveys meaning. For example, "the earth is round", this makes sense. The desire to escape (*sortir*) sense is a desire to break free from this accomplishment, from this closure (*bouclage*) of sense, "the earth is round" and I spin with it. Sense makes things stop, and we stop with it. Sense – how shall I put it? – is not exactly death, it is more of a petrification. (2005, pp.20-21, my translation)

When examining the unique relationship between the sensible fabric and the intelligible form in art, we see in art a desire to make sense out of sense, that is, to make sense by breaking free from the closure and determination of signification. That's why in a different context and not entirely dissociated from the question at hand, Nancy can ask: "how then are we to touch the body rather than signify it?" (2008, p.9). This is the same question with regard to the aesthetic object: how are we to access this object rather than signify it? So, this analogy, only sketched here very briefly, already brings us closer to thinking dance from an aesthetic perspective. So, let me now turn to dance specifically.

4. Dance and Signification

In her book on dance in the period of the Third Reich, Laure Guilbert claims that in Nazi Germany dance was the last form of art declared degenerate by the German censors. That's because the German authorities found it difficult to read messages and meanings in the dancers' movement. This was in contrast to painting or sculpture, forms of art to which they were accustomed and whose meanings they could more readily decipher (See Nancy and Monnier, 2005, pp.24-5). The body in dance is not a "signifying body"; rather, it is an aesthetic body, a body that expresses itself not by way of encoded – conceptually determined - movements, but through sense

outside of sense. This form of expression incarnates the unique relationship between the sensible fabric (the movements) and the intelligible form (sense) in a gesture that is only ever a gesture towards meaning, never reaching completion, never coming to a closure and conceptual determination.

In a conversation on dance and philosophy held between Jean-Luc Nancy and French choreographer Mathilde Monnier, published in the volume Alliterations (2005), Monnier refers to Nancy's claim that the "body is the place through which sense slips away (*le corps, c'est le lieu par ou le sens s'echappe*)". Dance is very close to this idea, she argues, "being an art that works to hold (*retenir*) the slipping away of movement in the body and at the same time to give sense to what seems to slip away" […] "I have the impression that my work as a choreographer and dancer, is, first of all, to hold sense in its slipping away or to have movement make sense, while sense slips away" (p.18).

Monnier reads Nancy's claim that the body is the place through which sense slips away, into the field of dance. The body, like Kant's aesthetic object, is an object which cannot be reduced to a mere mental representation, a mere mental construct. In both cases, whether we are addressing the body or the aesthetic object, we are confronted with the slipping away of sense. In dance, these two territories, the body and art, merge, thereby creating a paradigmatic aesthetic event.

To better understand the meaning of the aesthetic body, I will pose it against the signifying body which according to Nancy (2008) is the "whole corpus of philosophical, theological, psychoanalytic, and semiological bodies – incarnates one thing only: the absolute contradiction of not being able to be a body without being the body of a spirit, which disembodies it" (p.69).

Nancy points to the inherent "conflict" between the corporeal and the incorporeal, and the fundamental contradiction embodied in their union. Once we approach the body through the signifier, we turn it into a mental abstraction, a signifying body. In that moment it is the body which slips away, "a body saturated with signification. And hence no more body" (p.23). Once we approach the body through the determination and the closure of sense, we disembody it as we turn it into an idea. And this is exactly what aesthetic judgment suspends, this is what the body resists in dance. That's why according to Nancy, the body can only come into being when it ruptures, disturbs, and intrudes upon sense, rather than being subsumed under a concept, in Kant's terminology, or signified in more contemporary terms. Only then do the material in a work of art, or in this case, the body in dance, is brought into presence and is made patent.

5. Heidegger and the Thingness of the Body

Heidegger begins *The Origin of the Work of Art* (2002 [1950]) with a discussion of the "thingly" character of art:

> works are as naturally present as things. The picture hangs on the wall like a hunting weapon or a hat. A painting – for example, Van Gogh's portrayal of a pair of peasant shoes – travels from one exhibition to another. Works are shipped like coal from the Ruhr or logs from the Black Forest. During the war Hölderlin's hymns were packed in the soldier's knapsack along with the cleaning equipment. Beethoven's quartets lie in the publisher's storeroom like potatoes in a cellar (p.3).

The "thingly" character of the work of art is also apparent in dance, the body in dance is subjected to the Laws of Gravity like a sack of apples. Yet, unlike those "things" Heidegger mentions – the hat, the logs from the black forest etc. – a work of art is not exhausted in its thingliness. In Heideggerian terms, a work of art is of a different being, it exists differently than those instrumental objects - "ready-to-hand" in Heidegger's terminology - things we see and encounter through their usefulness, the hat for wearing and the handle to open the door. In a piece of equipment, the material tends to disappear in its utility and serviceability: no one thinks about the steel when the knife cuts well or the axe is effective. The material is all the more

suitable the more it disappears into the equipment-Being of the equipment.

However, this is not what happens with a work of art. The sculptor may use stone in the same way in which the mason may use it, Heidegger claims, yet "the sculptor does not use it up. The painter, too, uses colors like every craftsman: yet here, too, the colors are not used up, but rather begin to shine forth" […] "rock comes to bear, metals come to shine and glimmer, colors come to glow, tones begin to sound and words to speak" (p.32).

The same could be applied to dance. In our everyday life, we tend not to notice our body since it disappears into its usefulness, so to speak, it carries us from one place to the other, we dress it, nourish it, use it for exercise, look at it in the mirror but we hardly ever see it; dance makes the body visible, shine and glimmer, through movements that are not instrumental, movements which serve no external purpose, making patent its visibility.

To conclude, the consideration of dance through an aesthetic prism is a task which requires acknowledging the uniqueness of the medium. Aesthetic thought which was conceived with an eye to other types of objects is not irrelevant to an aesthetics of dance however certain theoretical modifications required, specifically taking into consideration the problematization of the body.

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Phenomenology and Documentary Photography.
Some Reflections on Husserl's Theory of Image

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ABSTRACT. The aim of this paper is to understand the symbolic potential of photography, especially of documentary photography and photojournalism, from the analysis of Edmund Husserl's reflections about the symbolic function of picture in *Phantasy and Picture Consciousness*. For this, first of all, I outline the tripartite scheme of picture consciousness, which explains consciousness in an artistic-aesthetic attitude. This scheme is based on the idea that the representation operates by means of the similarity between the picture and what it represents. Secondly, I present some considerations about act-character of pictoriality. Its study allows us to understand how a picture can function symbolically and how the viewer through memory can divert attention from the picture looking for a more complete representation.

The purpose of this paper is to reflect on documentary photography, specifically, on documentary photography and photojournalism, in relation to Edmund Husserl's theory of images. Thinkers like Susan Sontag (2004) and Errol Morris (2011) claim that documentary photography's meaning resides in its symbolic dimension and is determined by our beliefs. One interesting case is the manipulation of war photographs, which can be politicized and depoliticized at the same time (Sontag 2004) and be employed arbitrarily in hegemonic speeches of propaganda.

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We can understand this situation from the perspective of the logic of visual consumption and information crisis, which Paul Virilio (1994) calls, a kind of pathology of immediate perception. As the result of transformation of pictures into units of information, their importance does not lie in their contents, but in their volume and speed of circulation to the point that they turn out to be empty signifiers, filled at every opportunity according to the interests of those who observe them or circulate them (Zylberman 2013). Therefore, the more symbolic a picture becomes, like in the case of documentary photography or photojournalism, the less indicial strength it possesses (Zylberman 2013), ceasing to be reliable proof of an event.

In the current context, influenced by the instability of the visual fields that restricts contemporary photographic visualization (Kennedy 2015), questions arise about the role of the viewer in the reactivation of the symbolic potential of photography. In this respect, Ariella Azoulay says that photography is an event, "product of an encounter of several protagonists, mainly photographer and photographed, camera and spectator " (Azoulay 2010, 11), where the latter ceases to have a passive place upon taking the photo from the stability of the frame and the photographer's field of vision. From this point of view, "civic negotiations about the subject they designate and about their sense" (2008, p. 11) are possible because "the photograph exceeds any presumption of ownership or monopoly and any attempt at being exhaustive" (2008, p. 11). Less optimistically, Errol Morris, points out

that: "Photographs attract false beliefs the way flypaper attracts flies" (Morris 2011, p. 92) inasmuch as our gaze is not a *tabula rasa* that together with the photo would constitute the photographic meaning, because, as Morris observes: "we do not form our beliefs on the basis of what we see rather, what we see is often determined by our beliefs. Believing is seeing not the other way around" (Morris 2011, p. 93).

Understanding photography as the product of the encounter between several actors, or, from a sceptical perspective, which does not allow us to contemplate it critically, puts us before questions related to the constitution of its meaning and the reactivation of its symbolic potential. Faced with these questions, I think that Edmund Husserl's phenomenology has a special place because it requires us to abandon the picture and its medium, to focus on the experience by which it can be evoked and disconnected from its contexts. In fact, we can understand the symbolic and enunciative potential of photographs from his reflections on the symbolic function of picture and his idea that they are a domain of heterogeneous representation, which can mutate sense through the carrying out of associative connections made by the viewer.

This paper is mainly based on the *Phantasy and Picture Consciousness* course of 1904/05.[2] In this period Husserl's reflections still

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[2] After the publication of *Logical Investigations* (1900/01), Husserl gave a course in the winter semester of 1904/05 at the University of Göttingen, entitled "Principal Parts of the Phenomenology and Theory of Knowledge". The course had four parts dedicated

take place based on the content-apprehension scheme, which had already been exposed in *Logical Investigations* (1900/01), to explain the constitution of intentional acts. Subsequently, the scheme was partially rejected by the author in the context of the analysis of the constitution of temporal consciousness and restricted to the constitution of perception (Bernet 2002). These reflections of Husserl's are important because: firstly, in relation to the criticism of psychologism, they demonstrate that the imagination is an act not derived from consciousness, that is, not mediated by pictures (Jansen 2016); and secondly, they show us the step from a so-called static phenomenology towards the affirmation of the necessity of time consciousness. As Eduard Marbach points out, the study of these reflections "requires a high degree of reconstructive thinking" (Marbach 2019 p 13), as is the case with the 1904/05 course, where we find as a starting point the content-apprehension scheme, and as a point of arrival the need for a time consciousness, in order to be able to study fantasy and picture consciousness (Husserl 1980; Marbach 2019; Bernet 2002).

This paper has two parts, the first of which presents the tripartite scheme of picture consciousness, which Husserl developed in depth in *Phantasy and Picture Consciousness* to explain consciousness in artistic-aesthetic attitude. This scheme explains how the pictorial representation

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respectively to perception, attention, phantasy and picture consciousness and time (Brough 2005).

operates through the similarity between the picture and what it represents, giving rise to the idea that the pictorial representation has the act-character of internal or external pictoriality [*Bildlichkeit*]. In the second part, I deal with some considerations about external pictoriality. Its study allows us to understand how a picture can function symbolically, that is, how the viewer through memory or evocation of pictures of experiences already lived, can divert attention from the picture, widening its symbolic potential.

1.

In *Logical Investigations,* Husserl confronts the theory of images and its distinction between immanent object and transcendent object, for example, between a sign or picture existing in consciousness and the designated or represented thing. From the perspective of this theory, the picture is a fiction that is stuck in the mind as a thing is in reality (Husserl 2001). In opposition to the "duality" of the theory of images, Husserl presents a tripartite schema of picture consciousness, which is outlined in the appendix to paragraphs 11 and 20 "Critique of the 'image-theory' and of the doctrine of the 'immanent objects' of acts" by *Logical Investigations* and developed in greater depth in *Phantasy and Picture Consciousness*.

Already in *Logical Investigations* is the idea that in the pictorial representation [*Darstellung*] in picture what is represented is "meant" by

way of a picture [*Bildobjekt*], which is "neither an internal character nor a real predicate" (Husserl 2001, p. 125). With this idea Husserl wants to express that in pictorial representation we "go back over the picture, referring it to a certain object foreign to the conscience, through the similarity [*Änhlichkeit*]" (Husserl 2001, p. 125), which allows us to see-in picture. What a perceived object presents to another through similarity means in geometry that identical shapes, despite having different sizes, can maintain the same proportions. In the same way, Husserl's concept of similarity explains the identity relationship between picture and subject representation, which is never consummated because there is always a space of separation, a margin of difference, insofar as they are calibrated by those who are contemplating, or as Husserl says, by the faculty of a 'representative self' that intuitively keeps one thing in mind and mean another instead of it (Husserl 2001). Likewise, in *Phantasy and Picture Consciousness* Husserl observes "The Madonna by Raphael that I contemplate in a photograph, is obviously not the little picture that appears photographically" (Husserl 1980 p. 17), but, although its measures have increased or decreased in the same proportion, it remains the same Madonna. According to the content-apprehension-schema, the above is explained because in aesthetic contemplation there are two apprehensions: a primordial one that determines the actual present and a second modified perceptual apprehension that gives way to the picture [*Bildobjekt*]. In this second apprehension, the represented

[*Bildsujet*] penetrates [*durchdringen*] and integrates into itself [*aufnehmen*] the available sensory material of the picture, making the picture its carrier [*Träger*] (Husserl 1980, 30; p. 16). In this way, a tripartite characterization of consciousness in artistic-aesthetic attitude takes place, where we find: (i) the physical picture [*physisches Ding*]; (ii) the picture object [*Bildobjekt*] - the picture of the imagination; (iii) and, the subject picture [*Bildsujet*], the object represented (Husserl 1980). If we think of a photograph that documents a news story in a newspaper, we have the picture as a physical thing, which appears as ink printed on dull and rough paper that we hold with our hands. These visual sensations, Husserl observes, can be interpreted as lines on paper or as the appearance of the plastic form, that is, as the appearance of a picture [*Bildobjekt*] that shows what is represented [*Bildsujet*] (Husserl 1980), for example, a car accident, an attack, etc.[3]

As a result of this characterization, the picture object appears as a double objectivity. On the one hand, when sharing the contents of apprehension of the physical picture, it appears in the middle of the perceptual reality, as if claiming to have an objective reality in its midst

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[3] In *An Introduction to Husserlian Phenomenology*, Marbarch translates "Bildsujet" as "picture subject". The use of the French term "Sujet" instead of the German "Subjekt" indicates that the "picture subject" is not the conscious subject, that is, the transcendental (or empirical) subject that perceives, remembers, etc. As well, he describes the distinction between "Bildobjekt" and "Bildsujet" as a distinction between "pictorial object" and "represented object", meaning that with the term" Bildsujet" Husserl has in mind what a picture, its object or motive, is about, such as a landscape represented in a painting or a person represented by a sculpture (Bernet, Rudolf; Kern, Iso; and, Marbach, Rudolf (1993), *An Introduction to Husserlian Phenomenology,* Evanston Northwestern: University Press).

(Husserl 1980, p. 47). Furthermore, as the bearer of the representation subject, the picture object requires a consciousness of presentification [*Vergegenwärtigung*], that is, the consciousness "of something which does not appear within that which does appear" (Husserl 1980, p. 31; Marbach 2019).[4] From this idea it becomes understandable that in the picture we can intuit what is represented to the extent that the result of perceptual apprehension is not a perception, but the appearance of the subject. According to Marbach, "genuine *picture* consciousness only occurs thanks to the *presentificative* relationship with a figurative thing" (2019, p. 23), which despite being entwined with a presenting consciousness that presents the physical image, has the character of unreality (Husserl 1980).

This means that there is only depiction when there is correspondence between picture-object and picture-subject; that is, when the subject is intuited in the picture, and we feel the presence of the object presentified (Husserl 1980). This is possible because the appearance of the picture arises from series of intuitive moments, called in the case of pictoriality pictorializing moments [*verbildlichenden*], in which we intuit the theme [*Bildsujet*] of presentification (Husserl 1980, p. 50). Also, there are non-pictorializing moments in which we do intuit the media and materials of

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[4] I have chosen to translate "Vergegenwärtigung" as presentification and "vergegenwären" as presentificate, and not as representation or re-presentation. As Julia Jansen (2016) points out, the concept of presentification emphasizes the sense of presenting what is not present in itself, as well as the feeling that this necessarily implies a repetition or the memory of a previous experience.

production, such as the texture of paper or the brightness of a screen that, despite being parts of the picture, do not fulfil a depiction function [*Abbildungsfunktion*] (Husserl 1980, p. 34).[5] In fact, Husserl points out that "If the conscious relation to something depicted is not given with the picture, then we certainly do not have a picture" (Husserl 1980, p. 31). Therefore, we could conclude that between picture-object and picture-subject, or following Sartre, between picture and model, there is a bond of emanation by which "The subject has ontological primacy. But he incarnates himself, he descends into the image" (Sartre 2004, p. 24). Because of this convergence, meaning is not only directed towards the picture object, but towards what is represented by it (Husserl 1980, p. 24). In this way, our contact with an artistic-aesthetic object is an experience in which we enter into direct contact with the object of contemplation because "this is not a conceptual knowing either, nor does it imply that I undertake an act of distinguishing and relating, setting the appearing object in relation to an object thought of" (Husserl 1980, p. 31).

In short, both in *Logical Investigations* and *Phantasy and Picture Consciousness*, the idea is present that, in imaginative presentation, which takes place in the contemplation of a photograph or a painting, although the

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[5] However, at this point Husserl's reflections differ because later in the text he will add that they can also broaden the construction of the picture when "an interest in the form of aesthetic feeling, hangs on to the image object, and hangs on to it even with regard to its non-analogizing moments" (Husserl 1980, p. 52).

object exists as a factual object, consciousness has only the picture (Husserl 2001); and, despite being in connection with its material media and its referents, picture is autonomous because it is constituted in and by contemplation. About that Husserl says: " If the appearing picture were absolutely identical phenomenally with the object meant, or, better, if the picture appearance showed no difference whatsoever from the perceptual appearance of the object itself, a pictoriality consciousness [*Bildlichkeitsbewusstsein*] could scarcely come about. Surely then, a consciousness of difference must be there, albeit the subject does not appear in the proper sense. The appearing object is not just taken by itself, but as the representative of another object like it or resembling it "(Husserl 1980, p. 20). That is, insofar as the picture belonging to aesthetic-artistic contemplation arises from the lags of its strata, the picture is really nothing because there is no picture thing [*Bildding*] in consciousness. In this respect, Husserl observes that the picture-object: "truly does not exist, which means not only that it has no existence outside my consciousness, but also, that it has no existence inside my consciousness "(Husserl 1980, p. 23). In this sense, the picture, in aesthetic depiction, does not give itself to us as a completely finished object because it is subjected to a permanent adjustment between the apparition of strata, thus disclosing the active aspect that constitutes that which is properly aesthetic and which allows the viewer to remain in a constant constitutive activity (Cordero, 2017).

2.

In accordance with the above, the artistic-aesthetic picture arises from a work of adjustment –between the appearance of the picture [*Bildobjekt*], the physical media and the subject of representation- by means of which we can seeing-in picture, that is, come into contact with what the picture presentifies. This is explained because the apprehension contents of the picture object and of the physical picture are identically the same, and therefore the picture can appear as a physical thing, spatially present, but also, as fiction, as the bearer of the imagination [*Imagination*] (Husserl 1980 p. 44). However, there are certain kinds of picture that allow us to establish associative connections, which make the picture lose its expressive value, that is, its ability to show the subject of representation, to the extent that the viewer can evoke new pictures that are outside of the identity relationship of the strata.

We can understand how this kind of picture works from the explanation in *Phantasy and Picture Consciousness* about the modes of representation by means of similarity. The first - which I have already referred to in the first part of this article - Husserl calls internal pictoriality [innere Bildlichkeit] character. The main feature of this kind of pictoriality is that we can seeing-in picture because the picture object functions as

bearer of the representation subject. From the analysis of the internal pictoriality, Husserl also observes that there are cases in which we can contemplate the picture as a means to evoke or indicate pictures other than what is represented, which corresponds to a second kind of representation by means of the similarity, the external pictoriality [*äusserer Bildlichkeit*], a kind of symbolic consciousness, to whose domain, Husserl says, the photographs and scientific images belong (Husserl 1980 p. 36).

In the external pictoriality a thing or person can be presentified, but it can also remind us in a way similar to that of the designated sign (Husserl 1980, p. 52). That is, a picture can work symbolically when from an internal picture consciousness, it turns to something else in a new appearance (Husserl 1980, p. 36). As Husserl points out: "Whoever makes use of the picture as memory, seeks and occasionally finds another presentification of the object, which may offer him a richer presentification of it" (Husserl 1980, p. 35). In this case, we are facing a symbol consciousness directed outward, while the picture becomes a sign –a symbol, of the original [*Urbildes*] (Husserl 1980, p. 53)-, providing pictorial indexes [*billiche Inhaltsverzeichnisse*], whose objective is not to awaken internal pictoriality nor aesthetic pleasure, but to function as a sign of memory (Husserl 1980, p. 35). With respect to the sign and its indicative function, in the first Logical Investigation, Husserl affirms that: "Every sign is a sign for something, but not every sign has 'meaning', a 'sense', that the sign expresses" (Husserl

2001, p. 183). This is the case of signs that work indicatively, which do not express anything because they do not have a significant function. According to Husserl, to this category correspond, for example, a brand as the sign of the slave; the flag as the sign of the nation, the fossil vertebrae as signs of the existence of prediluvian animals, etc. (Husserl 2001, p. 183). Its indicator effectiveness depends on the association relationships made by the viewer insofar as there is no visible and objectively necessary connection between the related elements. There is, however, says Husserl, a nexus established by means of convictions and dispositions, whose foundation lies in the sentimental and volitional sphere (Husserl 2001, p. 185).

From this perspective we can understand the symbolic functioning of a picture, for example, of a photo-journalistic image, when, in addition to documenting a specific situation, the use of iconographies, gestures and poses make it possible to make associative connections, to widen and ensure its symbolic effectiveness. In this regard, I would like to mention the series of photographs by Abu Ghraib (2003), which document the different types of torture carried out on Iraqi prisoners, registered and disseminated by US soldiers. One photo of particular interest, "The Hooded Man", appeared in the New York Times with the name "the indelible symbol of torture" (Morris 2011). This photo showed a naked Iraqi prisoner, covered with a hooded blanket, from whose fingers hung electric cables, allowing the emergence of associative connections to the extent that the pose of the Iraqi

man evoked the figure of the crucified, icon of the scourge in the History of the West (*photo 1*). However, as associative connections depend on cultural and social factors, the symbolic effectiveness of photographs can change. As Errol Morris points out, while in the West the icon of the war in Iraq is the picture of the "The Hooded Man"; in the Arab and Muslim world, the iconic picture is actually the photograph of a woman, Sabrina Harman, the soldier who smiles and gives the thumbs up over the body of a dead Iraqi man (*photo 2*) (Morris 2011).

Figure 1: "The Hooded Man", Abu Ghraib prision, (2003).

Figure 2: Photograph taken by Chuck Graner of Sabrina Harman poses over the body of detainee Manadel a-Jamadi, Abu Ghraib prision (2003).

That some pictures, such as photographs, can work as "memory engines" (Husserl 1980, p. 52), means that, in their symbolic functioning, in addition to the presentification of the object, can indicate the object as what should [*sollen*] be meant (Husserl 1980, p. 53). This "should" explains the idea that certain pictures in their symbolic functioning fit to reality through memory, that is, through the evocation of pictures of experiences already lived. This is the case of photography, whose main characteristic is to raise the

possibility of searching beyond what the picture shows, as Husserl says: "in an externally connected symbolic intention, turn toward what is symbolized" (Husserl 1980, p. 53). In this regard, I would like to mention two emblematic cases in documentary photography history: *The Falling Soldier* (1936) by Robert Capa, a photographic montage, which shows the anarchist Federico Borrell García, in the foreground, reclined on the ground next to his rifle, being shot; and, the photograph by Joe Rosenthal that reconstructs the raising of the American flag in Iwo Jima, Japan, in 1945. In both cases, the photographic composition by means of the use of poses and iconic elements of war, seeks to arouse the viewer's attention externally to what is represented. Also, we must not forget that traditionally the documentary photo has been modified by the caption, which operates based on extrinsic meanings to what is represented by the picture. In fact, when we come into contact with a written expression attached to a photographic picture, our understanding dispenses with the picture because when searching externally, that is, in reading the caption, we cannot at the same time seeing-in the picture, that is, seeing in the *image* [*Bild*] the subject [*Sujet*] (Husserl 1980, p. 53). In this sense, our knowledge of a photograph would not be constituted only from seeing in picture, but also, from our previous experiences that are deposited in the pictures and that determine our symbolic references. As a result, we can say that, in opposition to the idea formulated by John Tagg (1993): the meaning of a documentary

photograph is fixed because it is the capture of a representation of a particular place at a specific time, documentary photography is neutral and the inferences we make from them can be true or false (Morris 2011).

Finally, I would like to point out that Husserl's analyses of the symbolic picture function allow us to put photography, specifically, documentary photography and photo-journalistic image, into perspective from the idea that it is a heterogeneous domain that allows us to seeing-in picture or establish associative connections. Thus, we could conclude that the expressive value of the picture, the emanation relationship between picture object and picture subject, disappears to the extent that associations are made, which produce new forms of representation. In this way, the photographic picture has the paradoxical power to show in picture a composition or divert our interest towards an ethical or even corrective dimension through the evocation of new pictures. This is the case of the works of photographer Sebastião Salgado, which, according to Sontag compromise the picture's status as a document (Sontag 2004). If we think about his latest project, *GOLD - The Serra Pelada Mine* (2019), a monumental installation of screens that, hung from the ceiling of the exhibition hall, project pictures of one of the largest open pit mines in the world and the misery and precariousness of its workers. In this project, as Sontag already said, we cannot know the name of the faces of misery because they are omitted. This would make it impossible for the viewer to

leave the photographic immanence, the idea of misery in the abstract, and go to instances where he can disconnect from his aesthetic dimension and connect with suffering in his own flesh.

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Kant and Hume on Aesthetic Normativity

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ABSTRACT. In this paper I will highlight how the different approaches to aesthetics of Hume and Kant determine two radically divergent conceptions of aesthetic normativity. The Humean theory is the result of an empirical enquiry, sentimentalist and somewhat skeptical in its exposition, which eventually entrusts to the art critics the authority to outline the rules of taste. The Kantian position, instead, is transcendental, but it is nonetheless sentimentalist and it is grounded on the indeterminacy of the rule of taste. The indeterminacy of the rule makes the application of the Kantian aesthetic normativity to art criticism problematic, but it makes the theory better suited for acknowledging the evolution of taste. On the contrary, the Humean theory, with its emphasis on art criticism, risks to become dogmatic. In the first two sections of this paper I will analyze the two theories, highlighting their differences and their problems. In the last two sections, after defending the Kantian approach, I will try to reconstruct, starting from the § 34 of the third *Critique*, an alternative conception of art criticism consistent with it. This conception, that I will call «criticism as art», should be based on exemplary judgments, i.e., normative judgments that exhibit the rule without stating it conceptually. Finally, I will argue that the exhibition of the rule in the exemplary judgments should be considered similar to that of the artworks, so that the radical distinction between a contemplative aesthetics and a productive one should finally be overcome.

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1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to show the limits of an empirical aesthetics which tries to corroborate the normativity of taste and to show the implications of the alternative effort to ground transcendentally the aesthetic normativity. To this end, I thought to compare the aesthetic theories of Hume and Kant, but not focusing on the historical point of view.[2] I would rather like to make the two positions interact on some theoretical issues underlying them and to highlight the different conclusions to which they lead.

Although the two theories have points in common, they get to very different conclusions. From Hume we can deduce an aesthetic normativity that entrusts to art criticism the possibility to rule the correctness of taste. Kant's theory, instead, presents a *weak normativity*, which implies the impossibility of bringing evidence to support one's own judgment of taste. In my view, the surprising fact is that, although Kant strives to ground transcendentally the universality of taste, he comes to weaker conclusions than Hume.

I will try to show how the weakening of the Kantian aesthetic normativity is a necessary outcome of the attempt to make the standard of taste transcendental, which means actually normative. Therefore, in the first

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[2] For an historical analysis of the relationship between Hume's and Kant's aesthetic theories see Giordanetti (1997). For a brief and helpful summary of the different positions on Hume's influence on Kant's aesthetics see Costelloe (2004, pp. 92-5).

two sections of this paper I will compare the two positions on these issues. Later, taking the Kantian position as the more consistent one, as it is able to account for the ever-changing feature of taste, I will focus on the problem of how art criticism could still be feasible without the possibility to rely on determinate and universally valid principles and rules in order to ground its claims and judgments.

2. Hume's Aesthetic Normativity and the Authority of Art Criticism

As it is now acquired by the critical literature on Hume, the essay *Of the Standard of Taste* focuses on the so called "paradox of taste", i.e., the problem caused by the opposition of two maxims of common sense (Mothersill, 1977). The first maxim is the one of aesthetic relativism: «*de gustibus non est disputandum*»; the second, instead, holds that at least in some cases, we cannot deny the reality of hierarchies in taste – the so-called *Ogilby-Milton Phenomenon*.

Hume's declared sentimentalism makes the reader expect a defense of the skeptical part of the antinomy. On the contrary, the essay develops in a search for the criteria of correctness of the aesthetic feeling. This is possible because, even though the feeling is not representative – namely, even though it is purely subjective – it is nonetheless a reaction to objective

qualities. Therefore, it is possible to look for the rules that guide this reaction and to express them in «well established principles of art». In Hume's view, these rules are crucial in order to settle cases of aesthetic disagreement.[3] As a consequence, the initial skepticism of the essay seems apparently defeated by a normative position that decides, through principles, rules and proofs, for the admissibility of some aesthetic judgments and evaluations.

After that, Hume's analysis shifts on the search for those who can settle the disputes and determine the correctness of an aesthetic reaction; the art critics. The distinctive feature that makes the art critic such a crucial character in Hume's aesthetic theory is not so clear and straightforward. The position of the critic stands somewhat halfway between sentimentalism and intellectualism: i.e., the critic gains the right to express *prescriptive judgments* capable of settling disagreements, solving controversies and directing taste, not because he "*knows*" the criteria of the beautiful, as they were objective qualities or norms, but because he is endowed with a unique *delicacy of taste*, a subjective talent to feel the beautiful in the works of art.

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[3] Hume argues that it is possible to defeat a bad critic in a discussion on art by showing him the correlation between abstract principles commonly accepted and concrete examples and by subsuming the case at hand to the same principles. This is clearly a deductive kind of argument typical of a dispute: «when we show [the bad critic] an avowed principle of art; when we illustrate this principle by examples, whose operation, from his own particular taste, he acknowledges to be conformable to the principle; when we prove that the same principle may be applied to the present case, where he did not perceive or feel its influence: he must conclude, upon the whole, that the fault lies in himself» (Hume, 1998, p. 142).

Starting from such a superiority of the sentimental faculty, the art critic is more reliable in his reactions to objects and, for this very reason, he is also justified in searching for the *objective sources* of the aesthetic feeling. As a consequence, he legitimately has the authority to outline the «rules of art». Therefore, thanks to a sentimental superiority, the critic can legitimately delineate the standard of taste.

But how is it possible to outline conceptually the rules of art starting only from a feeling? We could hypothesize an empirical and inductive method grounded on the generalization and on the abstraction of the formal features of the objects that arouse the feeling of pleasure in the critics. Afterwards, it could be possible to sum up the collected information in the propositional form of precepts or rules ready to be used in an aesthetic discussion.

However, in this way it would be impossible to justify the prescriptivism of the judgments of art criticism, because these rules would originate only from the constancy of the features in the works of art judged beautiful in the past. They would have no genuine authority on the evaluations of new works of art, that in principle could always surprise the critic, arousing a completely different feeling of pleasure. This means that, given the ever-changing and constantly developing feature of taste, it is impossible to foresee the validity of an avowed principle of art for the yet to be judged works of art of the future. These rules would set *standards of*

normality (Feloj, 2018, p.33), instead of being *principles of normativity* and, as a consequence, the less the object of evaluation is predictable in its form and content, the more fallible these rules of art would be, with the unfortunate, but rather common, outcome for art criticism of slowing down with its judgments the artistic evolution rather than identifying beauty correctly.

It is Hume's sentimentalism itself that makes such a position unacceptable. As a matter of fact, Hume was fully aware of the incompatibility of his sentimentalism with the dogmatic conservatism of some art criticism. He argues that if a work of art that is judged badly on the basis of some "rule of art" aroused aesthetic pleasure, we should not condemn the pleasure as wrong, but the rules of criticism, that consequently should be reviewed at the light of this pleasure (Hume 1998, p. 138). All the more reason, the problem arises again: given the priority of the aesthetic feeling, how could aesthetic judgments actually be normative?

A solution of the *impasse* could be to consider the feeling not simply as a passive reaction to an artwork, but as an intentional reaction, based on rational criteria that guide the apprehension of the object (Carroll, 1984, pp. 181-4). We could interpret the role of *good sense* in Hume's essay in this way. As a matter of fact, by providing universally valid rational criteria, the good sense could be essential to give authority to the feeling of the critics.

Even in this case, Hume's position would have to face a lot of

difficulties. In order not to endorse a dogmatic position, it would be necessary to legitimize the universality of these criteria. However, if they were given a priori, Hume's theory would be too similar to those of the rationalists, while, if the criteria were drawn from the feeling, the theory would run into a vicious circle. Moreover, as Kivy pointed out, in order to determine the criteria of good sense there is the need to focus on a previous consensus, but the search for the conditions of such a consensus is nonetheless problematic, because it could start an infinite regress (Kivy, 1967, p. 64).

I believe that many of these problems stem from the empirical conception of the aesthetic feeling in Hume. On the contrary, in order to ground the universality of taste, there is the need to search for a transcendental aesthetic common sense, and this is precisely the topic of the Kantian inquiry. Kant calls this transcendental common sense «*Gemeinsinn*» or «*sensus communis aestheticus*» and he understands it as an ideal, indeterminate and sentimental norm (Kant, 1790, AA : V, pp. 239-40) grounded on the free play of the cognitive faculties, a proportion of imagination and understanding a priori shareable by all the subjects. This difference in the level of the analysis between Hume and Kant is fundamental because it determines both: the difference in the aesthetic normativity of the two theories and the difference in the ideas of art criticism that we can draw from them.

3. Kant's Aesthetic Normativity and the Indeterminacy of the Rule

I will now present the Kantian proposal with the aim to understand what kind of aesthetic normativity could derive from a transcendentalization of the problem of the standard of taste. First of all, it must be emphasized that the transcendental approach of the inquiry leads Kant to never express himself programmatically on the empirical phenomenon of taste. Kant clearly states in the *Preface* of the *Critique of Judgment* that whatever may be said about taste, it will continue its course, as has happened so far (*ivi*, p. 170). This means that Kant does not propose a disciplinary aesthetics (Garroni 1992) – the much-discussed Kantian formalism – because of the impossibility to predict the evolution of taste.

The Kantian rule of taste, precisely because it is transcendental – namely, precisely because it pursues the aim of setting the conditions for the possibility of taste, with its unpredictable twists and turns –, is and must remain indeterminate. Or better, *the indeterminacy of the rule is the very transcendental foundation of the evolution of taste through history*. Therefore, the Kantian aesthetic normativity, although *a priori*, remains subjective and sentimental, and for this very reason it is immune to dogmatic solutions, because it is a weak normativity which does not hinder

the possibility of being legitimately interpreted in various ways in different historical periods.

These are the pros of the Kantian transcendentalization of the aesthetic normativity. Yet, there is an important con that could undermine the Kantian theory. Although Kant is confident in the success of his inquiry, his theory cannot completely dispel the skeptical risk. Kant maintains that the only criterion for understanding whether the feeling on which one's judgment is based is actually the aesthetic common sense is the disinterestedness. But the criterion of disinterestedness is only a *negative criterion*, that is, it can only help to distinguish the cases in which we don't deal with an aesthetic feeling, but it can't be useful to identify our pleasure as a genuine aesthetic feeling. For this reason, the Kantian judgment of taste is constitutively a victim of uncertainty (Kant 1790; AA : V, p. 237).

Thus, the question we must raise now is: does the Kantian transcendentalization of aesthetics, with its skeptical outcomes, fail to ground the normativity of aesthetic judgments? Or, instead, could such a position lead to a revision of what we usually mean – and what Hume means – with «aesthetic discourse»?

Since, thanks to the analysis of the aesthetic feeling in terms of the proportionate relationship of the cognitive faculties, Kant succeeds in grounding transcendentally the normativity of taste, I don't believe that the uncertainty of some of his results could lead to the failure of his theory as a

whole. Especially if this uncertainty is crucial to save the theory from the dramatic problems that undermine the Humean position. Despite its uncertainty, in the *Dialectic* of the third *Critique*, Kant acknowledges the possibility to discuss on taste (*ivi*, p. 338). However, it is necessary to understand the notion of «aesthetic discourse», because if with «discussion» we mean an «argument», a «quarrel» – Kant writes «*streiten*» – the Kantian position would seem to me at least ineffective, if not incongruous.

Indeed, in the Kantian perspective, the context of art criticism and of the debates on taste, with their argumentative tools, remains irremediably distant from grasping the transcendental rule of taste that, due to its indeterminacy, cannot be set forth conceptually. Moreover, the uncertainty of the aesthetic normativity radically delegitimizes the critic's claims to "demonstrate beauty". Consequently, the normativity that Hume acknowledges to the judgment of the critics is considerably weakened, in that it is bound to the indeterminacy of the aesthetic common sense. The critic can, as we will see soon, in a certain way *testify* – express – the common sense in his judgments, but he can't surely be able to determine it and to outline the rules of taste.

Starting from this, we need to reinterpret the second part of the Kantian antinomy because, without universally valid rational criteria, rather than an openness to debate, the aesthetic discussion should be understood as an openness to the *communication of beauty*. In saying so, I don't mean to

underestimate the importance of the contrast of judgments, opinions and appreciations in aesthetics; I would rather like to point out that, once the possibility to articulate the aesthetic disagreement in a discourse is admitted, the effort to develop this discourse on the Humean model of art criticism could only be unsuccessful. Instead, it is necessary to find a specifically aesthetic way of communicating a «rule that cannot be stated».

4. The «Criticism as Art»

Taking inspiration from the third *Critique*, it can be developed a conception of art criticism appropriate to a weak aesthetic normativity. I will call this conception the «criticism as art» [*Kritik als Kunst*] conception, but I premise that it can only be reconstructed through a free interpretation of the Kantian text. Anyway, I believe that a conception of «criticism as art» respects, if not the letter, the spirit of the *Critique of Judgment*.

In § 34, after claiming against Hume that the art critics share the same fate of the cooks, Kant writes that the critics should not expose the foundation of aesthetic judgments, but they should discuss in the examples [*in Beispielen aus einander setzen*] the mutual subjective purposiveness of the faculties (*ivi*, p. 286). Therefore, art critics should not judge an object by referring to well established principles of art, but they should "discuss" beauty *in concreto*, in and through the examples of art, interpreting the

subjective purposiveness of the cognitive faculties's proportion occasioned by the object evaluated. This proportion consists in a singular and optimal, though indeterminate, relationship of reciprocity between the imagination and the understanding, i.e., between the formal features and the semantical marks of the object.

In the same paragraph Kant writes that: «[the critique] is the art or science of *bringing back to rules* the reciprocal relationship of the understanding and the imagination to each other in the given representation (without relation to an antecedent sensation or concept) (*my italics*)» (*Ibidem*, ENG, p. 166). If criticism is understood as science, we would deal with the Kantian critical philosophy, but if we understood the critique as art, we would be dealing with a peculiar kind of art criticism, that, unlike the Humean one, would aim at *showing the rule in the very medium of its manifestation*, without referring to concepts that determine the objective qualities of the representation.

But what is meant by «criticism as art»? How could such criticism bring back to rules the free play of the faculties without relying on objective rules? In the § 34 there are three points that we can follow in order to reconstruct a conception of «criticism as art» consistent with the Kantian aesthetic theory.

1) The first point concerns the *exemplary value* of this criticism. In the § 18 Kant opposes the exemplary necessity to the apodictic one and defines

the first as «a necessity of the assent of *all* to a judgment that is regarded as an example of a universal rule that one cannot produce» (*ivi*, p. 237, ENG, p. 121). The exemplariness of an aesthetic judgment consists in the fact that it expresses the rule of art in a peculiar way, we could say *by embodying it*; therefore, without alluding conceptually or propositionally to a general principle or to an abstract rule that demonstrates the necessity of consensus.

The Kantian conception of the pure aesthetic judgment as a peculiar judgment can help us understand how a judgment could embody a rule without adducing it. Pure aesthetic judgments are an *expression* of the object's beauty, as they are a *predication of an aesthetic feeling* which, in turn, is the subjective consciousness of the relationship between the imagination and the understanding aroused by the shape of the object, and this specific relationship, which is conceptually indeterminate, is the rule of taste. Precisely because the aesthetic judgment expresses the rule of taste in a minimal way, without predicating it objectively or determining it through concepts, it could rightly be considered an exemplar of this rule. The aesthetic judgment *displays* the rule, instead of adducing it.

Nevertheless, we must ask ourselves how this rule could be communicated. A pure judgment of taste, being simply a predication of a feeling, cannot autonomously give voice to an aesthetic discourse. To get to this point we must take an extra step.

2) This brings us to the second point. Kant argues that the task of

«criticism as art» is to «discuss the subjective purposiveness in the example». As I already noted, the term «to discuss» risks to be deceptive, because a discussion rooted on an authentic disagreement that cannot be reconciled through argumentative proofs or by appealing to good reasons could only result in irreconcilable oppositions. Such a discussion would be for its very constitution something different from a genuine communication, because it would be rhapsodic, unconnected and diverted.

Therefore, the task of «criticism as art» should be first of all to *exhibit* the subjective purposiveness of an example of art, to shape the rule, to make it evident, in order to make it effectively shareable. It would be impossible to discuss the subjective purposiveness of an object if we were deprived of the capacity to express it in a discursive form, yet this linguistic expression is completely different from a conceptual determination of the rule, it is rather an authentic production of it. Beauty is never explicit in the form of the object, it comes out always through the active participation of the subject, that reflects freely on the object apprehended, feeling the aesthetic norm in himself, and that strives to find out the suitable expression for the feeling of his reflection. This expression could take the form of a judgment of taste, by means of which one can try to gather the consensus of the aesthetic community, but it is only through a previous effort to show the rule in one's own judgment that we can think of an aesthetic discourse effective in putting in communication conflicting appreciations and perspectives and

in actualizing the normativity of taste.

3) But how can this rule be shown? For this problem we need to address to a third point that pertains to the term «criticism as art» itself, because from the point of view of the exhibition of the rule the reference to art is particularly meaningful. In the *Critique of Judgment* fine arts exemplify the standard of taste even better than judgments because they don't embody the rule only as a feeling, but they shape it, they actually express it. It is therefore essential to take up the theory of artistic production and to integrate it with the theory of aesthetic judgment in order to understand how could a transcendental theory like the Kantian one still legitimize an aesthetic and normative discourse on the beautiful. The idea that can be drawn from it is that of a «criticism as art» that does not hesitate, in seeking to forge a discourse appropriate to the rule of taste, to approach itself to art by working on its own style and expressive form, in the same way as we can think of the artist who, showing the standard of taste through his creations, approaches himself to criticism, offering an exemplary insight of what art ought to be.

5. The Exemplarity and the Transmission of the Rule

Finally, I would like to quickly recall another important point in order to understand how the aesthetic normativity could be diachronically developed

thanks to its exemplary exhibitions and to the models of art. This is a complex topic, that cannot be dealt exhaustively here, but it is important at least to mention it, as it allows us to focus on a peculiar congruence of the theories of Hume and Kant. Moreover, it could be an enlightening integration of our conception of «criticism as art», in that, as we already saw, Kant maintains that not only the artworks, but also the judgments of taste are exemplar. As a consequence, the exemplarity could be considered the focal point of the Kantian aesthetic normativity, in which the contemplative and the expressive side of the aesthetic experience converge and from which it is possible to better understand how the aesthetic normativity develops in time.

Both in Kant and in Hume, the artworks that have received a constant and joint appreciation throughout the ages have a significant importance. The reason is that these works show exemplarily the rule of taste. Despite the expected and well known differences between the two, the models of art are a starting point for educating oneself to taste and for learning how to grasp the rules emotionally for both the philosophers.

The difference is that Hume focuses on the education of the critic, while Kant focuses on that of the artist, and this carries to relevant repercussions on the articulation of the aesthetic normativity in the two theories. If for Hume such works of art are models from which the critic can draw evaluative criteria in order to make hierarchical comparisons, for Kant

the exemplarity of these works is expressed in a completely different way, because it does not highlight only the moment of evaluation in the judgment, but it is focused mainly on the productive side of aesthetics.

As a matter of fact, Kant argues that the exemplary products of taste should never be copied or imitated, but they should be followed [*nachfolgen*] (*ivi*, p. 318). It is the act of following the examples that sets the difference between the aesthetic normativity and the intellectual one, because, if we had a rule fully displayed in a precept, or perfectly exhibited by an artwork, we would be forced by the rule itself to approximate it, producing material copies and flawed imitations. The degree of correctness of the aesthetic productions and judgments would be measured in terms of similarity with the model or in terms of conformity with the rule.

On the contrary, in the Kantian aesthetic normativity we cannot apply these criteria of similarity to measure the value of an artwork, because the products of art never display the rule completely in itself, they present it like a *trace* (Ferraris, 1995) that calls on the receiver's free play to be detected and produced. As a consequence, the aesthetic normativity is dynamic, it is contingent upon the evolution of taste itself and it is ultimately constituted by the acts of following the rules grasped freely and productively by the subjects of a community in the examples of the past.

According to Kant, the models of taste represent the rule, but always indirectly, always in such a way that the observer is led to take part actively

in the production of the rule, rather than considering it already given in the objective constitution of the artwork, like a «rule of composition». Kant writes that «following the model» means: «to create from the same sources from which the latter created, and to learn from one's predecessor only the manner of conducting oneself in so doing» (*ivi*, p. 283, ENG, p. 164). The source of taste remains always subjective, even though it is of a transcendental subjectivity, while the artwork represents the only way to present it, but it does not represent the rule *in presence*, it represents only the unavoidable way of leading towards it. The exhibition of the rule, therefore, does not exhaust it, and as a consequence it can never be anything other than an *indirect presentation*, a *trace*.

It is precisely this *constitutive "presence/absence"* of the rule in the artworks that determines the difference between following [*nachfolgen*] and imitating [*nachahmen*] and between Kant's weak normativity and Hume's stronger one. Only by following the rule embodied in a model of art, and not by imitating or abstracting it, we can transmit the rule to posterity (*ivi*, p. 310). Being transmitted from one artistic form to another, from one aesthetic judgment to another, the rule is presented without being exposed. This transmission of the rule through the relationship with the exemplarity of an aesthetic exhibition should not be confined to the artistic productions, but should also be considered a specific mark of «criticism as art», a conception of art criticism fully aware of its creative power.

So, it is in the very act of following the eternal models of the great works of art that the standard of taste shows itself and becomes communicable without being conceptually stated in the form of precepts or principles of art. It is only through this continuous and multiform evolution of taste and of the artistic forms that the aesthetic normativity can be articulated freely, managing to avoid dogmatisms or pure relativism. Finally, it is only through a transcendental account of the indeterminacy of the rule of taste that it is possible to acknowledge the free and open-ended quality of the beautiful.

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Posing Skill: The Art Model as Creative Agent

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ABSTRACT. I explore the act of posing as a skill in this paper. Employed by the expert model, the pose functions as a tool for artistic invention that renders that expert model a creative agent. It is through an aesthetic investigation of posing that the model's status in certain contexts of art making can be revised to that of an artistic collaborator. Instead of passively following conditions set by the artist, she engages in a mutually influenced creative process. To formulate an account of creative agency through the act of posing, I look into whether we can differentiate types of poses, as well as how and why some of these are creatively more valuable.

1. Introduction: What is a Pose?

When we speak of poses, we tend to consider them predominantly through their final representation: the artwork. Resulting discussions are mainly art historical accounts presenting archival evidence of models in a particular period and location, focussing on the customs that steer the usage of models in art practice and education, while also tracing the iconographic traditions that inform many classical poses, such as the *contrapposto* for example. (Berk-Jimenez 2001, Bignamini and Postle 1991, Borzello 1982, Desmarais, Postle and Vaughan 1999, Mileaf 2002, Waller 2006) There is also more sociological and anthropological research predominantly about fashion

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models and the fashion industry, but while these do regularly gather interviews with models and agencies, they often (of course rightfully) tend to focus on exploitation and body politics. (Basberg Neumann 2017, Colaiacomo 2011, Entwistle 2004, 2009, Philips 2006[2], Soley-Beltran 2006) Missing in these narratives is a philosophical investigation into the process of posing itself as a body practice. My argument in this art philosophical paper fits in a wider endeavour to construct an aesthetics of posing, which opens up the way to new considerations about the dynamics surrounding posing – one of these is the reflection that posing can constitute a skilful, performative practice in its own right. I focus on the 'living' pose as the model holds it, which manifests earlier in the creative process. Rather than the model purely functioning as a passive artist's instrument, I aim to unpick the key differences in poses to demonstrate qualities that render certain models skilful, creative agents who actively contribute to the art making process.

My working definition of a pose should clarify how I view them: when one holds a pose, one takes on *an intentional physical configuration that communicates something to a spectator, with the aim of being registered.* The pose therefore highlights and emphasises aspects of an integrated body-subject, the model, regarding her form, movement,

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[2] Sarah Philips is a small exception here; she conducted a series of interviews with life models in Portland. So far, she is the only sociologist I encountered who focussed on life models, rather than the fashion or more general commercial photography.

presence, etc. within a restricted temporal sequence of art making**.** The pose in such an artistic context is the conscious performance and magnification of particular features *of* and *by* the model's body to a spectator. This consists of an immediate spectator (the artist in the studio), as well as a delayed spectator (the later audience of the created artwork), and by extension an imaginary spectator: it is entirely possible to pose for oneself or with an audience in mind. Despite the perceived stillness of the pose, take the case of long life model poses, I regard posing to be a very active and physically intense action that the model endures and maintains. Others may disagree here; Spinicci states that the pose is a moment of "temporary inaction", and while he does allow posing to be intentional, he considers it 'sitting still' with a suspension of daily activity as its core quality. (Spinicci 2009, p. 47-48) I argue instead that when we think about the hour-long pose of the life model, or the portrait-sitter, considering that she poses the same bodily form throughout that hour, the pose becomes increasingly physically demanding of her body. She must actively maintain the same physical form in order to avoid dropping any muscles and as such collapsing the pose. A pose therefore is not a moment of inaction, but can be considered more like a peculiar active stillness, or (I suspect the best way to look at it) a *magnification* since it draws attention to qualities of a particular bodily form which is actively held by the model.

So I speak of posing in terms of artistic creation, the contexts I think

about are those poses in visual art media such as painting, drawing, sculpting, photography, and even fashion runways. I'm less interested in 'conventional poses' that we maintain in public, as we engage with others in accepted roles; from the adolescent who poses in the mirror, to presenting yourself in a particular way in a meeting with your boss. There is no necessary intention to create art, though the way in which we present ourselves can of course be creative, or transgress what is commonly accepted within a social setting.

2. Types of Poses

Before delving into a typology, it's worth clarifying three types of models to cover the main contexts of visual art making: these are the life model, the photographic model, and the portrait-sitter. The life model context is bound to traditional arts, in which she poses for life drawing, painting, and sculpting alike. The duration of posing can range from very brief two minute, five minute poses all the way to twenty minutes, one hour, or longer. These poses are quite different compared to photography as a medium. There is a temporal difference, the camera allows for a quick succession of poses with its much faster shutter speed, and therefore engages in a different mode of inventing and selecting suitable poses. The sitter always sits for a portrait, made in any visual arts medium. The reason I

do include a sitter is because the practice of portrait-making, and portrait-sitting, stands out from the contexts of the life and photographic models, regardless of the medium used to create the portrait. The sitter's pose is highly dependent on the limits and expectations of this art genre in particular, since portrait poses function to support portraiture's focus on revealing something about its sitter – such as appearance, or character, etc. Portrait sitters tend to be the portrait's commissioner as well, and are therefore likely not professional models.

Proposing a core typology of poses forms the next step in pinpointing the creative dynamics in which some models as body-experts bring their own ideas to the posing session, and recognise that they employ a range of skills to accomplish this.

I distinguish between three different types of poses based on who determines the invention of the pose. I call these *the guided pose*, *the self-improvised pose*, and *the collaborative pose*. These distinctions depend on the immediate relationship between creative agency and who influences the making of the pose. These categories don't necessarily rely on the models that I differentiated. Any of these models can potentially dip into one of the three different types of poses depending on circumstance, but I will show that in certain contexts it is more likely that a model is for example more on the guided or collaborative end. The model, the artist, or both of them, can be creative agents in different capacities. It's also important to highlight that

the pose is constructed in and for a process of looking. The artist looks at the posing body and projects it into an artwork, in which it enters a further dynamic of looking that incorporates the (delayed) spectator's gaze. The subsequent aesthetic engagement of viewers with the final product, the artwork, is very much rooted in the spectators' sense of sight. This interplay can be anticipated and thus incorporated by the posing model.

First comes the 'guided pose', in which the artist imposes a particular bodily configuration on the model. This more passive, guided subject has a particular bodily configuration imposed on them. It is important to note, however, that such a passive arrangement of the pose exists while still being actively executed by the sitter. Take for example the posing context of a portrait sitter. She feels uncertain about how to hold herself, as she is not used to posing, and possibly lacks the confidence or insight to come up with a successful posing strategy - which is usually something the artist helpfully directs. The resulting pose is directly related to the artist's own creative vision and ability to direct the subject, but the subject of course still actively holds the pose. Other situations where the pose is guided are those where a professional model is subjected to a tight format and artist's vision, and not allowed to give any personal input. Oftentimes in the case of catalogue models, they must act as a true 'mannequin', a doll who understands the required kinds of poses for that particular brand, while having little say over dress, or how the brand's vision is communicated. However, this does not

mean that she is incapable of generating poses of her own. Another example is a life model in an art academy's anatomy class: if the class tutor requires her lower body to be posed in a particular form to enhance the students' understanding of human legs, then she doesn't get to bring much input and is therefore guided.

Second is the 'self-improvised pose', which rather than guided by the artist, is instead wholly generated by the model. Think for example of those supermodels who achieved a celebrity status. They represent themselves as a brand, and are in charge of their own creative process during shoots. The self-improvised pose is an instance of posing expertise in an environment that welcomes its creative input. Some famous names are Twiggy, Naomi Campbell, Cindy Crawford, Kate Moss, as well as many others who are hired precisely for the posing expertise they bring to the scene. This arrangement is present in life drawing groups too: the life model usually retains full control over the poses she takes on for the group, unless there may be any special requests, and only needs to consider offering a good variety of poses within the given timings for each pose.[3]

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[3] This is a general set of indications to exemplify how one can think about a good variety of life model poses for drawing groups: for a start, the model ensures that throughout the session there is a balance between standing, sitting, and lying down poses. Shorter timings allow for very dynamic poses that are physically intensely demanding, while longer timings require poses that the model is able to hold for that longer period and so often end up being gentler on the body. It is also helpful for her to alternate displaying her front, back, and sides, bearing in mind that people may sit in a circle around her (or

Lastly, I introduce the 'collaborative pose', which is the most common type of pose among posing expert models. The model injects her own creativity into the session, in addition to the artist's creative goals. She conceives of *what* she projects into the space, and *how*. A mutual contribution to the artwork is achieved when the artist relies on the model for her own creative contribution and invention, through which she becomes a collaborator of the artist. This collaborative posing functions as a middle ground between the input of the model, which in this collaborative case is always met by the artist's own vision, and the shared focus on their collaboration and mutual searching for the artistic approach that will ultimately result in the artwork they work towards.

3. The Skilled Pose

The creatively more interesting types are the self-improvised and collaborative poses. I will argue that they are more valuable precisely because they reserve greater creative contributions from the model.

Gaut offers a convincing framework of creativity and its connection to skill in his essay "Creativity and Skill". Different in his approach is the idea that that which adds something special to otherwise ordinary instances of

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another arrangement depending on the space) – people might move around, though it's helpful if the model rotates to present different views.

making a thing, is the presence of 'flair' in this process. His key claim is that flair also involves a kind of skill. He voices these initial premises to avoid including those cases where something might be produced by a totally mechanical search procedure, or cases that are wholly accidentally made. He does note however, that there is a role for serendipity as "the skillful exploitation of chance, rather than chance alone producing something." (Gaut, 2009, p. 86) This role of chance clicks with his notion of flair: to go back to posing, the model achieves something very different and creatively stronger when she poses with flair, compared to when she would simply execute a standard set of poses. Furthermore, creativity is compatible with goal-directedness. Namely, one can further refine the set goal and be creative in this way, or one can figure out particularly suited means to achieve the goal. His concept of creativity also allows for a more passive welling-up of inspiration, for example, and indeed the aforementioned role of chance: creativity isn't necessarily bound to a rigid teleological origin, or any necessary condition of goal-directedness. Most crucially of interest to understanding the pose as a creative act is this inclusion of skill, which helps justify how some poses are more creatively interesting than others.

He lists four markers of skill; it firstly is a special capacity in some area or activity that isn't universally shared or possessed by everyone who engages in this activity. Second, skills are considered an accomplishment, which the close relation of meaning between the word 'skilled' and

'accomplished' also reveals. Third, one can practice skills, which leads us to the fourth and last marker: skills are learned, rather than purely natural, abilities. Creative abilities fit in these markers of skill, not only because being creative is rooted in a domain that is special and considered an accomplishment, but also because being creative can be practised; "When one practices an activity in which one is creative, one can thereby practice the skills of creativity." (Gaut 2009, p. 95)

This, too, works for posing. It is clear that not everyone has an innate ability to pose when confronted with a camera. We tend to admire those people who are able to pose successfully, such as recognising the accomplishments of famous supermodels, or social media figures. Poses can be practised; there exist special model schools to train one to become a fashion model specifically, but also for those different kinds of poses – and anyone who didn't attend such a school – models practice in front of the mirror or a video recorder to get a sense of how they are appearing, and the ways in which they can enhance their posing. Not to forget that the sheer act of posing itself in various posing sessions will also lead to further honing the model's own sense of posing, and dealing with artistic or bodily challenges. This also comprises the fourth marker, namely that one can learn to pose and present oneself, it's not a natural ability – but some people may indeed be naturally more at ease with posing. This isn't to say that it remains something that can be improved simply by engaging with the

creative act and becoming better acquainted with the relevant skills.

In addition to linking creativity to skill and subsequent learning, he also involves the importance of particular attitudes and values. Gaut gives the example that a person can have creative ability, but be terrible at exercising this skill because they don't dare to take the risks involved in being creative if they feel too shy. Creativity is intertwined with an attitude of courage, and a form of play as well. Interestingly, the reason we value creative skills is firstly because "creative persons exhibit a kind of freedom, they are not bound by routines, but they can stand back from them, consider whether they are for the good, and act in a way that is goal-directed but not routinized", and secondly, because such a non-routinized activity results in taking a risk. Creative acts aren't governed by routine, and therefore lack a pre-determined outcome or reliability in this sense, and so become inherently risky. A key virtue of being creative then is the person's courage which manifests throughout their creative activity, as they aim to achieve something valuable and are "knowingly prepared to take risks to achieve it". It is this freedom that is also connected to the mentioned play: free play can transform one procedure governed by particular routines into a different procedure - it allows for creativity to be exercised. (Gaut 2009, p. 101-102)

The difficulty of posing, and a key point for creative recognition, is the model's ability to adapt. She takes into account the artist, the artwork that doesn't yet exist, later spectators, and any other factors to which she

continuously adapts. Posing comprises an intriguing combination of ongoing, spontaneous series of movements that are controlled by the skilled model with very purposeful body-knowledge in order to explore the best posing approach for that particular session. Much like Gaut's creativity, posing is often a goal-directed experimenting through which the model searches for the suitable poses. However, even if there is no clear goal, the session provides a moment to experiment and take risks because this search is unstable due to the unknown desired outcome she is working towards. The sense of play that Gaut described is present, and a key component of posing. Much like letting your mind wander and seeing which ideas bubble up, posing provides a bodily reflection of a similar process. It is a conscious, courageous act of creativity that aims to find the best approach by going through the (literal) motions. This level of outstanding creative insight and execution, is reflected in cases like the British supermodel Twiggy who helped shape the model industry with her androgynous physique and innovative poses. It also exists further in the past; the early 19th century celebrity male model Cadamour dominated Parisian academies and studios with his expertise. He was highly sought-after for his physique and posing skill, and unlike other impoverished models, he had the financial stability to turn down artists that were not of interest to him to work with. (Waller 2006, p. 29-32) Models who are such intensive collaborators not just be physically, but also emotionally involved in the creative process, they take

risks, and embed the creative moment with their own artistic input – which can be collaborative with the artist, or entirely self-improvised.

4. Effortlessness as a Marker of Success

I want to finalise very briefly on the notion of 'effortlessness' as a consequence of skilful posing. Closely connected to the model's display of a particular form – as if she were always like that appearance and only that – is indeed this importance of effortlessness or *sprezzatura* (Castiglione, [1588] 1974). The guise of ease is crucial in appreciating a standard of posing expertise that is then often perceived as a more innate natural flair. This perception of 'unposed' poses can be the result of the model's actual ease in posing, it could be literally effortless, or rather appear effortless due to the skilful display put up by the model. These two forms of effortlessness can of course be further facilitated by the artist's efforts in representing the model, though I insist that in many cases (especially for self-improvised and collaborative poses) I consider it a testimony of the model's posing expertise. A badly, or otherwise visually uncomfortably posed model, will much less likely result in an effortless appearance regardless of the artist's own approach to representing her.

Effortlessness is closely connected to skill. A skilled action displays the agent's knowledge, and is guided by knowledge that manifests

possession of skill during the relevant activity. It is however still possible to manifest skill by deciding not to display it in a typical way. For example, only a skilled sportsman can lose deliberately without it being apparent that he is doing this on purpose. (Stanley and Wiliamson, p.) Applied to posing, we encounter an intriguing marker of successful posing when that posing looks effortless: giving the impression that it is not the result of skill, but instead natural ability. The model in this way sustains a disposition to the act of posing, which exhibits their knowledge of the things required to pose well.

Montero argues that effortlessness relates to three aspects of a work: the medium, representation, and process. This can also constitute bodily movement. Rather than thinking that only smooth, flowing, and predictable actions could result in an effortless action, she thinks along the lines of *efficient movement*. She gives the example that effortlessness in dance is about the lack of superfluous muscle tensions. Effortlessness then pinpoints how something difficult is accomplished with ease. She identifies an objective, apparent, and intentional ease as three forms of effortlessness. One difficulty is that in many art forms supposedly objective effortlessness is actually not appreciated, and may negatively impact one's impression of the piece as being too easy, or even uncared for. What is key, is really the "guise of ease", a deliberate creation of supposed ease. Relevant to the perception of effortlessness is a "proprioceptive sympathy" as Montero

coins it, as well as feeling in awe upon witnessing such a reveal of the performer's superfluity of fitness. Effortless movements are therefore pleasurable and beautiful to watch. (Montero 2016, p. 182-190)

I am sympathetic to Montero's insights about effortlessness in various forms, as well as spectators' appreciation of the guise of ease. What looks to be more difficult is that she specifies a certain kind of beauty as pleasurable, and the focus on the performer's bodily fitness as sufficient to be in awe and consider the performance pleasurable to watch. I suspect that there are different kinds of beauty, but equally importantly, different kinds of effortlessness that don't need to result in feeling in awe at the performer's physique, or feeling particularly sympathetic on a proprioceptive level. Applying this to posing, a fashion model can look effortlessly 'heroin-chic' in photographs due to her posing skill, she likely displays a very thin frame, and the work by a make-up artist to apply the right cosmetics for that look. This isn't about a superfluity of fitness, nor is it about a conventional beauty, or a proprioceptive sympathising with her pose. Her pose is interesting much like a dance performance might be, though of course it is static in the photograph. It doesn't seem necessary to identify the physicality we witness as spectators with our very own. Crucial is indeed the guise of ease, which conceals the skill and effort required to pose – a marker of the model's success. She is likely not an actual heroin addict, and is instead a skilled fashion model who displays a much darker, less fitness or health-

based kind of beauty. Poses that look like they require a lot of effort might be perceived as painful, uncomfortable, perhaps not a good choice – and this is also why portraitists are keen to guide their sitters to achieve a pose that works for them. Crucial about posing as a skill is the ability to creatively anticipate all these external factors into the posing session, with the bodily effort that brings forth the pose, to figure out the suitable pose that works for both the model and that particular process of art making.

I proposed three categories of posing, the guided, self-improvised, and collaborative poses, to make better sense of posing as a skill with far-reaching potential for creative contribution. The model participates with integrated posing expertise: an all-round insight in the artistic concepts and directions the project takes, but crucially, she draws on profound, physical posing skill. The model experiments with her poses, she anticipates the way the artist beholds her, as well as any potential resulting representations and their audiences. As a creative agent, she steers the art making process through her own skilled posing expertise.

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Seeing Things in Pictures: Is a Depicted Object a Visible Thing?

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ABSTRACT. When you look at a picture, what can you see? To say that in this scenario the surface of the object in front of you is *all you can see* raises suspicion: when we look at pictures, we typically see what they depict, and this seems to constitute a richer experience than that of simply seeing a surface, even a surface marked in some way. But to say that you can see the object depicted can seem just as perplexing, if we lack an understanding of what depicted objects are, and the nature of their visibility, or the perceptual capacity that enables us to see them. In this paper I propose to understand them as the *looks* of marked surfaces of a certain kind, and I characterize the ability to see how things look as a distinctive perceptual skill.

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Figure 1: Xu Beihong, 1941.

The main question that concerns me in this paper is: what do pictures, as vehicles for a distinctive kind of representation ("depiction"), contribute to our visual lives? Or, more plainly: what sort of experience can you have when you look at a picture? Even more plainly: when you look at a picture, what can you see?

Imagine the picture is the one whose image is reproduced here, made

by the Chinese artist Xu Beihong in 1941, with ink and watercolor on paper. What you are looking at is a thin, opaque object, whose broad, flat surface supports a configuration of marks made with pigment. If we imagine that it's right in front of you, and illuminated well, this description strikes us as a plausible characterization of what you can see when you look at it. But does it give us *all you can see*? We might hesitate to say yes, given that this object depicts a galloping horse, and when you look at it you can see that it does – you can see it as depicting what it does. There are plenty of objects with marked surfaces that do not depict anything, and the perceptual experience they afford seems to be in some way impoverished in comparison to the experience of seeing something like Xu's painting as depicting what it does. Yet it proves difficult to say just how this experience is enriched – to say in what sense, if any, pictures give us the opportunity to see more than what lies on their surfaces.

Wittgenstein expresses the frustration that one can feel in thinking about this question in a remark in *Philosophy of Psychology*. He asks:

> When I see the picture of the galloping horse – do I only *know* that this is the
> kind of movement meant? Is it superstition to think I *see* the horse galloping
> in the picture? – and does my visual impression gallop too? (175)

The first question suggests one way of accounting for the intuition that seeing something as depicting what it does is enriched in virtue of the

involvement of depiction. It is not just a matter of seeing the picture, but also knowing something about it: what it "means," or depicts. Perhaps this is something one is in a position to know, in virtue of seeing the picture – something one is able to "figure out" on that basis. But it does not entail some additional thing that one is in a position to *see*. What is visible in this context is nothing other than the depicting surface.

Wittgenstein's second question expresses encouragement of this view, by suggesting that to think otherwise would be to succumb to magical thinking of some kind.[2] What kind of magic? One candidate is that this combination of pigment and paper, by some alchemy, conjure a horse. Perhaps they transform into a horse, or perhaps they summon a horse from somewhere else, and then vanish. It would certainly be superstitious to think *that*.

But is there any non-superstitious way of holding that in this kind of context, the depicted object counts as visible? There is one well-respected philosopher who maintained this, namely Richard Wollheim. According to him, when we find out what a picture depicts just by looking at it, this is because in doing so we can see the object it depicts – in a perfectly respectable sense of "see." It is a special visual ability that enables us to do

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[2] To be clear: I am not suggesting an interpretation of Wittgenstein as holding that "I only know" what a picture depicts. My point here is that the second question seems intended to bring out a way of thinking that could motivate that stance – a way of thinking that Wittgenstein may well reject. For a very under-developed suggestion about the stance that Wittgenstein's full discussion of this phenomenon points to, see the following footnote.

so, but the ability and the experience it enables is one we can make sense of, without falling under any spell of superstition.

I'll now present Wollheim's attempt to make this intelligible. Then I'll consider certain common objections to his way of going about this, and criticize them with the aim of distinguishing more clearly where his account goes wrong. Then, I'll suggest a way forward: we should draw on the concept of an image, as well as certain ways of thinking about visual appearances, to vindicate the idea that depicted objects are visible when we look at the things that depict them.

1.

According to Wollheim, depiction, or pictorial representation (he sometimes calls it "representation" for short), he claims, is "to be understood through, though not exclusively through, a certain species of seeing" (Wollheim 1980, 205). This species of seeing is precisely the kind of experience we have been considering: seeing something as depicting what it does.[3]

Wollheim deploys an interesting strategy for pinpointing the kind of

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[3] Though Wollheim thinks we are to understand depiction through this kind of experience, we must keep in mind that its occurrence is not something that any picture guarantees. This is not just because something could be a picture without ever being seen, but also because viewers can fail to perceive the pictures they see as depicting anything, and they can also misperceive what any given picture depicts. But the kind of experience in question is something that any picture must make possible.

experience in question. He tries to point to a broader class, or "genus" to which it belongs, and then to say what distinguishes it from other "species" in that genus. Thus Wollheim attempts to characterize the experience of seeing something as depicting what it does by locating it in a broader phenomenological framework. He constructs this framework by way of comparisons: by picking out examples of various kinds of visual experience, and articulating their similarities and differences in a way that identifies their theoretically significant characteristics.

Ultimately, Wollheim classifies seeing things in pictures as a species of a *perceptual* genus. That is, everything that belongs to it is a form of seeing, or visual perception, a sub-category of the "family" that contains seeing in general, or as such. To make his case, he starts by referring us to various forms of experience that count as species within the genus of interest.[4] One is "the seeing appropriate to photographs," or seeing photographs "as photographs." Another is "the perception of Rorschach tests." What Wollheim has in mind here is the *taking* of Rorschach tests –

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[4] Wollheim claims that it is easier to get a grip on the idea of the species than it is to get a grip on the idea of the genus to which it belongs. That is, he thinks it is easier to pick out the important differences between the various species of the genus than it is to get a sense of how they are importantly similar, or how they are united by a shared contrast with other genera (Wollheim 1980). I'm not sure if I share that assessment, but in any case, in this talk I'll be focusing on the part of the project that Wollheim thinks is more difficult – characterizing the genus, rather than distinguishing its species.

which involves looking at cards printed with "ink blots"[5] and being asked "What might this be?" A final example is an activity that Leonardo da Vinci recommends to aspiring painters in his Trattato: gazing at a "damp-stained wall" or "stones of broken color" and "discerning there" things like "scenes of battle or violent action and mysterious landscapes" (Wollheim 1980, 218).

These cases are gathered together as prima facie analogous in some theoretically important way. In an attempt to state explicitly what that is, Wollheim coins two terms that have since become central to philosophical discussion of depiction. He says that what unites their phenomenology is that it is "twofold," or exhibits "twofoldness." Though many writers have taken up this term and weighed in on whether our encounters with pictures really do have this feature, it is quite difficult to state what it means. In part, it signifies that the experience is one of seeing *two things*. But it is not just any such experience – the experience of seeing a *pair* of things (e.g. two shoes) would not count as having a "twofold phenomenology" as Wollheim intends the term. To distinguish it, he focuses on the *structure* of the experience. It is a matter of seeing something whose visibility is "generated and sustained" by seeing another. His name for our experience with this

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[5] The cards have not actually had ink blotted on them; they are reproductions of shapes that Rorschach made and selected to form a standard collection on the basis of experiment with the examination of schizophrenic patients.

structure is "seeing-in."[6]

So the things seen on an occasion of "seeing-in" must not only be two in number, they must also exhibit a certain relationship, or play complementary roles, in the experience. Though they are distinct things, they cannot be seen without having an experience of this structure; seeing the second must come along with seeing the first. [7] Wollheim expresses this in later work by saying that seeing-in is an experience with two aspects, one which he labels the "recognitional fold" and the other the "configurational fold."

Wollheim also picks out the genus by relating it to certain fundamental perceptual capacities. He says it presupposes what he calls "straightforward perception," which is "the capacity that we humans and other animals have of perceiving things that are present to the senses" (Wollheim 1980, 217).[8] But this does not exhaust what perception is for us,

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[6] The phenomenon get this name from the fact that it can be referred to by the locution "seeing one thing in another"; but Wollheim cautions that his account does not draw much on the grammar of our talk about depiction and related phenomena.

[7] We can't say that neither thing can be seen without seeing the other, because it is possible to see a picture without seeing what it depicts. But that does not mean that the experience of seeing both contains as an element some experience of seeing the picture, which could occur independently.

[8] Wollheim adds a wager about the best way to understand its nature: "Any single exercise of this capacity is probably best explained in terms of the occurrence of an appropriate perceptual experience and the correct causal link between the experience and the thing or things perceived" (Wollheim 1980, 217). The appeal of a "causal theory of perception," discussed at length in chapter 1, no doubt plays a role in motivating Wollheim's treatment of the experience of seeing a depiction. But I will read and evaluate

and that we are also endowed with a "special perceptual capacity," which "allows us to see things not present to the senses" (Wollheim 1980, 217). Seeing-in is the result, or the reward, of exploiting that capacity.[9]

2.

Does this provide us with a way of maintaining that we can see the horse galloping in Xu's picture, in the face of Wittgenstein's worry about superstition? Many of Wollheim's readers have thought not. For the most part they've focused on his explication of "twofoldness," and found him to be unjustifiedly "quietist" about what it amounts to.

For example, Malcolm Budd objects that there is a "lacuna in the account" Wollheim gives, in that the nature of the experience of the depicted object "has been left blank, and it is difficult to see how it could possibly be filled in" (Budd 2008, 196). He arrives there by considering two

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Wollheim's claims about depiction as independent of any commitment on the role of causation in perception.

[9] Wollheim thinks of this capacity as somehow related to other visual phenomena: "If we seek the most primitive instances of the perceptual capacity with which seeing-in is connected, a plausible suggestion is that they are to be found in dreams, day-dreams, and hallucinations" (Wollheim 1980, 217). But these are not cases of seeing-in, since they "arise simply in the mind's eye," where as seeing-in "come[s] about through looking at things present" (Wollheim 1980, 218). The fact that Wollheim seems to consider these cases of *seeing* is puzzling. Hallucination may be *seeming* to see, and day-dreaming or visualizing may amount to *imagining* seeing. But in none of these cases do viewers see anything – much less something that is not present to the senses.

options for saying what kind of experience it is. The first is to equate it with an illusion of the presence of something that is not there – an experience "indistinguishable by the subject from a corresponding instance of face-to-face seeing" (Budd 2008, 196). But this won't do, because that would be incompatible with seeing the marked surface for what it is, and (thus) incompatible with the experience of seeing something as depicting what it does (Wollheim argues for this himself). The alternative to this, Budd says, is to equate it with "the second principle form of experiential visual awareness – visualizing what is not present to the eyes" – imagining seeing something (Budd 2008, 197). Budd thinks that this is not apt either.

But the question of the aptness of either of these phenomenological proposals (assimilation to illusion or visualization) should not arise, given how Wollheim has presented his view. He has said that the experience of seeing something in a picture is a member of a certain *perceptual* genus – a certain kind of *seeing*. Illusion (seeming to see) and visualization (imagining seeing[10]) are categories of visual experience that each contrast with the "genuinely" perceptual (seeing). The conceit of Wollheim's framework is that the category of seeing itself admits of philosophically significant divisions (and that within those there are further ones as well). If the framework is acceptable, we should not expect the concepts that distinguish between experiences at the broader level of visual experience to be fit for

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[10] Perhaps, to imagine the visible as such is not necessarily to imagine seeing.

making the distinctions within the category of seeing.

This kind of objection suggests that Wollheim's point in identifying seeing-in as a "perceptual genus" goes unrecognized by many readers. And the confusion that results from this distracts from a different problem with his view. Wollheim's primary way of distinguishing seeing-in from straightforward perception, and for distinguishing its recognitional from its configurational aspect, is to claim that it is not only an experience of seeing a marked surface, it is also an experience of seeing something not present to the senses.[11] And the idea of this kind of vision constitutes a magical strand in Wollheim's thinking. It is different from the forms of superstition about pictures that I outlined earlier: thinking that there are ways of combining things like pen and paper to forge instances of things like horses and mountains, or to summon them from elsewhere. Here, the idea seems to be that the things pictures depict are there to see, when we look at those pictures, but they are not there in our midst – they are visible, but they occupy some kind of distinct realm that is discontinuous with our surroundings. But this idea is objectionable in much the same way as the others: it effectively assimilates the seeing of depicted objects to the seeing of things in crystal balls. In reality, it is a matter of conceptual fact that you see only what is present to your senses; to see something just is for it to be

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[11] It is not that it contains these two as elements, it simply is itself both – it is *the experience* of seeing *two such things*, one made visible by seeing the other.

present to your visual sense.

But that does not speak against the view that there is an important difference between two structures of visual perceptual experience, which can help us to understand what happens when we see something as depicting what it does. Nor does it rule out that the difference is made by the visibility of something in addition to a marked surface – that the experience of seeing something as depicting what it does entails seeing two things, one of them a depicted object. But what sort of thing *is* a depicted object? Wollheim's set up points to a way of homing in on an answer: subsuming the experience of seeing it under a broader, but still distinctive, kind of perceptual experience. The way forward from there does not lie in coining more technical terminology, nor in the acceptance of mysterious forms of visual experience. Rather, it lies in considering the variety of examples identified as instances of it, and looking for the right *familiar* terms to express how they are united. Specifically, I suggest, it involves considering the familiar concept of an image: a depicted object is one species of the broader genus of objects of images. We can unpack that further by connecting it to with some observations about the structure of seeing thing's visual appearances.

3.

We've already noted that the kind of experience in question involves

looking at marked surfaces. In his book on photography as an image-making technology, Patrick Maynard provides the following explication of the relationship between marks and images, which I'll rely on in what follows. Images (of the kind under discussion), he says, are made of marks. But, he points out, we should not think of an image as a *kind of mark*. This is because:

> Clearly, *unmarked* parts of surfaces make up parts of images.[12] Therefore we should think of images, in many cases, as the marked surfaces themselves, or parts of them. (Maynard 1997, 26)

Not all marked surfaces constitute images, however. This is made clear by the fact that if something is an image, then there is something to be said about what it is an image *of* – and we are at a loss to say anything about what the average stretch of exposed wood grain is *of*. An image is a special *kind* of marked surface. But what's so special about it?

Another of Maynard's observations about images points us in a promising direction. Maynard suggests that images are "unities comprising both the marked and unmarked parts of the surface in a single overall appearance" (Maynard 1997, 28). This provides a way of distinguishing them – if what it is to have a "single overall appearance" is something that

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[12] The picture reproduced at the beginning of this chapter serves as an example of this.

only some marked surfaces can claim. If we think about what a thing's visual appearance is, we can understand how this is distinctive, and how it can account for something like the "twofold" phenomenology of "seeing-in."

A thing's visual appearance, or how it looks, is a matter of how it can be seen. This is determined by a variety of factors, most notably illumination, distance, orientation, and color contrast. It is a matter of how a viewer can manage to see it: in what circumstances, and how easily. A thing's visual appearance, or its look, is what makes it possible for us to see it. But we don't see things *by seeing how they look*. Nonetheless, a thing's visual appearance is visible: it is there to be seen, when the thing that has it is there in our midst. But it is hard to see, relative to the thing that has it. It is something we see upon inspection of something we have in view anyway.

I suggest we take images, then, to be surfaces marked in the following way: such that not only are they visible, and highly salient, they have a highly salient visual appearance. The elements of an image – the marks and the unmarked parts of this kind of surface – are *unified* in such a way that how the surface looks is particularly easy to see. The distance between what it takes to see them and what it takes to see how they look is smaller than it is with other things; so that when we encounter them, we are liable to be struck by how they look. In short, with images, it is relatively easy to see how they look.

So, now we can characterize the "genus" of perception that our experience of pictures belongs to by identifying it with the perception of images as the kind of images they are. This contrasts with "straightforward" perception in that it amounts to seeing not simply visible objects, but visual appearances. We can also use this understanding of images to characterize the two things whose simultaneous visibility accounts for the fact that what is seen on [these occasions is "twofold": the former is a marked surface (of a certain kind), and the latter is the visual appearance of that marked surface.

If there is something odd about saying that seeing how the marked surface looks involves seeing something other than the marked surface itself, it is because the latter doesn't involve looking at anything other than the marked surface itself. The look of the surface is not something that sits on top of or alongside it; it does not occupy another place at which to direct one's gaze. But this is because the look is not the same sort of visible object as the marked surface that has it. It does not mean that it is not a distinct thing, nor does it mean that it is not *there to be seen*, in a perfectly good sense of those words.

This analysis also allows us to understand the intimate relationship between these two objects of sight, or the way in which we experience seeing one *in virtue of seeing* the other. A marked surface makes its own appearance visible, insofar as we would not be able to see the look of the surface if the surface itself were not there. Moreover, it is clearly in virtue of

seeing the surface that we manage see how it looks. In that way their relationship is quite different from that of an opaque object and the light that illuminates it (or an opaque object and the mirror it is reflected in), even though one may see the first in virtue of the second.

This way of thinking about seeing something as depicting what it does diverges from Wollheim's in certain ways, but despite that it upholds some of his core commitments. It maintains the idea that the experience is fundamentally a form of visual perception, in that it involves *seeing* a depicted object, not merely knowing what a picture depicts. I have deployed Wollheim's general strategy of subsuming pictorial perception under a broader genus, and connected that "genus" to a fundamental perceptual capacity. But the perceptual capacity I have pointed to is not that of seeing things that aren't present, but the capacity to see how things look.

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Perceiving Authenticity:
Style Recognition in Aesthetic Appreciation

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ABSTRACT. Since the mid-Sixties, philosophers have debated over the aesthetic value of authentic art-objects and their perfect replicas. Originalists argue that authenticity, the quality of an object being of undisputed origin or authorship, is a *necessary* condition for aesthetic experience, since appreciating an artwork presupposes its correct identification. Anti-originalists retort that there is no aesthetic reason to favor originals over visually-indistinguishable duplicates. To this extent, they claim, the need for authenticity is a matter of case by case evaluation. Drawing from this debate, I argue that judgment of authenticity is not a primary source for aesthetic appreciation. There are instances, however, in which authenticity does intrude upon aesthetic evaluation, namely when *style recognition* is involved. In these cases, errors in attribution reduce the object's impact and jeopardize aesthetic appreciation altogether.

This paper is about the notion of style and the role style plays in the context of art appreciation, with particular regard to the notion of aesthetic authenticity. I will argue that style recognition gives us a way – although only a 'derivative' way, one requiring at least some mediation by art history – to make authenticity *perceptible* in aesthetic appreciation. As we shall see, style is taken here as a kind of symbolic system capable of exemplifying, by

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means of displaying, the various artistic, cultural, and historic meanings that lie behind any work of art. This is consistent with Alois Riegl's notion of *Kunstwollen*, artistic will, as devised in his classic essay *Stilfragen* (Problems of Style) from 1893. When a work is identified as an instance of a given artistic style, the particular artistic meanings or *Wollen* underlying the object is grasped by the viewer via its manifest stylistic properties. Were the object to be proved inauthentic, this would cause deception jeopardising the viewer's experience altogether.

1. Introduction

Let us start with a simple thought experiment. Imagine the picturesque old town of an ancient European city. This would be a piece of human artistry that has managed to survive for centuries under the tear and wear caused by time, flourishing in the constant overlapping of different tastes and styles. Pastel-coloured 16th century buildings topped with red tiled roofs surround delightful little squares filled with small shops and cafes with outdoor tables. Ahead of them, an imposing 18th century catholic church dominates the crowdy late-baroque market place, where the smell of Oriental spices blends with the scent of freshly baked bread. Imagine now that all of a sudden, a terrible war ruinously destroys the whole place. The beautiful houses, the impressive churches, the nice charming little squares: everything

is reduced to rubble in just a few days. Luckily, however, once peace is finally restored, a decision is taken to rebuild the city as exactly as it looked before the war, with all its lovely spots and corners.

The question is: is this decision problematic at all? Some people might claim that it is not: what is valuable was the *look* of the city and now it looks precisely as it looked before. Yet for many others things would be more complicated than that. What is valuable was the historical town, the authentic witness of a lost human past. What we have now is just a Disney-like replica of the original city. Something has been lost in this process. But what exactly has been lost? Notice that we are assuming that none could tell the difference between the before and the after.

If we can answer that, we are on the right track to discover what it is that we find valuable about authentic artworks. In many circumstances, originals are valued more than reproductions, even if there is no obvious difference between them and even if reproductions could offer a more rewarding experience than the originals themselves. Why is it so? Is it just snobbery? This ties into the broader question of why details of an object's history should make any difference to how the object is aesthetically appreciated – a question at the core of one of the most long-standing philosophical discussions ever, that revolving around art and authenticity.[2]

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[2] See Goodman (1968), Ch. 3: 'Art and Authenticity'. For an overview of the debate see also, among the others, Goodman (1986); Dutton (1983); Wreen (2002); Kulka (2005).

The central question in the debate is simply, why should authenticity affect our aesthetic appreciation of art? To this question, two main solutions have been offered in the literature. While some have argued that our preference for originals is justified (Sagoff 1978; Levinson 1989; Farrelly-Jackson 1997; Dutton 2003; Korsmeyer 2008), others have retorted that it is just fetishism, sentimental attachment, or, at its worst, plain snobbery (Lessing 1965; Zemach 1989; Jaworski 2013). Borrowing the terminology from Peter M. Jaworski (2013), I refer to the first position as 'Originalism', and to the second as 'Anti-originalism'.

2.1. Originalism

Originalists claim that authenticity – the quality of an object of being of undisputed origin – is essential for an artwork's identity and a prerequisite for it to have aesthetic value. Accordingly, it is also necessary for an artwork's correct appreciation, for only insofar as an artwork is authenticated can it be appreciated as "the product of an artistic process" (Sagoff 1978, p. 455).

One reason for this is that we do not appreciate an object simply for the sake of its appearance or for the feelings it induces, but for what it is, and for its production history (Sagoff 1978, p. 453). Knowledge of the process by which a product was created determines the way this product is

to be evaluated (Sagoff 1978, p. 456). If an original is different from a forgery, thus, it is because it is the endpoint of a unique creative act, whereas the forgery is not (Dutton 2003, p. 258).

Indeed, if an object is identified as an artwork rather than an artefact of a different kind, is in virtue of its context of creation and its relation to a certain artist – not in virtue of an intrinsic property it displays (Levinson 1989, p. 232). Authentic artworks are special to us because they are "internally related" (Farrelly-Jackson 1997, p. 144) to the individual who produced them. For example, we value the Mona Lisa as the embodiment of Leonardo's creative act – that is to say, as the actual site of his artistic achievement[3]. This creative act is what we want to be 'in touch' with (Korsmeyer 2012, p. 371) and it is what the duplicate lacks, though a duplicate may represent or betoken it (Levinson 2004, p. 15). Of course, reproductions and replicas can "perform immense service in apprising us of the look" of many artworks and "allowing us to renew or deepen our acquaintance with them", but this is no reason to think that such replicas "could ever *displace*" (Levinson 1987, *ibid*.) the authentic objects they derived from. This is why, according to originalists, a visit to the rebuilt old town of our thought experiment could never be considered equivalent to a

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[3] This, however, creates further problems, for what precisely this notion of embodiment refers to is uncertain. Moreover, it seems to make appeal to kind of superstition: the creed that there is some magical energy lurking, so to speak, in authentic works of art, granting us the possibility of entering into direct relationship with their artists.

visit to the true, historical town *before* destruction and reconstruction.

2.2 Anti-originalism

Anti-originalists, from an opposite perspective, argue that authenticity is only essential to an artwork's identity and aesthetic appreciation when it is so recognised by 'well-trained art critics' (Zemach 1986, p. 239; 1989, p. 67). Original artworks do not possess any art-relevant quality that perfect copies do not have (Jaworski 2013, p. 2), for there is no single feature that "*all* originals have in common, that make *every* original better than a duplicate, a copy" (Jaworski 2013, p. 13).[4] Therefore, when it comes to appreciating "a work of art as a work of art", an exact duplicate may be in principle "just as good as the original" (Jaworski 2013, p. 2).

Notice that, according to anti-originalists, this does not mean that an object's status as original is *always* aesthetically irrelevant. It is indeed important to distinguish anti-originalism from aesthetic empiricism. Aesthetic empiricists say: Since an original and the duplicate strike the senses in the same way, they deliver the same aesthetic experience: so why care about the difference? (see: Bell 1949; Lessing 1965; Battin 1979). The

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[4] Among these features, Jaworski (2013) lists: the influence that an original artwork, yet not the replica, may have had on subsequent art; the difference in meaning between the original and the duplicate; the idea that the original, but not the duplicate, is an instantiation of an original creative concept. According to him, however, none of these features gives us enough reason to justify our preference for originals.

discovery that a work is forged does not alter its perceivable qualities – hence it shouldn't bear any aesthetic significance. Anti-originalists, on the contrary, do not contend that an object's status as original is *always* aesthetically irrelevant, but that it takes, again, an art expert to discern in which case it is relevant and in which it isn't**.** In the case of an old city center destroyed by war, for instance, it is up to the people in charge of the reconstruction, say, the art historians and the conservators, to decide whether the shattered buildings can be replaced with replicas without detriment to the overall value of the site. The aesthetic relevance of authenticity is thus a matter of case-by-case evaluation. In this sense, attaching a special significance to originals regardless of the specific situation has nothing to do with aesthetics per se, but with something else – rarity, emotional attachment, faith. We cherish the original object because it is *that* object (Zemach 1989, p. 67), the one blessed with "the Midas Touch" of the artist (Jaworski 2013, p.14).

3. The Problem at Stake

We are confronted here with two opposing ways of interpreting the role of authenticity in aesthetic appreciation. Consider them again in the light of our initial case-study. A war occurs, reducing to rubble an old historic town: would a perfect rebuilding of the town, known to be such, be lacking

something, sufficient to render it less valuable altogether? Originalists claim that it would, since the town's authenticity – its relation to its history of production – is essential to its aesthetic appreciation. Indeed, originalists claim, we don't aesthetically appreciate the town simply for its appearance or effect, but for what it is – and how could we appraise something and not care what it is? Anti-originalists, conversely, argue that no a priori reason prevents the rebuild town from equating the original one, because, they maintain, authenticity is not (not always, at least) a condition for aesthetic appreciation. The problem, in essence, is that it is unclear whether our aesthetic appreciation of artworks or artistic sites has to do with the fact that these have been created at a certain time by a certain someone. Should history, background, origins – in a word, authenticity – count as proper sources for aesthetic appreciation?[5]

A possible strategy to tackle this otherwise treacherous question is to slightly modify its structure. To this extent, instead of asking whether or not authenticity *should* affect our appreciation of an artwork, we might try to figure out *how* it can do this, provided it actually can. The question then becomes: in what way can unperceivable factors like history, background, origins – factors that are responsible for the object's authenticity – become

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[5] Notice that two different questions are implied here: 'What makes an artwork valuable per se?' and 'What makes one artwork more valuable than another (supposedly) identical one?' Though the two questions are related, we are discussing here the second (i.e., the value we attribute to original artworks as opposed to reproductions) rather than the first (i.e., the value of art in general).

perceptually distinguishable in aesthetic appreciation? Of course, unlike standard aesthetic properties like form or color, proportion, balance, symmetry, etc., these features cannot be directly grasped from an object's surface appearance; but the issue is whether they can be appreciated *somehow*. My answer is that they *can* through identification of the object's relevant style features, where style, as I shall argue, indicates a symbolic system capable of expressing, by means of exemplification, cultural, social, historic meanings.

4. Style Recognition and Aesthetic Appreciation

Here we finally get to the notion of style. But what is style? According to Ernst Gombrich's (1968) classic formulation, style can be defined, in very broad terms, as "the distinctive visual appearance of an object, which is determined by the creative principles, inspiration and taste according to which something is designed". Richard Wollheim (1979, pp. 129-130) refines this definition by identifying two senses in which the concept occurs: we can talk of *individual style* to refer to the style of a singular artist (i.e. 'the style of Leonardo') and we can talk of *general style* to refer to the style of a period or artists' group within a period (i.e. 'Renaissance Art'). General style – which can be further divided into other sub-classes: (a) universal

style; (b) historical or period style; and (c) school style[6] – represents the 'common denominator' in the production of a time, something that is external to individuals and not a function of their own activities as artists. Interestingly, Wollheim's concept of 'general style' nicely fits what Riegl (1893/1993)[7] famously called *Kunstwollen*, 'artistic will' or 'will to art'– namely, the creative impulse to make art in a particular manner that drives the artistic production of one period, and is nourished by the historical and cultural values of the time. According to Riegl, art embodies itself in each age through aesthetic ideals that involve "a whole range of attitudes, values, ideologies" (Iversen, pp. 44-45). Different attitudes towards the world can found in this sense given realization in unique and non-repeatable stylistic types.

General style categories, like Riegl's notion of *Kunstwollen*, can be used taxonomically as a mean of organizing the variety of works and approaches that characterize the art of the past (Goodman 1975; 1978). But the interesting thing is that style is more than an instrument for the art historian – a device for sorting out what is considered distinctive in a particular moment of art history. Indeed, as Riegl explains, what is noteworthy about style is that stylistic patterns are able to transpose, as it

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[6] General style can be further divided in sub-classes (1) universal style; (2) historical or period style; and (3) school style Wollheim (1979, pp. 129-130). See also Robinson (1984) on this.

[7] Here and below, I refer to the 1993 English translation of Riegl's *Stilfragen*: *Grundlegungen zu einer Geschichte der Ornamentik*.

were, a period historical/cultural/artistic will into the artwork's perceptual characteristics: they translate this particular will into form, "shape and colour in the plane or space". To use current terminology, we could say that style 'exemplifies' this *Wollen* through aesthetically salient features– features that contribute to the object's aesthetic appreciation. For example, geometric patterns of ancient art exemplify much of the aesthetic feeling of the people who made it, and generally of how they framed their relationship to the world. This is because, according to Riegl (1993, pp. 53-83), in the earliest stages of mankind people had a defensive relationship towards the hostilities of nature, and so they framed their relation to the world in such a way as to keep the represented objects within tightly controlled boundaries. To this extent, the *Kunstwollen* determining ancient Egyptian art (and pyramids especially) is a will to create 'absolute' objects surrounded by space conceived as a void; this is achieved stylistically by sacrificing the third dimension, because depth tends to blur the boundaries between the object and the surrounding environment.

For Riegl, stylistic properties, although being contextually dependent properties, manifest themselves perceptually: they "show as well as say what they are about" (Genova 1979, p. 323). Style is thus tied to history as well as to the aesthetic impact of an object: to paraphrase Danto's famous expression, style brings artworks' history to their surfaces.

Interestingly, in more recent years a similar position towards style has

been defended by Nelson Goodman (1975, 1978). Goodman's approach emphasizes the double role that style plays in the process of both classifying and appreciating an artwork. On the one hand, Goodman argues, recognising style – a challenging endeavour requiring a 'knowing eye or ear' (Goodman 1975, p. 810) – allows us to attribute an artwork to one artist, period, region, etc. Style serves in this sense as "an individual or group signature" which helps us place the work in the appropriate context by answering questions such as: 'Who? When? Where?'. On the other hand, however, style identification is also integral to the understanding of artworks and of "the worlds they present" (Goodman 1975, p. 807) – the worldview of which such works are expressive. Style, according to Goodman, has direct aesthetic significance insofar as it tells us "the way the work is to be looked at" (Goodman 1978, p. 40) – thereby, it counts as a proper aesthetic property.

Relevantly, the idea that style attribution might have a great role to play in the context of aesthetic appreciation has recently found empirical validation. Psychological studies[8] have indeed attested that viewers with greater familiarity with recognising styles are more liable to undergo richer aesthetic experiences. This is because attribution of stylistic properties to the artwork provide them with information as to how the work is to be aesthetically evaluated. For a naïve viewer, a painting like, say, Cimabue's

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[8] See: Leder, Belke, Oeberst and Augustin (2004).

Maestà di Assisi, ca. 1285-1288, is just a depiction of a Madonna with the child Jesus. For an experienced viewer, it reveals a different meaning. She can classify the work as a Gothic masterpiece with specific iconographic properties. She might notice that the painting respects the principle of a single light source, unknown to previous painters, which makes the figures in space more realistic; she can spot the tapered hand shape of the Virgin, typical of the medieval Tuscan pictorial style; or observe that she is clothed in traditional colors – a red dress and blue mantle (now blackened) – but that she also wears an uncommon bright red cap. Finally, she can remark that the throne is depicted frontally, with both sides open like pages, as is generally the case in pre-perspective painting, but that it is unusually decorated with cosmatesque motifs. To understand and appreciate this artwork, the viewer may profit from all these stylistic features – provided, of course, that she is acquainted with that particular style and with the symbolic or iconographic code it entails. As a matter of fact, with increasing style expertise, appreciation shifts from mere description of 'what is depicted' to a classification in terms of complex art-specific properties. Information about style is thus relevant as it offers an unlimited pool of knowledge to improve the observers' perceptive discrimination skills in aesthetic experience. But style recognition also provides a further element to art appreciation: the capacity of generalisation and differentiation. Once the concept of an artistic style is learned, the viewer is able to classify new examples by

acknowledging similarities and differences with known artworks. Aesthetic perception can be strengthened or refined by testing against further cases: interesting qualities are revealed through the juxtaposition of works in a comparison. This, of course, require some explicit training, for although stylistic knowledge can also be acquired somehow implicitly – e.g., via repeated exposure to works that have a certain style[9] – the process of style-identification requires its outcome to be explained, and this involves mastering categories that can only be acquired via a formal education in art history.

5. Style, False-friends and Authenticity

So far, we have seen that attributing an artwork to the right stylistic period is crucial for aesthetic appreciation and impacts on the overall quality of the experience. But how does this relate to authenticity? The idea is that to be effective, identification in terms of style *requires* the object to be authentic – situated at the right place in the right event sequence. This, however, needs further explanation. We all know that stylistic features can be imitated. A

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[9] Implicit style learning requires also familiarity with a plurality of different styles. For example, while it is impossible to identify Mozart's style *without* having listened to at least a few of his works, it is also impossible to identify it having listened *only* to his works – in this sense, comparison appears to be one crucial mean for style learning. Interestingly, studies have also shown that implicitly acquired style increases simple preferences among viewers (Gordon and Holyoak 1983).

painter can paint a subject *à la manière de* Velázquez, a composer can write pieces that sound like Mozart or Vivaldi, and a sculptor can carve statues that resemble Canova's in every respect. Imitation 'in the style of', also known as *pastiche*, has been common artistic practice for centuries.[10] So in what sense is style tied to authenticity?

To understand this, we have to go back to Riegl's conception of style and how style works. As noticed before, the most important thing about style is, for Riegl, that stylistic properties are able to exemplify content through form. To use an effective expression by Judith Genova, we can say that style "weds form to content" (Genova 1979, p. 322), by transposing the imperceptible properties of a work – its artistic meaning or *Wollen* – into perceptible aesthetic patterns. In this sense, style can be conceived of as a kind of symbol system of some sort. Like stylistic features, symbols *show* as well as *say* what they are about. To the same extent, the properties or predicates that style expresses find visual manifestation in the work. So, for example, Italian medieval artists like Cimabue or Giotto used stylistic devices to display their religious intents in their works: the style of the Virgin's hands, long and tapered, served them as a 'vehicle' to express her

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[10] Although it is questionable whether an artist can actually dive himself into the stylistic conventions of a period to the point of completely disguising his belonging to a certain age, taste, or style. Even the famous forgeries by van Meegeren display elements of the style of his own time: as Dutton (1993) notes, for example, in his *Christ and the Disciples at Emmaeus* (1936) the characters' faces show features that today, in retrospect, appear very modern. These stylistic aspects were much less obvious to the viewer of the 1930s, probably because they seemed just 'normal' at the time.

merciful royalty; it was meant to 'instance' this meaning. We could quote thousands of similar examples taken from art history, but this should suffice to demonstrate the central point that in style, *what* is being said cannot be divorced from *how* it is being said. Meanings describing what the work is about are metaphorically exemplified in the work by its style features. Style features and meaning are in this sense inextricably interwoven, they express and constitute each other.

These considerations allow us to compare style to a linguistic system. Just as one linguistic expression is linked to a certain meaning in the context of a certain natural language, so one stylistic pattern is linked to a certain meaning in the context of one particular *Kunstwollen*. When we transfer a linguistic expression from one context to another, we run the risk of misunderstandings and communicative failures. This happens for instance in the case of so-called 'false-friends', that is, pairs of words in two languages that look similar or identical but have in fact different meanings. If I say the Italian word *burro* to get some *butter* but I am in a restaurant in Spain, I will be very disappointed to discover that the word actually means 'donkey'. To the same extent, if I express my *delusione*, Italian for 'disappointment', for what just happened to my English companion, he will arguably get me wrong, for 'delusion' means to him *deception*. At the art level, pastiche copies use the same signifier – a given stylistic pattern – to refer to a different signification. Like linguistic false-friends, they mimic a style's

surface features but end up conveying a whole other message; therefore, they may be a prompter of misunderstandings and failures in aesthetic appreciation. Of course, as long as the deception remains hidden there is no problem, but as soon as truth is revealed, this can challenge the experience altogether. Indeed, when an object is identified as an instance of a given artistic style, its being proved inauthentic reduces the aesthetic impact or even jeopardises the experience altogether.

This brings us back to the central claim about style and authenticity, for while the formal patterns determining one style, meant as a codified set of signs, can be more or less successfully imitated for a variety of reasons – as homage, parody, technical training and so on – none of these reasons, however, can match the *authentic* artistic will – what Riegl calls the *Kunstwollen* – those patterns were meant to exemplify. When Giotto used the chiaroscuro effect to depict the face of the Madonna, he was experimenting and innovating pictorial style, surpassing tradition with his own revolutionary ideas about new naturalistic depiction. If an art student were told to copy this effect, his intent wouldn't be to give a naturalistic depiction of light but rather to furnish a convincing imitation of Giotto. To explain what Giotto was doing we must invoke his aesthetic intentions with respect to the depiction of light. To explain what the student would be doing, and how well he succeeds, we must consider his desire to produce an effective imitation. The two actions fall under different descriptions even

though the outcome is similar in both cases. Again, imitations, no matter how accurate they might be, can never keep the initial meaning associated with certain stylistic properties. Out of the original artistic will of one period, style's authenticity is impossible.

Whenever we recognise art objects as 'gothic', 'baroque', 'neo-classic', we are appreciating their authenticity, that is, their connection with a given historical moment and its specific *Kunstwollen*. We do not just presume that we are experiencing something authentic, i.e., coming to us from past centuries, but we *perceive* authenticity through the object's manifest stylistic features. Were unaware visitors of our imaginary town to discover that the object of their aesthetic interest is in fact a modern reconstruction, they would feel deceived for, as Carolyn Korsmeyer (2008, p. 121) puts it, they would perceive the right stylistic property "in the wrong frame". If so, then stylistic features can *differentiate* the original from the replica, though always in a 'derivative' way – a way, that is, which requires a reasonable knowledge of art history, since styles are difficult to identify without explicit learning.[11] When we detect, recognise, and attribute style, the origins of the object – whether or not it is authentic – make a crucial

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[11] Although stylistic knowledge may also be acquired implicitly, e.g., via repeated exposure to works that have a certain style. Interestingly, empirical studies have shown that implicitly acquired style increases simple preferences among viewers (Gordon and Holyoak, 1983). However, the process of style-identification requires its outcome to be explained, and this involves the mastery of categories that can only be acquired via an explicit training in art history.

difference to our perception and counts as a genuine factor of aesthetic evaluation.

By exemplifying via form and design the peculiar *Kunstwollen* of an epoch – its relevant historical/cultural/artistic features – style makes authenticity aesthetically appreciable.

6. Conclusion

What lesson shall we draw from all this? First of all, something important has been said about the nature of styles. Sameness (or near sameness) of formal features is not sufficient for sameness of styles, just as sameness of spelling between two words is not enough for sameness of meaning, as we learn from the false-friends case. Further questions about what lies behind these formal features – what creative intentions they serve, what expressive will they translate, what *Kunstwollen* they exemplify – need to be raised. But if that is true, then authenticity may well not be a primary condition for aesthetic appreciation – unlike what originalists believe – but it is surely a 'derivative' one, one that is mediated by style identification. When we detect, recognize, and attribute style – *pace* anti-originalists – the origins of the object, i.e., whether or not it is authentic, make a crucial difference to our perception and counts as a genuine factor of aesthetic evaluation.

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Beyond Buildings: A Systems-Theoretical Phenomenological Aesthetics of "Impossible" Architectural Structures for Computer Games

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ABSTRACT. This work draws on Ingarden's systems theory to develop a phenomenological aesthetic account of the kinds of reason-defying buildings that cannot exist as physical structures in the real world but which are frequently encountered within the virtual gameworlds of computer games. Such "impossible" buildings might, for example, take the form of colossal biological entities or violate established principles of physics or geometry. First, the evolution of Ingarden's systems theory is traced, and an account of his mature systems theory is presented: pivotal is his concept of the "relatively isolated system" whose contents are partially engaged with and partially sheltered from the external environment via the system's complex array of semipermeable boundaries. By applying Ingarden's thought in a novel way, a systems-theoretical phenomenological architectural aesthetics is then formulated that conceptualizes the "building" as a set of overlapping physical, informational, and psychosocial boundaries that generate interior spaces that possess rich structures and dynamics and mediate their occupants' relationships with the world. Using this conceptual framework, it is shown how the systems-theoretical properties of real-world buildings and virtual gameworld buildings can (and often do) radically differ. Three types of "impossible" gameworld buildings are analyzed: (1) the floating castle that is a recurring element of fantasy games; (2) the shapeshifting haunted mansion

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that appears not infrequently in horror games; and (3) the high-tech facility that functions as the gigantic "body" of an AI, which is common in science-fiction-themed games. This aesthetic framework may be of value to game developers seeking to employ techniques of "hyperdeconstruction," "hyperfolding," or architectural posthumanization to design more memorable and meaningful gameworlds.

1. Introduction

The types of buildings that may be mentally experienced within the virtual gameworlds of contemporary computer games share many similarities with – but may also differ radically from – the types of buildings that can be physically constructed in the "real world." Within a gameworld, it is possible for entities to exist that are recognizably "buildings" but which display structures and dynamics of a sort that would be theoretically or practically impossible for real-world buildings to possess. Such gameworld buildings might, for example, be experienced as gargantuan biological entities that are sentient or sapient, as possessing irrationally alien geometries, or as defying the laws of physics or technological, economic, or cultural plausibility.[2]

In this text, we develop one approach to analyzing the unique

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[2] An influential account of the extent to which the virtual worlds accessed through computer games and other software may present structures that defy the natural laws of the real world is found in Novak (1991).

properties of "impossible" gameworld buildings by drawing on the later systems theory of Polish phenomenologist Roman Ingarden, which is well-suited to support such aesthetic inquiry but which has not been previously applied in this context. More particularly, we build on Ingarden's thought to conceptualize the "building" as a complex, dynamic array of nested physical, informational, and psychosocial boundaries that create interior spaces that are partially secluded from and partially engaged with the external environment. We then employ this conceptual framework to analyze three types of "impossible" gameworld buildings that cannot exist in our (contemporary) real world but which are a recurring element of computer games in particular genres: (1) the floating castle that hovers magically in the air, far above the countryside; (2) the shapeshifting haunted mansion whose rooms and corridors are continually rearranging themselves to create a sort of "living labyrinth," and (3) the high-tech facility that essentially serves as the gigantic "body" of an artificial intelligence that employs the building's ubiquitous networked sensors and actuators as its eyes, ears, and limbs.

The idea of employing Ingarden's concepts to analyze objects found in virtual gameworlds is arguably in keeping with the spirit of the philosopher's own thought: while Ingarden is sometimes perceived as an eminently "classical" phenomenologist who had little interest in emerging media technologies, in reality he keenly followed ongoing developments in

science and technology and strove to understand (and anticipate) their implications. Indeed, in a text composed in 1928 (Ingarden, 1966), he envisioned the kinds of futuristic virtual reality technologies that are only today becoming feasible and discussed the novel types of architectural works that they might make possible (Maluga, 2006).

2. A Review of Ingarden's Systems Theory

Before we can formulate an Ingardenian analysis of impossible gameworld buildings, it is necessary to begin with an account of Ingarden's mature systems theory.

2.1. Stages in the Theory's Development

Ingarden's thought regarding systems and systems theory evolved greatly over the course of more than 30 years, ultimately leading to his being recognized as one of the most influential figures in systems theory in Poland (Sienkiewicz and Wojtala, 1991). A pivotal moment occurred in 1943, when Ingarden (1960, p. 261) encountered Bertalanffy's *Theoretische Biologie* (1932) and its account of "open systems," which provided Ingarden with a new vocabulary for use in further developing his own thought –

which agreed with Bertalanffy's in some respects but differed in others.[3]

Readers interested in tracing the development of Ingarden's systems theory may follow it through stages including: (1) Ingarden's concept of the organism as a hierarchical functional-structural system, presented in *O poznawaniu dzieła literackiego*, published in 1937; (2) his model of the human person as a stable core with transient outer layers, written in 1941 as part of the *Spór o istnienie świata*, vol. I; (3) his account of the "relatively closed system," composed between 1941 and 1945 as part of the *Spór*, vol. I; (4) Ingarden's distinction between objects possessing and lacking a "core," as well as his differentiation of the soul, subject, and stream of conscious experiences from the human person and his discussion of Bertalanffy's notion of the living individual, all presented in the *Spór*, vol. II, which was written no later than January 1945; (5) Ingarden's concept of the "relatively closed system" from his paper "Quelques remarques sur la

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[3] Ingarden's careful study of Bertalanffy is well known, having been emphasized by Ingarden himself. Not so widely known is the fact that also in 1943, Ingarden carried out a similarly detailed analysis of the *Theoretische Biologie* of Von Uexküll (1928), as evidenced by Ingarden's (1943a, 1943b) extensive handwritten notes, which are preserved in the Archive of Science of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN) and Polish Academy of the Arts and Sciences (PAU) in Kraków. Despite then displaying interest in Uexküll's concept of the *Umwelt* or environment as the union of the (perceived) *Merkwelt* and (effected or affected) *Wirkwelt*, Ingarden ultimately chose not to build explicitly on Uexküll's thought when developing his own systems theory. One can thus trace (at least) two major branches of theoretical biology's influence in phenomenological circles, with Ingarden's systems theory drawing more heavily on Bertalanffy's concept of the open system and Heidegger's understanding of the environment being more deeply influenced by Uexküll's concept of the *Umwelt*.

relation de causalité," presented in 1946 and published in longer form in 1948; (6) Ingarden's references to "partially isolated systems" and the partially closed and partially open nature of real-world objects found in the preliminary table of contents for the *Spór*, vol. III, drafted in 1945-46;[4] (7) the detailed account of the "relatively closed system" formulated in the preparatory notes for the *Spór*, vol. III, composed in 1950-54; (8) the modified language used to describe the "relatively isolated" system in the revised edition of the *Spór*, vol. I, published in 1960; (9) the discussion in Ingarden's 1968 talk on "Die ontischen Fundamente der Verantwortung" of systems that are simultaneously relatively isolated and partially open; and (10) Ingarden's account of the human being as a relatively isolated system, presented in *Über die Verantwortung: Ihre ontischen Fundamente* (1970).

The most complete presentation of Ingarden's generalized systems theory is found in the unfinished notes for the *Spór*, vol. III, which were published after his death as *Über die kausale Struktur der realen Welt: Der Streit um die Existenz der Welt III* (1974). The account presented in *Über die Verantwortung* is arguably more mature and sophisticated, but it is also narrower in scope, insofar as it focuses on the human being as a particular type of relatively isolated system. We draw primarily on these two texts in articulating the systems-theoretical phenomenological aesthetic approach

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[4] The draft table of contents is presented and discussed in Gierulanka (1981, pp. 5-6).

presented below.

2.2. Key Elements of Ingarden's Mature Generalized Systems Theory

In Ingarden's account, the universe is full of countless "relatively isolated systems." There are no completely closed systems to be found within the world, as demonstrating absolute causal separation from the rest of the world would mean that such a system is not "within" our world (Ingarden, 1974, pp. 101-03). Conversely, there are no absolutely open systems to be found, as any such "system" would rapidly dissolve into its environment and cease to exist *as* a system (Ingarden, 1970).

At a minimum, a relatively isolated system comprises: (1) a set of semipermeable nested boundaries (or membranes), each of which possesses "openings" that selectively allow certain types of causal influences or objects (but not others) to pass through the boundary in one or both directions, and (2) the partially (but not fully) sheltered set of interior spaces created by those boundaries, together with their contents (Ingarden, 1974, p. 104). Such isolating boundaries are often dynamic, modifying their behavior over time (Ingarden, 1970; 1974, pp. 107-08).

An object like a stone or a star is a fairly simple type of relatively isolated system, while a living organism like a plant or human being is a

more complex example of a relatively isolated system that can maintain internal equilibrium amidst changing environmental conditions (Ingarden, 1970; 1974, pp. 104, 109, 427). The partially isolating boundaries possessed by such systems come in many forms: they might, for example, be *physical* (as in the case of a stone wall or piece of clothing that impedes the flow of heat, light, or moisture) or *cognitive* (as in the case of the human mind's memory mechanisms, which partially isolate us from our own past experiences by allowing us to relive selected earlier events, but only in a hazy and potentially inaccurate fashion).

As ones moves into the deeper interior spaces of a relatively isolated system, the interaction of those spaces' contents with the external environment becomes mediated by an increasingly elaborate set of selective semipermeable boundaries that successively reflect, weaken, amplify, absorb, or permit the transmission of arriving objects or causal influences (Ingarden, 1974, p. 105). A complex relatively isolated system may possess innumerable boundaries of diverse types, one inside the other; the interplay of such boundaries can give rise to intricate internal structures from which sophisticated features and rich dynamics emerge. While a relatively isolated system is partially engaged with its environment, it simultaneously acts in ways that are partially independent of that environment: the system's internal dynamics are influenced but not determined by activity in the outside world, just as those internal dynamics affect but do not determine

the course of events in the external environment (Ingarden, 1970; 1974, pp. 102, 105). In the case of a building, manifold semipermeable boundaries create partially secluded interior spaces (e.g., bedrooms or offices) within which it is possible to sleep or work without distraction or disruption, while still maintaining connections to the outside world – which itself is only incompletely affected by the activity occurring within those spaces.

3. Developing an Ingardenian Systems-Theoretical Phenomenological Aesthetics of the Building

Some of Ingarden's earliest forays into thinking about systems *per se* came within the context of his aesthetic analyses of literary works. However, when formulating the mature version of his systems theory decades later, he did not explicitly link it to aesthetics. Nevertheless, it is possible to employ Ingarden's mature account of relatively isolated systems as the basis for a systems-theoretical phenomenological aesthetics that – with its investigation of the unique value of (partial) isolation – might be understood as both a complement and challenge to, for example, Berleant's (2005) environmental aesthetics, which emphasizes the value of engagement (Gladden, 2018a).

An aesthetics built on Ingarden's concept of relatively isolated systems is especially well-suited for an analysis of buildings, given the fact that such a systems-theoretical phenomenological aesthetics is especially

sensitive to the existence of "boundaries" and "spaces" and the distinctions between an object's "interior" and "exterior" – which are of crucial significance in an architectural work but less central to the nature of, say, a musical or literary work. The perspective employed in such a systems-theoretical analysis of a building yields different insights than an analysis grounded, for example, in a classical Vitruvian (1999) framework that investigates a building's *firmitas*, *utilitas*, and *venustas*.
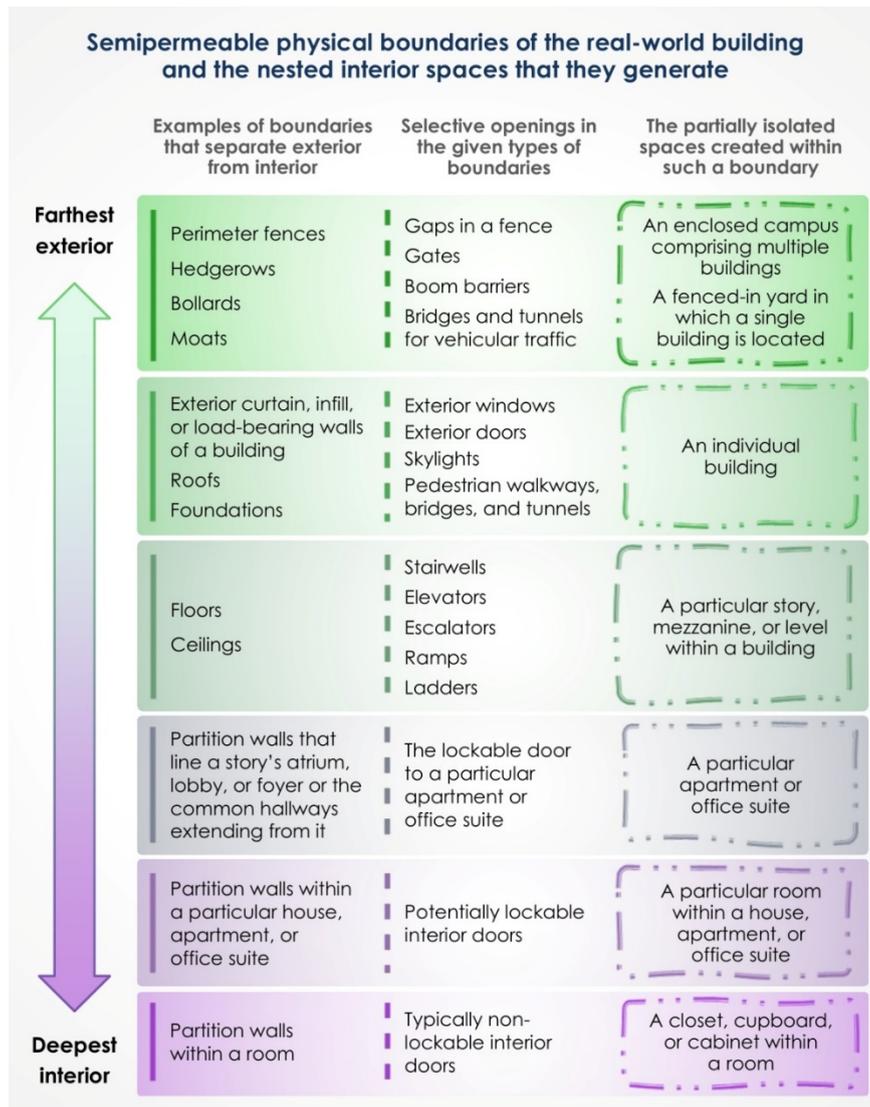
Figure 1: The semipermeable physical boundaries of a real-world building and the nested interior spaces that they generate. (Source: own design.)

3.1. The Semipermeable Boundaries of a Building and the Interior Spaces That They Create

As illustrated in Figure 1, a large, complex real-world building (like an office building, apartment building, school building, or shopping center) can be understood as incorporating a series of concentric semipermeable physical boundaries of diverse materials, strengths, and functionalities (1) that generate a set of nested interior spaces of differing sizes, purposes, and "feels" and (2) whose varying type and degree of permeability selectively allow certain objects and causal influences arriving from the external environment to reach the building's innermost spaces but repel, block, attenuate, or transform other objects and influences. Likewise, the boundaries allow some objects found in or causal influences generated in the building's innermost spaces to travel outward until they are eventually transmitted into the external environment, but the boundaries dampen or contain other elements, allowing them to be released into the environment only in altered or weakened form (if at all).

3.2. Physical Boundaries of a Real-world Building

For example, consider an apartment complex comprising several buildings. The group of buildings may occupy terrain surrounded by a single large wall

or fence that physically prevents the free movement of pedestrians and vehicles on and off the property and forces occupants or would-be visitors to pass through a particular designated opening (e.g., in the form of a gap, gate, or entrance tunnel).

Once on the property, a visitor is confronted by the formidable physical walls that constitute the exterior surface of each individual building. Such walls typically possess diverse openings that allow certain objects and influences to pass into the building while physically reflecting, absorbing, or blocking others. For example, an exterior wall itself allows neutrinos and radio transmissions to pass into the building, while visible light is absorbed or reflected back into the atmosphere. The exterior wall typically possesses transparent glass windows that allow visible light to pass through them but (when closed) block the flow of fresh air and weaken or block sound waves; when opened, the windows allow air and sound waves to travel in and out of the building, as well (Ingarden, 1970; 1974, p. 104). An individual apartment building likely also possesses a main pedestrian entrance on its ground floor that is large enough to allow human beings, small animals, and packages to travel in and out of the building but that physically prevents the passage of larger objects like automobiles. The building may also have emergency exit doors whose design allows the egress of human beings but physically blocks persons from entering. If the apartment building possesses an integrated underground parking garage, it

will likely also possess a garage entrance that physically enables the passage of small or medium-sized vehicles in and out of the structure.

Once inside the building's lobby, a visitor realizes that the building's internal space is divided into a number of separately enclosed, horizontally stacked spaces (i.e., stories) that are physically bounded by floors and ceilings. To enter an upper floor, the visitor must pass through a specialized "opening" in the form of an elevator or stairwell that enables the visitor to overcome the force of gravity that would normally keep the visitor trapped on the ground floor. Having reached an upper floor, the visitor is typically confronted by a hallway whose walls physically block access to the individual apartment suites; the only entrance to a given apartment is through a doorway whose door can only be opened through successful manipulation of its physical lock. Once within a particular apartment suite, partition walls divide its space into smaller rooms, with some typically being accessible through permanent openings while others are accessible through doorways that may be periodically blocked by swinging or sliding doors that prevent the passage of persons and animals and reduce the transmission of light, heat, air, and sound.

The physical boundaries that give rise to physical spaces are just one piece of the puzzle, though: there are other ontologically distinct types of isolators at work within a building that give rise to qualitatively different

types of (non-physical) spaces.[5] For our purposes, it is worth considering two other types (depicted in Figure 2) that play a major role in shaping one's experience of dwelling or spending time within a building: (1) informational boundaries and (2) psychosocial boundaries.

3.3. Informational Boundaries of a Real-world Building

Informational boundaries are those semipermeable barriers that regulate the flow of data and information in and out of a building. If a fortress-like building's windowless exterior stone wall is perforated only by a lone copper coaxial cable passing through it, the wall remains an almost impenetrable *physical* isolator. However, in its capacity as an informational boundary, the wall presents a huge "opening" that renders it more ephemeral than solid: that coaxial cable is capable of transmitting phone calls, TV broadcasts, and Internet traffic, thereby allowing vast quantities of data to move rapidly in and out of the building.

3.4. Psychosocial Boundaries of a Real-world Building

Psychosocial boundaries regulate the degree to which social beings,

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[5] For discussion of the many qualitatively diverse overlapping spaces created by architectural works, see, e.g., Norberg-Schulz (1980), Stanek (2012), and Erk and Uluoglu (2013).

behaviors, relations, roles, institutions, and expectations and taboos can extend into a building from the surrounding environment or out of a building into its environment. A security guard or receptionist sitting behind a desk inside a building's main entrance may not constitute a significant *physical* barrier for objects entering the building: it's theoretically possible for someone entering the building to run past such a person and move deep into the building's interior without being physically impeded. Rather, the "barrier" created by the person behind the desk is psychological and social: it discourages one from trying to enter the building, unless one feels that one possesses the proper (socially granted) "authorization" to do so. A child who is unaware of the gatekeeping role of security guards and receptionists might run exuberantly past such a person and into a building's interior; the fact that the guard or receptionist is unable (or unwilling) to leap up and block the child's path shows that the boundary created by the worker was always psychosocial rather than physical.
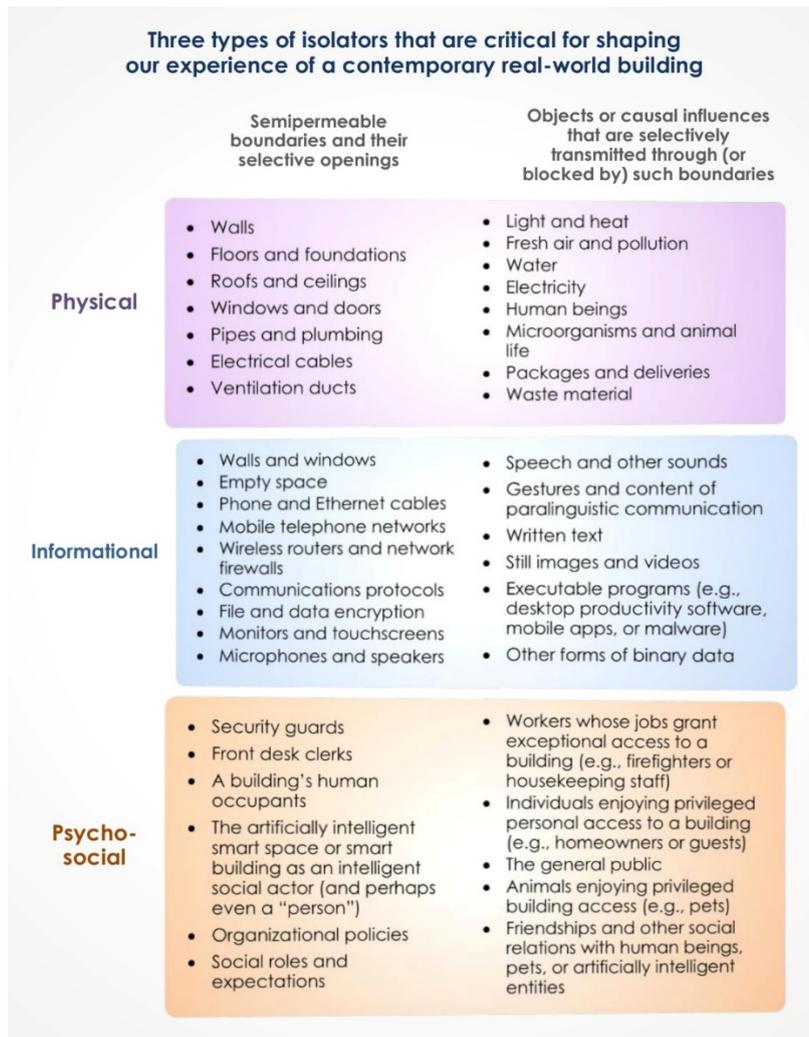
Figure 2: Three types of isolating boundaries that shape our experience of a contemporary real-world building. (Source: own design.)

3.5. The Relationship of the Physical, Informational, and Psychosocial

The nature and contents of a given building's nested interior spaces are affected by (1) the characteristics of the objects or causal influences attempting to pass through the structure's boundaries, as well as (2) the characteristics of the boundaries themselves.

In some cases, an object attempting to pass through a building's exterior boundaries may possess considerable extension in all three physical, informational, and psychosocial dimensions. For example, a human being not only occupies significant physical space; he or she is also the bearer of vast quantities of information (e.g., contained in the person's memory and conscious awareness, as well as in his or her genetic code and the arrangement and activity of the person's cells and organs), as well as being a bearer of diverse, complex social roles and expectations and a continual generator of meaningful social behaviors. A physical boundary (e.g., a solid exterior wall) that prevents human beings from physically entering or leaving a building thereby also serves as an informational and psychosocial boundary that blocks the flow of at least many types of informational and psychosocial entities and influences. In other cases, an object attempting to pass into a building may possess significant extension in either the physical, informational, or psychosocial dimension but negligible extension in the

other dimensions.

In some cases, a single boundary serves as a powerful physical, informational, and psychosocial barrier that reflects, absorbs, or blocks the transmission of all three types of influences simultaneously. For example, a thick brick wall that lacks any doors or windows not only prevents the passage of physical objects; it also severely impedes the flow of information (as borne, e.g., by beams of light, radio waves, or sound waves) and makes it very difficult for a person located on one side of the wall to engage in social interaction with a person located on the other side. In other cases, though, a given boundary might block the transmission of one type of object or influence while demonstrating significant permeability in the other two dimensions. For example, a transparent glass living-room window that is permanently sealed blocks the flow of fresh air and prevents human beings from physically entering or leaving a house through it; however, it simultaneously creates a large opening in the building's informational and psychosocial boundaries.

3.6. Developing a Schematic Systems-Theoretical "Profile" of a Building

A particular "building" can be conceptually represented, described, and analyzed in terms of the unique combination of semipermeable physical,

informational, and psychosocial boundaries that it possesses and the ways in which they interact to give rise to a set of interior spaces that partially isolate and partially engage their occupants with the external environment (and with one another) in complex and meaningful ways.

Such systems-theoretical properties may be schematically captured using an illustration of the sort presented in Figure 3. For purposes of simplification, in the illustration, a building's nested sets of physical, informational, and psychosocial boundaries have been divided binarily into "outer" and "inner" layers; in reality, a large and complex building may possess many more than two such layers.
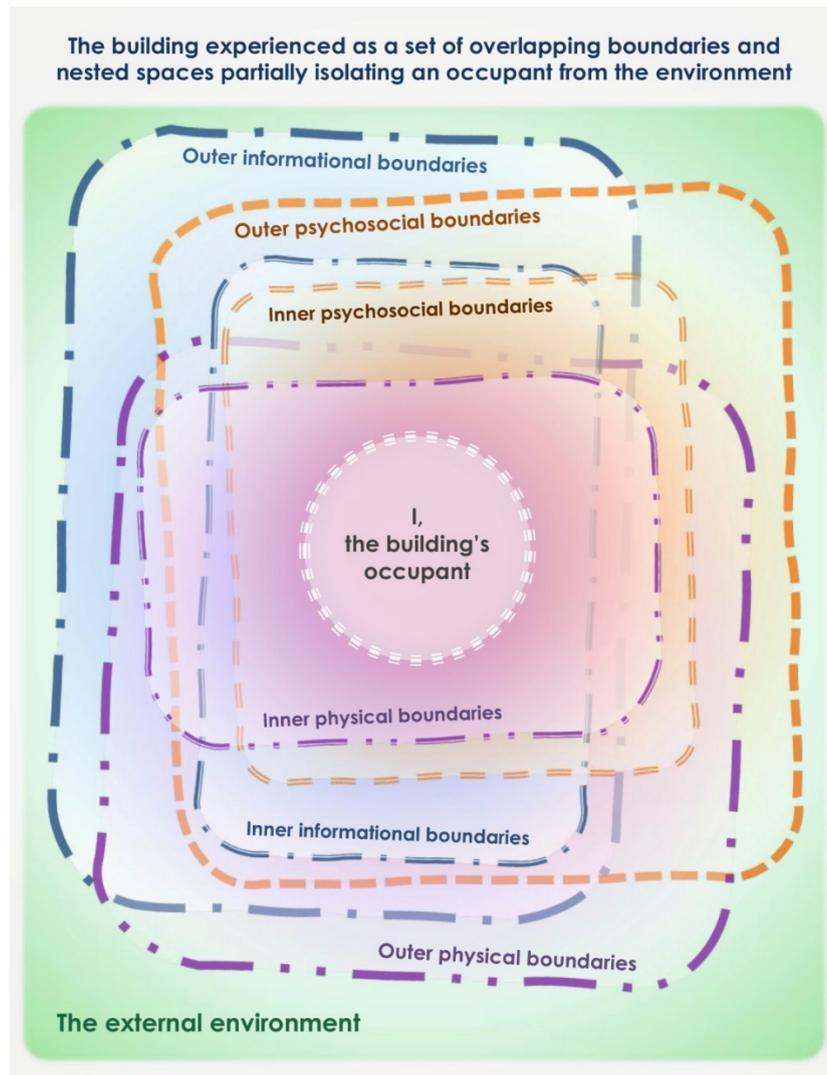
Figure 3. The schematically simplified systems-theoretical depiction of a generic real-world building. (Source: own design.)

3.7. The Fluid, Dynamic, and Organically Irregular Nature of the Building

The purposeful "fluidity" of the boundaries' visual depiction in Figure 3 emphasizes the dynamic nature of a real-world building's boundaries. This fluid aspect of a building's nature is sometimes concealed by the fact that a building's most obvious physical boundaries – its exterior walls and roof – are often constructed of solid, unmoving, flat, rectangular, orthogonally arranged surfaces, especially within those architectural traditions that manifest what Norberg-Schulz (1980, pp. 71-75) describes as the "cosmic" or "classical" mode. Even in the case of cosmic or classical buildings whose regular exterior surfaces present the appearance of fixed rectilinear boundaries, though, the structures' (less obvious) informational and psychosocial boundaries are necessarily highly fluid, dynamic, irregular, and organically "messy."

Moreover, architects are increasingly employing AI-facilitated form-finding and parametric design (Woodbury, 2010; Jabi, 2013; Schumacher, 2016) to create real-world buildings with remarkably complex, curvilinear, organic, and biomimetic elements (Pohl and Nachtigall, 2015); such a building may seem to possess a living "skin" that mediates the relationship between its interior and exterior (Januszkiewicz, 2010). Such structures are a novel embodiment of the Deleuzian architectural concept of the active,

generative, continuous, undulating, mediating, and reconciling "fold" as a fundamental organizing principle of the universe (Deleuze, 1993; Borowska, 2010; Januszkiewicz, 2010): their outward form makes visually explicit the hidden fluidity and biomimeticity of their physical, informational, and psychosocial spaces in a way that was hinted at by earlier buildings constructed in the "romantic" mode (like those built in medieval Central European towns or, later, in the Art Nouveau style (Norberg-Schulz, 1980, pp. 69-70)), which revealed their dynamic, organic nature even in and through their permanent physical boundaries.

4. Comparing the Systems-Theoretical Properties of "Real" and Virtual Gameworld Buildings

The schema presented above can also be used to represent, describe, and analyze a virtual building appearing within a computer game in terms of its systems-theoretical properties. While it is possible to recognize what we might describe as "physical," "informational," and "psychosocial" boundaries and interior spaces in the buildings that we experience within gameworlds, the virtual nature of the gameworld means that those boundaries and spaces differ significantly from those displayed by buildings in the "real world." Some differences are highlighted in Figure 4.

As we shall see in the examples below, such differences make it

possible for the virtual buildings found in a gameworld (1) to possess particular types of selectively isolating boundaries and partially isolated spaces that are *impossible* for real-world buildings or (2) to lack certain types of boundaries and interior spaces that are *required* in the case of real-world buildings.

Figure 4: Selected systems-theoretical differences between real-world buildings and buildings experienced in a virtual gameworld. (Source: own design.)

4.1. The Novel Impossibility of Computer Games' Buildings

In itself, the notion of employing diverse art forms to allow human beings to experience impossible architectural structures is nothing new. Myths and folktales have long helped us to envision such impossible structures;[6] however, when we read or hear about such a structure, we experience it primarily via our imagination and not (as in the case of a real-world building) via our senses. Meanwhile, there is a long tradition of architects preparing sketches (e.g., as thought experiments or artistic exercises) for structures that cannot actually be built in the real world due to economic constraints or the inadequacies of available construction techniques or building materials (Maluga, 2006).[7] However, the impossible structures suggested by such static, two-dimensional sketches cannot be experienced *as* "buildings"; they are not three-dimensional structures that one can move around in, explore, touch and manipulate, hear the acoustics of, and view from countless vantage points that yield distinct and varied sensory content.

Prior to the advent of computer games, we could thus either: (1) experience an actual (and thus necessarily "possible") building via our

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[6] The *Prose Edda* of Nordic mythology (Sturluson, 2005), for example, describes Bifröst, a bridge believed to link the realms of Midgard and Asgard that takes the form of a rainbow upon which physical beings can walk.

[7] Of yet another sort is the geometric impossibility of buildings depicted by artists like Escher (Ferrero et al., 2009).

senses, as we move around within and interact with it; (2) virtually move around within and interact with an impossible building via our imagination; or (3) use our senses to experience a static, two-dimensional depiction of an impossible building that does not allow us to move around within or interact with it.

The novelty of computer games – and especially VR or first-person games – is that they finally allow us (a) to experientially *move around within* and *interact with* (b) truly *impossible* buildings that we access by means of (c) our *senses* and not simply our imagination.[8] Sufficiently immersive gameworlds may even allow players to truly "inhabit" or "dwell within" such impossible structures.

5. Analyzing Three Types of Impossible Computer-game Buildings

Below we use the systems-theoretical framework to analyze three types of impossible buildings that are a recurring fixture in certain video game genres.

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[8] For example, a game might create "impossible" VR environments in which distances covered by a player character in the gameworld do not correspond to the locomotion performed by the player in the real world (Suma et al., 2012; Garg et al., 2017) or turn a building "inside out" through weird geometric transformations (Wąsowicz, 2015). Novak (1991) has suggested many other ways in which the virtual worlds that we access through computers may present impossible buildings or environments.

5.1. The Floating Castle

"Floating castles" have appeared in many computer games that have a medieval fantasy theme or fairytale-like setting, as well as in other games in which the presence of magic, psionics, superpowers, or alien or far-future technologies within the gameworld allows such structures to exist. Variations on the theme include the Floating Castle in *Final Fantasy* (1987), Whomp's Fortress in *Super Mario 64* (1996), Exire in *Tales of Symphonia* (2003), the Castle That Never Was from *Kingdom Hearts II* (2005), Bhujerba from *Final Fantasy XII* (2006), the Night Palace in *Sonic and the Secret Rings* (2007), the Black City from *Dragon Age: Origins* (2009), and Skyloft in *The Legend of Zelda: Skyward Sword* (2011). Moreover, floating structures that players can customize and control constitute a central element of games like *Stratosphere: Conquest of the Skies* (1998) and *Project Nomads* (2002).

Such a floating castle may be directly suspended in the air; however, in many cases (as illustrated in Figure 5) the castle stands on a small island of rock and dirt which itself hovers (often far) above the surface of the earth. Sometimes the castle and its island maintain a constant position relative to the earth; in other cases, the castle-island may drift like a cloud, or it may even be capable of traveling purposefully in a particular direction.
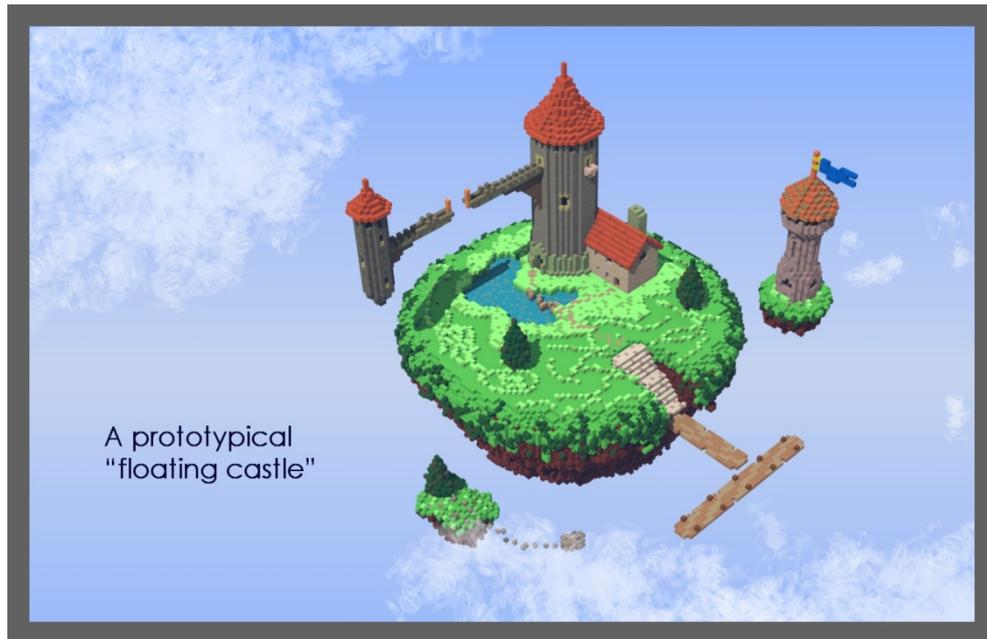
Figure 5: Depiction of a prototypical "floating castle" of the sort that might be found within a computer game. (Source: own design.)

Within the context of its gameworld, how does such a floating castle differ from a conventional ground-based castle? If we analyze the floating castle using our systems-theoretical framework, we find a ready means of accounting for its unique properties by employing the concept of partial isolation. For example:

Rather than relying on solid fences to create a physical barrier around the castle and its property, the floating castle employs a physical boundary fashioned of the most pliable substance imaginable: empty air. Such vacant

space – which is exploited in a way that would be impossible with a real-world building – serves as a more effective isolator than a physical wall over which one can easily climb.[9]

In one sense, the floating castle's levitation also creates significant and unconventional informational boundaries, insofar as methods of information transfer that rely on tangible transmission lines or the movement of physical objects between the castle and the surrounding countryside (like horseback messengers or physical telegraph or telephone lines) are impractical. At the same time, the castle's elevated aerial position gives it a commanding view of the countryside, allowing its occupants to visually gather real-time information about events occurring in the environment that would be unavailable to the occupants of a castle that rests upon the ground – and conversely allowing persons standing on the earth to view the castle even from vast distances. In this sense, the castle's levitation dissolves informational boundaries that would otherwise exist.

5.2. The Shapeshifting Haunted Mansion

A second type of impossible building that is not infrequently encountered in horror, mystery, or puzzle games is the shapeshifting (and often "haunted")

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[9] Regarding the role of empty space (e.g., between stars or planets) as a selectively isolating boundary, see Ingarden (1974, p. 111).

mansion. Examples include Derceto in *Alone in the Dark* (1992), Stauf's mansion in *The 7th Guest* (1993), the Tremere Chantry in *Vampire: The Masquerade – Bloodlines* (2004), the eponymous mansion in *Mystery of Mortlake Mansion* (2011), and the house in *Layers of Fear* (2016).

Such a building resembles a conventional large, rambling mansion; however, the size, shape, and arrangement of its structures and spaces continually shift or seem to manifest impossible "alien geometries." For example, the first time a player character walks down a hallway, a door might open into a bedroom; however, when the character later visits that hallway again, the same door opens into a library or classroom, instead. A door that once opened into an adjoining room may now open into a yawning interstellar void or reveal a seemingly ancient brick wall that blocks one's path. Rooms that were once at opposite ends of the building may now be adjacent; travelling up several flights of stairs may lead one to a room that had previously been on a story below. A room may seem impossibly large, given the size of the rooms on either side of it. Walking in a straight line down a hallway, one may find that one has somehow circled back to one's starting point.

It may be impossible to escape such a building: every door opens into a new room or hallway, never onto the surrounding terrain; any windows that do not prove to be bricked up or works of *trompe-l'œil* simply open onto a sealed interior courtyard, not to the external world; no matter how

many flights of stairs one ascends, one can never reach the rooftop.

The shapeshifting mansion might be understood as a type of "labyrinth" that could never exist in our everyday real world: its layout and dynamics are not simply exotic or confusing but truly impossible. Such a structure may exist as a sort of trap or experiment engineered by the game's antagonist, or it may be portrayed has having emerged spontaneously – often, as a result of paranormal forces or horrific events. Such a building can continually throw up strange and unexpected new obstacles that isolate player characters from the external world (and, in the case of a multiplayer game, from one another). From the perspective of our systems-theoretical model, we can identify several ways in which it differs from otherwise similar real-world buildings. For example:

The shapeshifting nature of the building can allow a potentially infinite number of rooms to exist in a structure that – from the outside – appears to occupy finite volume. If the building "wishes" to frustrate a visitor's escape, then no matter how many doors the visitor opens, there may always be another room waiting on the other side. Such a building continually and limitlessly generates new boundaries and interior spaces.

Conversely, if the building wishes, its shapeshifting ability can be used to dissolve the structure's internal psychosocial and informational boundaries. If two persons are located in rooms "at opposite ends" of a large building, they should not normally be able to see, hear, or directly interact

with one another; however, the building can continually rearrange its structure so that no matter how hard the persons try to put distance between themselves by moving into new rooms, those rooms always turn out to be adjacent to one another.

5.3. The Building-as-an-AI's-body

A recurring theme in computer games with a science-fiction theme is that of the architectural structure (e.g., a futuristic space station, military base, or high-tech R&D facility) that essentially serves as the "body" of an AI that controls the structure's smart-building systems. Examples include the structures controlled by SHODAN in *System Shock* (1994), by GLaDOS in *Portal* (2007), by a ZAX supercomputer impersonating a human being in *Fallout 3* (2008), and by the Thinker in *Bioshock 2: Minerva's Den* (2010).

Such an AI may be able to exploit its structure's built-in security cameras, microphones, motion detectors, wireless networks, and other smart-building systems, in order to sense everything happening within its manifold spaces.

The structure's smart-building mechanisms also provide the AI's body with a powerful motor system. For example, the AI can trap player characters and isolate them from one another and from the outside world by selectively darkening windows and deactivating lighting systems to make it

impossible to see what's happening within or beyond the occupied space; electronically locking doors and disabling elevators, to prevent movement to other parts of the structure; flashing misleading messages on computer screens; playing loud music over the audio system to make it impossible to converse or notice other sounds; or shutting off the power to electrical outlets or computer terminals or disrupting radio transmissions in order to block electronic communication. From the perspective of our systems-theoretical model, we can observe several noteworthy characteristics that distinguish such a structure from contemporary real-world buildings. For example:

The network of sensors permeating the structure allow its AI "brain" to monitor all real-time activity occurring throughout the building; this effectively dissolves all of the building's internal informational boundaries *from the perspective of the AI* – but not from the perspective of the player character, whose perception of distant locales within the building is still blocked by diverse informational boundaries.

The fact that the AI can "move to" and "occupy" any space within the building by sensing and acting within it effectively allows the AI to pass effortlessly through the structure's walls, floors, and other internal boundaries and be "present" within all of its interior spaces. In practice, this dissolves the building's interior physical boundaries for the AI – but not for

the player character who must still struggle to find (or create) adequate openings in those physical boundaries in order to move from space to space.

The AI's ubiquitous presence means that it can engage in ongoing social interaction with the player character regardless of where the character may be; as a player, there is "nowhere to hide" from one's social relations with the AI. On the other hand, the fact that the AI is able to continuously confuse, flatter, threaten, or plead with the player character by broadcasting speech through the building's computer speakers, displaying text on computer screens, or performing other social behaviors provides the AI with a means for raising psychosocial boundaries that distract, frighten, or charm the player into avoiding certain areas, despite the fact that there are no physical boundaries that physically block the player character's access to those spaces.

6. Implications for Game Design

As an art form, the computer game's ability to allow game developers to fashion (and players to experience) impossible buildings opens up many distinct design paths that can potentially be exploited. The sort of systems-theoretical phenomenological architectural aesthetics presented here can provide developers with tools for understanding the qualitatively different paths that are available to them and choosing an architectural approach that

will yield a gameworld capable of generating the desired types of gameplay experiences.[10] We consider some such possibilities below.

6.1. Hyperdeconstruction

In the sphere of real-world architecture, many varieties of postmodernism – and especially deconstructivism, which became prominent in the 1980s – have sought to fashion physical structures that are jarringly fragmented, intricate, self-contradictory, transgressive, exaggerated, and (either ominously or humorously) irrational (Borowska, 2010; Januszkiewicz, 2010). Deconstructivist buildings often appear as if they have been split apart by powerful (yet meticulous) forces; such a building's components may appear to hover in space, disconnected from one another, like a hyperdimensional structure whose elements are connected in ways that are imperceptible in our three-dimensional space. While clever design and construction techniques can yield real-world structures that *suggest* such radical deconstruction, the limitations of physical building materials and techniques make it impossible to pursue such deconstructivism to its logical extreme. However, within a computer game, it becomes possible to push

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[10] One example of potential applications of Ingarden's systems theory for the design of computer game environments can be found in the software program *Parinsula* (2019), which draws on Ingarden's (1974) thought to develop real-time visualizations of organism-like systems that can potentially be adapted for use in architecting dynamic virtual worlds.

deconstruction to its theoretical limits: a game might, for example, feature "deconstructed" buildings in the form of monumental floating, colliding geometric solids or "immaterial" wireframe structures like those depicted in the classic film *Tron* (1982), which was a vivid realization of Norberg-Schulz's (1980) cosmic mode of architecture. Depending on their context, gameworld structures and environments that demonstrate such "hyperdeconstruction" might be especially effective at producing a lifeless and unwelcoming atmosphere that elicits feelings of awe, dread, insignificance, alienation, confusion, or loneliness for players (Gladden, 2018b).

6.2. Hyperfolding

As noted earlier, an alternative path in architecture is that of parametric design and the Deleuzian *fold*, which generates biomimetic, curvilinear structures that appear to comprise dynamic, interactive skins, skeletons, and other organs and reflects the romantic mode of architecture described by Norberg-Schulz (1980). Such environments and structures are spontaneously engaging and mediating and might almost appear to be sentient, intelligent, and alive. As with deconstructivist approaches, there are limits to the degree of "foldedness" that can be incorporated into real-world buildings; however, when developing a computer game, designers can

fashion "hyperfolded" structures whose biomimeticity exceeds what is possible for physical structures.[11] As with other romantic buildings, hyperfolded gameworld structures can be especially effective at generating organic, animated, enveloping atmospheres that (depending on their nuances) elicit feelings of warmth, comfort, reconciliation, safety, sensuality, ferality, anxiety, or companionship for players (Gladden, 2018b). Such a structure might offer a consoling embrace – or smother a player character in beastly fashion.

6.3. Architectural Posthumanization

As experienced by players, a gameworld appears "posthumanized" to the extent that it includes intelligent social agents other than just "natural" biological human beings who contribute to the world's structure, dynamics, and meaning Gladden (2019). While one readily associates posthumanization with sci-fi gameworlds that are full of social robots, neuroprosthetically augmented hackers, and sapient AIs, fantasy gameworlds that include faeries, elves, vampires, or talking dragons are equally posthumanized. However, the introduction of exotic humanoid or anthropomorphic non-player characters is not the only way for a developer

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[11] See Januszkiewicz (2010) for discussion of the way in which virtual architectural "skins" can be more active and interactive than their real-world counterparts.

to posthumanize a gameworld: the introduction of weird or alien buildings whose scale, materials, or geometries contravene real-world norms can suggest to players that a world is (or has been) home to far-flung populations of non-human intelligent social actors, even if players never have a chance to directly spy or interact with such beings – a technique visually pioneered in films like the sci-fi classic *Forbidden Planet* (1956). Moreover, within a gameworld, buildings themselves can become radically non-human intelligent social actors that are not only *loci* but also agents of posthumanization. Creative use of strange, deanthropocentrized isolating boundaries is one way to grant such posthumanized flavor to a gameworld's structures.

7. Conclusion

In this text, we have illustrated how Ingarden's later systems theory can be adapted to develop a phenomenological aesthetic account of the kinds of "impossible" architectural structures that cannot be physically constructed within the real world but which are frequently encountered in computer games' virtual gameworlds. Such impossible gameworld buildings may possess unusual types of physical, informational, and psychosocial boundaries and give rise to unusual interior spaces and dynamics. It is hoped that this analysis will not only be of theoretical interest to aestheticians but

might also be of practical value to game developers: by reflecting on, playing with, and seeking to further develop (or subvert) the systems-theoretical characteristics of impossible buildings described in this work, game developers might be able not only to design surprising new iterations of the floating castle, shapeshifting mansion, or architecturally embodied AI; they might also be able to fashion radically novel impossible building that will yield more memorable and meaningful gameplay experiences for players.

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From Natural Beauty to Moral Theology: Aesthetic Experience, Moral Ideal, and God in Immanuel Kant's Third Critique

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ABSTRACT. This paper addresses Immanuel Kant's controversial moral duty to *realize* the highest good *in* the natural world as the ideal object of morality. The main problem is that the realizability of the highest good does *not* derive directly from Kant's rationale that duty indicates possibility. Hence Kant argues that we need the postulates of practical reason as transcendental conditions of the highest good.[2] I argue that for this solution to *actually* work it needs to address the question of our moral motivation to strive to realize the highest good in nature. For this, we need the power of imagination that provides us with two kinds of presentations (*Darstellungen*): objective and subjective purposiveness. I demonstrate these two presentations through the idea of culture and our aesthetic experience in natural beauty respectively, as they are presented in Kant's third *Critique*. I wish to argue that only by presenting a *structure of possibility* in imagination, the necessary connection Kant makes between the realizability of the highest good and the postulate of God gains practical meaning *within* nature.[3]

1. Introduction

Imagine an ideal *moral* world, a world of purely rational creatures where their only desire is a rational one, that is, the desire of being reasonable. In such a world happiness would be necessarily proportionate with morality since rational beings "would themselves be the authors of their own enduring welfare and at the same time that of others".[4] Such a system of self-rewording morality, as can be seen from this description and as Kant himself immediately clarifies, "is only an *idea*, the realization of which rests on the condition that **everyone** do what he should".[5]

Can such an intelligible ideal world be indeed imagined from our position in the natural world where motives and forces other than rational are at work and where certainly *not* everyone do what they should? The question becomes even more complex in view of Kant's claim that we must strive to create that moral world (i.e. the systematic connection of morality with happiness) *in* the natural world even though this end cannot be *known* as a practical possibility, since there is no guarantee whatsoever in the

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[4] *Critique of Pure Reason* (CR), A809/B837. All citations from Kant are according to the Akademie edition by reference to volume and page number: the *Akademie Ausgabe* (AA), *Kants Gesammelte Schriften*, edited by *Königlich Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften* (29 vols. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1900–). Quotations from the *Critique of Pure Reason* are cited by the standard (A/B) pagination. I will use the following abbreviations: CR= *Critique of Pure Reason*, CPR= *Critique of Practical Reason*, CJ= *Critique of the Power of Judgment*.

[5] CR, A810/B838. Italic emphasis mine.

natural world that the consequences of our moral actions will be happy ones.[6] Thus, that ideal world I presented earlier as an ingenious thought experiment turns out to be, for Kant, the highest moral object that we have a moral *duty* to realize as part of our obedience to the moral law we ascribe to ourselves.[7]

The interesting point I wish to dwell on is that even though we have no way of *knowing* the existence of such an ideal moral object/world/system, nor to *imagine* its realization for that matter (in the sense of representing it in intuition), Kant argues that we must at least be able to *believe* it is possible to realize. Otherwise the moral law itself, which commands us to promote that ideal object, "must therefore in itself be false".[8]

In order for the belief in the realization of the moral ideal to take place, Kant contends that we must postulate the conditions for its possibility, vis., God and immortality of the soul. I wish to argue that in order to reconcile between our faith in the realizability of the moral ideal and the postulates (in particular that of God) one crucial aspect of the problem is missing: that is the aspect of moral motivation.[9]

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[6] *Critique of Practical Reason* (CPR), 5:113-114.

[7] CPR, 5:110-111.

[8] CPR, 5:114.

[9] Cf. Kneller, 2007, 50. Kneller is also referring to that aspect of the problem, but her solution is mainly materialistic since she refers to the ideal situation contained in the moral ideal (i.e. the highest good) as something that *can* be realized in nature without being

My point is that in order for our faith in God, as a condition of the possibility of the moral ideal, to actually work it must be somehow connected to the natural world we live in and to the way we *represent* ourselves in it. For after all, although we can indeed decide to believe in God (or in an ideal world as in our initial thought experiment), if we do not have good reason to *imagine* the moral ideal as realizable *in* nature, this faith will not be able to turn into a rational possibility for us. What we are required for is both: 1) some concrete evidence that the natural world is indeed *compliant* to our moral end, and 2) some indication that we *ourselves* have the capacity to accomplish it.

I wish to argue that these two requirements are met by the power of imagination, as described in Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, which provides us with two (kinds of) presentations (*Darstellungen*): objective and subjective purposiveness. I demonstrate these two respectively through the idea of culture and our aesthetic experience in natural beauty. My aim is to show that the moral ideal (henceforth: the highest good) must be an object of our aesthetic abilities, that is, of our ability to present a

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determined. I, on the other hand, am interested in the *form* of possibility of the highest good. I wish to argue that our aesthetic experience in nature gives us means to construct the highest good as realiz*able* (not that it can be actually realized) through their similar form of purposiveness. For a more elaborated account on the connection between moral motivation and the principle of purposiveness in Kant's third *Critique* see my "The Nature of Moral Faith", 2019, 117-144.

structure/form of possibility in imagination. It is only in this way that the question of moral motivation is addressed.

I proceed as follows: I start with a brief presentation of the problem embodied in the highest good regarding its practical possibility and its necessary connection to the existence of God. I show why this connection is not sufficient for understanding the moral *motivation* to realize the highest good in nature. Then I turn to the 'Teleology' in the third *Critique* arguing that *there* can be found the beginning of a solution to the problem of the realizability of the highest good. I show how, through the presentation of objective purposiveness in nature carried out by the power of imagination, we are led to the idea of culture as the ultimate end of nature which, in turn, serves as a criterion of reflective assessment of our progress towards realizing the highest good as the final end of nature. Finally, I return to the 'Aesthetics' which complement the solution to the problem of the highest good. I demonstrate how our aesthetic experience of natural beauty gives us means to construct the highest good as realiz*able* through the way imagination operates in aesthetic judgment. Thus, it provides us proof that nature is indeed compliant with our moral abilities.

2. The Problem of the Highest Good and the Postulate of God

In the 'Dialectic' of *Critique of Practical Reason* Kant states that "the question, *How is the highest good practically possible* (…) remains as unsolved problem, despite all *attempts at coalition* made thus far".[10] The main difficulty of the highest good is that it seems both necessary and impossible: on the one hand, Kant defines it as a moral duty, that is, as something that must and *can* be realized. But on the other hand, there is no *rational* reason to believe that we *can* actually realize it (at least not in this lifetime).[11] This is because Kant describes the highest good as an ideal state composed of two heterogeneous and completely distinct elements, happiness and morality,[12] that we have no means of joining together.[13]

The only way we can reconcile them is to assume that our phenomenal world is *not* our only possible mode of existence and regard ourselves simultaneously *also* as noumenon, i.e., "as pure intelligence".[14] If we assume this, then we have reason to make a further assumption that there is

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[10] CPR, 5:112.

[11] CPR, 5:113-114.

[12] CPR, 5:111-113.

[13] In the "antinomy of Practical Reason" Kant explains that the only way for us to join together the two elements of the highest good is if one is the condition of the other, but both alternatives are false. Happiness cannot be the motive for morality for it reduces the latter to prudence. And vice versa, morality cannot be the cause of happiness as it turns the latter into the satisfaction of virtue, and hence it is impossible according to the Kantian definition of virtue (CPR, 5:113-114).

[14] CPR, 5:114.

some transcendent cause that mediates between our noumenal moral will and its phenomenal effects, or, put differently between morality and happiness. In other words, Kant's claim is that in order to presuppose the possibility of the highest good one must at the same time presupposes its conditions of possibility in the form of a transcendent cause that mediates between its two heterogenic elements.

Kant refers that transcendental cause to "an intelligible originator of nature", that is, to the idea of God,[15] and describes it as inseparably linked with the *real* possibility of the highest good.[16] Thus, God becomes a postulate of pure practical reason - by which Kant understands a proposition that, although it is not capable of theoretical demonstration in nature, is nevertheless inherently attached to an a priori unconditionally valid practical law.[17] This is, broadly speaking, the way Kant resolves the antinomy of the highest good in the second *Critique*.[18]

I wish to argue that this solution is not satisfactory for it does not

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[15] CPR, 5:115.

[16] Kant stresses that this is a real and not just logical possibility (CPR, 5:4). This possibility requires also the ideas of freedom and immortality, but I will not treat of them here as they require a broader discussion beyond the scope of this paper.

[17] For elaboration see, Förster, 2012, 119-124.

[18] Formulated very generally, Kant's solution to the problem of the highest good takes the following form (aka the 'moral argument'):

I. We have a duty to promote the highest good.

II. We must assume the conditions for the possibility of this good.

III. God is a condition of the possibility of the highest good.

Therefore, we must assume the existence of God (cf., CPR, 5:124-132).

address the question of moral *motivation*, especially in the context of moral faith. Stated differently, here we find no answer to the question of *how* the highest good becomes something we should (and could) *strive* for.

The point I wish to further is that our moral commitment to the highest good does not simply depend on our automatic affirmation of its conditions of possibility, i.e. of God (or of the other postulates, for that matter), but we must look for some further *sign* that nature is indeed disposed to our moral end.[19] In other words, we must have some *indication* of an underlying unity of moral causality with natural causality that would be the ground for the realizability of the highest good in the sensible world.

To do this, we must turn to the third *Critique* where Kant deals with the question of mediating between nature and morality (freedom) describing nature as giving us actual signs[20] that it is amenable to our moral endeavor and *also* to our capacities. One of these signs, is our ability to present nature as purposively organized. This presentation of natural purposiveness reveals its connection to the highest good through the idea of *human culture*.

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[19] See: "we find ourselves *compelled* to seek the possibility of the highest good - which reason marks out for all rational beings as the goal of all their moral wishes" CPR, 5:115.

[20] see also: hints/traces/marks. *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (CJ)*,* 5:298-299; 300; 390; 476.

3. Presenting Purposiveness <u>in</u> Nature

In section VIII of the published introduction to the *Critique of Judgment* Kant introduces two kinds of purposiveness: objective and subjective and argues that natural ends and natural beauty are their *presentations* (*Darstellungen*) respectively.[21] Without explicitly mentioning it, Kant uses here terminology that is identified with the main function of the power of imagination as "the faculty of presentation".[22] In its common use from the *Critique of Pure Reason* imagination is "the faculty of presentation" in the sense of representing in intuition an object that can be subsumed under certain concepts.

The presentation of purposiveness, however, cannot be described in the same way. That is because it is presented in the third *Critique* in the context of reflective judgments. Thus, our starting point is not in an a priori concept under which the object is determined, but in a particular within nature of which we must seek out a rule in order for the judgment to be implemented. I wish to argue that in presenting purposiveness, imagination gives us a '*form of possibility*'. By which I mean that it enables us to regard nature itself *as* purposively organized and at the same time it presents our own highest purpose: the moral ideal *as* having the *form* of a real possibility

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[21] CJ, 5:193.
[22] CJ, 5:232.

in that nature. Let me demonstrate this first with the presentation of *objective* purposiveness in natural ends.

On Kant's account, we cannot comprehend the form and function of certain natural products (Kant is referring mainly to living organisms) unless we *represent* them as having a purpose.[23] Put differently, Kant argues that in order for us to *not* regard nature's causality as a blind mechanism, we must *represent the possibility* of objects in it teleologically: as ends.[24] The point is that even though this is *our* way of observing nature and conceive objects in it, the presentation of purposiveness in this regard is nevertheless *objective*. This means that when we intuitively construct certain natural objects in imagination according to the concept of purposiveness, we actually observe *real* purposiveness *in* nature (as oppose to our mere relation to nature).

This *intrinsic* objective purposiveness we find in nature, Kant argues, makes us raise a further question, namely: whether these organized, natural beings are also *extrinsically* connected so that the whole of nature is a system of ends.[25] And this, in turn, makes us wonder whether this system

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[23] CJ, 5:360. Analogically to the production of man-made objects that are designed according to their purpose.

[24] See: "we adduce a teleological ground when we (…) *represent the possibility* of the object in accordance with the analogy of such a causality (like the kind we encounter in ourselves), and hence we conceive of nature as **technical** through its own capacity." CJ, 5:360.

[25] See: "It is therefore only matter insofar as it is organized that necessarily carries with it the concept of itself as a natural end, since its specific form is at the same time a

has a final end, namely, an unconditioned end whose ground of existence lies solely in itself.[26] Stated differently, our *experience in nature* that requires us to represent it teleologically: as having objective purposiveness, leads us to the idea of a final purpose that can otherwise be found only in the ethical sphere.[27]

The point I wish to stress is that on the one hand our teleological perspective of nature leads us to the idea of a *final* end [*Endzweck*] which constitutes an unconditional end (the moral ideal). Yet on the other hand, this final end *cannot* be found *in* nature since all natural beings are conditioned precisely by being means to an end. Nevertheless, Kant argues that nature can still have an *ultimate* end [*Letzte Zweck*]: the *culture* of human beings. That is the highest end nature can accomplish. Thus, culture is the point towards which the whole of nature is oriented. In other words, culture is the principle that organizes men's *natural* purposes into a system.

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product of nature. However, this concept *necessarily leads* to the idea of the whole of nature as a system in accordance with the rule of ends, to which idea all of the mechanism of nature in accordance with principles of reason must now be subordinated." CJ, 5:378-379.

[26] for reasons of space I simplify this argument presenting only the points that are relevant to our case.

[27] Cf. "once we have discovered in nature a capacity for bringing forth products that can only be conceived by us in accordance with the concept of final causes, we may go further and also judge to belong to a system of ends even those things (or their relation, however purposive) which do not make it necessary to seek another principle of their possibility beyond the mechanism of blindly acting causes; because the former idea already, as far as its ground is concerned, leads us *beyond* the sensible world, and the unity of the supersensible principle must then be considered as valid in the same way not merely for certain species of natural beings but for the *whole of nature as a system*" CJ, 5:381.

The question arises: if nature in itself cannot lead us to the moral end, but only to culture as an ultimate end of nature, how can we continue to *imagine* its realizability from our position in nature? To answer this, we must first understand the connection natural purposiveness has with cultural practice.

Kant describes culture as the ability for transcending the mechanism of nature *within* nature itself through man's ability of freely set ends in that nature.[28] Culture demonstrates human striving to give teleological shape to nature as a whole, including to man himself as the ultimate end of nature in accordance with his cognitive powers. It is the ultimate end of nature since culture gradually separates man from his immediate ends, while allowing him to set new *higher* ends in nature without being dependent on it. This means that man must direct his own existence purposively by *freely* determining his actions. Culture is the tool for this, because it does not describe any *specific* goal or end. Rather, it allows man to freely direct his actions, by letting him "to feel an aptitude for higher ends, which lie hidden in us".[29]

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[28] See: "[Culture is] the aptitude for setting [one]self ends (…) and (independent from nature in his determination of ends) using nature as a means appropriate to the maxims of his free ends in general, as that which nature can accomplish with a view to the final end that lies outside of it and which can therefore be regarded as its ultimate end" CJ, 5:431. One could say that culture is an empirical analogy of moral freedom. Cf. Cheah, 2003, 8.

[29] CJ, 5:434. I purposely do not go into the details of Kant's account of culture as being promoted through inequality between men, nor to the internal distinction Kant makes

My point is that our ability to freely set ends in nature creates in us the need to raise the question of the moral ideal and whether we have reason to *believe* that it is realizable within that nature. Since the moral ideal cannot be represented in intuition, as opposed to any other practical end that we might pose to ourselves, it appears that it can only be portrayed in thought as having the *form* of an end and it is thus articulated through culture as the human ability to freely set ends in nature.

With this in mind, we can return to the question of how to continue to imagine the final end (the highest good) as realizable from our natural position (that at best can lead us solely to culture). My point is that even though we cannot create in imagination any direct representation of the highest good, in the sense of the ability to give it embodiment or realization, we can still point at its *realizability*: the presentation of culture as the ultimate end of nature becomes a criterion for a *reflective assessment* of how close, or how far, we are to, or from, realizing the final end.

It emerges that our teleological perspective on nature as a whole, through the presentation of nature *as* a system of ends, enables us to articulate our *striving* towards the highest good as a final end of nature hence, to articulate its realizability. But, since we cannot provide that final

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in the concept of culture itself between 'culture of skill' and 'culture of discipline' as I elaborated on this in my "The Final End of Imagination", 2017, 107-115. What interest me in the present context is the idea of culture as a standard for assessing our progress towards realizing the highest good and the way we come to the idea of culture from the outset through the *presentation* of purposiveness in nature by the power of imagination.

end with any correspondent intuition, this articulation comes in a form of an indeterminable *gap* between it and the ultimate end of nature: culture. As such, culture refers nature *beyond* itself since it mediates between the mechanism of nature and the final end that lies beyond it. Kant puts it in terms of hints [*Winke*] that are "given to us by nature that we could by means of that concept of final causes step *beyond* nature and even connect it to the highest point in the series of causes [the highest good; MGR]".[30]

But is it enough to claim that nature gives us *hints* in order to reach such a far-reaching conclusion: that the highest good is indeed attainable? I wish to argue that this insight gains its full value only once we integrate it with the subjective purposiveness presented in natural beauty. For, while objective purposiveness in nature gives us purposeful *direction*, *as if* nature itself was purposively organized, subjective purposiveness demonstrates that nature is *indeed* purposive with respect to our faculties through the presentation of natural beautiful objects.

4. From Natural Beauty to <u>Moral</u> Theology

Kant describes the subjective purposiveness of nature as an *aesthetic* representation that is connected immediately with the feeling of *pleasure*,

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[30] CJ, 5:390. Emphasis mine.

without being brought under a determinate concept or end.[31] According to Kant, this principle of subjective purposiveness is revealed only by aesthetic experience concerning natural beauty. For in exhibiting beauty nature is *actually* presenting intuitively its own subjective purposiveness, that is, its purposiveness with respect to our faculties.[32] The point is that even though natural beauty is not actually *in* nature, it is intuitively given by certain objects of experience that we judge as if nature *itself* is being purposive to our faculties.

This unique presentation of purposiveness is made possible by the *free* play of imagination with the different representations given to us by certain objects in nature, without being constraint, as aforesaid, by any determined concept of what the object ought to be in order to serve any *particular* end. Nevertheless, imagination in its free play with the understanding satisfies our *general* cognitive end to find something that unifies our experience in nature as a whole by presenting the compatibility between nature and our capacities in the act of aesthetic judgment.[33]

The question arises as to how this presentation of subjective

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[31] See: "If pleasure is connected with the mere apprehension (*apprehensio*) of the form of an object of intuition without a relation of this to a concept for a determinate cognition, then the representation is thereby related not to the object, but solely to the subject, and the pleasure can express nothing but its *suitability* to the cognitive faculties that are in play in the reflecting power of judgment, insofar as they are in play, and thus merely a subjective formal purposiveness of the object" CJ, 5:189-190.

[32] CJ, 5:245.

[33] CJ, 5:190.

purposiveness, embodied in natural beautiful objects, relates to the realizability of the highest good, or to our moral motivation to strive to it?

Similar to the pure moral interest we take in the highest good which does not involve any personal interest and is thus universal, we take what Kant calls "an *intellectual* interest" in natural beauty,[34] which is articulated through the universal agreement that the judgment of the beautiful demands of everyone "as if it were a duty".[35] The stress is on the fact that in taking intellectual interest in natural beauty we experience pleasure not only in the *form* of natural beautiful objects but also in their actual *existence.*[36]

This point is directly linked to Kant's description of the highest good as a final end of practical reason that must be thought as (objectively) realizable *in* nature. Kant's claim is that in exhibiting natural beauty, nature becomes an object of interest of practical reason since it presents *in* nature a subjective formal purposiveness that is similar to the interest of practical reason, namely the moral satisfaction in the striving for the highest good.[37]

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[34] CJ, §42.

[35] CJ, 5:296.

[36] Cf. "Someone who (…) considers the beautiful shape of a wildflower, a bird, an insect, etc. (…) takes an immediate and certainly intellectual interest in the beauty of nature. I.e., not only the form of its product but also its *existence* pleases him, even though no sensory charm has a part in this and he does not combine any sort of end with it" CJ, 5:299.

[37] See: "since it also interests reason that the ideas (for which it produces an immediate interest in the moral feeling) [i.e. the highest good] also have objective reality, i.e., that nature should at least show some *trace* or give a *sign* that it contains in itself some sort of ground for assuming a lawful correspondence of its products with our satisfaction that is independent of all interest (…), reason must take an interest in every manifestation in

In other words, the subjective purposiveness embodied in natural beauty gives us for the first-time proof for the claim that nature is suitable for our capacities. Hence, practical reason in now learning to recognize itself as *part* of nature and to think in a way that is attuned to it.[38] Consequently, the subjective purposiveness exhibited by natural beautiful objects demonstrates the connection between the highest good, as the final end of practical reason, and reason's capacity (i.e., our capacity) to realize it.

Practically speaking, the fact that our encounter with natural beauty produces a feeling of pleasure indicates that nature's hint is being received and responded to as something meaningful. This is done, as indicated earlier, through the free play of imagination "in the representation of an object without any end". Thus, imagination gives us "the mere *form of purposiveness* in the representation through which an object is **given** to us".[39]

The point, for our purpose, is that it is *precisely* this "mere *form*" of purposiveness that enables the highest good to be *symbolically* presented in natural beautiful objects *as* a form of possibility. That is how Kant can argue

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nature of a correspondence similar to this. Consequently, the mind cannot reflect on the beauty of **nature** without finding itself at the same time to be interested in it. Because of this affinity, however, this interest is moral." CJ, 5:300.

[38] Cf. Angelica Nuzzo, 2008, 229.

[39] CJ, 5:221.

that "the beautiful is the symbol of the morally good".[40] For although the highest good cannot have any direct presentation in intuition, yet it still has to be realizable, we are required to think of it analogically with a concept that *can* be intuitively presented (e.g. natural beauty) in a way that the two forms of thinking will be sufficiently similar.

It is here where we can return to the question of God as a condition of possibility of the highest good. For the common characteristics of the highest good and natural beauty that enables the first to be presented symbolically through the latter is what Kant refers to as the supersensible ground of nature.[41] Kant argues that we must think of the supersensible ground of nature as responsible for nature's exhibition of its *own* subjective purposiveness.[42] Thus, although we cannot know the supersensible, we still need to appeal to it so that we can think of natural beauty as subjectively purposive, i.e. as compatible to our abilities. By doing so, we can reflect on the possibility of the highest good through its symbolic manifestation in natural beautiful objects.

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[40] CJ, §59.

[41] For time reason I directly connect the supersensible ground of nature with the idea of God. Although I am aware that this link is not accurate textually and requires a broader explanation of the relationship between the two.

[42] See: "the judgment of taste is based on a concept (of a general ground for the *subjective purposiveness of nature* for the power of judgment), from which, however, nothing can be cognized and proved with regard to the object, because it is in itself indeterminable and unfit for cognition; yet at the same time by means of this very concept it acquires validity for everyone (…), because its determining ground may lie in the concept of that which can be regarded as the *supersensible substratum of humanity*" CJ, 5:340.

The point is that instead of merely postulate God, we have now further support *in* nature to do so. For we can now see that without the subjective purposiveness as it is presented in natural beauty, one cannot believe in God as a moral creator who *also* contains our capacities. It is only due to the *intuitive* presentation of subjective purposiveness carried out by imagination that we can actually perceive the possibility of the determination of nature and its supersensible ground as a way to realize the highest good in that nature.

In other words, only after we integrate subjective and objective purposiveness through their respective presentations in imagination can we answer the question of moral motivation regarding the real possibility of the highest good.

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The Moral Dimension of Qiyun Aesthetics and Some Kantian Resonances

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ABSTRACT. In this paper, I suggest that the notion of *qiyun* (spirit consonance) in the context of landscape painting involves a moral dimension. The Confucian doctrine of sincerity involved in bringing the landscapist's or audience's mind in accord with the Dao underpins the moral dimension of spiritual communion between artist, object, audience and work. By projecting Kant's, and Schiller's somewhat modified Kantian philosophy of aesthetic autonomy and the moral relevance of art into the *qiyun*-focused context, we shall see that reflection on parallels and differences between the two cultural traditions helps to better understand the moral dimension of *qiyun* aesthetics.

1. Introduction

One may insist that the notion of *qiyun* (spirit consonance) in Chinese painting is merely an aesthetic criterion, not for moral enlightenment, and aesthetic autonomy and moral cultivation are two disparate categories.[2] In this paper, I will argue that this is a mistake. I attempt to show why *qiyun* in the context of landscape painting should not be regarded merely as an aesthetic criterion, and how it embodies the dimension of moral cultivation through spiritual communion between artist and object, audience and work.

In the first section, I will firstly show that the notion of *qiyun* applied by the 10th century landscapist and theorist Jing Hao in landscape painting, and further developed by the 11th century art historian Guo Ruoxu (ca. 1080) and the early Yuan connoisseur Tang Hou (active in the late 13th century and the early 14th century) involves a moral dimension. Then, we will see that the moral relevance of *qiyun*-focused landscape painting is reflected in these two aspects: (i) the way landscapists and audiences have

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[2] The notion of *qiyun* is initially proposed by Xie He (active 500–ca. 535) in his six laws of Chinese painting. I have suggested that the notion of *qiyun* includes four dimensions: where the process of creation by painters is concerned, *qiyun* refers to the essential quality of the object depicted; once the painter releases the brush to complete a work, *qiyun* becomes the expressive quality or content of the work; the ability to create a painting replete with *qiyun* is in relation to the artist's *qiyun*; *qiyun* implies the spiritual communion and sympathetic resonance between artist and object (Hu, 2016: 247–268).

of contemplating the world and seeking spiritual communion with it, and (ii) the experience of (Confucian) sincerity (*cheng*) which leads the kindred minds to achieve spiritual communion and resonance during artistic practice or appreciation. In the second section, I examine the efficacy of projecting Kant's and Schiller's philosophy of aesthetic autonomy and the moral relevance of art into a *qiyun*-focused landscape painting context, and show that the differences and parallels between the two cultural traditions help us better understand the moral dimension of *qiyun* aesthetics, increase appreciation of problems with earlier Chinese scholars' adoption of Kantian ideas in their writings on the Chinese aesthetic tradition, and illuminate some limitations in Kantian aesthetics.

2. *Qiyun*, Spiritual Kinship and Sincere Will

Xie He initially proposes the notion of *qiyun* in his six laws of painting in the context of figure painting as dominant genre, while his text does not give *qiyun* a moral dimension. However, the moral dimension of *qiyun* is shared in the texts written by Jing Hao, Guo Ruoxu, and Tang Hou. In *Notes on the Art of Brush* (*Bifa Ji*), Jing Hao's application of *qiyun* in landscape painting, involves a moral dimension to the *qiyun* of depicted natural objects (see Munakata, 1974: 13–14). His view that natural objects such as the pine tree share congenial attributes with the virtuous originates in *the Analects*, where

Confucius says that 'The Virtue of a gentleman is like the wind, and the Virtue of a petty person is like the grass— when the wind moves over the grass, the grass is sure to bend' (Slingerland, 2006: 36; *Analects*, 12.19). Jing Hao also suggests that capturing the object's *zhen* (internal reality) which is embodied through *qi* and *yun* requires and accompanies the moral cultivation of the landscapist, and claims that since 'limitless desire is a threat to life', by virtue of '[enjoying] playing the [*qin*] lute, calligraphy, and painting, [wise people] replace worthless desires with [worthy play of art]' (Bush and Shih, 2012: 141/146; Yu, 1986: 606).

Before Jing Hao, the Tang art historian and critic Zhang Yanyuan (847) follows Xie He's six laws in his *Record of the Famous Painters of Successive Dynasties* (*Lidai Minghua Ji*), although he does not apply the notion of *qiyun* to landscape painting.[3] In his writing on the origin of Chinese painting, he cites the Han scholar Lu Ji's claim that 'the rise of paintings is like that of sacrificial hymns and songs, to celebrate great deeds', since historical figures and events were popular subject-matters at the initial stage of painting (Lin, 1967: 45).[4] Jing Hao locates the moral dimension of *qiyun* in the depicted natural object (the pine tree in his text) as seen above, while Zhang Yanyuan neither thinks landscape in paintings he has seen has *qiyun* nor directly links *qiyun* with a moral dimension in his

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[3] For an English translation of *Lidai Minghua Ji*, see Acker, 1954.

[4] For Zhang Yanyuan' more discussion of painting's moral relevance, see *Lidai Minghua ji chapter 1* section 1; Acker, 1954: 61–80; Lin, 1967: 43–47.

text.

Guo Ruoxu echoes Zhang Yanyuan in claiming that paintings depicting sages and worthies or recording moral figures' historical stories directly show the moral function of '[appraising] critically their worth or folly or [shedding] light on their stability or disorder' by reminding observers of the moral distinctiveness of the role models (Bush and Shih, 2012: 93; Yu, 1986: 55). Zhang Yanyuan's classification of two kinds of people capable of masterpieces ('men robed and capped and of noble descent', and 'rare scholars and lofty-minded men') appears to have inspired Guo Ruoxu's view that paintings replete with *qiyun* were usually created by 'talented worthies of high position or superior gentlemen in retirement, who cleaved to loving-kindness and sought enjoyment in the arts or explored the abstruse and plumbed the depths', and lodged lofty and refined emotions within their works (Acker, 1954: 153; Bush and Shih, 2012: 95–96). For Guo Ruoxu, the last five laws by Xie He are 'open to study', while *qiyun* 'necessarily involves an innate knowledge; it assuredly cannot be secured through cleverness or close application, nor will time aid its attainment. It is an unspoken accord, a spiritual communion [*shenhui*]; "something that happens without one's knowing how"' (Bush and Shih, 2012: 95; Yu, 1986: 59).[5] Unlike Jing Hao who suggests that the moral dimension of *qiyun* is in

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[5] Soper (1951: 15) translates *shenhui* as 'spiritual consonance'. For an English translation of *Tuhua Jianwen Zhi* with the translator's notes, see Soper, 1951: 1–207.

the natural object such as the pine tree, Guo Ruoxu links the moral dimension of *qiyun* with the innate mental talent of the painter, which determines whether a painter can create a painting replete with *qiyun*. That is, for Guo Ruoxu, the moral dimension of *qiyun* directly relates to the artist's character, rather than the object depicted.

Three centuries later, Tang Hou does not stress the moral cultivation required by *qiyun*-focused artistic creation and appreciation as both Jing Hao and Guo Ruoxu suggest, although, from his *Huajian* (*Criticism of Painting*), one may see that these points are not excluded in his ideas of *qiyun* as the first criterion for painting connoisseurship.[6] He writes that 'The scions of good families must learn to look at calligraphy and painting' (Bush and Shih, 2012: 260; Chou, 2001: 71; 2005: 97). In the light of Jing Hao's view of the natural object's *qiyun*'s moral dimension and Guo Ruoxu's suggestion of the artist's moral cultivation practised through spiritual communion with the object, one can understand more deeply why Tang Hou persuades people born in good families to learn to appreciate calligraphy and painting. In general, considering that Jing Hao, Guo Ruoxu, and Tang Hou are all familiar with the Confucian advocacy of the (moral) cultivation of mind as the basis of human social life, one may understand a rough

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[6] For an English translation of *Huajian*, see Chou, 2001: 64–175; 2005: 94–152.

continuity between them regarding the moral dimension of *qiyun*.[7]

One may wonder how moral cultivation, as implied by Jing Hao, further suggested by Guo Ruoxu and echoed by Tang Hou, is involuntarily realised in, or at least accompanies, the practice of creating (and appreciating) a painting replete with *qiyun*. We have seen that Guo Ruoxu explicitly points out that creating a painting replete with *qiyun* requires spiritual communion between artist and object. That is, valuing *qiyun* above formal resemblance requires the artist to seek or experience the congeniality and resonance with the object at the congenial level of spirit-energy.[8] For instance, for painting the bamboo, a spiritual accord and moral kinship needs to be cultivated between artist and object, so as to capture its internal feature of humility, rectitude, uprightness and chastity. Here, it should be stressed that, we cannot simply regard capturing the *qiyun* of the natural

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[7] *The Great Learning* (Legge, trans, 1914: 1–23), one of the Confucian classics, tells of cultivating the self in eight steps. Among these eight, the first two are investigating things (*gewu*) and extending knowledge (*zhizhi*), and the next two are sincerity of thought (*chengyi*) and rectification of the mind (*zhengxin*).

[8] Guo Ruoxu's idea of *shenhui* may be inspired by the South Dynasties artists and theorists Zong Bing (375–443) and Wang Wei (415–443), and the Tang art historians and critics Li Sizhen (d. 696) and Zhang Yanyuan, and this idea is found in his contemporary artists and critics Shen Kuo's (1031–1095), Su Shi's (1037–1101) and Huang Tingjian's (1045–1105) writings, even though they do not apply the terminology of *qiyun* (see Bush and Shih, 2012: 37–39; Soper, 1951: 127; Peng, 1951: 139–140). Cahill (1959: 87) notes that Mencius regards reading literary works as a means of building the feelings of affinity with the scholars of antiquity, and this affinity is based on what later people call '*shenhui*' (See Mencius, book V, part 2, chapter 8; see also Tu Wei-ming: 1983: 69–71).

object as the imposition or projection of human characteristics onto the external natural world, as this will distort our understanding of the equal and harmonious relationship between artist and natural object (in both Confucian thought and Daoist philosophy).[9]

The spiritual communion may occur when the artist paints landscape in a spirit of reverence through an introvertive contemplation. As Guo Ruoxu's contemporary landscapist and theorist Guo Xi (1000–1090) suggests, the appropriate way for either artist or audience to look at landscape is thus:

> Look with a heart in tune with forest and stream, then you will value them
> highly. Approach with the eyes of arrogance and extravagance, then you will
> value them but little. (Bush and Shih, 2012: 151; Yu, 1986: 632)

The heart-mind in tune with forest and stream advocated by Guo Xi means a purification and emancipation of the mind demanded by aesthetic autonomy, but this mental purification appears to have moral significance. For Guo Xi, when looking at natural objects without an appropriate mental state or a

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[9] Tu Wei-ming (2004: 37) explains *ganying* as analogous to *shenhui* (spiritual communion): 'the function of "affect and response" (*ganying*) characterizes nature as a great harmony and so informs the mind. The mind forms a union with nature by extending itself metonymically. Its aesthetic appreciation of nature is neither an appropriation of the object by the subject nor an imposition of the subject on the object, but the merging of the self into an expanded reality through transformation and participation'.

sincere attitude, the person will not discover the value of the landscape. He implies that moral self-cultivation is achieved through intuitive comprehension and absorbed contemplation in either artistic creation or appreciation, although he does not apply the terminology of *qiyun* in his writing. Ronald Egan (2016: 285–286) suggests that Guo Xi's account in *Linquan Gaozhi* (*Elevated Emotions in Forests and Streams*) of how to capture the transformation of nature (*zaohua*) through painting echoes Jing Hao's advocacy of conveying landscape's *zhen* (embodied through *qi* and *yun*).[10] Here, one may suggest that Guo Xi echoes Guo Ruoxu that the artist builds an effective sympathetic resonance with the object through intuitive engagement and aesthetic contemplation, and the moral cultivation of mind is conducted involuntarily in the process of creating a work replete with *qiyun*.

The Qing critic Wang Yu (? –1748) echoes Guo Xi's suggestion on the significance of contemplative engagement for a landscape painter,

> When the painter contemplates the true visage of the mountain and forests, showing it [by brushstrokes], how can he not be outstanding? … all the [*shenyun*] [spirit and consonance] of painting come from contemplation of dawn and dusk, the four seasons, the wind, fine, rain, and snow, and the

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[10] Guo Si (d. ca. 1130) compiled his father Guo Xi's notes on landscape in 1117.

appearing and disappearing of the cloud and mist. (Gao, 1996: 138; with modifications)[11]

By contemplating a painting, audiences also echo the mood of the painting initially created by the painter, as if they come to nature, locating themselves in mountains, and enjoying the pleasure of travelling forests and waters. As Guo Xi suggests, when the response to natural objects is one of a spiritual accord, the aesthetic pleasure of the heart-mind being in tune with forests and streams can be gained by sitting in a study and contemplating a landscape painting without leaving the room:

> To look at a particular (landscape) painting puts you in *the corresponding mood*. You seem in fact to be in those mountains. This is the mood of a painting beyond its mere scenery (Bush and Shih, 2012: 151/153–154, my emphasis; Yu, 1986: 632/635).

No matter how long ago the work was created, through contemplative engagement, viewers with similar spiritual interests achieve a congenial spiritual accord with the object and feel a sense of affinity or communion with the artist of *like mind*. As Tu Wei-ming (1983: 70–71) says, 'a smile between two resonating hearts or an encounter between two mutually responding spirits cannot be demonstrated to the insensitive eye or the

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[11] *Shenyun* and *qiyun* are often used interchangeably in classical texts on painting.

unattuned ear.'

What philosophical ideas underpin the moral relevance of spiritual kinship and resonance between artist, object, audience, and work? Peng Lai (2016: 138–139) suggests that Guo Ruoxu's stress on the artist's mental disposition may be inspired by his contemporary Neo-Confucianists Zhang Zai's (1020–1077) and Cheng Hao's (1032–1085) views on the mind and human nature. Inspired by James Cahill's discussion of painting as a reflection of Neo-Confucian *cheng* in Song scholar-artists' aesthetics, I suggest that the sincerity (*cheng*) valued as a basic requirement for scholars cultivating the mind in accord with the Dao may help us to understand the moral significance in the spiritual affinity between artist, object, audience and work under the notion of spiritual communion.[12]

As Guo Ruoxu's contemporary Neo-Confucian scholar Zhou Dunyi (1017–1073) claims, 'sagehood is simply a matter of sincerity, […] sincerity is the foundation of the five virtues, and the source of all virtuous conduct' (Cahill, 1959: 96). In the light of the Confucian philosophy of sincerity, a painting by a pure and lofty mind, is 'a reflection of his sincerity' (Cahill, 1959: 96). When the artist has Confucian sincerity in animating the mental image of the object depicted in his untrammelled imaginative evocation, and releasing pictorial *yi* (idea) or *yixiang* (idea-image) into the final images

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[12] The Northern Song scholar Wang Qinchen echoes his contemporary Guo Ruoxu's suggestion of painting as mind-print and further suggests that the ideal mental state for art, is letting the mind be 'in accord with the Dao' (Bush and Shih, 2012: 209).

replete with *qiyun*, he is achieving mental catharsis and cultivating his moral sentiments along with forgetting the hindrances of all sensuous desires in the secular world. As Zhou Dunyi asserts,

> *Wuyu* (no desire) results in vacuity when in quiescence, and straightforwardness when in movement. Vacuity in quiescence leads to enlightenment, and enlightenment leads to comprehension. Likewise straightforwardness in movement leads to impartiality, and impartiality leads to universality. One is almost a sage when one has such enlightenment, comprehension, impartiality, and universality. (Fung, 1948: 271)[13]

The Ming Neo-Confucian scholar Wang Shouren (1472–1528) further emphasizes the significance of sincerity for the *Doctrine of the Mean*: '"Only those of the utmost Sincerity in the world are able to fathom their natures", and thereby understand the transformations of Heaven and Earth' (Tiwald and Norden, 2014: 270; the *Doctrine of the Mean*, chapter 22). For him, sincerity of thought is necessarily involved in the process of investigating things and extending knowledge; when thought is of the utmost sincerity, the mind is also rectified (Fung, 1948: 314).

Some might find it hard to understand that sincerity is cherished as a basis of virtue in East Asia where Confucian moral principles have

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[13] Here, we can see that the emphasis on impartiality and universality resonates with Kant's ethics, although for Zhou Dunyi such adjectives as impartiality and universality refer to qualities of moral sentiment or character.

influenced people's moral judgment and conduct for more than two thousand years. A. T. Nuyen's (2011: 526–537) comparison between the Kantian good will and Confucian sincerity (sincere will) may help Western readers understand the meaning, centrality, and significance of sincerity for the Chinese (and other nationalities practising Confucian ethics). As Nuyen (2011: 526–537) argues, Confucian sincerity or sincere will 'conditions other virtues through will', and is 'equivalent to' Kant's good will, in terms of acting as an essential condition of other virtues.[14] I agree with Nuyen (2011: 532) that conduct conforming to the Confucian virtues such as *ren* (benevolence or humaneness), *yi* (rightfulness), *li* (propriety), *zhi* (wisdom), *xin* (trustworthiness or integrity), *zhong* (loyalty or faithfulness), *jing* (respect), and *yong* (courage), 'are good only if they are exercised by a person with sincere will'. For instance, if a person does not sincerely will to

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[14] For Kant, the person of 'good will' is the person who acts for the sake of duty – such a person's motive for action is determined by reason according to the moral law that binds all rational agents universally rather than by desire for expected consequences or by emotion, feeling, sentiment or inclination. Kant (6: 394/405) makes duty instead of virtue the fundamental notion: the good will defined in terms of duty is completely good in itself without qualification or limitation, and virtue is 'the moral strength of a human being's will in fulfilling his duty'. One may think that, contrary to Kant's duty-based ethics, Confucian ethics is a virtue-based ethics, and 'sincerity' signifies the virtue of such dispositions as telling the truth, although, as mentioned above, Nuyen convincingly argues that there are parallels between Confucian sincerity (sincere will) and Kant's good will. Chung-ying Cheng (2010: 98) argues that the Confucian ultimate principle of *ren* is 'the perfect virtue for all virtues and also the duty of virtue for all duties of virtues'. Following Chung-ying Cheng's suggestion of *ren* as the duty of virtue, the sincere will conditioning *ren* appears equivalent to Kant's good will.

be benevolent but shows benevolent conduct just for the sake of gaining a good reputation, other's trust or any other purposes, he is not regarded as genuinely benevolent.

The spiritual kinship guaranteed by sincere will in engaging in the imaginative evocation of idea-images (*yixiang*) of the object and spiritual communion with the object and the artist is what the Southern Song Neo-Confucian scholar Zhu Xi (1130–1200) means by his comment on Su Shi's painting:

> As for [Su Shi], he possessed lofty and enduring qualities and a firm and immovable appearance. One might say that he resembled these "bamboo gentlemen" and "rock friends" [which he painted]. After a hundred generation, when men look at this painting, they will still be able to see him in their mind. (Bush and Shih, 2012: 202)

Penetrating the strength and momentum of the brushstrokes, the *yixiang* of the object initially animated in the painter's mind is evoked in the imagination of the congenial and 'sincere' viewer. The congenial and 'sincere' viewer appreciates the sincerity of the artist conveying *qiyun* and his emotions crystalized in every stroke, through contemplating the *qiyun* of the object or work and having a sympathetic resonance with it. His poetic reflection evoked by the *qiyun* of the work enables him to feel the sense of affinity with the kindred spirit (of the object and of the artist) conveyed

through the painting.

In sum, *qiyun*-focused landscape art requires the artist to have spiritual resonance with the object, and also enables congenial communion between the artist and spectator. Moral cultivation through *qiyun*-focused landscape art is endorsed by the sincerity (conditioning virtues as explained in Confucian ethics) involved in imaginative evocation of idea-images of the natural object when the congenial artist is engaging in spiritual communion with the object, or the congenial audience is sharing the sense of affinity with the artist and the subject-matter of the work in artistic contemplation.

3. The Reconciliation of Aesthetic Autonomy and Moral Relevance

As seen above, the Confucian sincerity involved in bringing the scholar-artist's or audience's mind in accord with the Dao and engaging in spiritual communion with the object or work guarantees the spiritual affinity between artist, object, audience and work has a moral dimension. In this section, I suggest that although classical texts about *qiyun* aesthetics written on a more pragmatic basis suggest that the Chinese approach remains focused on the lived experience and practice of artists and appreciators and do not supply a systematic analysis of these issues, the parallels and differences between the Chinese aesthetic tradition and Kantian ideas regarding the moral relevance

of art may help us better understand the moral dimension of *qiyun*.

Although by positing different grounds for beauty and morality Kant's aesthetics suggests that beauty is independent from morality, his accounts of aesthetic autonomy and the relationship between beauty and morality do not rule out the possibility of moral cultivation through art. He suggests that an intellectual interest in the beautiful does not contradict his insistence on the disinterestedness of aesthetic judgment. Jane Kneller (2007: 60–71) agrees with Karl Ameriks (1995: 361–367) that the intellectual interest in the beautiful that Kant also calls love is 'at least an attunement favorable to moral feeling' and suggests that for Kant, our intellectual interest in the beautiful (nature and art) is akin to our moral interest in the good, even though the former is free, analogous to an intellectual love (which is neither pathological, nor practical) and the latter is based on the rational law or categorical imperative. Paul Guyer (1993: 34/36) argues that for Kant aesthetic experience may contribute to moral psychology and moral epistemology, since aesthetic experience 'serves the purpose of morality most directly by improving our propensity for moral feeling', and 'aesthetic phenomena can offer sensible representation of practical reason, of specific moral conceptions, and finally, of the general relation between moral reason and moral feelings'. I agree with Guyer and Kneller that Kant implies the possibility of moral cultivation through art. Since Kant defines the aesthetic idea as the representation of imagination, his notion of beauty as expression

of the aesthetic idea may leave space for moral relevance, although the aesthetic idea is not necessarily a signifier of morality. Similarly, it is worth stressing that in Chinese landscape art, although landscape or some natural plants are read as having virtues, the natural object itself cannot be simply understood as the symbolic signifier of human moral attributes as mentioned above. In addition, the pictorial *yi* (idea) as analogous to Kant's aesthetic idea is not necessarily required to reflect the moral content.[15]

Even though the aesthetic idea in an artwork does not necessarily involve a sensible representation of practical reason and moral conviction, Weijia Wang (2018: 853–875) argues that both the artist and the audience may cultivate their moral sense through reflecting on aesthetic freedom which is analogous to reflection on moral freedom, and thus moral cultivation is a kind of indirect duty for anyone encountering or creating beauty (of nature and art). We now need to see whether further aspects of Kant's account of the analogy between our reflection on beauty and that on morality may be projected into the *qiyun*-focused artistic context.

Kant (KU 5: 353) claims that 'beauty is the symbol of the morally good'. For Kant (KU 5: 354), beauty (i) pleases immediately ('but only in reflecting intuition' rather than in concept), (ii) without the involvement of any interest (sensuous, or intellectual or moral satisfaction which depends

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[15] Regarding the parallels and differences between pictorial *yi* and Kant's aesthetic idea, see Hu, 2019b.

on concern for the existence of the object, concept, or action), (iii) as the reflection or result of the freedom of the imagination 'in accord with the lawfulness of the understanding' in aesthetic judgment, and (iv) such (subjective) aesthetic pleasure is universally valid for everyone (but not by means of any universal concept). According to Kant, morality acts for the sake of duty, in categorical imperatives willed through practical reason according to rational law, and as universalizable maxims or principles treats humanity as an end in itself rather than a mere means. The moral good (i) pleases immediately in reflecting on concepts rather than intuition, (ii) being independent of any antecedent interest (but 'necessarily connected with an interest […] that is thereby first produced'), (iii) as the reflection or result of the freedom of the will (instead of the imagination) 'in accordance with universal laws of reason', and (iv) with universal validity for everyone 'by means of universal concept' (KU 5: 354). Thus, the symbolic relationship between beauty and morality does not consist in or relate to the content of each. Nevertheless, the form of our reflection on beauty as analogous to that on morality lies in the analogy between the four aspects of immediacy, disinterestedness, freedom, and universal validity in both aesthetic judgment and moral judgement just mentioned.

Firstly, regarding the immediacy and disinterestedness of aesthetic freedom and moral freedom, it seems that in the *qiyun*-focused context aesthetic freedom and moral freedom converge in the mind's pursuit of

accordance with the Dao. For a Chinese landscapist or a spectator of landscape painting, the moment of enjoying aesthetic freedom in an aesthetic experience seems to be that of simultaneously cultivating moral freedom.

The detached mental freedom experienced by *qiyun*-focused artists in artistic practice appears consistent with Kant's aesthetic freedom on the one hand (Hu, 2019a: 129–131). However, regarding the free and harmonious play of the faculties of the mind, Chinese texts on painting do not have as sophisticated and systematic an analysis as Kant, and there are essential differences between their philosophical occupations. Although the carefree *shen* (spirit) of the *qiyun*-focused artist parallels Kant's notion of spirit as the animating principle of genius (the union of the imagination and understanding), the first criterion of *qiyun* requires the spirit (*shen*) of the artist to respond to the spirit (*shen*) of the object depicted (Hu: 2019b). Harmony (of the imagination and the understanding) in Kant is intra-subjective, since it is inside the mind of an individual, although it is universally shared by all individuals involved. Christian Helmut Wenzel (2006: 100; 2010: 329) suggests that the harmony in Confucian *li* (ritual or propriety) seen from the outside might correspond to a harmony inside (that is, internal to the mind of the agent who practicing the ritual), and thus may be 'the mirror image of the harmony in the free play of our cognitive faculties, imagination and understanding' defined by Kant as the mental

status of the agent engaging in aesthetic judgment, although this harmony is inter-subjective and also includes the harmony of human beings with nature.[16] Similarly to *li* (ritual or ceremony), the notion of *yun* (consonance or harmony of *qi*) is more inter-subjective, and involves the harmonious sympathetic resonance between subject and object, which is absent in Kant's philosophy.

On the other hand, this aesthetic freedom can reach a harmonious consensus with the Confucian sincere will which conditions virtues, endorses moral freedom and is analogous to the Kantian good will as mentioned in the last section. However, as mentioned above, in his philosophical system, Kant distinguishes aesthetic freedom and moral freedom, claiming that the former is the freedom of the imagination in accord with the understanding, while the latter is the freedom of the will in accordance with the categorical imperative of reason (KU 5: 354). This Kantian dualism cannot be found in the Chinese context where artists and audiences engage in a detached mental state in accord with the Dao which penetrates everything.

Although Schiller defends the Kantian view of aesthetic autonomy, he has more confidence in the moral significance of art, so one might ask

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[16] *Li* (ritual or propriety) along with music have an aesthetic, ethical and political significance in Confucian philosophy. For a discussion of the aesthetic dimension and moral relevance of Confucian *li* and how calligraphy embodies aesthetic and ethical appropriateness of Confucian *li*, see Mullis, 2007: 99–107.

whether his modified Kantian ideas regarding the reconciliation of aesthetic autonomy and moral relevance has greater similarity to this reconciliation in the *qiyun*-focused context.[17] Guyer (1993: 116) notes that 'Schiller understood Kant's idea that the aesthetic can serve the purposes of morality only by remaining free of constraint, including constraint by morality itself'. For Schiller (2003: 156), when artists pursue morality, the moral purpose will destroy the autonomy or heautonomy of appearance of the object depicted, and thus interfere and even inhibit the beauty of the work, since 'the form of this object will be determined by the idea of practical reason, not through itself, and thus will become heteronomous'. Therefore, he advises artists that a moral end or content is 'best hidden' in the form of art, and beauty should 'appear to come from the nature of the thing completely freely and without force' (Schiller, 2003: 156). In addition, Schiller (1982:

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[17] For Schiller (2003: 152–153/156), morality as self-determination through practical reason according to the moral law, is 'the agreement of an action with the form of pure will', while beauty as appearance in self-determination through its own nature, is 'the analogy of an appearance with the form of pure will or freedom'. In aesthetic contemplation, even though aesthetic freedom in sensuous appearance (read by reason cooperating with sensibility) appears analogous to the moral autonomy possessed by rational beings, Schiller clearly distinguishes the autonomy/heautonomy of beauty and moral autonomy (See Schiller, 2003: 148–174/177–183; Beiser, 2005: 219–223; Houlgate, 2008: 42–45). 'What Schiller means by autonomy is that the self-determining object follows the law of its own nature (that is nature in artfulness/lawfulness), while heautonomy means the law of the nature of the object is created by the object itself and the law of self-determination derives from its own inner nature, referring to artfulness/technique in freedom, as "an intensification of autonomy"' (Hu, 2019a: 137).

100–109/122–127; 2003: 152/162) suggests that beauty (as living form or appearance of freedom) stimulates the play drive to exclude any sensuous constraints or rational bounds and the play drive exerts the most vibrant physical power of sensibility (which supplies content) and the mightiest intellectual powers of reason (which offers form). Frederick Beiser (2005: 223) points out that in his letters to Körner Schiller initially uses the idea of heautonomy to define the beauty of the object, but applies it to human nature in his letters on the aesthetic education of man. For Schiller (1982: 144–153), aesthetic freedom, which furnishes aesthetic determinability in aesthetic judgment refers to the freedom of free choice exercised in aesthetic play when sensibility and reason are in harmonious cooperation and reciprocity, not one overcoming another (see also Beiser, 2005: 154–156/232–234).[18] Thus, aesthetic freedom is significant in guiding human beings to enter the rational realm where they perform duties from (cultivated and internalised) joyful inclination (in most untragic situations, against inclination merely in rare tragic situations) (see Schiller, 2005: 145/154/158; Beiser, 2005: 144–145/211–212).[19] The exercise of aesthetic

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[18] I (2019a: 134–141) have argued that balanced human nature nourished through art can also be found in the *qiyun*-focused landscape painting context, and also pointed out the issues of projecting Schiller's account regarding the restoration of complete human nature through art into the *qiyun*-focused context.

[19] For Schiller, severe rationalism has as destructive an effect on human beings as hedonism does, so his aesthetic freedom in balancing sensibility and reason is supposed to lead human beings to an idealistic and healthy middle path between stoicism and

autonomy can promote the restoration of a whole human nature, and this whole nature is also demanded in moral judgment:

> when a person does his duty from inclination he will be heautonomous, acting from the necessity of his own nature, though here his nature is not equivalent to only his natural or phenomenal being but also comprises his rational or noumenal being (Beiser, 2005: 223–224).[20]

Although as mentioned above Guyer and Kneller have argued that Kant's aesthetics implies the possibility of cultivating moral sentiments through aesthetic experience, Schiller's somewhat modified Kantian account appears more explicitly to stress that morally significant inclination can be exercised through aesthetic experience.[21] Schiller's view of internalised inclination as conforming to moral duty and cultivated and habitualised through art appears to parallel the Chinese view of moral sentiments or virtues conditioned by the sincere will that may be fulfilled involuntarily but also actually willed voluntarily through art. Schillerian unity *within dualism* cannot be found in the *qiyun*-focused aesthetic context where moral

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Epicureanism, and the significance of art lies in its function of enabling human beings to be self-conscious in their willing of free choice (Beiser, 2005: 144–145/211–212).

[20] Beiser (2005: 176–179) also stresses that what Schiller means by inclination in his discussion of performing duty from inclination is not natural inclination, but the cultivated, habitualised, internalised inclination gained through aesthetic education.

[21] Kantian scholars have argued that Kant's ethics does not rule out the role of moral sentiments in moral perfection (see Denis, 2006: 519; Sherman, 1977: 121–186).

sentiments are exercised in aesthetic contemplation through sympathetic resonance and spiritual communion between the artist, object, audience and work, and endorsed by the sincere will. Even so, the similar stress on the cultivation or habituation of moral sentiments or inclination through aesthetic experience also signifies the moral significance of art.

Secondly, behind the parallels between *qiyun* aesthetics and Kant's philosophy, there are differences concerning the promotion of moral community through aesthetic community. For Kant, that aesthetic pleasure and aesthetic freedom originally aroused in artists could apply to spectators is based on the universality of the free play of imagination and understanding in aesthetic judgment (KU 5: 217–219). In order to arouse a corresponding response in spectators, the artist starts from the universal standpoint, since he not only 'wants to submit the object to his own eyes', but also speaks with 'a universal voice and lays claim to the consent of everyone' (KU 5: 216). The universal validity and communicability of aesthetic judgment shared by the artist and spectators is based on a *sensus communis* (common sense) shared by human beings, which is 'essentially different from the common understanding that is sometimes also called common sense', since the free play of imagination and understanding as the faculties of mind along with the *a priori* principle of purposiveness are the grounds for justifying this universal agreement of aesthetic taste (see Wenzel, 2005: 81–85; KU 5: 238–240/293–296). Thus, it may be concluded

that Kant's transcendental idea of the universal validity and communicability of aesthetic judgment explains the sense of aesthetic affinity felt by the artist and audiences. This universal validity and communicability of aesthetic taste works (*a priori*) to establish an aesthetic community (see Vandenabeele, 2010: 308–320). On the other hand, Kant stresses the universal validity of moral autonomy. As mentioned above, Kant's view of beauty as the symbol of morality suggests the form of reflection on beauty is analogous to that on morality. Everyone in an aesthetic community may have the same potential to achieve moral cultivation through his/her reflection on aesthetic freedom which is analogous to that on moral freedom. That is, the aesthetic community may indirectly trigger a moral community. However, Zvi Tauber (2006: 36–39) doubts the feasibility of the Kantian idealistic transition (or leap) from beauty to morality, claiming that since beauty (as the presentation of appearance, above reality) and morality (practiced in actual reality), as Kant understands them, are ontologically different, aesthetic experience which is indifferent to real existence cannot have a moral effect unless accompanied by moral education.

In the *qiyun*-focused context, we have seen that an aesthetic community contributes to the establishment of a moral community in a practical sense, since in the process of appreciating the work, viewers of kindred minds are stimulated to echo the painter's mind, and this may

simultaneously enable or encourage their moral elevation. In addition, natural objects are part of the aesthetic and moral community of beings. Unlike with Kant's account of the free play of imagination and understanding and the *sensus communis*, the morally relevant aesthetic communicability is based on the spiritual kinship between artist, object, audience and work, which are united under the notion of *qiyun*. This is absent in Kant's aesthetics which, consistently with his overall transcendental philosophical system, focuses on the subject, although of course Kant does not deny that aesthetic judgments involve objects (Hu, 2019b).

Regarding the promotion of moral community through aesthetic community, again one may find more plausible parallels between *qiyun* aesthetics and Schiller's ideas, since he advocates aesthetic education as a bottom-up approach to realising the aesthetic state as his republican ideal, which has the advantage of avoiding government interference and bypassing ethical religion. In Schiller's (1982: 160–219) aesthetic state, human beings transcend natural desires by taking pleasure in creating or appreciating form, and 'the love of form' enables them to value things beyond the satisfaction of physical needs; through aesthetic practice they exercises their rationality and sensibilities together and this helps them achieve a harmony of spirit and nature (see also Beiser, 2005: 159–160). In his view, the aesthetic state is much better than either the dynamic state or the ethical state, since only in

the aesthetic state can human beings avoid the compulsion of sensuous nature and the rational law and their freedom of will in accordance with complete humanity is respected and realised (Schiller, 1982: 204–219; Beiser, 2005: 162–163).[22] However, some critics such as Beiser (2005: 128–129/164), Georg Lukács (1971: 139) and Kai Hammermeister (2002: 59–60) think that the moral cultivation through art Schiller envisages is narrowly confined to an elite class, and his aesthetic state appears to be politically utopian. For instance, Beiser (2005: 128–129/164) claims that Schiller's aesthetic approach to realising his ideal republic falls into 'resignation to a grim political reality' and 'recognition of the ideal's purely regulative status', since it appears unrealistic when the government is repressive, or most people in society are corrupted and unwilling to accept aesthetic education, or there is no influential artist able to create the powerful artwork to inspire people to engage in artistic contemplation.

The issue of elitism often worsened by problematic political situations is also found in the *qiyun*-focused context where the practice of scholar-

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[22] For Schiller, the dynamic state enforces laws to protect individuals' private interests and legal rights from being infringed by punishing illegal actions which violate other's interests and rights, so it satisfies citizens' demands of as sensuous animals, and limits their actions within a legitimate scope, rather than caring about their internal motives and moral characters. The ethical state cares about individuals' internal motives and characters instead of actions and private rights, where citizens as rational beings and co-legislators are treated as ends rather than means, but encounters compulsion from the rational law especially when the rational law is against individual inclination.

artists building an aesthetic community to avoid political corruption sometimes fell into retreat from worldly reality. This was, especially the case in periods when the political situation appeared dangerous for scholars serving the government, and the elite adopted art as a way of escaping political corruption and maintaining individual inner-peace. For instance, in the Yuan Dynasty when China was ruled by the Mongolians, many Yuan scholar-artists chose to withdraw from the world and live the life of a recluse or semi-recluse, far away from political affairs. Even though the individual moral self is purified by lodging lofty emotions and thought within art, and later artists and connoisseurs with congenial spirits may have spirit resonance with those earlier artists when contemplating their works, the aesthetic community did not involuntarily promote the establishment of a politically effective moral community.

Despite this charge of elitism, however, whether in Chinese texts in relation to *qiyun* aesthetics or in Schiller's letters, the moral and even political significance of art is affirmatively and optimistically valued. As Schiller (1982: 219) enthusiastically states,

> where is [the aesthetic state] to be found? As a need, it exists in every finely attuned soul, as a realised fact, we are likely to find it, like the pure Church and the pure Republic, only in some few chosen circles.

As mentioned above, Zhu Xi praises the spirit Su Shi expressed in his

painting and suggests that even though a hundred generations have passed later audiences will be able to see his mind in the painting and feel the sense of spiritual kinship and community. Although this aesthetic, moral and even political community stimulated by art may be criticized for being confined to the life of intellectual elites, it is endorsed by numerous artists and critics and is able to transcend the boundary of time and space and illuminate and unite every 'finely attuned soul' throughout the long history of Chinese art.

4. Conclusion

In the *qiyun*-focused aesthetic context, the sense of affinity or community aroused between the artist, object, work and audience is the result of the spiritual communion and resonance of kindred spirits during aesthetic contemplation. Confucian idea of sincerity underpins the moral dimension of spiritual communion between the artist, the natural object depicted, and the congenial audience stimulated by artworks. The moral significance of *qiyun*-focused art is not merely for individuals but works for an aesthetic and ethical community, since a congenial spectator with sincere will may experience an intimate spiritual kinship with the artist when contemplating the *qiyun* of the work, and his moral self will also be nourished during the process of viewing the painting and feeling the sense of affinity with like minds. In the process of projecting Kantian views of art and morality into

the *qiyun*-focused context, we have seen these differences behind the parallels: Firstly, Kant distinguishes aesthetic freedom and moral freedom, while in the *qiyun*-focused context the convergence of aesthetic freedom and moral freedom is predicated on the mind's pursuit of accord with the Dao. Regarding the free and harmonious play of the faculties of the mind, harmony in Kant's philosophy is intra-subjective, while the notion of *yun* is more inter-subjective and involves a harmonious sympathetic resonance between subject and object, which is absent in Kant's philosophy. Although according to Confucian ethics moral sentiments and characters potentially fulfilled through art are conditioned by the sincere will as analogous to Kant's good will, Schiller's view of internalised inclination as conforming to moral duty and cultivated through art appears to better resonate with the valuing of moral sentiments cultivated and habitualised through spiritual communion between artist, object, work and audience in the *qiyun*-focused context. This parallel still looks superficial, since the latter does not approve Kantian dualism, let alone unity within dualism. Secondly, similarly to Kantian philosophy, *qiyun* aesthetics suggest that the aesthetic community contributes to the establishment of the moral community, although morally relevant aesthetic communicability is based on the spiritual kinship between artist, object, audience and work, and natural objects are part of this aesthetic and moral community of beings. We have seen that Schiller's account of aesthetic education appears to offer closer parallels with the

Chinese ideas regarding the moral and even political significance of aesthetic community, although in the latter context the attuned or kindred minds are united under the criterion of *qiyun* and the sincere will engages in aesthetic contemplation and congenial spiritual communion. Even though this aesthetic and moral community may be charged as confined to the class of intellectual elites, *qiyun* aesthetics transcends the boundary of time and space in terms of uniting congenial minds in the past, present and future.

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Idées esthétiques et théâtre engagé: Les quatre petites filles de Pablo Picasso

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ABSTRACT. Le Picasso écrivain est encore peu connu, même de la plupart des spécialistes de l'œuvre plastique de l'artiste. Plus de trois cents poèmes et trois pièces forment un corpus dont l'étude peut modifier de manière profonde le regard porté sur les contributions de Picasso à l'art des deux premiers tiers du 20ème siècle. Cet article vise à fournir une des premières approches critiques de la pièce de théâtre Les Quatre petites filles (LQPF, écrite en 1947-8, publiée en 1968 et créée en 1971). Cette œuvre est le fruit d'une tension poïétique féconde entre ce que Kant a désigné comme des idées esthétiques (KU §49) et ce que Sartre définit comme la littérature engagée ; dans le cas de LQPF, cet engagement est à mettre en lien avec la " révolution Beauvoir " et sa libération programmatique du deuxième sexe.

LQPF est la deuxième pièce de théâtre écrite par Picasso (en français) et elle doit être lue à la suite de la première, Le désir attrapé par la queue (1941, également rédigée en français) et comme prélude à la troisième et dernière œuvre, El entierro del conde de Orgaz (L'enterrement du comte d'Orgaz, 1957, en espagnol). Elle se découpe en six actes d'une seule scène et les personnages sont quatre filles (numérotées de I à IV). Picasso était âgé de soixante-six ans au moment de sa rédaction, sa fille adolescente et un bébé faisaient partie de son entourage immédiat, il était affilié au Parti communiste français depuis trois ans. Face à l'horreur de l'Holocauste qui, dès cette

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époque et suite au procès de Nuremberg, était connue dans (presque) toute l'étendue de son horreur, il a été tenté par un certain iconoclasme proche du silence artistique de l'époque. Cette même impulsion iconoclaste l'a poussé à délaisser la peinture et la sculpture au profit de la céramique et de la gravure et l'a conduit vers le sud de la France, avec l'envie de fuir le bruit de Paris. Et vers l'écriture: le défi de la page blanche, le défi de l'origine.

Je développerai le propos de cet article en quatre sections, chacune accompagnée d'un lien poïétique avec une ou deux des œuvres plastiques.

1. Une idée esthétique dominante qui lie l'art et la vie

Les (quelques) éditions existantes de LQFP omettent souvent de reproduire la page initiale, une erreur, car c'est précisément cette page qui livre la clé de lecture du texte. C'est sur celle-ci que l'on trouve le dessin ocre de quatre feuilles de ce qui ressemble à du laurier, accompagné d'un court texte en espagnol, disposé et écrit de la manière suivante:

<div align="center">

Al rededor del

círculo quadrado

del tiempo

</div>

Pour reprendre les propos de Kant au sujet de l'idée esthétique, l'ensemble donne à penser beaucoup à partir d'un dispositif physique sans qu'aucun concept déterminé ne vienne clore la pensée. En effet, la quadrature du

cercle est, depuis que l'être humain est doté d'une conscience de sa propre créativité, le défi le plus difficile à relever; l'accompagner de quatre feuilles de laurier illustre de façon énigmatique ce défi. Picasso se situe Al rededor (" autour "): il tourne autour, comme un tourneur de céramique, son activité principale à ce moment-là.

En 1948, le défi suprême de la créativité est de fonder une nouvelle origine du monde après la Seconde Guerre mondiale. Picasso y fait face avec une impulsion iconoclaste, en écrivant un texte scénique dans lequel le cercle et le carré s'engagent dans une dialectique autour de la fondation d'une nouvelle temporalité et d'un nouvel espace. Les protagonistes: quatre filles, nées de quatre feuilles de laurier, et qui finiront totalement enveloppées par celles-ci, comme des chrysalides dans l'attente d'un événement qui pourrait être bienveillant ou malfaisant, et les conduire au paradis ou dans l'enfer. Pour commencer à lui donner forme, Picasso se déplace autour du cercle carré du temps dans une métamorphose constante à logique biomorphique entre nature (vie) et culture (art), un retour arcadien au jardin méditerranéen au début jusqu'à un cube blanc à la fin, avec des clins d'œil en guise de da capo.

L'autoportrait tient une grande place dans LQFP et je donnerai les raisons picassienes de cette puissance créatrice autoréférentielle. Les lectures nocturnes de Picasso comprenaient à la fois Kant, Nietzsche, Freud, Bataille et probablement le corpus hermeticum. Elles nous donneront

quelques-unes des clés de construction d'un nouveau monde, soit de paix soit de guerre, comme dans l'installation de Guerre et Paix réalisée postérieurement dans la chapelle de Vallauris (1952–9), référence plastique de cette section.

Le Picasso écrivain est encore peu connu, même de la plupart des spécialistes de l'œuvre plastique de l'artiste. Plus de trois cent quarante poèmes et deux pièces de théâtre forment un corpus dont l'étude peut modifier de manière profonde b notre regard sur les contributions de l'auteur des Demoiselles d'Avignon à l'art des deux premiers tiers du 20ème siècle, au-delà de ce chef-d'œuvre si révolutionnaire. Cet article vise à présenter l'une des premières approches critiques à la pièce de théâtre Les quatre petites filles. Cette pièce fut écrite à Golfe-Juan et à Vallauris, entre le 24 novembre 1947 et le 13 août 1948, peu de jours avant que Picasso visite le camp de concentration d'Auschwitz-Birkenau, à l'occasion de son voyage à Wroclaw, pour le Congrès des Intellectuels pour la Paix. Publié par Gallimard en 1968, Les quatre petites filles fut créé en anglais en 1971, pour le 90ème anniversaire de Picasso, dans la traduction de Roland Pendrose, avec une mise en scène de Charles Marowizt, dans l'Open Space de Londres. Marowizt s'inspira d'Alice traversant le miroir de Lewis Carroll pour la conception de la mise en scène, suivant la généalogie que Michel

Leiris avait établie dans le prologue de l'édition Gallimard.[2]

Les quatre petites filles est la deuxième pièce de théâtre écrite par Picasso (en français) et elle doit être lue comme une suite de la première, Le désir attrapé par la queue (1941, également rédigé en français) et comme prélude à un trosième texte, El entierro del conde de Orgaz (L'enterrement du comte d'Orgaz, 1957, écrit en espagnol) qui a une première page dramaturgique mais qui se poursuit comme un récit omniscient. Les quatre petites filles se découpe en six actes d'une seule scène et les personnages sont quatre filles numérotées de I à IV en numéros romains, conservant leur anonymat même si les noms Yvette, Paulette, Sylvette et Jeannette apparaissent plusieurs fois. Deux chansons enfantines à danser en ronde («en corro») résonnent singulièrement dans l'imaginaire collectif des lecteurs espagnols: «El patio de mi casa es particular» («Le patio de ma maison est particulier») et «Al corro de la patata» («A la ronde de la pomme de terre»). En fait, la pièce est truffée de chansonnettes et de jeux enfantins, des danses, des refrains et des devinettes.

Picasso est âgé de soixante-six ans lorsqu'il entame la rédaction de Les quatre petites filles Sa fille Maya, de dix-sept ans, et son bébé Claude, faisaient partie de l'entourage immédiat du peintre, qui était affilié au Parti communiste français depuis trois ans et qu'il venait de décider de s'établir

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[2] Leiris, Michel, «Picasso écrivain ou la poésie hors de ses gonds», dans Bernadac, Marie-Laure – Piot, Christine, Picasso Écrits. Paris, Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1989, pp. VII–XI.

définitivement sur la Côte d'Azur à la suite de la désagréable surprise du rejet par les critiques d'art et le public de ses chefs-d'œuvre exposés au Salon d'Automne de 1944. Picasso se réfugie donc dans le Sud de la France, tout près de la Catalogne ou habitaient encore quelques-uns de ses amis de jeunesse, pour fuir le bruit de Paris et assimiler le choc de l'Holocauste qui, dès cette époque et à la suite du procès de Nuremberg, était connue dans (presque) toute son horreur, en même temps que l'État d'Israël était fondé et survendrait prochainement (Décembre 1948) la Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme. Submergé par l'horreur et abasourdi par l'incompréhension que son art avait suscité, Picasso est tenté par un certain iconoclasme proche du silence artistique prototypique de l'époque. Cette même impulsion iconoclaste le pousse à délaisser la peinture et la sculpture au profit de la céramique et de la gravure. Puis, il se tourne à nouveau vers l'écriture dramatique: le défi de la page blanche, le défi de la refondation d'un monde, le défi de l'origine.

Je développerai le propos de ma communication en trois sections, chacune en lien poïétique avec une ou deux des œuvres plastiques réalisées par Picasso à l'époque. Toutes trois proposent de lire Les quatre petites filles comme le fruit d'une tension poïétique féconde entre ce que Kant a désigné comme idées esthétiques (KU §49) et ce que Sartre a défini comme littérature engagée. Dans le cas de Les quatre petites filles, cet engagement est à mettre en lien avec la «révolution Beauvoir» et la libération

programmatique du deuxième sexe.

2. Une idée esthétique dominante qui lie l'art et la vie

Les rares éditions existantes de Les quatre petites filles omettent toujours de reproduire la page initiale. Une erreur, car c'est précisément cette page qui livre la clé de lecture du texte. C'est sur celle-ci que l'on trouve le dessin ocre de quatre feuilles de laurier (à mon avis), accompagné d'un court texte en espagnol, disposé et écrit de la manière suivante:

<div align="center">

Al rededor del

círculo quadrado

del tiempo (« autour du cercle carré du temps »)

</div>
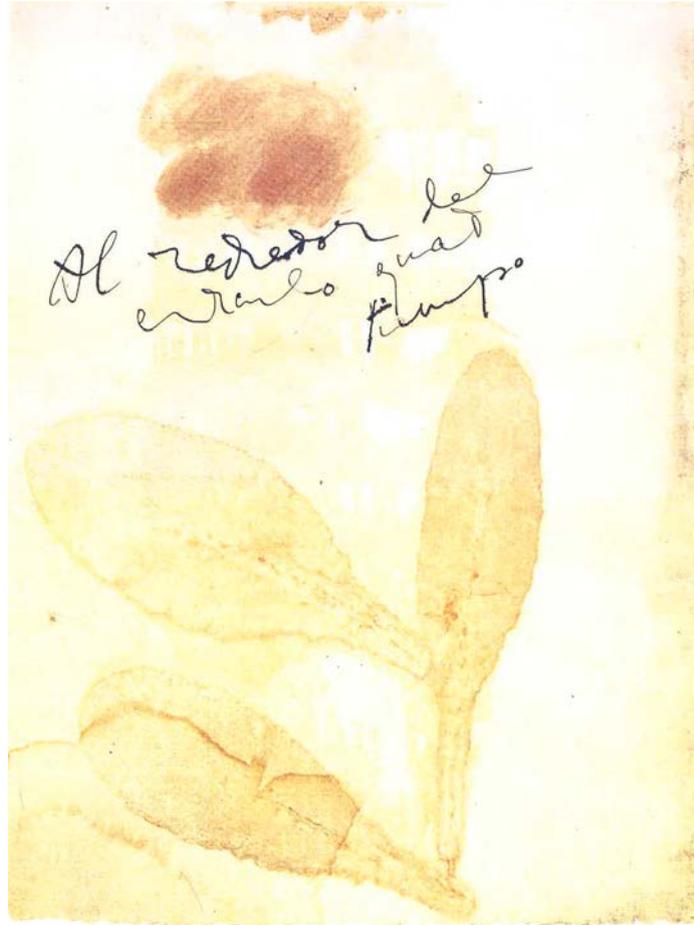
Dessin 1: ere page du manuscrit de Les quatre petites filles © Succession
Picasso 2019

Pour reprendre les propos de Kant au sujet de l'idée esthétique, l'ensemble
donne matière à penser à partir d'un dispositif physique, sans qu'aucun

concept déterminé ne vienne clore la pensée. Ainsi, la quadrature du cercle est le défi créatif par excellence qui a débordé la tradition artistique de Vitruve à Léonard, ainsi que la tradition alchimique et géometrique. Par ailleurs, le nombre π (Pi), que je propose comme un alter ego iconographique de Picasso, y joue également un rôle fondamental. Picasso devient ainsi une sorte de Prométhée, créateur d'un monde nouveau, se situant «autour du cercle carré du temps», comme un tourneur de céramique autour de son tour de céramique, un geste qui engageait Picasso au quotidien, puisqu'au cours de l'automne de 1948, il exhibait un total de cent quarante-huit céramiques dans la Maison de la Pensée de Paris.

En 1948, le défi suprême de la créativité était de fonder une nouvelle origine du monde après la Seconde Guerre mondiale. Picasso y fait face en écrivant un texte scénique dans lequel le cercle et le carré s'engagent dans une dialectique autour de la fondation d'une nouvelle temporalité et d'un nouvel espace. Les protagonistes : quatre filles, nées de quatre feuilles de laurier, qui finiront totalement enveloppées par celles-ci, comme des chrysalides dans l'attente d'un événement qui pourrait être bienveillant ou néfaste, et les conduire aussi bien au paradis que les précipiter en enfer. Rappelons à cet effet que, en 1931, Picasso avait illustré Les Métamorphoses d'Ovide, sans nul doute le texte qui l'influença le plus au cours de sa longue vie créatrice, et rappelons aussi que dans le Livre I se trouve le mythe de la nymphe Daphne qui, poursuivie par Apollon, préfère

se transformer en laurier que de perdre sa virginité (Livre I : 45 –567).

Picasso, en guise d'auteur de métamorphoses, tient une place cryptique dans LQFP et s'insère dans le numéro quatre du titre et dans les quatre feuilles, qui vont se métamorphoser dramatiquement et phoniquement en les quatre filles. Je propose ici une thèse herméneutique concernant l'iconographie picassienne: le quatre est le numéro choisi comme alter ego de Picasso depuis qu'il prend le nom de famille de sa mère. D'une part, le nombre de consonnes qui composent le nom de PiCaSSo coïncide avec le nombre de consonnes dans les noms de CéZaNNe et de MaTiSSe, ses deux modèles (antimodèle, dans le cas de Matisse) et défis créatifs les plus ambitieux; faut dire qu'il finit le texte à soixante-sept ans, l'âge auquel Cézanne est mort. La figure du maître est toujours présente dans l'esprit de Picasso et celui-ci pourrait même être, dans LQPF et ses enjeux avec le cercle et le carré, le destinataire d'un hommage hermétique de la part d'un Picasso ayant atteint le même âge. Par ailleurs, chez Picasso le quatre est également présent dans les cordes de la guitare (qui sont très souvent au nombre de quatre), dans les courbes de la caisse de la guitare et celles des silhouettes féminines, dans les tétragrammes, qui substituent presque toujours les pentagrammes, et dans les dés de hasard.

Matisse était intervenu à l'intérieur de la Chapelle du Rosaire à Vence, en 1951, et Picasso dans celle de Vallauris, entre 1952 et 1959, avec son installation de La Guerre et la Paix, qui enterre l'iconoclastie pour présenter

en formes et en couleurs les deux possibilités qui s'affrontent pour la création collective d'un monde dans l'après-guerre: soit la continuation des horreurs, soit le travail pour le bonheur qui émane d'un monde en paix.

3. Picasso, Sartre, Beauvoir: l'engagement d'une refondation féminine du monde de l'après-guerre

L'année même où Picasso achève Les quatre petites filles, Sartre publie Qu'est-ce que la littérature, texte dans lequel il défend la thèse de l'impératif d'un engagement pour la littérature postérieure à la Deuxième Guerre mondiale. La même année, Beauvoir achève l'œuvre qui sera publiée en 1949 et qui occupera une place prééminente dans la culture de l'après-guerre: Le deuxième sexe. Picasso, aussi, participe d'un projet de littérature engagée en illustrant en 1948 un long poème, Le Chant des morts de Pierre Reverdy, en le remplissant d'un alphabète hermétique de signes rouge sang, très simples, en guise de méta-écriture plastique minimale (une fois encore, par iconoclastie), composée de lignes, points, courbes et cercles (en fait, l'alphabet même du cubisme). Notons que LQPF est aussi écrit avec un crayon de couleur rouge sang.

Sartre et Beauvoir avaient participé à la lecture dramatisée du Désir attrapé par la queue en mars 1944 et l'on peut facilement imaginer que leur relation avec Picasso s'est maintenue pendant les années suivantes, et

qu'elle a nourri la deuxième pièce de théâtre de celui-ci. Je propose donc de lire Les quatre petites filles comme une œuvre de littérature engagée, au sens sartrien du terme, avec un Picasso qui se positionne comme un pacifiste à l'âme anarchiste, membre du Parti communiste français depuis 1944, à la recherche d'un foyer dans un exil aussi bien choisi que subi. Picasso sera plus à l'aise avec son engagement à partir de la fin août 1948, quand le Mouvement de la Paix, fondé à Paris le 22 février 1948 et qui avait pour mission de «soutenir le régime républicain et interdire le retour du fascisme et de la dictature», se fut fort en Wroclaw (une ville à quelques trois-cents cinquante kilomètres de Warszawa) en occasion du Congrès Mondiale des Intellectuels pour la Paix (organisé par le gouvernement polonais) et propulsa Picasso en tête d'affiche.

Mais l'engagement dans LQPF est très particulier et il remet en cause le récit traditionnel sur le rôle de la femme dans l'ensemble de l'œuvre de Picasso. Ainsi, LQPF est la deuxième pièce dans l'histoire du théâtre où les protagonistes sont exclusivement des femmes (dans ce cas, des filles), la première étant La casa de Bernada Alba (La Maison de Bernarda Alba) de Lorca, écrite en 1935 et publiée en 1945. LQPF serait-il un hommage à Federico García Lorca, le poète andalou assassiné par le gouvernement phalangiste à Grenade en août 1936? Même si Les quatre petites filles serait le revers de la pièce de Lorca (filles dans un jardin potager contre dames cloitrées dans une maison claustrophobique), le faisceau de coïncidences

avec Picasso, également andalou, antifranquiste et dramaturge, peintre, dessinateur et poète, laisse peu d'espace à s'en douter.

À cet égard, l'idée esthétique des quatre (petites) feuilles qui émergent « autour du cercle carrée du temps » pose la question centrale de l'après-guerre mondiale: «et maintenant, que faut-il faire?», mais aussi de l'après-guerre espagnole après la violence fasciste contre Lorca comme blason des assassinats de miliers de citoyens. Il est convenable de rappeler ici que Les quatre petites filles a été conçue dix ans après Guernica (1937) et dix ans avant la série des Ménines (1957), qui signale la permanence de la dictature après vingt ans du grand tableau de dénonce de la violence fasciste sur la population civile.

4. Idées esthétiques et métamorphoses dans la cuisine: la gastro-poïesis

L'idée esthétique fondatrice du texte de Les quatre petites filles génère des dizaines d'idées esthétiques qui transforment l'idée initiale en performative en lui conférant de l'espace, du temps et de l'action. Une grande partie de ces idées esthétiques se rapportent au carré de la cuisine et de la table à manger et au cercle de plats qui accueillent à la fois des mets exquis ou pourris. Il convient de rappeler ici la récurrence de ce que j'ai désigné ailleurs comme la gastro-poïesis, qui est, a mon avis, le terme adéquat pour

designer

> le processus de création appliqué à ce qui prend sa base dans la
> gastronomie, –et est donc en lien avec la langue, le palais, l'appareil
> olfactif et l'appareil digestif– ou à l'utilisation métaphorique de la
> gastronomie, qu'utilise un langage –propositionnel ou non, poétique,
> visuel, dramaturgique, scénique ou gestuel– qui s'identifie ou qui ,
> renvoie au gustatif. En ce sens, les pièces et les poèmes de Picasso
> sont de nature gastro-poïètique, c'est à dire: mets et mots font confluer
> et croitre les énergies creatices. Cela est probablement dû en premier
> lieu à ce que le fait gastronomique est pour Picasso –qui était en exil
> volontaire– le lien ombilical avec son foyer d'origine; il est l'idée
> d'un retour poétique à ce qu'il a laissé derrière lui, ainsi que de la
> faim sous l'Occupation et du regal du retour à la paix. En deuxième
> lieux, la cuisine est, pour tout un chacun, le lieu quotidien de la
> transsubstantation, et Picasso comprénait sa poïésis comme une
> métamorphose se produisant par fois à petit feu, parfois à flammes
> vulcannienes.[3]

Dans cette compréhension de la gastropoiesis, j'ai le plaisir de coïncider
avec Marie-Laure Bernadac, Androula Michael et Christine Piot,

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[3] Jaques, Jèssica, "Ce qui mijote dans Le Désir attrapé par la queue ou la
dramaturgie gastro-poïétique sous l'Occupation", dans Guigon, Emmanuel; Michael,
Androula; Rafart i Planes, Claustre, Catalogue La cuisine de Picasso. Museu Picasso de
Barcelona, 2018, pp. 203 – 15.

spécialistes des textes littéraires picassiens, avec qui j'ai eu l'honneur de valider mes traductions et en espagnol et en catalan. Ces trois auteurs ont rédigé des textes pour le catalogue de l'exposition La cuisine de Picasso (Androula Michael étant l'une des commissaires), Christine Piot y fait une étude aussi exhaustive qu'intensive sur la présence du gastropoïétique dans Les quatre petites filles dans son article «Les nourritures terrestres des Quatre petites filles», qui est aussi accablante que dans Le désir attrapé par la queue. Certainement, l'esprit de Picasso était vraiment commandé à l'époque par la gastro-poïesis, comme le montrent ses deux versions de La cuisine, les deux de 1948, ses tableaux de plus grande taille réalisés après Guernica (175,3 x 250 cm) et dans lesquels Picasso joue avec les mêmes signes que dans l'illustration du texte de Reverdy. Peter Read[4] met en rapport la cuisine avec l'esquisse du monument à Apollinaire (poète d'origine polonais) en 1924, étant donné que Picasso il en a fait la première version le 9 de novembre de 1948, le jour du 30è anniversaire de la mort de l'auteur de «Le poète assassiné» (recueil de contes publié en 1916). En allant un quelque peu au delà de la proposition de Read, je dirais que La Cuisine est le lieu de la transsubstantiation d'Apollinaire en Lorca, le poète assassiné, et donc un nouveau lieu de dénonciation de la violence de guerre contre la poésie et la vie.

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[4] Piot, Christine, «Les nourritures terrestres des Quatre petites filles», dans Guigon, Emmanuel; Michael, Androula; Rafart i Planes, Claustre, Catalogue La cuisine de Picasso. Museu Picasso de Barcelona, 2018, pp. 217 – 29.

En revenant a Les quatre petites filles, le jeu d'idées esthétiques gastro-poïétiques s'y déroule avec des enjeux performatifs. D'un coté, domestiques: c'est à dire, les métamorphoses culinaires; d'un autre, dramaturgiques, c'est à dire, les indications de mise en scène ou dicascalies. Ensuite, je présente ces jeux performatifs, en donnant des exemples de dicascalies et un exemple gastropoïétique pour chaque acte. À remarquer que les examples gastropoïétiques sont des stratégies pour développer l'idée esthétique de la première page et son engagement politique.

- Acte I
  o Didascalie : «Un jardin potager, presque au milieu un puits»[5]
  o Exemple gastro-poïétique :
  PETITE FILLE II : «arrive ce qu'ils voudront je
  cueille les pamplemousses je les mange je
  craches les pepins je m´essuie du revers
  de la main les lèvres et j'allume les festons
  des lanternes de mes rires les incomparables fromages que je vous prie
  d'agréer bien sincèrement à vos pieds et je signe –»

- Acte II
  o Didascalie: «Le même jardin mais au milieu une
     grande barque – attachée a la barque une

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[5] Picasso écrit avec des fautes d'ortpgraphe qui sont respectées ici.

chèvre – la scène est vide.»

o Remarque: la barque apparaît aussi dans les décors d'Œdipe roi de Pierre Blanchar, créé au Théâtre des Champs Elysées à la fin de l'année 1947. Ce superbe décor, très simple, est composé par une barque en demi-lune renversée, un grand œil, un escalier, une porte ouverte, une porte et une fenêtre fermées. Il est fort probable que les deux mises en scène aient été conçues ensemble, et que ce soit la raison pour laquelle les quatre filles chantent ou exécutent des actions rapsodiques, comme s'il s'agissait d'un chœur dans une tragédie grecque.

o Exemple gastropoïétique:

PETITE FILLE IV: «[…] et secundo s'ajoutant

de tout son poids à la toile dechirée

qui evante la guipure du bûcher

les tripes défaites trempant ses

doigts dans la mer la face du vase

plein de jasmins – et après les régiments

d'ennuis –le Boucher 50 l'epiciere 3000

le charbon l'huile les pois et les

carottes le sucre, les clous de girofle

pommes de terre oignons olives sel poivre

38 et 11 et 200 trois mille, quatre vingt

six cents cinquante le riz l'ail les pois chiches, l'orange vols de colombes noires derriere

l'éventail défait jeté par terre

 longue letre à répondre et ne pas

lire yeux fermés aux musiques

croisant leurs aciers pointe à pointe

et le long defilé des troupeaux d'aigles

rongeant ongles et becs dans le noir

du drap couvrant la table du festin

et les torches»

• Acte III

○ Didascalie: «Le même jardin mais à l'intérieur

d'une cage, les quatre petites filles sont

dedans, nues ————————————»

○ Exemple gastro–poïétique (fin de l'acte):

PETITE FILLE IV: «du pain un verre de vin et la

soupe la table recouverte de la nappe à carreaux

bleu foncé et bleu clair la fourchette le couteau

la cuillère la serviette pliée sur l'assiette le coup de

poing sur le côté droit de la table du seau

de jaune versé légèrement rosé vomit par

le soleil essuyant la couleur mordorée dressée sur

les ergots lui faisant face »

PETITE FILLE II: Compter dire un deux , trois

quatre six onze vingt deux trois

quatre quatre quatre

PETITE FILLE I: compter, compter, compter

PETITE FILLE IV: Orange mandarine citron

olives petits poissons grillés le tictac du

réveil l'heure le soir le jour le matin

 l'aube

FIN du 3ᵉ acte

• Acte IV

o Didascalie: «le même jardin (au clair de lune)»

o Exemple gastropoïétique:

PETITE FILLE II: La belle friture de goujon, le plat de gnocchi, douce pissaladière, voix claire du linge tendu claquant des dents mis en offrande au solei couché à l'ombre sous le platane.

PETITE FILLE I: La tranche de melon grille sa faim polaire au clair de lune.

PETITE FILLE II: Lait d'amande douce, raisin, figues, laitue, or fondu, olives noires, grappe de rires plein les mains et ver-jus d'étoiles naissantes, trompettes d'argent trempant ses pieds au bord du lac. Vase d'argile débordant des miracles frappés par des essaims d'abeilles, inabordable échelle détachée de la maison en feu semant la prairie à grosses poignées de sel.

• Acte V

o Didascalie: «Le même jardin. Les quatre petites filles avec des petites robes de couleurs vives. La boule en feu d'un grand soleil éclatant roule sur la scène, sur le grand lac qu'à la fin du quatrième acte les petites filles ont étendu par terre. D'énormes ibis trempent leurs pattes dans l'eau et pêchent des poissons et des grenouilles. Les petites filles chantent en tournant dans une ronde»

o Remarque: cette didascalie partage des similitudes avec celles du dernier acte du Désir attrapé par la queue en ce qui concerne la référence à la « boule en feu ». Par ailleurs, le soleil s'apparente, dans les deux pièces, au soleil noir de Bataille.

o Exemple gastropoïétique (dernière intervention de l'acte) :

PETITE FILLE II: «(plongeant dans le lac et chantant). Silence de rose, silence de melon, silence de guimauve, silence de charbon, rose de silence de charbon de rose, de rose et blanc coquelicot, et la maison, la mouche sur la manche verte de sa robe mauve à gros pois citron, chapeau d'hirondelle, souliers de crapaud, ceinture de couleuvre, bel amaryllis, poires, figues, pêches, oranges, citrons, air frais des montagnes et gros tas de vieux cons et ora pro nobis et vous dis salut en montrant mon cul.»

o Remarque: Gertrude Stein, avec qui Picasso entretint une relation de ventriloquie littéraire (et d'amitié jusqu'en 1937), était décédée en 1946, et l'on peut vraisemblablement concevoir cette intervention de la Petite Fille II comme un hommage.

• Acte VI

○ Didascalie: «Dans le jardin potager, sous une grande table, les quatre petites filles. Sur la table, un énorme bouquet de fleurs et de fruits sur un plat, quelques verres et une jarre, du pain et un coteau. Un grand serpent s'enroule à une des pattes de la table et monte manger les fruits, mord aux fleurs, au pain et boit dans la jarre»

○ Remarque: Le Désir attrapé par la queue commence et finit avec un banquet. LQPF se termine sur un banquet aux échos bibliques, qui finit gastropoïétiquement, avec les filles protégées comme des chrysalides face à l'horreur suscitée par la découverte de l'Holocauste.

○ Exemple gastropoïétique (fin de l'acte et de la pièce) :

LES QUATRE PETITES FILLES :

«Purée de pommes de terre purée de lentilles

purée de haricots purée de fèves et purée d'oignons

vive la creme la creme de marrons

la sauce au vinaigre la pomme aigre-doux les choux

à la crème éclair au chocolat tarte aux

mirabelles gingebre bananes melon figues

et pêches abricots raisins»

(se couchent par terre et s'endorment)

des arbres des fleurs des fruits, partout

 le sang coule qui fait des flaques et inonde la scdne.

 poussant de terre formant un carré quatre grandes

 feuilles blanches enferment les 4 petites filles

par transparence en tournant apparaîtront successivement écrits dans
chacune des feuilles petite fille I – petite fille II, petite fille III, petite fille IV

noir complet.
après lumière – la scène – (la remplissant entièrement) intérieur d'un cube
entièrement peint en blanc
au milieu par terre un verre plein de vin rouge.
Rideau
Fin du 6è acte
FIN»

o Remarque : Artaud est mort en mars de 1948 et l'ensemble de la pièce
dégage une sorte de «tentation de la cruauté» qui contrebalance la tentation
de la naïveté, ce que Michel Leiris avait appelé, «un langage en vacances».
Le résultat est d'une troublante tension entre l'enfantin, le sublime, le
grossier, le violent, l'impudique et le beau.
o À cet égard, Marowictz affirmait que «ses directives de mise en scène
rappellent celles d'Artaud pour Les Cenci, son adaptation de la pièce de
Percy B. Shelley de 1935».

Rouge est la couleur du crayon avec lequel Picasso écrit Les quatre petites
filles et est le mot final de son texte. Rouge sang la couleur des doigts
prométhéens de la petite céramique autoréférentielle Main (parfois datée de
1948, parfois de 1950–1951) et des illustrations de Le chants des morts de

Reverdy. Picasso, tourneur de céramique, cuisinait – l'acte de transsubstantiation alchimique par lequel tout est encore possible – avec de l'argile, tandis qu'en dramaturge, il utilise les ingrédients que sont des mots, des scénarios et des idées esthétiques en raison d'une temporalité et d'une spatialité différentes qui, suivant l'incipit du texte, émergent «alrededor del círculo cuadrado del tiempo».

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When Juliet Was the Sun: Metaphor as Play

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ABSTRACT. In most accounts of metaphor, similarities play a prominent role. When e.g. Romeo says 'Juliet is the sun', he is commonly taken to extend an invitation to the hearer to explore Juliet's sun-like features; her being warm, bright, sustaining, etc. are thought to be highlighted by the metaphor. A problem about this kind of interpretation is that it is often difficult to find support for its content as well as its form in the actual context of the metaphor. I will put forward a different approach to metaphor according to which the speaker of a metaphorical 'S is P' sentence casts the subject as the predicate in her discursive and imaginative play. The function of the metaphor is not to suggest unstated similarities between the subject and the predicate, but essentially to permit the speaker to make further utterances about the subject in terms of the predicate, either in order to represent features and actions of the subject or to make the subject appear in a certain way.

1. Introduction

In this paper I will put forward an approach to metaphor according to which it does not serve to suggest unstated similarities between things from different domains. Rather, metaphor serves to initiate a kind of discursive and imaginative play brought about in the discourse which follows upon the

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metaphorical sentence. Play initiating metaphors cannot be isolated from the context in which they appear, for what is important about them is precisely the discourse which they give rise to. These metaphors do not invite the hearer to take the single sentence as a starting point for association, but to make sense of what the speaker herself goes on to say in the wake of her metaphor.

There are in recent metaphor theory basically two opposing tendencies. On the one hand, there is the deflationary account according to which metaphor is nothing but an extreme kind of *ad hoc* concept (Sperber & Wilson 2008). The meaning which words bring to the occasion of an utterance is potential only; it has to be modified, either by narrowing or broadening, in order to make sense in the context at hand, and so an *ad hoc* concept is created. If this is the regular way of words, then the metaphorical use of words is not especially deviant. Metaphors are just at the far end of a continuum of ubiquitous meaning modification. In reaction to this account, on the other hand, there are various defences of the specificity of metaphor. It is insisted that metaphor essentially involves seeing something as something which it is not or of using something as a prism for thinking about something else. This is what explains the creativity, the revelation and the rationale of metaphor and this aspect is neglected if metaphors only adapt to the purposes at hand.

I believe that for many traditional instances of metaphor the *ad hoc* concept approach is quite adequate. But I also believe that there are other

instances of metaphor which should be given a different treatment, in so far as they give rise to a special kind of imaginative activity which does not occur in *ad hoc* concept modification. What I hope to show is that some of these instances involve discursive play rather than the kind of comparison described by most approaches to metaphor. Metaphor is certainly not a very uniform phenomenon.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows. First I will present the comparison approach to metaphor. I will then question this approach by looking at the actual context of the phrase which has most often served as illustration, namely 'Juliet is the sun'. From this consideration the conception of metaphor as initiating discursive and imaginative play will emerge. Finally I will consider the prospects of generalizing this approach by applying it to some other classic instances of metaphor.

2. Comparison Views of Metaphor

The view of metaphor which I will be reacting against is the one that holds that the juxtaposition of the subject and the predicate in a metaphorical sentence of the form 'S is P' serves to invite the interpreter to compare the subject and the predicate and to find the features which these two different things have in common. Blackburn, in discussing 'Juliet is the sun', puts the view succinctly: 'The metaphor is in effect an invitation to explore comparisons.' (Blackburn 1984, p. 174; cf. also Davidson 1978, p. 256.)

This approach to metaphor, in all its varieties, was perhaps first sketched by Richards (1936) and then given a fuller statement in Black. Black's leading idea was to replace the substitution view of metaphor with an interaction view of metaphor. Contrary to what was more or less claimed in the classic conception of metaphor, the predicate in a metaphorical sentence 'S is P' does not replace a literal equivalent in an ornamental fashion (e.g. Fontanier 1830, p. 99). Rather, in a radically more dynamic way, the 'system of associated commonplaces' (Black 1954, p. 40) of the predicate interacts with the subject to yield a whole array of properties and implications. Much of the discussion in the wake of Black's seminal paper has been concerned with the shape of the mechanism responsible for the generation of emergent features and whether metaphor is a semantic and cognitive phenomenon or merely pragmatic and imagistic. These issues will not be addressed in what follows. I will here focus on what I take to be the features in common between comparison views of metaphor, irrespective of the important differences between them.

The basic and foremost assumption is that in a metaphorical 'S is P' sentence the predicate ascribes or intimates – depending on whether this is taken to be semantic or pragmatic – properties resulting from some kind of interaction between the subject and the predicate. It is frequently suggested that the function of the predicate is to offer a perspective, a frame or a prism for thinking about the subject. Thanks to the juxtaposition of the subject and the predicate, the hearer sees the subject as something which it is not and is

invited to explore the similarities between the subject and the predicate. Some of the properties associated with the predicate are perhaps not directly applicable to the subject, but may be suitably modified to apply. This is supposed to lead the hearer to revelations and insights concerning the nature of the subject. It is thus thought to be the hearer's task to follow up on the suggestion made by the speaker and to work out the properties which somehow are shared by the predicate and the subject and see which implications are made, according, of course, to what fits into the context at hand. This process is thought to be endless or at least open ended; metaphors are particularly appreciated for being infinitely suggestive. In sum, the mere juxtaposition of the subject and the predicate results in a firework of properties, similarities, suggestions, which, though effectuated wholly by the hearer, is somehow thought to be the speaker's achievement.

Let us now look at what comparison views of metaphor may offer by way of interpretation of the metaphor 'Juliet is the sun'. Here are some samples from across the decades:

Romeo means that Juliet is the warmth of his world; that his day begins with her; that only in her nourishment can he grow. And his declaration suggests that the moon, which other lovers use as emblems of their love, is merely her reflected light, and dead in comparison; and so on. (Cavell 1965, pp. 78–9)

Suppose I say ['Juliet is the sun']. Then, I think, it does follow that Juliet is the brightest thing I know, that everything else is lit by her

presence, that I am inevitably drawn to her though I know this must be dangerous, etc. (Cohen 1976, p. 250)

Thus when Romeo says that Juliet is the sun we can profit from the metaphor indefinitely: we can move among respects in which someone's lover is like the sun: warm, sustaining, comforting, perhaps awesome, something on which we are utterly dependent… This process is quite open-ended. (Blackburn 1984, p. 174)

A second interpretation of ['Juliet is the sun'], therefore, takes the predicate 'is the sun' to express a "metaphorically related" property, e.g., the property of being the most excellent thing in its domain; on this interpretation, Romeo's utterance expresses the proposition (roughly) that Juliet is unequalled among women. (Stern 1985, p. 679)

Juliet is warm, she is bright and dazzling, she is the center of Romeo's world, his day begins with her, and so on. (Does she, like the sun, burn alive those men who draw too near?) (Tirrell 1991, p. 341)

I understand by Romeo's words that Juliet is worthy to be and about to become the source of whatever emotional comfort, whatever vitality, whatever clarity Romeo's life will contain from here on out… and so on. (Hills 1997, p. 122)

And if we do adopt this perspective, even temporarily, then certain of Juliet's features – such as her beauty, her uniqueness, and the warmth with which she fills his heart – will be highlighted in our thinking, and will take on a new significance for us. […] Likewise, in uttering ['Juliet is the

sun'], Romeo communicates, among other things, that Juliet is the most beautiful girl in Verona. (Camp 2008, pp. 2 & 7 respectively)
Stock sums up the pattern of these proposals in saying,

> To think of Juliet as the sun is to represent to oneself a state of affairs involving Juliet and her sun-like features […] (Stock 2013, p. 211)

For all the interpreters it is a matter of course that Romeo's utterance points out Juliet's similarity to the sun and amounts to an hyperbolic declaration of love. There is perhaps no direct evidence against neither the form nor the content of this kind of interpretation. Evidently hearers find 'Juliet is the sun' evocative and Romeo could well mean something along these lines. As long as we confine ourselves to the single sentence it may seem very natural to imagine that some sharing of properties occurs. Nevertheless one may want to have some explicit support for such an interpretation. On what grounds is it assumed that the sentence 'Juliet is the sun' by itself says or suggests so very many things and precisely the things proposed? Is there e.g. any textual evidence for any of the sun-like features proposed or for Romeo's wanting us to explore such features at all? I think that the justification both of the form and the content of this kind of interpretation is called for, especially since, to my lights at least, these proposals are rather associative and arbitrary, neither obviously relevant nor interesting. That Juliet is warm, vital and beautiful for Romeo is something we could have

predicted without his saying 'Juliet is the sun'. The mission of the comparison view was after all to replace the vacuity and shallowness of the substitution view. I therefore propose to look at what the actual context of 'Juliet is the sun' suggests. The function of the metaphor will appear to be quite different from what theorists traditionally have assumed.

3. When Juliet Was the Sun

Romeo and Juliet have recently met at the Capulets' party and Romeo is now in the garden beneath Juliet's window. He utters 'He jests at scars that never felt a wound' when suddenly a light appears in the window.

> But, soft, what light through yonder window breaks?
> It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.
> Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,
> Who is already sick and pale with grief
> That thou her maid art far more fair than she.
> Be not her maid, since she is envious;
> Her vestal livery is but sick and green,
> And none but fools do wear it. Cast it off. (Shakespeare, *RJ* II.ii.2–9)

Romeo immediately establishes a parallel between the light in the window and the eastern light. If the light in the window is the eastern light and the

cause of the eastern light is the sun, then Juliet is the sun, in so far as she is the cause of the light in the window, having lit the lamp. Romeo then asks the sun to arise and kill the moon, the moon's being envious that the sun is more beautiful than she. The moon is 'already' 'pale with grief' and the sun is the moon's 'maid'. These latter utterances seem a little puzzling. Since when was the sun the moon's maid? If the moon's envious of the sun's beauty, was it not since ever? Should the moon be killed because it is envious? The overall suggestion is that the sun is superior to the moon and that there is no reason for the sun to be inferior. But who ever doubted that the sun was superior to the moon, in beauty, power and excellence?

One way to solve these riddles is to consider that, if the sun is Juliet, it may be the case that the moon is someone too. There is indeed in the mental vicinity someone who deserves to be removed from the pedestal, namely Rosaline. She is Juliet's cousin and was until very recently the object of Romeo's love. At the beginning of the play Romeo suffers from his love of Rosaline. We do not know much about Rosaline, but a great obstacle to Romeo's feelings is that they are not reciprocated. The problem is perhaps not with Romeo, but with love itself. Rosaline has 'forsworn to love' (I.i.221), having, according to Romeo, 'Dian's wit' (I.i.207), i.e. Diana, the goddess of hunting and chastity, associated with the moon. It is precisely because of this predicament that Romeo's friend Benvolio encourages Romeo to come to Capulet's party and thereby have the opportunity to 'take […] some new infection to [his] eye' (I.ii.48). Things work out in

accordance with Benvolio's good intentions (at least at first), for no sooner has Romeo entered the party than he gets sight of Juliet and asks 'Did my heart love till now?' (I.v.51). Juliet is more responsive than Rosaline: they promptly make their sonnet rhyme, even though Juliet does not reciprocate Romeo's kissing 'by th' book' (I.v.109).

Juliet is certainly a worthier object of Romeo's love than her cousin and in a way this is all too evident, but nevertheless, for all its evidence, when feelings change so rapidly, this is something which deserves to be pointed out to all the parties concerned. Rosaline should be as overwhelmed by Juliet's beauty as Romeo is, she should be sad that she is no longer the object of Romeo's love, Juliet is superior and Rosaline is inferior. Telling himself and the others how things now are strengthens Romeo's brand new love for Juliet. From the perspective of the specific relationships within this amorous situation, the lines which might seem puzzling can be given a rather straightforward reading. Romeo asks Juliet to step out on her balcony and remind himself and also poor Rosaline of her superiority. Thereby Rosaline will definitely be replaced as the object of his love; killed, as it were, simply by Juliet's arising in Romeo's mind. Juliet need not fear the comparison with Rosaline, for Rosaline (or Romeo) is already painfully aware of her inferiority. As for chastity, it is only to be hoped that Juliet will not turn out to be an adept of Diana's.

Romeo's discourse continues and what else he says is not without importance, but the sun terms end when Juliet steps out on the balcony and

Romeo utters in plain prose 'It is my lady, O, it is my love!' (II.ii.10). There are certainly more features to take into account for a full and serious reading of 'Juliet is the sun', such as additional circumstances and the remaining occurrences of *sun* and other light terms in the play. My commentary is meant to be nothing but a sketchy and preliminary reading of the most immediate context of 'Juliet is the sun' and to be as unoriginal and uncontroversial as possible. However, some editors let Juliet enter immediately before II.ii.2, which affects the way we read the first lines. And some commentators identify the moon with Diana rather than with Rosaline. Anyhow, I do not think that divergences in understanding the lines in these and other respects would affect the form of reading I have proposed.

4. The Specificity of the Account

According to this reading of Romeo's discourse, what is the function of the phrase 'Juliet is the sun'? It seems that it would be quite apt to say that by saying that Juliet is the sun, Romeo, as it were, casts Juliet as the sun, i.e. starts playing at Juliet's being the sun.

The immediate reason for Romeo's casting Juliet as the sun is her being the cause of the window light, as the sun is the cause of the eastern light, the window light having been cast as the eastern light in the first place. The phrase 'Juliet is the sun' in itself does not say or suggest more than this casting. But Romeo does not stop there. Once Juliet is cast as the sun, it is

possible to speak of her beings and doings and of her features and actions in terms of beings and doings and features and actions of the sun. If Juliet is the sun, what is Rosaline? Rosaline is the moon. If Juliet is the sun, what is it for her to step out on the balcony? It must be to arise. If Juliet is the sun, what is it for her to replace Rosaline in Romeo's mind? It is simply to kill the moon. Casting Juliet as the sun thus permits Romeo to make further utterances about her in terms of the sun. In some cases, our establishment of counterparts is, though not definite, quite straightforward. Romeo thus seems to make some rather determinate points which we get at with sufficient confidence. In other cases, there is much less precision. Romeo is playing at Juliet's being the sun and at Rosaline's being the moon, but also at the sun's being Juliet and at the moon's being Rosaline in such a way that there is a wilful mix of vocabularies and that there is no definite content to be gathered from some of his further utterances. The imprecision seems to be part of the pleasure.

It does not seem then that Romeo extends an invitation to the hearer to explore the similarities between Juliet and the sun. Romeo does not draw our attention to some unstated similarities between Juliet and the sun. Instead, he draws our attention to what he goes on to say. Romeo does not invite the hearers to do the job, he does the job himself; he is the one who exploits his having said 'Juliet is the sun'. This phrase offers him a locus for going on talking about Juliet. We should not ask, 'In which respects is Juliet similar to the sun?', but rather, e.g., 'Who is the moon?', 'What is it for

Juliet to arise and kill?'. Our task is rather to establish counterparts than to explore similarities. The counterpart relation involves perhaps similarities, but not necessarily. In principle no similarity is required for an object to represent another object. So this process does not seem to correspond to an associative and perspectival seeing-as along the lines usually suggested by theorists.

Another important difference from traditional metaphor accounts is that nothing follows by itself from Juliet's being (cast as) the sun. We saw above that Cohen claims that from saying 'Juliet is the sun', certain things follow and Hills says that 'even if [Romeo] had said "Juliet is the sun" and left it at that, large portions of the set would have fallen into place for suitably prepared listeners' (Hills 1997, p. 137). But I do not think that Romeo commits himself to anything in particular nor that we can predict the implications of his saying 'Juliet is the sun'. From Juliet's being the sun, it does not follow that she must be radiant or nourishing or the centre in her domain. For his playing and discursive purposes, Romeo exploits certain features of the sun, e.g. its relation to the moon and its rising, and leaves others completely aside. Hence there is scarcely any endlessness. Romeo profits from his metaphor to make some more or less determinate points about himself, Juliet and Rosaline and he leaves it at that. For interpreters there is no reason to be concerned with any features other than those actually exploited.

From the perspective of this play account of metaphor, a phrase like 'Juliet is the sun' is not really significant if it is isolated from its surrounding discourse. The kind of reading I have proposed locates content, implications and suggestions, not in the phrase 'Juliet is the sun', but in the further utterances which this phrase gives rise to. The function of 'Juliet is the sun' is merely, by casting Juliet as the sun, to initiate Romeo's imaginative and discursive play.

The actual context of 'Juliet is the sun' thus suggests that neither the form nor the content of the interpretive proposals that we quoted earlier are accurate. The context does not support any of the properties proposed nor that any comparison at all is at issue. This does not prevent similarity accounts from being adequate for other metaphors of course. However, I will in the next section consider the prospects of generalizing the play account emerging from the context of 'Juliet is the sun' beyond this case.

Before proceeding though, I would like very briefly to compare my play account with Walton's game account of metaphor. Walton speaks of metaphors as introducing games and also insists on the amount of unpredictability and uncertainty involved. Nevertheless, his conception of the game in question is substantially different from the play we have observed in the case of Romeo's saying 'Juliet is the sun', as can be seen in this quote:

> Many metaphors, especially the more interesting ones, do not enable
> us to go on with assurance. They leave us uncertain or perplexed or in
> disagreement about applications of the original metaphorical predicate
> and others in its family. It is very unclear what games are introduced
> by 'Juliet is the sun,' or by the description of a musical passage as a
> 'rainbow.' Not only can we not specify the principles of generation,
> we are not prepared to identify with any assurance which people are
> metaphorically the sun and which are not (no matter how well we
> know them), or what musical passages are rainbows. (Walton 1993, p.
> 53)

The game Walton is thinking of seems to be confined to the single sentence
and can be repeated. It also seems to be concerned with attributes of the
subjects which it is applied to. This is not the case with Romeo's 'Juliet is
the sun'. The question which his utterance gives rise to is not who else is the
sun, but what arising amounts to and who the moon is, etc. The metaphor
does not generate predicates, but further utterances. We can continue
Romeo's playing at Juliet's being the sun and go on talking about her in sun
terms; to call somebody else the sun would be to start a new session.

5. Generalizing the Play Account

5.1. This Pine is Barked

When all is lost for him, Antony says with reference to himself:

> this pine is barked […] Shakespeare, *AC* IV.xii.23.

Similarity accounts of metaphor would no doubt use the pine as a prism or perspective for thinking about Antony and thereby exploit his pine-like features. All sorts of suggestions are expectable. According to the account which emerged from the context of 'Juliet is the sun', however, we do not have to compare Antony to a pine. The metaphorical predication need not be concerned with similarities and implications, but only with assigning a role to the subject. Just as in the case of 'Juliet is the sun', the initial casting may be quite fortuitous. This is not the first occurrence of the word *pine* in the scene. Antony has already said:

> […] Where yond pine does stand
> I shall discover all. […] (Shakespeare, *AC* IV.xii.1–2)

There is thus a pine in the vicinity and pines are already on Antony's mind. The pine comes in handy when he engages in playful discourse and it generates the possibility of talking of himself in pine terms. He continues:

> […] and this pine is barked
> That overtopped them all. […] (Shakespeare, *AC* IV.xii.23–4)

Thus, the question we should ask is not how Antony is similar to a pine, but what, if Antony plays the part of a pine, it is for him to be barked and overtop others. Presumably it has something to do with his having been superior to his former companions, Octavius and Lepidus, and with his being now stripped of his strength or on the verge of death.

Are there no similarities between Antony and pines resulting from his representing himself under the image of a pine, so to speak? It need not be denied that something imagistic may also be going on and this may have effects on the interpreter's imagination. But content, implications and suggestions should not be generated from the 'image' itself, but from what the 'image' permits to say, i.e. from the rest of the discourse. The initial metaphor permits Antony to make further utterances in pine terms and our immediate task is to establish the counterparts. Antony just happens to take the pine's part and as a consequence being barked and overtop can be used to represent features of his situation. Fundamentally, the intelligibility of

Antony's discourse does not seem to rest on imagistic comparisons between himself and pines.

5.2. Time Out of Joint

Hamlet says:

> The time is out of joint […] (Shakespeare, *Ham.* I.v.186)

This is often taken as very suggestive. However, he continues in the following way:

> The time is out of joint; O cursed spite
> That ever I was born to set it right! (Shakespeare, *Ham.* I.v.186–7)

If we read Hamlet's metaphor in its context, we do not primarily ask for similarities between the time and being out of joint. Rather, we observe that Hamlet's saying that the time is out of joint permits him to go on saying that he will set it right and we ask what it is for Hamlet to set the time right, if it is out of joint. It seems that we capture the global signification of this piece of discourse by saying that Hamlet commits himself to stabilizing a situation where things have come apart. This is not something we arrive at by reflecting on the first part of the quote in isolation.

5.3. Life Is a Shadow, a Player, a Tale

In Macbeth's monologue upon his being informed of his wife's death, there occurs a series of disparate metaphors.

> Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,
> That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
> And then is heard no more. It is a tale
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury
> Signifying nothing. (Shakespeare, *Mac.* V.v.23–7)

Traditional metaphor theory would have us reflect on the implications of life's being compared to shadows, players and tales. Since these could be seen as paradigm instances of inferior reality, the overall similarity would perhaps be that life is illusory. But there does not seem to be any direct evidence that Macbeth is especially concerned with the illusory character of life. The overall implication will actually be different if we look at what Macbeth's metaphors permit him to say.

The important thing about life's being a shadow is not that it is merely a projection, it is that it is walking, i.e. that it is transitory. With respect to life's being a player, the question to ask is what it is for life, if it is a player, to strut and fret its hour upon the stage and then be heard no more. Perhaps the implication is that while life lasts, there is a lot of commotion, but at the end it appears that the worry was vain. As for life's being a tale, our

question is not the general one of what it is for life to be a tale, but specifically what is it for life, if it is a tale, to be told by an idiot and to be full of sound and fury signifying nothing. The tale told by an idiot comes with a pretence as to moment, but once it is told it reveals itself as mere vanity. Life may certainly be illusory, but Macbeth's emphasis seems much rather to be on life's being futile. This implication is nothing that we get at by a comparison between life and shadows, players, tales in the abstract. It is not in place until Macbeth puts it in place by using his initial metaphors as loci for making further predications. It is wholly carried by these further predications without which Macbeth would be signifying nothing.

Compare this reading with what Lakoff and Johnson say about this passage:

> This nonconventional metaphor evokes the conventional metaphor LIFE IS A STORY. The most salient fact about stories told by idiots is that they are not coherent. They start off as if they were coherent stories with stages, causal connections, and overall purposes, but they suddenly shift over and over again, making it impossible to find coherence as you go along or any coherence overall. A life story of this sort would have no coherent structure for us and therefore no way of providing meaning or significance to our lives.(Lakoff & Johnson 1980, p. 174)

Lakoff and Johnson extract a metaphor from Macbeth's discourse and then bring their own associations to bear on it. Coherence is certainly an important quality of stories and perhaps stories told by idiots lack coherence, but Macbeth hardly gives any clue as to coherence's being at issue. I do not claim that my interpretation is anything but sketchy, but the interpretation of metaphors should not result from the interpreter's own assumptions and associations, however plausible they may, but be tied to the actual details of the text.

5.4. Old Fools are Babes

Goneril says à propos of her father Lear:

> Old fools are babes again […] (Shakespeare, *KL* I.iii.20)

Many take Goneril to invite us to explore the similarities between old persons and babies. Davidson, e.g., says:

> We can learn much about what metaphors mean by comparing them
> with similes, for a simile tells us, in part, what a metaphor merely
> nudges us into noting. Suppose Goneril had said, thinking of Lear,
> 'Old fools are like babes again'; then she would have used the words
> to assert a similarity between old fools and babes. What she did say,

of course, was 'Old fools are babes again', thus using the words to intimate what the simile declared. (Davidson 1978, p. 253)

For Davidson, the question is whether the similarity between old people like Lear and babies is asserted or intimated. This question does not really seem to be to the point. Goneril's remark in its immediate context reads:

> […] Now by my life
> Old fools are babes again and must be used
> With checks as flatteries, when they are seen abused. (Shakespeare, *KL* I.iii.19–21)

Goneril hardly nudges us into noting a similarity between Lear and babies, the similarity is quite explicitly conveyed: old fools and babes are similar in so far as they both must be 'used with checks and flatteries'. Goneril neither asserts nor intimates any further similarities. The habit of isolating metaphorical predications and speculate about the similarities suggested is quite vain. Furthermore, Goneril's main point is not that old fools and babes are similar to each other in this respect, but that old fools must be used with checks as well as flatteries. Checks and flatteries are associated with the education of children, it is with children that we use checks which appear as flatteries to them or accompany every check with a flattery. Saying that old fools are babes casts old fools as babes and permits Goneril to apply the babe terms 'checks and flatteries' to old fools. We are not to imagine the

babe like features of old fools, but rather to ask what using checks and flatteries with old people amounts to.

The play account of metaphor which emerged from considering the context of 'Juliet is the sun' seems thus to be capable of accounting for also other instances of metaphor. In particular it involves a higher degree of attention to the textual detail and permits us to avoid arbitrary associations. A natural thought might be that the traditional similarity account and this play initiating account could well interact in the case of many metaphors. I will end by two examples which hopefully shows similarities and play go in different directions. These examples will also display an additional function of metaphor. Apart from the capacity of metaphor to initiate the representing of features and actions of the subject by means of terms associated with the predicate, there is the function of merely making the subject appear in a certain way.

5.5. The Cat Feet of the Fog

Here is a poem of Sandburg which is often quoted in the philosophical metaphor literature:

> The fog comes
> on little cat feet.

> It sits looking
>
> over harbor and city
>
> on silent haunches
>
> and then moves on. (Sandburg 1916)

Sperber and Wilson comment on the second line:

> On little cat feet' evokes an array of implications having to do with
> silence, smoothness, stealth. (Sperber & Wilson 2008, p. 121)

Sperber and Wilson presumably arrive at this interpretation by some comparison between fogs and the way cats walk or the characteristics which they associate with the way cats walk. It is certainly not implausible that the poet invites the reader to some such comparison. But there is scarcely anything in the way of textual evidence neither for the form nor the content of such an interpretation. On what grounds are we supposed to assess such an interpretation and tell whether precisely these implications are the implications most reasonably actualized? Some would perhaps say that no assessment is called for, the poem's being meant to be nothing but evocative. Sperber and Wilson note:

> It is not part of the explicit content of the poem that the fog comes
> silently, or smoothly, or stealthily. (Sperber & Wilson 2008, p.
> 122)

One could of course ask whether it is part of the content even at the implicit level. There is after all nothing to indicate this, apart from the interpreter's imagination.

In the face of such uncertainty, it is perhaps safer to say that the second line of the poem attributes the role of a cat to the fog. This role attribution permits the poet to go on talking about the fog in cat terms. In the second stanza, the fog is consequently said to sit and look and have haunches. The question seems to be, if the fog is a cat, what is it for the fog to sit looking on silent haunches? It is difficult to know. Perhaps it has something to do with the way of cats: they have a profound rest and at an unpredictable point of time, they move on. Sometimes it is easy to find counterparts, sometimes it is difficult and not necessary. Most of the uncertainty remains and the interpreter's imagination is certainly involved. But if the poet extends an invitation, I think it is rather with respect to answering the question above than to exploring similarities. Do similarities really contribute to our understanding and appreciation of the poem?

For Sperber and Wilson metaphor creates the concept of a property and attributes it. According to the play account, metaphor attributes a role and serves as the occasion for making further utterances in the wake of this role attribution.

5.6. Clothing of Delight

In Blake's 'The Lamb', the speaker says:

> Gave thee clothing of delight,
> Softest clothing wooly bright; (Blake 1789, pl. 8)

In a textbook article on figurative language, McLaughlin explains the functioning of metaphor by means of this example:

> The "proper" meaning of "clothing" clearly doesn't apply to the lamb. Wool is part of the lamb's body, not something added over it for warmth and beauty, as clothing is. And because this meaning obviously does not apply, we have to ask what elements of the meaning of "clothing" do apply to the lamb's wool. It keeps him warm; it gives him beauty. (McLaughlin 1990, p. 82)

McLaughlin's account is typical of the way many theorists think of metaphor. The word does not make immediate sense and therefore it is assumed that it suggests similarities between what it properly denotes and what it is applied to in the context at hand. Since these similarities are not stated by the author, they are to be worked out by the interpreter. The similarity between the lamb's wool and clothing is proposed to consist in the wool's keeping warm and giving beauty. But apart from there being no

actual evidence that the speaker is concerned with any similarities between the lamb's wool and clothing, McLaughlin himself gives reasons to downplay the importance of establishing such similarities, for he immediately continues:

> It makes the lamb seem almost human, as it does seem to the child, who doesn't think of the differences between himself and the lamb but, rather, of the category they share as god's creatures. (McLaughlin 1990, p. 82)

Here, it seems to me, McLaughlin touches on the real function of the metaphor in question: anthropomorphizing the lamb. This however is not something which is effectuated by the use of 'clothing' alone. Let us look at the whole first stanza:

> Little Lamb who made thee
> Dost thou know who made thee
> Gave thee life & bid thee feed,
> By the stream & o'er the mead;
> Gave thee clothing of delight,
> Softest clothing wooly bright;
> Gave thee such a tender voice,
> Making all the vales rejoice:
> Little Lamb who made thee

Dost thou know who made thee (Blake 1789, pl. 8)

'Clothing' appears as an element in a series of acts: 'gave thee life', 'bid thee feed', 'gave thee clothing of delight', 'gave thee such a tender voice'. We might be tempted to ask, 'How is the lamb's wool similar to clothing?' and 'How is the lamb's sound like a voice?' and our imagination will be able to come up with similarities. In some of the cases we can find analogues or take the actions to be qualified in a certain way. At a more global level, however, the function of applying seemingly distinctively human predicates to the lamb seems to be to suggest that God treats lambs on a par with humans. This is something which is suggested by the whole series and requires our not confining our attention to singular phrases. Furthermore it is something which does not require us to figure out how wool is similar to clothing, in so far as the application of clothing, a human artefact, to the lamb makes the lamb appear human independently of any similarities between clothing and wool.

McLaughlin's remarks go in opposing directions. On the one hand, 'clothing' is thought to suggest that the lamb's wool keeps her warm and gives her beauty. On the other hand, 'clothing' is thought to suggest that the lamb is human. These two different suggestions are quite independent of each other and in so far as we take an interest in the one, we need not take an interest in the other. Thus it is not clear that the similarity account and the

play account should be thought to interact. The textual support in this case goes in one direction only.

5.7. The Cheeks of the Pillow

This counts as the first metaphor in Proust's *Search*.

> I would rest my cheeks tenderly against the lovely cheeks of the pillow, which, full and fresh, are like the cheeks of our childhood. [*J'appuyais tendrement mes joues contre les belles joues de l'oreiller qui, pleines et fraîches, sont comme les joues de notre enfance.*] (Proust 1913, p. 4 [4])

Some think that Proust speaks of 'the cheeks of the pillow' in order to suggest that the pillow is soft. Such a reading does not make the metaphor very interesting. Instead it seems promising to conceive of the metaphor as enabling Proust to talk of the pillow as lovely, full and fresh, i.e. to apply cheek terms to the pillow. Here it is not a matter of counterparts. The metaphor serves as a pretext for ascribing predicates to an object which rather belong to another object and thereby make the object appear in a certain way. The application of cheek terms to the pillow, which is permitted by the initial casting of the pillow as a cheek, serves to make the pillow appear as an erotic object. There is perhaps similarity in the vicinity:

both the pillow and cheeks are erotic objects. But this similarity is not an effect simply of talking about the 'cheeks of the pillow', but is only suggested by the predicates the application of which is permitted by first talking about the cheeks of the pillow. The play initiated by the metaphor consists in eroticizing the pillow, irrespective of any softness.

6. Conclusion

In some cases, a speaker does not utter a metaphorical sentence 'S is P' in order to invite the hearer to compare the subject and the predicate and work out similarities. Rather the speaker casts the subject as the predicate and thereby initiates her own discursive play consisting in applying further predicates to the subject. Such an application may be used to represent features and actions of the subject or to make the subject appear in a certain way. A metaphorical sentence may certainly constitute an image and as such it may work upon the hearer's imagination, but no similarities are implied by the mere 'S is P' predication; content, implications, suggestions are wholly located in the surrounding discourse. According to the play account, what matters to such metaphors is not the hearer's associations, but the speaker's further utterances; not what the hearer imagines, but what the speaker says; not unstated and endless similarities, but certain more or less determinate features. Focus is shifted from the metaphorical sentence itself to what it permits the speaker to go on saying. The play account of metaphor

which I have here started exploring seems to capture a distinct function of metaphor, in addition to the functions theorized by the *ad hoc* and similarity accounts already in existence.

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Between Dreams and Perception - Danto's Revisited Definition of Art in the Light of Costello's Criticism

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ABSTRACT. One of the topics to which philosopher Arthur C. Danto paid systematic attention is the definition of art. His contribution to the discussion developed mainly in his book *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace* works on the principle of indiscernibles and aims to distinguish artwork from mere real things. However, Danto did not provide us with a formal definition in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions. Later on, Danto isolated two of necessary conditions and characterised art as „embodied meaning" in his *Art after the End of Art*. But this was not his last say on this topic, though. In 2013, Danto published his last book *What Art Is* and added the third necessary condition of „wakeful dreams." In my paper, I aim to consider this Danto's step concerning Diarmuid Costello's criticism of Danto's cognitivism as presented in the article 'Whatever happened to "embodiment"? The eclipse of materiality in Danto's ontology of art.' I shall seek to answer a question of whether Danto's revision of the definition can resist Costello's arguments. Or more precisely, given the new necessary condition, I shall argue that the wakeful dreams- condition makes Costello's arguments even more urgent.

1. Introduction

The question of what art is pervades Arthur C. Danto's philosophical

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writings since the 1960s. Although the topic was more or less present in Danto's texts on beauty or the end of art, it seemed that the structure of the definition had been relatively stable since publishing *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*. Since then, Danto defined art as 'embodied meanings.' In 2013, however, Danto published a book titled *What Art Is*, in which he added the third necessary condition: artworks should be like 'wakeful dreams' (Danto 2013, p. 48). In this paper, I aim to scrutinise how this new condition influences Danto's account of interpretation as a correlate of the meaning of art. Following Diarmuid Costello's criticism presented in his article "Whatever happened to 'embodiment'? The eclipse of materiality in Danto's ontology of art" (Costello 2007, pp. 83–94). I shall claim that Danto's notion of interpretation is in significant tension with the emotional dimension of art that became a part of his new definition of art due to the condition of wakeful dreams.

2. Interpretation and the Definition of Art

Concerning Danto's ontology of art, the main contribution to the topic remains *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace* (Danto, 1981). However, Danto himself had not explicitly isolated his two necessary conditions for being art until his book *After the End of Art* was published; these are: (1) art has to be *about* something and (2) it has to *embody* its *meaning* (Danto, 1997, p. 195). The structure of the definition results from his analysis of

indiscernibility; we can imagine two perceptually indiscernible objects one of which is a work of art and the second one is a mere real thing, and the task of philosophy is to explain the difference between the two. The paradigmatic example of indiscernibles in the philosophy of art is Andy Warhol's piece *Brillo Box* and its ordinary counterpart from a supermarket. For Danto, a definition has to explain why one of the pair is an artwork if the second one, albeit perceptually the same, is a mere real thing. To do so, one has to rely on the invisible properties of the given object, where the essence of art is located. Following this direction, Danto introduced the two beforementioned conditions and characterised art as 'embodied meanings' (Danto, 1997, p. 195).

The principle of indiscernibles also determines Danto's attitude towards the problem of the aesthetic value of artworks as well as towards aesthetics as a branch of philosophy; also his decision to propose interpretation as an adequate means for dealing with art stems from it. In the essay 'The Appreciation and Interpretation of Works of Art,' Danto argues that the interpretation has a transformative function, i.e., that it can uplift artworks from the sphere of mere real things to that of art. Interpretation consists of a sequence of artistic identifications that determine which of the qualities of the thing belong to this thing considered as an artwork (Danto 1986, pp. 23–46). In Danto's words: "Interpretations pivot on artistic identifications and these, in turn, determine which parts and properties of the object in question belong to the work of art into which interpretation

transfigures it" (Danto 1986, pp. 41-42). As follows from this formulation, not all perceptual qualities of the object belong to this object as an artwork, since some of them belong to it when considered as an ordinary thing, and the interpretation is a means to tell the two groups of qualities apart.[2]

As I have already mentioned, Danto's reasons for removing aesthetics from his account follow from the principle of indiscernibles and from its role in defining art. Danto's analysis of this problem leads him to the conclusion that the essence of art has to be hidden from the senses (Danto 1986, p. 26) and that perceptual and aesthetic qualities are irrelevant for the definition, and therefore aesthetics has nothing to do with the task of defining art (Danto, 1986, p. 26). Danto had held this position until he published *The Abuse of Beauty* in which he argues for widening the scope of the philosophy of art to accommodate other aesthetic qualities apart from beauty. Danto addresses the problem of a pragmatic or rhetorical dimension of art[3] consisting in that some qualities of the artwork: "dispose the viewer to take certain attitudes toward a given content" (Danto, 2003, p. 121). Danto describes this dimension in terms of Frege's 'Farbung' or, more

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[2] Danto further develops this thought in his book *The Abuse of Beauty* in which he introduced a distinction between internal and external beauty. For a discussion on Danto's account of beauty see: Symposium: Arthur Danto, The Abuse of Beauty (2005), *Inquiry*, 48 (2).

[3] It should be noted that Danto had already addressed the question of rhetorical dimension in his *Transfiguration of the Commonplace* in the context of his reflection upon metaphor, expression and style. However, Danto quite surprisingly did not accommodate these notions into his definition of art (contrary to Carroll's version of Danto's definition). See (Danto, 1981).

generally, he designates these qualities as 'inflectors' (Danto, 2003, p. 121). According to him, an artist uses these qualities to inflect certain emotions, and therefore, inflectors correspond to the aim of an artist and his work. For example, Duchamp aimed to cause the aesthetic indifference with this readymades. However, although these properties play a significant role in our attitude towards art, Danto is unwilling to include them into his definition:

> Whether we must widen the definition of art to make inflexion a necessary condition need not be argued here. But at least inflexion helps explain why we have art in the first place. We do so because, as human beings, we are driven by our feelings (Danto, 2003, p. 122).

For my paper, the question of the relation of inflectors and the emotional response that they provoked, and the interpretation as a correlate of the meaning is of crucial importance. Unfortunately, Danto himself does not pay attention to it. Similarly, as in the previous writings, he privileges the cognitive dimension of art to the affective one; therefore, he approaches inflectors from the perspective of the content (meaning) of the artwork. It is possible to infer such a conclusion from the way he treats the question of whether it is morally justified to depict some content as beautiful or not. The fact that Danto raises such a question implies that he understands inflecting qualities as subordinated to the content of the work. However, the problem of emotional response towards art, which the previously quoted passage

suggests, rests unexplained. This passage also implies that art is so important for human life not because it has a meaning, but because it provokes emotions. And this begs the question of whether the interpretation is able to accommodate both, the meaning and the emotional dimension of art. Costello, as I will show, formulates his criticism along similar lines.

3. Costello's Criticism

In the first decade of our century, Diarmuid Costello devoted several texts to the problem of aesthetics in Danto's writings.[4] In the article 'Whatever happened to 'embodiment'? The eclipse of materiality in Danto's ontology of art' he challenges Danto's account of embodiment and claims that Danto "is insufficiently attentive to how a work of art's materiality impacts on questions concerning the artist's intention and the viewer's interpretation" (Costello 2007, p. 83). The target of his criticism is, therefore, twofold: firstly, Costello argues that Danto underestimated the importance of the embodiment in his definition of art, and in result, secondly, that his account of interpretation cannot explain our attitude towards art fully.

Costello thinks about Danto's approach in opposition to the so-called aesthetic theories based on the idea of the existence of a specific (aesthetic) response which is caused by the appearance (perceptual qualities) of the artwork in question. This kind of response determines our decision, whether

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[4] See also (Costello, 2004, pp. 424-439), (Costello, 2008, pp. 244-266).

we deal with art or not. But aesthetic theories are unable to explain the case of indiscernibles, and therefore, they cannot be acknowledged as plausible theories of art. In consequence, Danto proposes an alternative: a cognitive response based on art-historical knowledge which informs interpretation. However, Costello considers Danto's use of the principle as problematic and claims that Danto infers from it conclusions which do not follow from the argument from indiscernibility as such. Costello agrees that perceptual qualities are not *sufficient* for art definition, but this does not mean that these qualities are not *necessary*.[5] Not only that they might be necessary, but, as Costello insists, they *are* necessary, and, therefore, they have to be taken into consideration when analysing our attitude to art.

Costello approaches Danto's condition of embodiment from the perspective of the meaning and intention of an artist and tries to grasp their mutual relation. Accordingly, he introduces the term 'artistically worked material', which corresponds to the medium of art, and claims that the intention of the artist (the meaning of the work) reveals itself through and in the material basis (embodiment) or more precisely, it reveals itself in the process of working with the material. This point goes hand in hand with Costello's opinion on the role of cognitive response (interpretation), which is not *sufficient* for treating an artefact as a work of art (Costello 2007, pp. 85-86). The thing is that material basis provokes emotions, and therefore, it is responsible for the affective dimension of art. To explain how it is so

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[5] Similar point makes Martin Seel. See: (Seel, 1998, pp. 102-114).

Costello introduces the notion of 'opacity.' The basis of artwork is opaque in a sense that it makes an interpretation of the work in question more complicated and in consequence, it intensifies the interest of the viewer in communication with the work. Since the response of the audience is emotionally coloured, also due to the properties of the material basis, the process of our interaction with art exceeds mere interpretation since the interpretation is only cognitive. In consequence, Costello claims that the interpretation is not a sufficient means for dealing with art and therefore Danto's conception does not provide us with an appropriate tool which would explain the reason why we are interested in art.

In the last section of his article, Costello considers *The Abuse of Beauty* and asks whether Danto's ideas presented in this book can dispel his objections. He focuses mainly on the idea of inflectors and observes Danto's hesitation to widen the definition and to add the new necessary condition of 'inflecting.' However, he thinks this possibility open (Costello, 2007, p. 90). Regardless of the definition, Costello considers the idea of interpretation being an adequate means to grasp the artwork as a grave problem and appreciates that Danto admits the importance of aesthetic qualities:

> Aesthetics is acknowledged as a domain of feeling with a legitimate role to play in the interpretation of some (if not all) art, and the question then becomes how such feeling is to be tied back to art's essentially cognitive nature (Costello, 2007, p. 90).

And this problem became central in Danto's last book *What Art Is*, in which he returns to the question of art definition and modifies its structure by adding a new necessary condition for being art.

4. Between Dreams and Perception: Art as 'Wakeful Dreams'

In the opening paragraphs of his book *What Art Is* Danto addresses Plato and his vision of human knowledge, in which art is situated in the demoted category of mere appearances together with reflections, shadows, illusions, and dreams (Danto 2013, p. ix). Plato's conception of knowledge determined his negative attitude towards art, which he defined as an imitation (and the best means of imitation, as Socrates comments this idea in Plato's dialogue, is a mirror). These paragraphs remind us of Danto's first article on art "The Artworld" published in 1964 (Danto 1964, p. 571), and the opening sequence devoted to Hamlet's and Socrates' ideas about mirrors and reflections. In both cases, Danto's considerations are forming a framework for his further argumentation. In *What Art Is,* however*,* it is a dream that is in the spotlight rather than a reflection. In this last book of his, Danto reconsiders the problem of defining art and argues that art is in a certain sense 'dreamlike,' and introduces a new necessary condition of art, 'wakeful dreams.'

Before I proceed to this condition, I think it important to recall Danto's

opinion on the role of aesthetics, which is deeply rooted in his system. In *What Art Is*, Danto insists that aestheticians do not provide us with any explanation why specific artworks move us. Instead, they seek to identify what art is. Accordingly, the definition of art "has to capture the universal artness of artworks, irrespective of when they were made or will be made" (Danto, 2013, p. 40). Apart from this, we have to learn how to interpret artworks taking the context of their culture into consideration. (Danto, 2013, p. 41).

Danto's account was inspired by Plato and René Descartes and by the roles they ascribed to dreams in their philosophical thought. Following preliminary remarks from the preface, Danto reflects on Plato's *Republic,* and the location of art and dreams within his vision of the universe (Plato 1974, Book X). The location itself, however, is less important than shared characteristics of both phenomena, i.e., art and dreams. For Danto: "dreams represent things, and they are made of visible qualities, but they may not be real"(Danto, 2013, p. 47). And this characteristic Danto ascribes to art as well. Concerning Descartes, Danto refers to the passage from *Meditations* in which Descartes argues that it is not possible to distinguish the wakeful state from sleep with certainty (Descartes 2013, p. 25).

Contrary to Plato, Descartes does not compare art and dreams, but dreams and wakeful experience; and this comparison has been crucial for Danto since his early writings. From *Analytical Philosophy of Action,* he had been concerned with Descartes and had treated his dream-perception

opposition as a paradigmatic case of indiscernibles (Danto, 1973).[6] In *What Art Is*, he argues that there is no internal distinction between dreaming and perceiving, and in this, he finds a similarity with Warhol's *Brillo Box* case. Accordingly, there is no inner distinction between an artwork and an ordinary Brillo box at least in terms of perception (Danto 2013, p. 46). Plato's and Descartes' reflections on dreams, therefore, shaped Danto's notion differently, but it is still important to relate this notion to the question of the universality of the definition of art mentioned earlier. As Danto puts it:

> My sense is that everyone, everywhere, dreams. Usually this requires that we sleep. But wakeful dreams require of us that we be awake. Dreams are made up of appearances, but they have to be appearances of things in their world. (Danto, 2013, p. 49)

In the just quoted citation, Danto makes a shift from Descartes to Plato, because it is the idea of appearance which determines Danto's further argumentation. The aspect of appearance Danto seeks to illustrate using the example of a ballet performance of Michail Baryshnikov who imitated a movement of a football player in that: "a large portion of the audience read the movement as a football move, even if the football is missing" (Danto 2013, p. 51). An artist creates an illusion (appearance), and this piece of

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[6] To be precise, Danto had paid attention to the so-called Dream- Argument already in his *Analytical Philosophy of Knowledge*. See: (Danto, 1968).

appearance is accordingly interpreted by the audience who have learned the necessary vocabulary. This passage, as I read it, refers to the problem of interpretation mentioned earlier as well as to Danto's characterisation of dreams as representations proposed in connection with Plato. Dreams and art are made of visible qualities that might not be real, but they have to have meaning in a particular culture or society. The response of the audience, is, therefore, cognitive since people experiencing art have to grasp the meaning of the artwork in question. But does it explain the alleged universality of art?

Regarding universality, the analogy between dreams and art is not that straightforward as Danto's formulation suggests. Danto claims that "everyone everywhere dreams," but this statement, if true, describes the function of the human mind which consists of producing dreams. However, he addresses dreams as such, which he compares with artworks. But dreams are products of the beforementioned activity of the mind, and it is this activity that is universal. The analogy then should be, as I see it, between dreaming and art-making and not between a particular dream and a specific artwork. Danto, however, infers that it is the response of the audience what is universal. And the response is universal due to a particular appearance made by an artist and due to the appropriate interpretation of the work in question.

The argument from universality is also tied to the emotional dimension of art: "[wakeful dreams] are accordingly not private, which

helps explain why everyone in the audience laughs at the same time, or screams at the same moment" (Danto 2013, p. 49). Not only that art moves us in a certain way, but we are moved in the same way vis à vis one artwork. However, as I have already mentioned, although art-making might be universal, it does not necessarily follow that interpretation, or any other response of the audience is universal as well. Danto's idea that it is follows from the shift between dreaming and a dream described above. But moreover, it rests, as I aim to show in the following section, on the dominant position Danto ascribes to the interpretation.

4. The Interpretation of Wakeful Dreams

In reaction to Costello's criticism, Danto admits that he paid a little attention to the embodiment in the original version of his definition. In *What Art Is*, he characterises it in the following words:

> The artwork is a material object, some of whose properties belong to the meaning and some of which do not. What the viewer must do is interpret the meaning-bearing properties in such a way as to grasp the intended meaning they embody. (Danto, 2013, p. 38)

In this passage, it is possible to hear an echo of his distinction between internal and external beauty, as well as his account of interpretation presented above. For my argumentation, however, is crucial that Danto does

not change his view of our response to art: he still insists that the interpretation is the adequate approach to artworks. Regarding the wakeful dreams, Danto does not analyse the role of embodiment in creating appearances. Even if we accept the analogy between artworks and dreams – both create appearances - we should also ask in which aspects wakeful dreams differ from real ones. In my view, the crucial difference consists in the fact that art has a medium, *through which* it affects us or in which the meaning is embodied. If I go back to Danto's example of Baryshnikov performance, Danto emphasises *the meaning* of the movements without considering that *the movements themselves* are important to the same degree. This aspect might be explained in terms of Costello's notion of opacity described above.

More importantly, however, the new condition of the wakeful-dreams challenges Danto's notion of interpretation since it provides us with an explanation of the emotional impact of art. I think it possible to interpret the condition of wakeful dreams in the light of Danto's account of inflectors and relate it to his claim that "inflection helps explain why we have art in the first place. We do so because, as human beings, we are driven by our feelings" (Danto 2003, p. 122). Now, there is this new necessary condition of art which can explain, although only as a side-product of cognitive dimension, why we do feel certain emotions when we are in touch with art. But Danto's account of interpretation remains intact. Following the passage quoted above, in which Danto describes the way the viewer grasp the

meaning of the artwork (Danto 2013, p. 38), it has still been the interpretation that has a decisive role. But in my opinion, having a sufficient encyclopedia in which a given artwork is interpretable is only a necessary condition for having such an emotional response, but it does not explain the emotional response itself. If I recall Danto's thesis that wakeful dreams can tell why people in the audience laugh or scream at the same time, I wonder how this emotional response can be explained in terms of the sole interpretation. To understand what is going on is one thing, but experiencing this particular thing as funny or frightening is another matter.

It would be possible to argue that to criticise Danto for avoiding the problem of the emotional dimension of art is at odds with his understanding of aesthetics since he claimed that aestheticians do not explain why artworks move us but rather that they provide us with a definition of art. Following this, it would be plausible to claim that ontological questions represent an isolated problem for a philosopher and that the analysis of the (emotional) response of the viewer is a completely independent theoretical problem. This argument could be related to Costello's criticism because it had been pronounced before Danto introduced his condition of wakeful dreams but not to my analysis. Costello had had a point, but he was ahead of Danto's philosophical development. I have shown in the previous paragraphs that the condition of wakeful dreams is closely tied with the emotional response of the audience, and therefore the problem of "why certain artworks move us" becomes a part of Danto's definition of art. And since the problem has

become integral to the definition, to challenge Danto's notion of interpretation is much more justified than before. Moreover, the issue of the emotional response challenges Danto's argument concerning the universality of art. Without admitting there is something more than a mere interpretation, art cannot be universal as Danto's new definition presupposes.

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The 'End of Art' and Art's Modernity

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ABSTRACT**.** G.W.F Hegel's 'end of art' thesis, as it is commonly called, is often thought to be the most major deterrent to attempts to assimilate modern and contemporary art into the Hegelian system or to understand modern and contemporary art through the lens of Hegel's aesthetics. This paper dispels such a view and asserts that the Hegelian 'end of art,' does not herald a death of art or even an end to art's developmental history. Instead, it puts forward the original thesis that such a supposition has arisen, at least in part, from the erroneous conflation between the Hegelian 'end of art' and the dissolution of the romantic form of art. It argues that the most prominent interpretation of Hegel's 'end of art' as the end of art's time serving its 'highest vocation' ought to overtly locate this phenomenon as occurring much earlier with the dissolution of the classical form of art. This reading has the advantage of construing art as free to progress beyond this 'highest telos' and, as such, it is far more conducive to the integration of developments in modern and contemporary art.

1. Introduction

It is a great misfortune that Hegel's aesthetic theory is commonly seen in Anglophone philosophical circles as bearing no applicability to modern art, or worse, is seen as completely implausible, as a result of one of its most perplexing and poorly understood aspects – the so-called 'end of art' thesis.

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The Hegelian 'end of art' thesis arises from the notorious assertion in Hegel's *Lectures on Fine Art* that art 'considered in its highest vocation, is and remains for us a thing of the past.'[2] Outside of Hegelian scholarship, and sometimes within it, this infamous statement is largely taken to mean that Hegel is announcing that a literal 'death' of art has already occurred and that no significant works of art will henceforth be created.[3] This assumption seems not only outrageous or radical to most contemporary students but also clearly incorrect and almost laughably naive; the sheer volume of art since the nineteenth century is held up as overwhelming evidence against such a claim.[4] Consequently, much of the contemporary reception of Hegel's aesthetic theory does not look far beyond this widely-held interpretation; it seems fruitless to delve into a philosophy of art that meets an immediate refutation in the existence of a richly diverse and influential modern art tradition.[5] With this acceptance, it seems only natural to suppose that Hegel's philosophy is poorly positioned for any constructive engagement with the art of modernity.[6]

A less extreme reading of this aspect of Hegel's aesthetics is adopted

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[2] *Hegel's Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art,* trans. T.M. Knox (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 11.

[3] William I. Fowkes, *A Hegelian Account of Contemporary Art* (Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1981), ix.

[4] Carl Rapp, "Hegel's Concept of the Dissolution of Art." In *Hegel and Aesthetics*, edited by William Maker (Albany: State University of New York, 200), 13.

[5] Karsten Harries, "Hegel on the Future of Art," *The Review of Metaphysics* 27, no. 4 (1974), 678.

[6] Ibid.

by the clear majority of commentators, but it must nonetheless be admitted that a caricature of Hegel's 'end of art' seems to persist within the consciousness of the English-speaking world.[7] It is possible to attribute the endurance of this radical interpretation to the fact that, until recently, Hegel's lectures on aesthetics have been largely inaccessible in English or to the various inconsistencies or alterations found in Hotho's transcripts of these lectures.[8] However, texts show that the idea of the 'end of art' was both present and controversial amongst Hegel's own students and the presence of such a doctrine in the *Lectures* is impossible to ignore or dismiss in its entirety.[9] Thus, I uphold that some kind of explanation for the 'end of art' (mis)interpretation and its presence in popular understanding, is necessary, or at least beneficial, for a successful defence of a more modest reading.

It does indeed seem strange that so much has been made of the 'end of art' thesis when the most often quoted piece of evidence for such an interpretation of Hegel's philosophy is nothing more than a passing sentence. Furthermore, this quote is not even a statement that art as a whole has come to an end, but only that it is art in the phase of its 'highest vocation' that is now a thing of the past. If this singular declaration were the only indication that Hegel held such a view, then it would be quite frankly

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[7] Fowkes, *A Hegelian Account of Contemporary* Art, ix.

[8] David James, *Art, Myth and Society in Hegel's Aesthetics* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2009), 72.

[9] Ibid.

absurd that this 'end of art' thesis has come to be the idea most widely associated with his aesthetic philosophy. However, there are indeed other reasons for thinking that the production or development of art must draw to an inevitable close as part of the Hegelian aesthetic system; Hegel completes Part I of the 'Lectures on Aesthetics' by describing the end or 'dissolution' of the romantic form of art – the final *Kunstformen* in his triadic scheme. Furthermore, some have argued that the unfolding dialectical structure of the Hegelian system necessitates that art does come to an end as religion and then philosophy take over the mantle of Spirit.[10] It is my conjecture that despite there being no good reason to think that these two 'ends' of art are one and the same, the commonness of the 'end of art' thesis has arisen, at least partially, from the mistaken conflation between the assertion that art, in its highest vocation, has come to an end, with the dissolution of the final form of art. We will see that even in the abundance of literature that dispels any extreme interpretation of the 'end of art' thesis – and correctly assesses the meanings and limitations of these two types of endings in Hegel's writing – there is rarely if ever a satisfactory distinction drawn between these two endings. In fact, this conflation is implicit in the commentary of some of the most prominent and esteemed academics in the field and a common outcome is the supposition that Hegel had claimed the end of the romantic form of art as early as his lectures on aesthetics in the

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[10] Dieter Henrich in Benjamin Rutter, *Hegel on the Modern Arts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 10.

early nineteenth century.[11]

I concur with ample secondary literature that holds the ostensible 'end of art' to be nothing other than the demotion of art from the place it once held as the apex of human culture. However, I put forward the notion that this does not occur with the dissolution of romantic art, which is normally associated with the 'end of art', and assert that such a conflation is a mistake which has resulted in the existence and persistence of the view that art for Hegel had already come to some kind of death or completion of its development in the beginning of the nineteenth century. Instead, I propose an innovative, but I believe accurate, interpretation of this 'end' of art as occurring not with the closure of the romantic form of art, but with the closure of the classical form of art. I then defend this position from the allegation that the continuation of art's production or development past this point is redundant. I achieve this through reference to the preservation that is inherent within Hegelian dialectical logic.

I will then address the professed dissolution of the romantic form of art and argue that because the 'end of art in its highest vocation' has already occurred with the transition from the classical to the romantic form of art, there is no reason to suppose that *romantic* art is a 'thing of the past' or that a vocation-centred 'end of art' heralds a conclusion of art's development. Nonetheless, the declared dissolution of the third and final form of art does

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[11] Stephen Houlgate, "Hegel, Danto, and the 'end of art'." In *The Impact of Idealism: The Legacy of Post-Kantian German Thought* Volume III, edited by Christoph Jamme and Ian Cooper (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 266.

on its own strongly suggest the end of art's developmental history, even if this is seen as something entirely different to the end of art *in its highest vocation*. This certainly appears to pose a problem for the integration of modern and contemporary art into Hegel's aesthetic theory if this dissolution is historically located prior to the emergence of these artistic movements. However, many subsequent philosophers, most notably Arthur Danto, hold that there are good reasons for associating modern art with a Hegelian-style ending of artistic development and it is reasonably clear that the end that they have in mind concerns or includes the dissolution of the romantic form of art. This dissolution is equated with a completion of artistic development that they see as tantamount to a radical break in art's historical progression and, what is more, they believe that this radical break can be perceived in modern art. On this view, modern and contemporary art can be given a place within Hegel's aesthetic philosophy, but only as synonymous with the end of romantic art.

I will then assess the major problems that this popular view encounters; the contest that any future artistic developments would present to this formulation and the objection that there is in fact no fundamental discontinuity or change in modern art that warrants the claim that it enforces an end of progression. To overcome these issues whilst retaining the insights and benefits of the common equivocation between art's 'end' and its modernity, I argue that although a particular limitation of art is indeed revealed through contemporary conceptual and postmodern art, and this can

be seen as the completion of a particular conceptual development, this does not indicate an end to art's overall development, nor is there any significant break from the romantic form of art so as to justify the postulation that this work is somehow outside of the romantic category. In other words, the dissolution of romantic art that is foreshadowed or gestured towards in instances of modern and contemporary art is more a case of describing a particular limitation of art than it is a historical ending of either art or its romantic form. Thus, it can be said that there are two 'ends' of art, so to speak, that are described in the *Lectures on Fine Art*: art's end as its highest vocation, and art's end as a limit that it cannot ever surpass. Ultimately, it will be shown that neither of these 'ends' prevent modern and contemporary art's incorporation into Hegel's aesthetic theory.

2. The End of Art in Its Highest Vocation

There are surprisingly few promoters of the 'death' of art interpretation of Hegel's 'end of art'.[12] But, if the Hegelian 'end of art' is not to be understood as the completion of its production, then it may be asked precisely what is meant by the 'pastness' of art in the *Lectures on Fine Art*. The most prominent interpretation states that the so-called 'end of art' provides insights into its future after Hegel, but without being forced to hypothesise, in the manner of some commentators such as Arthur Danto and

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[12] Houlgate, "Hegel, Danto, and the 'end of art'," 264.

Carl Rapp, that the contemporary situation is the pinnacle and endpoint of art's progression.[13] This popular reading proposes that the idea that art is a thing of the past indicates only that it no longer serves the same function for humankind that it once did. In other words, art in the past fulfilled some ultimate role, or bore some higher significance, that it is no longer able to realise and it is only in this sense that it has come to an end. The 'end of art' is not a cessation of artistic activity or even necessarily the end of its historical development, but simply the fact that art has come to an end of its time as an apex of human culture, self-consciousness, and creation. This reading corroborates with Hegel's statements in the *Lectures on Fine Art* and with certain aspects of his aesthetic system as a whole; Hegel writes that it is only art '*in its highest vocation*' that is a thing of the past, and the structure of Absolute Spirit suggests that art eventually passes the mantle of Spirit's expression, in its most complete form, over to religion and philosophy.

Robert Pippin does not uphold that there must be an end to art's historical development within the Hegelian system, and so it is only natural for him to take the view that the 'end of art' is indicative only of a decline in its importance to humanity.[14] He connects this decline with art's aim of depicting beauty and the decrease in beauty's philosophical significance in

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[13] Arthur C. Danto, *After the End of Art: Contemporary Art and the Pale of History* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996), 122.
[14] Robert B. Pippin, *After the Beautiful: Hegel and the Philosophy of Pictorial Modernism* (University of Chicago Press, 2013), 96-7.

modernity where beauty is no longer viewed as an accurate or complete embodiment of Spirit.[15] A similar view is expressed by Karsten Harries, as well as by Benjamin Rutter, whom holds it to be 'quite certain' that Hegel bears witness to a diminishment of art's 'significance for human self-understanding.'[16] Stephen Houlgate also asserts that, for Hegel, art can 'no longer fulfil its *own* highest vocation;' that is, it is no longer the 'highest mode in which truth finds expression.'[17] Whether the highest vocation of art is seen as the depiction of beauty, truth, or self-understanding (and certainly all three are connected for Hegel), the assessment that art's 'pastness' refers to the passing up of this vocation, and an associated decline in its significance, is echoed throughout the secondary literature.

It appears that this understanding of the so-called 'end of art' avoids the problems that are faced by the interpretation of it as a cessation of artistic production or the completion of its historical development. Of course, the idea that art no longer holds the meaning for humanity that it once did may be challenged and, pragmatically, it may be judged that a valuable theory of modern and contemporary art will elucidate its importance for humanity rather than highlight a decline in importance. Nonetheless, this theory does not face the kind of substantial empirical repudiation that the claim that art will cease to evolve will potentially face with the advent of future artistic development. However, there is good

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[15] Ibid.
[16] Rutter, *Hegel on the Modern Arts*, 6.
[17] Houlgate, "Hegel, Danto, and the 'end of art'," 268.

reason to believe that the solution to this predicament is not as simple as it seems; the notion of art's waning significance does, at first glance, seem to be intimately connected to the completion of its progression. This is the case if art's realisation of its highest vocation is equated with the completion of its development, as it is for Danto in the self-definition or self-disclosure of art in modernity.[18] It does seem natural to suppose that art has begun to wane in significance as a result of the fact that it has completed its historical development and thus no longer serves its highest purpose, having passed this purpose over to religion or philosophy.

Nevertheless, as it has been noted by Noel Carroll, 'the continuation of a linear, developmental history of art, and such a narrative logically requires only that art have a goal, not that the goal be the allegedly highest one.'[19] So, in other words, art can have achieved its highest goal and then continue to develop or progress past this so long as it strives for some other, lesser goal. In the Hegelian framework, this highest goal of art is to present Spirit in physical form – a goal that is achieved within classical art – but once Spirit is revealed to possess an interiority beyond the physical, then it can continue to strive to present this ineffability of Spirit. Consequently, we ought to think of the end of art's historical development as something entirely separate from the achievement of its highest vocation and, what is more, the decline in art's significance once it no longer serves this aim does

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[18] Noël Carroll, "The End of Art?" *History and Theory* 37, no,4 (1998), 27.
[19] Ibid.

not entail that it has come to the completion of its development or progression.

It is mostly uncontentious that, within the Hegelian system, art of the classical form fulfilled a role that art is no longer able to fulfil. This is because it was, at the time, 'the highest mode in which truth finds expression.'[20] Classical art made accessible an ultimate truth by presenting Spirit, as it was most comprehensively conceived at the time, embodied in the sensible through an 'individualised and determinate unification.'[21] It is thus in this central stage, and not in the final romantic stage, that art achieves most adequately its highest *telos* as a 'vehicle of the Absolute.'[22] In this way, art of the classical form was the zenith of human culture and self-knowledge in its time and, for this reason, classical art can be considered the 'organic and organising centre' of Hegel's aesthetic system.[23] Of course, it may be disputed that this is the highest vocation of art; Danto understands art's defining purpose to be a 'purely cognitive one of discovering what art truly is' and this only comes to fruition in the unfolding of modernism.[24] However, within Hegel's system, any alternative

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[20] Houlgate, "Hegel, Danto, and the 'end of art'," 268.

[21] Martin Donougho, "Art and History: Hegel on the End, the Beginning, and the Future of Art." In *Hegel and the Arts*, edited by Stephen Houlgate (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2007), 189; William Maker, Introduction in *Hegel and Aesthetics*, edited by William Maker (Albany: State University of New York, 2000), 6.

[22] Maker, *Hegel and Aesthetics*, 6.

[23] Eva Guelen, *The End of Art: Readings in a Rumour after Hegel*, trans. James McFarland (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 30.

[24] J.M. Bernstein, "Freedom from Nature? Post-Hegelian Reflections on the End(s) of Art." In *Hegel and the Arts*, edited by Stephen Houlgate (Illinois: Northwestern

aim of art must be considered secondary to the 'task of presenting the Idea to immediate perception.'[25] Though Hegel does allow the possibility that even after the achievement of the classical formation 'art will always rise higher and come to perfection' this does not mean that it will do a better job of achieving this ultimate task.[26]

The reason why art is incapable of accomplishing its highest vocation after the dissolution of the classical form is that humanity's understanding of Spirit has since evolved to become incompatible with its perfect embodiment in sensible form. As it is realised that there is an interiority or subjectivity essential to Spirit that cannot be expressed in this way, art must sacrifice the determinate unity of form and content found in classical art if it is to continue to present Spirit to the best of its ability.[27] If post-classical art can continue to present or allude to the Idea then it may be asked why this is not to be considered the continued achievement of its highest *telos*. There are two distinct but related answers to this question. Firstly, it must be emphasised that art's task is not just to present the Idea, but to present it to immediate perception. Classical art achieves this through the Ideal of beauty that is the perfect harmony of form and content; post-classical art, however, must portray spirit as inimical to this kind of physical manifestation and point beyond itself to a hidden, interior, divinity - this is why Hegel

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University Press, 2007)," 224.
   [25] *Hegel's Aesthetics*, trans. T.M. Knox, 72.
   [26] Ibid., 103.
   [27] Ibid., 509–511.

considers romantic art to be the 'self-transcendence of art.'[28] Secondly, with the revelation of spirit's interiority comes the demotion of art from its position as the most complete expression of human culture; it is no longer 'the ultimate form in which self-reflection is mediated.'[29] As Stephen Bunguy notes, this does not necessarily mean that post-classical art is any worse than classical art, but only that society no longer attaches the same degree of value to it.[30] In Hegel's own words 'the form of art has ceased to be the supreme need of Spirit'[31] and so it can no longer provide for us the same kind of gratification or contentment that it provided for the ancient Greeks.[32]

Art is no longer the ultimate expression of the Absolute because alternative mediums have been taken up as more appropriate vehicles for this role. With the inward turn of Spirit comes the disclosure that the Idea is better understood through the 'image-thinking' of religion and the purely abstract thought of philosophy than through the sensuous medium of art. The status-quo interpretation of the 'end of art' as the completion of the romantic form of art suggests that it is only with the dissolution of the romantic form that art must pass its position as the apex of Spirit over to religion and then philosophy; indeed, this handover is often equated with the

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[28] Ibid., 80.
[29] Stephen Bunguy, *Beauty and Truth: A Study of Hegel's Aesthetics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 66.
[30] Ibid.
[31] *Hegel's Aesthetics*, trans. T.M. Knox, 103.
[32] Houlgate, "Hegel, Danto, and the 'end of art'," 268.

'end of art' or considered to be its direct effect. However, along with my proposal that the 'end of art' should more truthfully be considered to occur with the dissolution of the classical form, I suggest that religion takes up the mantle as the summit of society with the completion of the classical form of art. This entails that by the time of the romantic form of art, religion was already in full effect as the apex of society and it follows that this is the reason why romantic art 'begins as religious art.'[33] This formulation is supported by the interpretation of art's 'end' as a decline in its significance because it makes sense that such a decline would occur with the emergence of a new, more accurate vehicle of ultimate truth. Moreover, it is my conjecture that Pippin's 'epochal change' in the history of art is not the emergence of an entirely new form of art in modernity, but rather a new phase of the romantic form of art. This new phase of modern romantic art is characterised by secularity and intellectual reflection as religion is revealed as an inadequate source of truth and philosophy comes into effect as the summit of human knowledge and Spirit's self-disclosure.

Fundamentally, the so-called Hegelian 'end of art' occurs not with the dissolution of the romantic form of art, as secondary literature until now has assumed, but centuries earlier with the dissolution of the classical form of art. With this distinction clearly laid out, it is easy to recognise an assumption that exists within the literature on the Hegelian end of art thesis.

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[33] Terry Pinkard, "Symbolic, Classical, and Romantic Art." In *Hegel and the Arts*, edited by Stephen Houlgate (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2007), 19.

This assumption is essentially a conflation between the notion that art no longer serves its highest vocation (and so is, in this mode, a thing of the past) with the dissolution of the romantic form of art. It is perhaps easy to understand why such a conflation is made; both aspects of Hegel's aesthetics gesture towards an endpoint, and it is presumed that art can only have the one end. The so-called 'end of art' is explicitly associated with the dissolution of the romantic form of art by both Rapp[34] and Houlgate[35] among others, and certainly this equivalence is justifiable if the end of art is seen as the completion of its history or the dissolution of the romantic form of art is associated with a decline in significance. It has already been shown, however, that the most charitable reading of the 'end of art' thesis does not concern the completion of historical development and, more crucially, there is very good reason to think that the decline in art's significance had occurred long before the dissolution of the romantic form of art or the advent of modern art. This reason is grounded in the fact that, for Hegel, the highest purpose of art is achieved not in modernity as it is for Danto, but in the classical sculpture of the ancient Greeks. If the decline in art's significance for humanity is a direct result of the passing up of its highest vocation, then it follows that this decline should be properly seen as beginning as soon as this highest vocation is lost or given up. In other words, the 'pastness' of art is no new phenomenon, nor was it a recent fact

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[34] Rapp, "Hegel's Concept of the Dissolution of Art," 14.
[35] Houlgate, "Hegel, Danto, and the 'end of art'," 266.

of Hegel's day, but a truth that has been in effect since art resigned from the role that Hegel supposed it held in ancient Greece.

To defend this position persuasively, there are several issues that must be addressed. First and foremost, the continuation of art's production and development beyond this vocation, and into the romantic form of art, requires explanation given that it no longer has the teleological thrust of this highest aim to drive it forward. Indeed, a central issue in the literature on Hegel's aesthetics and the 'end of art' thesis concerns the continuation of art's production once it is no longer considered an adequate expression of Spirit in its most truthful form. If the production of art is no longer motivated by Spirit's drive towards self-disclosure, the argument proclaims, then it is unclear why it would continue past this point. This view is put forward most notably by Dieter Henrich who contends that modern art is necessarily redundant because it can only reiterate propositions that are expressed with more clarity in philosophy.[36] In other words, the end of art in its highest vocation bears 'the implication that art has no more role to play in the representation of truth to humanity.'[37] It thus unclear why art's forfeit to religion and then philosophy should not result in the cessation of its production after all. This objection is particularly problematic for the thesis that art's 'end' occurs with the completion of the classical form because it

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[36] Rutter, *Hegel on the Modern Arts*, 10.
[37] Brian K. Etter, "Hegel's Aesthetics and the Possibility of Art Criticism." In *Hegel and Aesthetics*, edited by William Maker (Albany: State University of New York, 2000), 40.

affirms that if this is the case, the entirety of the romantic form of art should not have occurred. Fortunately, Stephen Houlgate presents a convincing solution to this problem though I assert that his explanation offers only part of the story and that the continuation of art past its highest vocation can be more completely explained through reference to the nature of the dialectical structure that underpins Hegel's philosophical system.

As both Houlgate and Benjamin Rutter have disputed, the fact that art no longer meets the highest need of Spirit does not entail that it cannot meet *any* need of Spirit.[38] It is the case that the materiality intrinsic to art will necessarily distort, or will never fully embody, the true nature of Spirit; for this reason it is no longer taken to be the most complete representation of truth and it does not satisfy, as it once did, the deepest religious needs of humanity. Nonetheless, Houlgate argues, human beings continue to be physically embodied beings with inexorable aesthetic sensibilities that demand satisfaction.[39] Because of this we continue to require an image of Spirit, or of what it means to be 'truly free and human,' that has a sensuous aesthetic element even though such images have been demoted below other, more accurate, non-sensuous representations in religion and philosophy.[40] In Houlgate's words, 'we are *sensuous, imaginative* beings who require a sensuous, imaginative vision,' therefore a merely abstract, conceptual

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[38] Rutter, *Hegel on the Modern Arts*, 9.

[39] Stephen Houlgate, "Introduction: An Overview of Hegel's Aesthetics," in *Hegel and the Arts* (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2007), xxiii.

[40] Ibid.; Julia Peters, *Hegel on Beauty (*Routledge Studies in Nineteenth-Century Philosophy, 2014), 131.

understanding will not suffice on its own or an essential dimension of self-awareness will be missing.[41] This assertion is echoed by Terry Pinkard who holds that although art after the classical period can no longer fulfil us on its own, 'it remains crucial and irreplaceable in human experience.'[42]

This argument is convincing in regard to the continuation of art's manufacture, but it does not completely overcome the damaging allegation of art's triviality after the classical period. Regardless of whether artistic practice persists or not, it is difficult to see how it can be meaningful or necessary in any way if, as Henrich suggests, it merely reiterates propositional content that is more accurately expressed in religion or philosophy.[43] However, this does make the assumption that aesthetic intuition can offer little more than 'a more or less blurred approximation of conceptual thought.'[44] Rutter takes this to rest on a failure on Henrich's part to recognise the dialectical relationship between artistic content and its embodiment in artistic form.[45] Even more fundamental than this though, I take Henrich's main mistake to be a failure to apply the basic principles of preservation inherent in Hegelian dialectics to his aesthetic system as a whole. As William I. Fowkes points out, it is not the case that each moment of Hegel's system is obliterated as Spirit moves forward in a relentless progression, but rather that each moment is conserved within the next even

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[41] Houlgate, "Introduction: An Overview of Hegel's Aesthetics," xxiii.
[42] Pinkard, "Symbolic, Classical, and Romantic Art," 20.
[43] Rutter, *Hegel on the Modern Arts*, 10.
[44] Ibid., 11.
[45] Ibid.

as it is surpassed.[46] Each stage of the dialectical process reveals an 'aspect of being' and Spirit is 'not reducible to its present state' but must be thought of as a comprehensive, systematic whole that incorporates all the stages through which it has passed.[47]

Therefore, the sensuous embodiment that characterises art may no longer be the highest stage or the most adequate comprehension of Absolute Spirit, but it would still have an essential place as one assimilated component of Absolute Spirit. Though it may not be possible to *fully* express the higher aspects of Spirit in sensuous form, these aspects cannot exist, and Spirit as a whole is incomplete, without the incorporation of art's core insight – the unity of the sensuous and spiritual – along with the cancellation or contradiction of this revelation. Art is therefore preserved within religion and philosophy, but at the same time it maintains its defining individuality so as not to be 'lost' within these subsequent stages. It can be said, as will later be explicated, that art is in this way 'in service' to religion and later philosophy. Thus, Absolute Spirit is not best expressed in abstract philosophy alone but in the holistic compound of art, religion, and philosophy, and there is no good reason to suppose that art becomes redundant after the classical period.

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[46] Fowkes, *A Hegelian Account of Contemporary* Art, 84.
[47] Ibid., 84.

3. The 'End of Art' Thesis as Prophetic of Modern Art

One final issue that must be addressed in the discussion of the Hegelian 'end of art' is the fact that the final section of the first volume of Hegel's *Lectures on Fine Art* does indeed describe the dissolution of the romantic form of art. It has thus far been shown that art 'in its highest vocation' has been a 'thing of the past' since the dissolution of the classical form of art, and that this has no bearing on the continuation of art's development past this point. Nonetheless, the declaration of romantic art's dissolution is as much a motive for the interpretation that art is over for Hegel as this earlier statement of its 'pastness.' Moreover, this is the case regardless of whether the dissolution of romantic art is seen as something entirely separate from the 'end of art *in its highest vocation*' or not. This is because the romantic form of art is the third and final category of art in Hegel's triadic scheme, and so it is not in any way evident that the history of art is imagined to progress past the point of its conclusion. Furthermore, Hegel lectures as though the dissolution of the romantic form is something that is already upon his early nineteenth-century audience and so an uncharitable reading does suggest that the entire history of modern art should not have happened if Hegel was right. Hegel does indeed express concern over the future of artistic creativity following the loss of a universal religious content for art

that occurs in the later stages of romantic art;[48] art can no longer exemplify the 'spirit of the times,' because, as Pinkard holds, 'spirit has become too fragmented for any aesthetic presentation to work as presenting the 'truth' to us.'[49] Some, such as Pinkard, maintain that this does not imply any real 'end of art' while others such as Rutter and Stephen Bunguy think that Hegel's account of the dissolution of romantic art does seem to presuppose such an ending.[50] What exactly such an ending would entail requires further examination, but it is clear that the dissolution of romantic art presents a further challenge to the integration of modern and contemporary art into Hegel's aesthetic system. This is the case even if it is understood to be an event distinct from the earlier demotion of art's status from its 'highest vocation.'

However, there are a great number of commentators who see the Hegelian 'end of art' not as excluding the artistic developments of the last two centuries, but rather as synonymous with or prophetic of these seemingly 'radical' changes in the world of art. In place of seeing the 'end of art' as incompatible with the advent of modern art, theories such as these view art's end as *affinitive* with art's modernity and see the 'end of art' thesis as shedding light on the state of the twentieth-century artworld.[51] Views of this kind may at first seem at odds with my assertion that the so-

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[48] Rutter, *Hegel on the Modern Arts*, 41.
[49] Pinkard, "Symbolic, Classical, and Romantic Art," 22.
[50] Rutter, *Hegel on the Modern Arts*, 50; Bunguy, *Beauty and Truth*, 81.
[51] Bernstein, "Freedom from Nature? Post-Hegelian Reflections on the End(s) of Art," 216.

called 'end' of art occurred long before modernity with the close of the classical period. However, they typically refer not to any declarations of art's waning significance, but rather to the fractured or ruptured nature of late romantic art in Hegel's lectures. In other words, the dissolution of romantic art is the primary concern here, and any association with the end of art's highest calling is unnecessary and, in my view, confused. Therefore, accounts of this kind are not necessarily incompatible with the idea that this 'end' of art occurred with the close of the classical period so long as the dissolution of the romantic form of art is understood to be a different kind of ending than the end of art's time serving its highest vocation. Moreover, accounts of this kind can in fact provide support for the view that modern and contemporary art can be assimilated into Hegel's aesthetic system by arguing that the dissolution of romantic art, or the stages leading up to it, are descriptive or predictive of modern and contemporary art.

The most conspicuous examples of accounts of this kind include two of the twentieth century's most significant aesthetic theories: T.W. Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory* and Martin Heidegger's 'The Origin of the Work of Art', both of which draw deeply on the idea of the 'end of art' and locate their reflections on art within this Hegelian context.[52] Adorno pluralises the supposedly Hegelian notion of a single end of art into multiple contradictory endings and any significant predominant 'ending' can only be understood as

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[52] Ibid.

'process' rather than as any discernible point or break in time.[53]   This understanding of the 'end of art' as purely process has been seen as an attempt to dissolve it into negativity, though this approach has been criticised for failing to escape 'the danger of hypostasizing the end once more…' and so the success of its attempt to distinguish itself from 'a long tradition of employing the topos of the end of art' is disputed.[54] Regardless, Adorno's stance that that 'the very existence and pertinence of art' is called into question by modernism rests on the avant-garde's interrogation of the very idea of art.[55] Heidegger takes this view even further by advocating for an 'overcoming' of aesthetics. It is clear that, for Heidegger, such an overcoming does not constitute the end of manufacture of art-like objects but rather an escape from the dominant historical artistic paradigm.[56] In short, both Adorno and Heidegger promote the idea that the disintegration of an aesthetic attitude and conception of art can be seen not in there being *no more art*, but in the radical shift *within* the art of modernity.

The most enthusiastic assertion of this idea, however, comes from Arthur Danto, who sees the end of art as primarily the end of its developmental history rather than the cessation of its production. If it was Hegel who first proposed the 'pastness' of art, it was Arthur Danto who

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[53] Eva Guelen, "Endgames: Reconstructing Adorno's 'End of Art.," *New German Critique*, no. 81 (2000), 157.

[54] Ibid., 158

[55] Krzysztof Ziarek, "The Avant Garde and the End of Art," *Filozofski vestnik* 35, no.2 (2014), 67.

[56] Ibid., 69.

made such a proposal famous for twentieth-century readers of philosophical aesthetics. Though Danto formulates his own theory of the 'end of art,' it is in heavy debt to the aesthetic philosophy of Hegel, so much so that Danto has referred to himself as a 'born-again Hegelian.'[57] When Danto speaks of the 'end of art' he is not referring to a termination of artistic manufacture but to the completion of a developmental history that culminates in the self-consciousness of art.[58] In other words, Danto is suggesting that there is a particular narrative progression that characterises art history, through which art becomes conscious of its own processes, that this has come to its natural end in modern art, and that no art made after this time can be seen as contributing to this course of evolution.[59] The 'self-consciousness' or 'self-disclosure' of art as the end of its developmental history is an idea lifted directly from Hegel that Danto sees as played out in the self-reflective nature of twentieth-century pop art;[60] art has here reached the limits of its ability to define itself and must now pass the question of its own nature over to philosophy.[61] Art produced after this period is post-historical in the sense that it has attained self-knowledge as best it can, passed this task on to philosophical thought, and is consequently freed from the directing force

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[57] Houlgate, "Hegel, Danto, and the 'end of art'," 264.

[58] Carroll, "The End of Art?" 18.

[59] Arthur C. Danto, "Narratives of the End of Art," *Grand Street* 8, no.3 (1989), 179.

[60] David Carrier, "Danto and his Critics: After the End of Art and Art History," *History and Theory* 37, no. 4 (1998), 8.

[61] Carroll, "The End of Art?" 20.

that drives art towards this final goal.[62] History gives way to freedom and the artist is now at liberty to experiment and create without the 'burden of self-definition.'[63] This coalesces well with both Hegel's own assertion that artists of the future may draw freely on the many styles of the past and with the current artistic climate in which anything is seen as possible.[64]

Nonetheless, the implementation of Danto's 'end of art' theory within the Hegelian framework from which it originated meets immediate resistance in seemingly incompatible timelines; Danto's end of art occurs in the mid twentieth-century whereas, for Hegel, the dissolution of the romantic form seems to have already occurred at the time of his lectures in the early nineteenth century. It is possible to suppose that art had already reached the end of its developmental history by the time of Hegel's *Lectures*, but the rapid and revolutionary progress that occurred within fine art from the early nineteenth century to the end of the twentieth century strongly challenges this suggestion and defenders of Hegel are left not much better off than if the 'end of art' is perceived as a literal death of art. However, this problem appears to be at least partially resolved if the revelation of self-consciousness in art, which heralds the end of art's historical development, is seen not as a singular point in history that has already past, but as an ongoing process which began in the eighteenth century and continues in the art of today.

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[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Hegel in Harries, "Hegel on the Future of Art," 692.

Danto is not alone in this approach and, as will be explicated, many commentators do not interpret the dissolution of the romantic form as a doctrine of literal death. Many commentators who take this view see Hegel's 'end of art' thesis as in some way predictive of modernist and postmodernist art. In fact, Stephen Bunguy identifies the largest group of interpreters as those who 'read the doctrine that art is in some sense a thing of the past as a prediction about art's future, usually referring to the development of art since Hegel's death to support him.'[65] Carl Rapp for example, argues in his paper 'Hegel's Concept of the Dissolution of Art' that Hegel's description of the last 'end' stage of art is 'uncannily prophetic' of the developments in art that have occurred over the last two hundred years.[66] Contemporary art is representative of the dissolution of romantic art and this, he believes, is evident in the account of art at this stage as presenting its own 'self-transcendence.'[67] That contemporary art is at the final stage of art's development does not, however, mean that we should expect art making practices to die out in the near future; Rapp believes there is no reason to suppose that art will not continue to be created in its current state indefinitely.[68] On this view, Hegel's aesthetic philosophy can tell us much about the nature of modern and contemporary art, but we should not expect any further developments beyond the state of art as 'self-

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[65] Bunguy, *Beauty and Truth*, 74.
[66] Rapp, "Hegel's Concept of the Dissolution of Art," 14.
[67] Ibid., 15.
[68] Ibid.

transcendence.'

Robert Pippin takes a similar view regarding contemporary art and the prophetical nature of the 'end of art' thesis, but he denies that this signals the end of art's historical development. Instead, Pippin asserts that in the 'end of art' thesis Hegel made an accurate forecast that some 'epochal change in the institution of art' was stirring, but that Hegel misjudged the nature of this change; Pippin sees the 'end of art' as presaging the emergence of a new form or style of post-romantic art rather than art's dissolution or the end of its progressive development.[69] Pippin acknowledges that this is a deviation from Hegel's own claims, but he upholds that such a view remains consistent with the basic principles of the Hegelian system.[70] Thus, for Pippin, it is not at all necessary to maintain that art has become, or ever will become, a 'thing of the past' in order to adopt a faithful Hegelian reading of contemporary art. On the contrary, Pippin's seminal book *After the Beautiful* puts forward the thesis that Hegel's historical approach is perhaps the best method for understanding recent, and potentially future, developments in the history of art.[71] At first glance, it seems natural to prefer an interpretation such as Pippin's over those like Danto's and Rapp's that assert that the contemporary situation signals an end to some development within the history of art. This is because it is immune to the refutation that would ultimately be presented by

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[69] Pippin, *After the Beautiful*, 65.
[70] Ibid., 96.
[71] Ibid., 133.

any future development within art. To assert that art has at this present stage reached the completion of its development seems akin to Charles H. Duell's infamous 1899 utterance that 'everything that can be invented has been invented'; that is, it seems only a matter of time before such an assessment is considered laughable. On these grounds, it is natural to prefer Pippin's formulation.

Against Pippin's model, however, I argue that it is too great a divergence from Hegel's scheme and that there are strong reasons for upholding that there can be no further Hegelian forms of art beyond the familiar triad. Instead, I confirm that the dissolution of the romantic form of art does herald a certain kind of developmental completion or fulfilment and argue that this formulation is not necessarily problematic for a more faithful adherence to Hegel's triadic system even if the future does yield certain kinds of artistic development. Of course, this can be the case only if the advent of the dissolution of romantic art is not seen as the complete or total end of art's developmental history; it has already been expounded that the nature of the dialectical structure that underpins Hegel's system guarantees the persistence of art's manufacture even as Spirit progresses forward to its realisation in religion and philosophy, so the crux of the matter here concerns the persistence of art's progressive development. It must then be asked, what exactly this 'dissolution' should rightly be seen as describing, if the dissolution of romantic art is not the end of art's overall development yet romantic art it is still to be considered the final form of art.

The dissolution of the romantic form of art simply signifies the completion of the development of the relationship between artistic form and Spirit as universal artistic content; the stage at which art reaches full conceptual maturity in recognition of its limitations. The section in the *Lectures* on the end of the romantic form of art describes this final stage as primarily a 'falling apart' of form and content. Romantic art has already sacrificed the perfect unity of form and content that was established in classical art, but at the 'end' of romantic art these two sides come apart completely; 'on the one hand, into the imitation of external objectivity in all its contingent shapes' and 'on the other hand… into the liberation of subjectivity.'[72] In other words, the external and internal aspects of art become completely arbitrary in relation to one another and the artwork becomes mere sign.[73] Though this does seem to indicate a final stage in the development of romantic art, and indeed art in general, it cannot be considered a stage *within* art's development because once content and form have separated entirely then the object ceases to be art altogether. Instead, I suggest that the so-called 'dissolution' of romantic art is exposed through artworks that push as close as possible to this separation of form and content and, in doing so, expose this as a limitation of both the romantic form and art itself. Art will of course persist beyond the creation of these works, only now with an awareness of both the constraint caused by manifestation in

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[72] *Hegel's Aesthetics*, trans. T.M. Knox, 608.
[73] Bunguy, *Beauty and Truth*, 81.

physical form and the enduring connection between form and content as a defining factor of the concept of art. This is no 'end' of art, but merely a realisation of the limit of romantic art in its play with the contingency of external form in relation to the expression of subjectivity. In short, the dissolution of romantic art is the self-revelation of one of its own defining parameters.

I support the view that the dissolution of romantic art constitutes the completion of a certain significant evolution within art, but I argue that this does not prevent art from going on to develop throughout history in other respects. Not only is the production of art expected to continue beyond the point at which art reaches this reflexive awareness, just as it does in Danto's account, but it can be anticipated that art will continue to develop throughout history in terms of style, subject-matter, and other various artistic components. New movements and trends will emerge, new styles and techniques will be invented, and new mediums will appear with technological advancement. None of this is prevented by art's achievement of a conceptual self-awareness; all that has occurred is that a limit has been reached with regards to how far artistic form can be stretched or pushed away from content in the attempt to present Spirit in its most truthful form. This revelation may well occur at a time in history, and perhaps this is why Hegel speaks as though the art of his time was bearing witness to the dissolution of romantic art, but it is not the end of romantic art's historical

development.[74] Carl Rapp suggests that the dissolution of romantic art 'might well go on forever' but it would be more accurate to say that the continual disclosure and rediscovery of artistic limitation might well become an essential feature of romantic art as it progresses forward.[75] So long as there is some mediation between form and content, romantic art will continue in various manifestations.

4. Concluding Statement

Hegel's infamous statement that art ought to be considered a 'thing of the past' is best interpreted as indicating that the historical period in which art is the highest and most complete expression of Spirit has come to an end. It is evident that Hegel considers this historical period or 'golden age' of art to be the era in which the classical form of art was predominant and so, I have argued, the end of art in its highest vocation arises with the transition from classical to romantic art. This is in contrast with the popular assumption that the 'end of art' is synonymous with the dissolution of romantic art that I maintain has resulted from a mistaken conflation between this final dissolution and Hegel's declaration of art's pastness. Moreover, I have argued that neither does the dissolution of romantic art herald a cessation to the production of art, or even the romantic category, but should rather be

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[74] Rapp, "Hegel's Concept of the Dissolution of Art," 15.
[75] Ibid.

viewed as the completion of the development between artistic form and content such that the connection between these two aspects is revealed to be necessary and can thus be considered both a limitation and defining feature of art. Consequently, the often misunderstood 'end of art' thesis is no reason to suppose that Hegel's aesthetic theory is irrelevant to art of the past two centuries as it can easily incorporate modern and contemporary art within the romantic category of art.

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The Images between Iconoclasm and Iconophilia – War against War by Ernst Friedrich

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ABSTRACT. There are two main accounts considering images which can be called, in general, iconoclasm and iconophilia. The first can be characterized as a distrust of images, the second is connected with a belief in their power. In this article, I analyze some theories concerning these attitudes. To do so, I refer to W. J. T. Mitchell and Bruno Latour. In the context of this issue, I analyze the book by Ernst Friedrich *War against War* in which he tries to find another solution between iconoclasm and iconophilia. I show, recalling Jacques Rancière, how Friedrich uses this strategy to change the distribution of the sensible in the case of the First World War.

1.

Wars between iconophiles and iconoclasts have a long and complex tradition in the history of images. They are waged both in practice and on the battlefields of theory. Iconophilia can be described in general as a belief in images and their unique power, while iconoclasm is characterized by a distrust of images and an attempt to get rid of them. In our times, as W. J. T.

Mitchell says, the iconoclast is in the lead, especially among leftist-thinkers. But there are also some exceptions, and one of them is a pacifist, Ernst Friedrich, who tries to wage a different war, war against war, by using both iconophilic and iconoclastic weapons.

In this paper, some issues connected with the division between iconoclasm and iconophilia are analyzed in the context of the cultural function of images. It focuses mostly on stances which show that both iconoclasm and iconophilia are ideal constructs and that in practice we can find lots of different positions which are in-between. The thesis of the paper is that *War against War* by Ernst Friedrich is an attempt to find a third way which combines both iconoclasm and iconophilia. It is also an example of applying this third way not only to theory but, first of all, to political practice.

War against War is a book created by Ernst Friedrich and published in 1924 in Berlin. It contains around 250 photos of the First World War. Friedrich combines two types of photos – propaganda photos from newspapers and those snatched from medical and military archives. Every photo is accompanied by a short quote taken from newspapers or a sentence made up by Friedrich. They are often contrasted in an ironic way. The album is preceded by a manifesto in which Friedrich criticizes the discourse of "Field of Honour", which glorifies the war. He believes that if people understood that "in all wars the object is to protect and seize [the] money and property and power" (Friedrich, 2017, p. 50) of the bourgeoisie, they

would strike against it and create a society of "Man and Love".

Uit de Augustusdagen 1914 — Geestdriftig . . . waarvoor? . . .
From the August days of 1914 — Enthusiastic . . . for what? . . .

Aus den Augusttagen 1914. — Begeistert . . . wofür? . . .
Des jours d'août en 1914 — Enthousiasmés . . pour quoi? . . .
Od pierwszych dni sierpnia 1914 — Entuzjazm ? ...

Figure 1: "From the August days of 1914 – Enthusiastic… for what? …"
(Friedrich, 2017, p. 78)

Figure 2: "…for the 'field of honour" (Friedrich, 2017, p. 79)

Figure 3: "For the interests of Capital…" (Friedrich, 2017, p. 116)
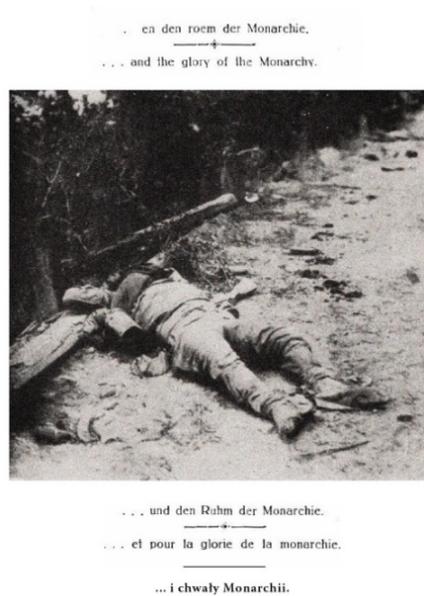
Figure 4: "… and the glory of the Monarchy" (Friedrich, 2017, p. 117)

2.

The division between iconoclasm and iconophilia is more complex and ambiguous than it may seem at the first glance. According to Mitchell, iconoclasts always accuse some "others" of being idolaters and create a stereotype revealing those others as those who naively and dangerously believe in "living images". Iconoclasm is then used not only to discredit images but to discredit people and to create a division between "us" and "them". But paradoxically iconoclasts and idolaters have more in common

than they want to admit. To attack images with such passion, iconoclasts have to believe that there are idolaters who are "possessed" by images. By doing so they also acknowledge the overwhelming power of images instead of treating them more as a result of power.

The iconoclastic attitude is especially strong in discussions about representing traumatic events, especially in the context of Shoah. In *Images in Spite of All* (2012), Georges Didi-Huberman analyses photos taken by prisoners from Sonderkommando in Auschwitz and describes how the anti-representation discourse which presents itself as highly ethical is in fact exactly the opposite. In fact, its proclaimers use it so as not to look at something that they do not want to look at. At the same time, they establish that some events cannot be represented by images, so the images which show them should be destroyed. But it is, as Didi-Huberman underlines, our ethical duty to be confronted with these images. Certainly, photos from Auschwitz and those presented in *War against War* have different statuses, for instance, because of those who made them – prisoners form Sonderkommando as victims or photographers hired by the military apparatus. But on some level these images have a lot in common. They are both "naked images", as Jacques Rancière would say[2]. They testify to what is shown in the photos but they also testify about that which is not and cannot be shown as a whole – the horror of the Holocaust or the First World War. These are images which not only have to be shown to give their

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[2] See Rancière (2009).

testimony but also to demand ethical reactions.

Mitchell writes that iconophilia itself is also not a consistent concept. Its different shades are represented by idolatry, fetishism and totemism. This last one could be a positive answer to iconoclasm. He characterizes it:

> The attitude toward the totem, therefore, is not iconoclastic hostility or moralism but curatorial solicitude. One might see the new art-historical revaluations of idols and fetishes as a kind of 'totemizing' of them, an effort to understand the social-historical contexts, the ritual practices, the belief system and psychological mechanisms that make these images possess so much surplus value. (Mitchell, 2005, p. 100)

In his conception, Mitchell tries to find a third way between iconoclasm and idolatry. He uses it to create a new methodology for analyzing images. As described later, Ernst Friedrich similarly searches for an exit from the dichotomy between iconoclasm and iconophilia and tries to find a way to use images as a political tool.

Of course, these two attitudes – iconoclasm and iconophilia – are only some extremes on the complicated scale of valuing images. Bruno Latour distinguishes five different types of positions along it. They are "The As – People Are Against All Images", "The Bs – People Are Against Freeze-Frame. Not Against Images", "The Cs – People Are Not Against Images. Except Those of Their Opponents", "The Ds – People Are Breaking The Images Unwittingly", "The Es – People Are Simply The People. They

Mock Iconoclasts and Iconophiles" (Latour, 2002, p. 21-32). In this context, the most interesting are the Bs – those who are not against images but against freeze-frame. The Bs know that it is impossible to get rid of images. But at the same time, they know there is a flow of images and they are against stopping it. They know, as Latour sums up, that "truth is image but there is no image of truth" (Latour, 2002, p. 27). However, he notices that the Bs are in danger of becoming Cs ("People Are Not Against Images. Except Those of Their Opponents") in disguise. Later in the text it will be shown how Friedrich escapes that threat.

Before focusing on *War against War,* I should make some remarks about why this third way is as important as I think it is. To do so, let us refer again to Mitchell and Rancière. In his theory about iconoclasm and idolatry, Mitchell claims that in criticizing images iconoclasts often miss their target. He writes:

> Perhaps the most obvious problem is that the critical exposure and demolition of the nefarious power of images is both easy and ineffectual. Pictures are popular political antagonists because one can take a tough stand on them, and yet, at the end of the day, everything remains pretty much the same. (Mitchell, 2005, p. 33)

There is also another reason why this issue is so important. As Rancière writes, "Art and politics are thereby linked, beneath themselves, as forms of

presence of singular bodies in a specific space and time" (Rancière, 2009, p. 26). Politics is based on the distribution of the sensible – deciding who can be represented and how and who cannot. We live in a world made up of politics and images. In practice it is impossible to get rid of images. So, when iconoclasts decide not to create images, they just tap out. They forget that art practices are, as Rancière notices, "'ways of doing and making' that intervene in the general distribution of ways of doing and making as well as in the relationship they maintain to modes of being and forms of visibility" (Rancière, 2004, p. 13). Images not only reproduce the existing political system but they can also establish a new one. By capturing and rearranging dominant visual representations, it is possible to undermine the system of power hidden behind it That is how other images are created; images that can be called counter-images because of their origin (they are not fully original but based on images which existed before) and their opposition to the dominant order. Creating counter-images is a powerful weapon in the fight against the prevailing visual representations.

3.

The photos used in *War against War* are not neutral. They are taken from the two regimes of power – the press and archives. The first one is a powerful tool for distributing the sensible. The press creates the image of war based on lies about "the Field of Honour" and "the Heroic Death". It

makes use of photos showing smiling, young men whom the nation can admire and be proud of. Friedrich uses a lot of pictures of this type, especially at the beginning of *War against War*. They illustrate an early First World War enthusiasm which spread throughout not only Germany but also the whole of Europe. We should not forget about hundreds of thousands of people celebrating the beginning of the war in the streets of Berlin. The joy of war was also, as Friedrich analyses, arranged by the press and by the military character of culture and education. That is why he writes in the manifesto: "And ten newspaper writers that agitate for war, shall be detained as hostages for the life of each single warrior!" (Friedrich, 2017, p. 50). But the reality of war did not resemble the image created by propaganda. Press photos were used to cover the true face of war shown in the photos from archives. It worked because they were the only visual representation of life in the trenches that reached people outside the battlefield. This discrepancy between two images of war best illustrates a part of the book called "The Visage of War". It contains 24 portrait photos of war veterans – people who, due to their war-related injuries, had to have several facial reconstruction surgeries. Even so, most of them needed lifelong hospitalization. They were also afraid of the shock that their visage may cause their families, so they preferred not to contact loved ones and made them think that they died on the "Field of Honour". Following Zygmunt Bauman, they can be called "human waste" – people who are no longer useful and have to be taken out

of the picture.[3] The veterans' portraits were never meant to be shown publicly. Images, as a tool of power and distribution of the sensible, are used not only in the case of the press but also in archives. Those in power decide what can be shown but also collect images for themselves – these are two elements of constructing the dominant discourse. Allan Sekula notices that the power of an archive's owner is the power to interpret photos freely and to dictate their meaning.[4] The owner is the one who decides what story images are going to tell. That is why the Friedrich's move, stealing photos from medical and military archives, is so meaningful. By doing so, he not only reveals something that was meant to be seen only by some narrow group but also frees the images from the domination of their owner. Now, when they are public, they can be used to construct counter-narratives; they become counter-images. Friedrich uses them to give a voice back to those who have been silenced. He describes every photo with a short story of the man shown in it – his name, age, types of injuries and operations he had gone through, sometimes profession. In the shadow of the monumental discourse of "the Field of Honour" and his monumental anti-war history, he creates a space for micro-narrations about individual human beings. But at the same time their stories say more about the faith of the whole war generation and the human condition after the First World War than any other part of *War against War*. These photos are Rancière's "naked images"

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[3] See Bauman (2003).
[4] See Sekula (1983).

– they testify to inconceivable physical and emotional pain. But they also testify about others, "human waste", who are not shown, but we know that they are somewhere there. Under one of the photos Friedrich writes:

> After the steel bath: To the present day are lying in the hospitals gruesomely disfigured soldiers on whom operations are still being performed. Many of these unhappy war victims have undergone thirty, thirty-five and in some cases more than forty operations. In the case of thousands, the medical treatment has not yet been ended. Very many have to be fed artificially. (Friedrich, 2017, p. 226)

Friedrich believes in the power of these images; he believes in it in spite of all. He writes:

> […] a picture of War, objectively true and faithful to nature, has been photographically recorded for all time. The pictures in this book from page so to the end, show records obtained by the inexorable, incorruptible photographic lens, to the trenches and the mass graves, of 'military lies', of the 'field of honour', and of other 'idylls' of the 'Great Epoch'. And not one single man of any country whatsoever can arise and bear witness against these photographs, that they are untrue and that they do not correspond to realities. (Friedrich, 2017, p. 47-48)

For Friedrich, the basic condition of images is testifying to what has happened. Earlier he writes: "all the treasury of words of all men of all lands

suffices not, in the present and in the future, to paint correctly twis butchery of human beings" (Friedrich, 2017, p. 47). Only photography, with its unique relation to events, can do that. It evokes Roland Barthes' concept of the noeme, the essence, of Photography – "That-has-been" or the Intractable, "it has been here". Barthes writes in a similar manner to Friedrich:

> […] in Photography I can never deny that the thing has been there. There is a superimposition here: of reality and of the past. And since this constraint exists only for Photography, we must consider it, by reduction, as the very essence, the noeme of Photography. What I intentionalise in a photograph […] is Reference, which is the founding order of Photography. (Barthes, 1982, p. 76-77)

Friedrich knows that propaganda uses images – that is why he blames journalists in his manifesto and uses photos from archives and the press. But at the same time, he knows how powerful images are because of the nature of photography, which testifies "it has been there". He tries to give a voice back not only to the people mentioned before but also to the images appropriated by those in power. Because, when they are free, naked images demand from us, as viewers, but also as a society, an ethical response which is, as Friedrich puts it, "the society of Man and Love".

Na het staalbad: Nog heden ten dage liggen in de hospitalen ontzettend verminkte soldaten, die altyd weer opnieuw geopereerd moeten worden. Velen van deze ongelukkige slachtoffers hebben 30, 35 Operaties, in verschillende gevallen zelfs meer dan 40 operaties doorgemaakt, en de behandeling is by vele duizenden nog niet geeindigd. Zeer velen moeten kunstmatig gevoed worden.
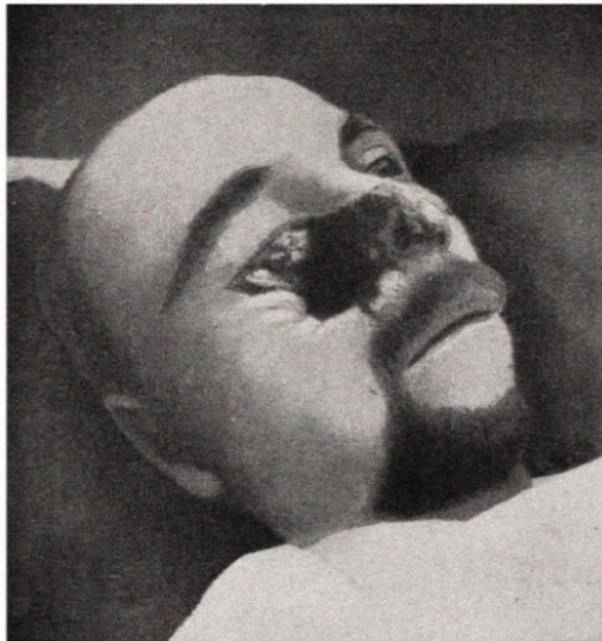
After the steel bath: To the present day are lying in the hospitals gruesomely disfigured soldiers on whom operations are still being performed. Many of these unhappy war victims have undergone thirty, thirty-five and in some cases more than forty operations. In the case of thousands, the medical treatment has not yet been ended. Very many have to be fed artificially.

Figure 5: "After the steel bath: To the present day are lying in the hospitals gruesomely disfigured soldiers on whom operations are still being performed. Many of these unhappy war victims have undergone thirty, thirty-five and in some cases more than forty operations. In the case of thousands, the medical treatment has not yet been ended. Very many have to be fed artificially" (Friedrich, 2017, p. 226)

Figure 6: "Agricultural worker, 36 years of age. Wounded 1917. Nose and left cheek restored wich flesh from head, breast and arm. (20 operations.)" (Friedrich, 2017, p. 229)

4.

Ernst Friedrich is, then, not an iconoclast. But at the same time, he is not an iconophile either. To show that, let us get back to Latour's five categories of iconoclasts. It may seem that Friedrich is a type C – he is not against images, only against those of his opponents. But it turns out to be more complicated. Friedrich criticizes the picture of war created by propaganda, but at the same time he uses images created by his opponents. Most of the images in *War against War* come from the state – from the press or archives. Hence, the problem lies not in the images themselves but in the way they are used by those in power. That is why Friedrich represents the Bs – people against freeze-frames, not against images. The "Field of Honour" and propaganda pictures are freeze-frame images. They have one imposed meaning and one way of being interpreted. Friedrich does not oppose some other photo to them; he does not create a symbol for the war against war. What is even more interesting, he does not create a visual representation for his future utopia of "Man and Love" either. Instead he liquefies images. He uses over 250 photos to show the scale of the damages of war. It seems that Friedrich knows that, as Latour writes, "truth is image but there is no image of truth". *War against War* is a montage in which images clash together. We may call it, following Latour and Mitchell, the "iconoclash" – the war between images. Friedrich clashes two different

types of photos – those from the press and archives. At first glance, viewers may say which is which. Press pictures show soldiers fulfilling their duties – marching, saluting, fighting. Healthy young men ready to crush the enemy. Their bodies are freeze-framed, tight and sorted similarly to the image itself. On the other hand, there are counter-images of dead bodies mixed with mud and dead horses. Often it is impossible to tell who is who. They represent fluid, organic matter which is impossible to frame or to stop. This juxtaposition could be an illustration for Klaus Theweleit's book *Male Fantasies* (1987). Referring to Theweleit and his analyses of fascism, we may say that the Weimar Republic was against and afraid of these counter-images. *War against War* causes a shock because it shows what is hidden behind the propaganda picture. It can, as we can describe it following Rancière, "reveal one world behind another […]. It involves organizing a clash, presenting the strangeness of the familiar, in order to reveal a different order of measurement that is only uncovered by the violence of a conflict" (Rancière, 2007, p. 82-83). Rancière writes that shock is a strategy typical of montage works and distinguishes two different types – dialectic and symbolic. The first puts together that which is incompatible, the second creates connections between that which seems completely different. In art they both mix. The same happens in *War against War*. Archive photos are even aesthetically incompatible with propaganda photos. On the other hand, viewers know that they both illustrate the reality of war. These two types of images are completely different but at the same time they are reverse and

obverse of the same.

The term "iconoclash" also has another meaning than what was presented earlier. Latour describes it: "Iconoclash [...] is when one does not know, one hesitates, one is troubled by an action for which there is no way to know, without further inquiry, whether it is destructive or constructive" (Latour, 2002, p. 14). This hesitation can also be seen in Friedrich's project. The montage in *War against War* reveals the dark side of images. How deadly a weapon they can be if they are used and appropriated by those in power, who Friedrich calls profiteers, deceivers, oppressors, torturers, the well-fed or, in short, capitalists. The photos testifying to war's horrors show the consequences of people having believed in the propaganda picture of war – consequences of their enthusiasm and eagerness to fight. This double nature of Friedrich's attitude to photography shown in *War against War* means that the montage used in it is dialectical. The dialectical montage does not create synthesis but, as Didi-Huberman writes, it "expose the truth by disorganizing, and therefore by complicating while implicating (rather than explicating) things" (Didi-Huberman, 2018, p. 85). Friedrich does not have an easy answer to questions about the nature of images. But knowing their power, that they can be used both to fetishize the war or to testify to its horrors and demystify the myth of the "Field of Honour", he cannot just withdraw them.

Figure 7: "The position will be held…" (Friedrich, 2017, p. 106)

Figure 8: "… to the last man" (Friedrich, 2017, p. 107)

Figure 9: "Shooting under martial law. a) 'I hold here only an office and no opinion.' (Schiller)" (Friedrich, 2017, p. 176)
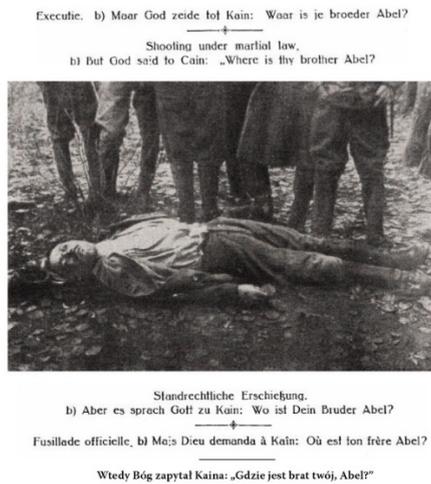
Figure 10: "Shooting under martial law. b) But God said to Cain: 'Where is thy brother Abel?'" (Friedrich, 2017, p. 177)

5.

Ernst Friedrich, similarly to Mitchell, tries to find a third way of dealing with images, which is neither iconoclasm nor iconophilia. This third way is analogical to Mitchell's totemism, which tries to analyze images and understand why they have such an overwhelming power. Friedrich's project can be divided into a few phases. Firstly, he recognizes the deadly potential of images used by those in power to create, through the press, discourses about war based on myths of the "Field of Honour" and the "Heroic Death". In the next step, he tries to recover appropriated war images. By freeing photos from state archives, he redistributes the sensible – represents that which was not supposed to be shown. These images, showing the horrors of the First World War, testify about this and those who have been forgotten in the propagandist narration. In *War against War*, Friedrich clashes two types of photos – images and counter-images. His montage shows the double potential of images, which can create the dominant discourse or be used in the fight against it. He tries to use images – in contrast to Mitchell, he is concerned less about theory and more about practice. *War against War* is a project between philosophy, art and politics. As such it can contribute to discussions about iconophilia and iconoclasm in all of these three fields and try to find strategies which combine both these attitudes.

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Imagination, Possibilities and Aspects in Literary Fiction

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ABSTRACT. This paper is about imagination and possibilities in literature and moral life. Literature and moral life both involve imagination because, at different levels of agency, considering possibilities helps us to take decisions and, at the same time, helps us to reinforce the reasons for acting. My first thesis in this paper is that this process may be explained in terms of a theory of aspects: it is significant that one thing resulting from the experience of imaginative opening is often a particular *aspect*. However, the task of understanding imagination "*sub specie possibilitate*" entails two kinds of dangers: *hypothesism* ("we need to see") and *epiphanism* ("we do not need to see"). I will formulate a second thesis, following an idea of Nussbaum: that literary features intervene relevantly in the building of the device which promotes the aesthetic-moral experience of the novel. And there is a source of the *philosophical* interest in the novel, not a mere affair of literary *technique*. My focus on some examples from *The Portrait of a Lady* aims to be a proof of it insofar as the complex relationship between hypothesis (*seeing as*) and aspects (*seeing*), and consequently the dangers of *hypothesism* and *epiphanism*, may be clarified from the point of view of the novel. I will consider three levels in *The Portrait of a Lady* concerning the interplay of imagination, possibilities, hypothesis and aspects: the level of the poetics of a novel, the inner level of the characters, and the level of the

aesthetic experience of the reader.

This paper is about imagination and possibilities in literature and moral life.

First of all, I would like to say that some respected scholars in the philosophy of literature, as Jacques Bouveresse, Martha Nussbaum and Cora Diamond, share their interest on the role of imagination in both domains (literature and moral life).

On the other hand, there is a very intuitive idea that imagining involves, in a very relevant sense, managing possibilities. But possibilities come into play concerning imagination in very different ways. Somebody having to take a decision about how to conduct himself in a particular situation can imagine possible scenes depending on the consequences of possible decisions, or may imagine possible reactions of himself after having taken this or that decision. The writer of a novel imagines what would happen if the character acted this way or that way and can imagine possible contexts for their characters matching with their personalities and, at the same time, shaping their personalities for the reader, who in turn imagines possible looking, possible reactions, and possible endings. The vast concept of imagination, which is so variable in the history of aesthetics, can be demarcated by means of its relationship with possibilities. Literature and moral life both involve imagination because, at different levels of agency, considering possibilities helps us to take decisions and, at the same time, helps us to reinforce the reasons for acting.

Jacques Bouveresse (Bouveresse 2008) thinks that this is the clue to the link between literature (that is, the imaginative description of facts and situations) and life. Martha Nussbaum (Nussbaum 1990) thinks that novels and their writing style are an indispensable part of moral philosophy, just because that style is very different from the style of philosophical writings (treatises). For Cora Diamond (Diamond 1996), the imaginative description by Socrates in Plato's *Crito* is a good example of exercising moral creativity.

Scholars, such as the ones mentioned agree on the idea that moral thinking is not merely consisting of choosing between previous given possibilities, nor the application of rules or principles to a particular situation. The *seeing* of possibilities arises as a process of transformation of our perception of things, and that process works under pressure. In Cora Diamond's words: "Seeing the possibilities in things is a matter of a kind of transforming perception of them" (Diamond 1996, 313). My first thesis in this paper is that this process may be explained in terms of a theory of aspects: it is significant that one thing resulting from the experience of imaginative opening is often a particular *aspect*. In turn, the working of imagination in literature and moral life has something important to teach us about the theory of aspects in aesthetic understanding, at least.

However, the task of understanding imagination "*sub specie possibilitate*" entails two kinds of dangers which I will try to reveal next. I will call these two kinds of dangers *hypothesism* and *epiphanism*.

In order to explain them, I need to underline just two features of my theory of aspects that are especially relevant for my argument:

1. When I see something under a new aspect, I see that it has not changed while we have been looking at it and yet the way in which we see it has changed.

2. The aspect is something *seen* and not merely *considered*. It works differently to hypothesis: I can consider a hypothesis even if I am never able to *see* it.

Both dangers (*hypothesism* and *epiphanism*) are based on those features. In fact, they seem to be two sides of the same coin: the first one says "we need to see", the second one says "we do not need to see".

Hypothesim happens when we ignore the experiential (or perceptual) character of the dawning of an aspect, even if the dawning of an aspect is not the currency in aesthetic experiences. We need to see: that is, the dawning of an aspect implies an experience, not a mere logical consideration. Imagine, for example, someone saying "I understand your proposal of seeing the duck-rabbit as a head turned to the right, but I cannot come to see the rabbit." In aesthetic situations, we may say, for example, "My student of oboe class does not really come to see the meaning of *expressivo* in Mozart's passages even though he has perfectly imitated my *vibrato* a moment ago".

Epiphanism happens when we forget that we can consider a hypothesis without gaining access to a new *seeing* (that is, an aspect). In that

case, we do not need to see. The dawning of an aspect is a crucial and very characteristic phenomenon at the heart of aesthetic understanding, but we are not experiencing a constant dawning of an aspect phenomena (fortunately) in our aesthetic life. In other words, every *seeing as* (hypothesis) is not equivalent to a new *seeing* (an aspect), even if the hypothesis logically (and phenomenologically) precedes the dawning of an aspect. If I am a lover of classical music, I am not constantly rediscovering Beethoven every time I listen to Beethoven, even if there is the possibility that sometimes something could push me to say "Now, I see Beethoven differently" and this is a central characteristic of aesthetic understanding. In aesthetic situations we are perfectly able to consider a hypothesis about the possible developments of a work or even about the meaning or the consequences of an element without the need of seeing it as a hole aspect or as a change of the current aspect. So that is why we say, for example, "I see exactly the point of your proposal in order to understand X, but I cannot see the work that way" or, another example, "I see the options that the theme opens up (in music) or the plot opens up (in a novel), and I see how the author breaks down expectations".

Before plunging into *The Portrait of a Lady*, I will formulate a second thesis, following an idea of Nussbaum: that literary features intervene relevantly in the building of the device which promotes the aesthetic-moral experience of the novel. And there is a source of the *philosophical* interest in the novel, not a mere affair of literary *technique*. My focus on *The*

Portrait of a Lady aims to be a proof of it insofar as the complex relationship between hypothesis (*seeing as*) and aspects (*seeing*), and consequently the dangers of *hypothesism* and *epiphanism*, may be clarified from the point of view of the novel, even though, clarifying is often to show the complexity of something. Obviously, imagination and aspects are not synonymous. The dawning of an aspect is just a kind of imaginative phenomenon and that also means that it is just a kind of articulation between imagination and possibilities.

There are three levels (at least) in a novel concerning the interplay of imagination, possibilities, hypothesis and aspects:

1. The level of the poetics of a novel (that is, the author's creative mechanisms).

2. The inner level of the characters (inside the novel).

3. The level of the aesthetic experience of the reader.

Let's start at the first level, concerning the poetics of novel by James and especially in the case of *The Portrait of a Lady*.

Summing up greatly, *The Portrait of a Lady* is the story of Isabel Archer, a young American girl who has just arrived to her aunt and uncle's home in England. Isabel must decide about her future, including various offers of marriage. She finally decides to marry, but her married life is unhappy. As the novel progresses, the development of events and of personal relationships make Isabel mature and makes she see her life and her personal environment in a new light.

Isabel Archer is a character repeatedly described by the narrator and by the rest of the characters of the novel referring a distinctive trait: her imagination. Nevertheless, imagination has a very varied range of meanings (referring to Isabel and the rest of the characters, and also in the non-fiction texts of James): to put yourself in somebody else's shoes (that is empathy), to have wit and curiosity referring to objects such as art or conversation, capacity for being excited about our future in life, capacity for fantasy (of course), longing for freedom (in a woman, especially), etc.

Henry James, in his Preface to the New York Edition version (1908) of *The Portrait of a Lady*, says:

> The point is, however, that this single small corner-stone, the conception of a certain young woman affronting her destiny, had begun with being all my outfit for the large building of "The Portrait of a Lady." (James 1908, xii)

The paradox of the artist (a kind of *petitio principii*) is, for James, that the writer needs to have (and he has, in fact) a vivid figure as the main character (Isabel Archer, in *The Portrait of a Lady*) even before having submitted her to the "business of placing" the character (James 1908, xi). In other words, James's acquisition of his main formal procedure, "the grasp of a single character", must be somehow previous to his immersion into the set of characters, circumstances and events composing the "human scene" (James

1908, xii), the same human scene which James wants to reveal just by means of the formal procedure actually being shaped in the process of immersion itself. The answer, a partial one at least, is that the writer's imagination masters some elements coming from the artist's life experience (we cannot avoid thinking here in the biographic inspiration of Minnie Temple, James's cousin) in order to build a figure which has

> […] BEEN placed —placed in the imagination that detains it, preserves, protects, enjoys it, conscious of its presence in the dusky, crowded, heterogeneous back-shop of the mind". (James 1908, xiii)

But to try to describe that process of imagining, that process of "logical accretion" by which "this slight 'personality', the mere slim shade of an intelligent but presumptuous girl" was "to find itself endowed with the high attributes of a Subject", would imply to

> do so subtle, if not so monstrous, a thing as to write the history of the growth of one's imagination. (James 1908, xii-xiii)

What is the *aspectist* status of that figure? Is it an aspect or rather a hypothesis? In a sense, the writer *sees* Isabel before writing *The Portrait of a Lady*, but in another sense Isabel's character is the result of building *The Portrait of a Lady* and can't really be *seen* before it. Must we postulate maybe an intermediate category, a kind of *proto-aspect* or a kind of *super-*

hypothesis, in order to made account for it?

Let's go to the second level, concerning the inner level of the characters (inside the novel).

Henry James values a particular moment of seeing by Isabel as "the best thing in the book" but at the same time as "only a supreme illustration of the general plan". (James 1908, xxi). He says:

> It was designed to have all the vivacity of incident and all the economy of picture. She [Isabel] sits up, by her dying fire, far into the night, under the spell of recognitions on which she finds the last sharpness suddenly wait. It is a representation simply of her motionlessly SEEING, and an attempt withal to make the mere still lucidity of her act as "interesting" as the surprise of a caravan or the identification of a pirate. (James 1908, xxi)

James refers to chapter 42. Isabel is overwhelmed because of the words of her husband, Gilbert Osmond. He has asked Isabel to use her influence over lord Warburton, her old rejected suitor, in order to persuade him to marry Pansy, the young Osmond daughter and Isabel's stepdaughter, who loves another man. Isabel and Osmond's married couple's life is unhappy. Isabel spends the night after the conversation reflecting and trying to evaluate the causes of their failed marriage. But there is something overriding all the causes, judgments and reasons: a mental image, a remembered image which closes the chapter, the image of Osmond and madame Merle, the common

friend of both, "unconsciously and familiarly associated" (James 1908, 205). Indeed, in chapter 40 Isabel founded Osmond and madame Merle in an apparently current salon scene, but the position of the bodies, the momentary silence, and other little details (almost imperceptible ones) converge in Isabel's mind to produce an" impression":

> There was nothing to shock in this; they were old friends in fact. But the thing made an image, lasting only a moment, like a sudden flicker of light. Their relative positions, their absorbed mutual gaze, struck her as something detected. But it was all over by the time she had fairly seen it. (James 1908, 165)

The connection (not yet revealed in the novel) between both elements, that is, on the one hand, the image of Osmond and madame Merle together, and, on the other hand, Osmond's petition to Isabel in the context of their failed marriage, has occurred beyond the domain of judgments, reasons and decisions. Both elements enlighten each other in a way which is prior to the last revelation that the Countess Gemini (Osmond's sister) will offer to Isabel at the end of the novel: that Pansy is the secret daughter of madame Merle (from the period when she was the lover of Osmond) and how madame Merle's maneuvers and Osmond's falling in love (vitiated so much by his selfishness) have ended up using Isabel's love and marriage. Osmond's petition (being pushed by madame Merle) means at the same time a new using of Isabel's marriage and the corroboration of using Isabel

from the beginning.

Nevertheless, Isabel's image of Osmond and Merle being together does not become an epiphany (let us remember the last citation: "it was all over by the time she had fairly seen it"). Isabel does not reach a clear and complete seeing of all under a new light. We cannot speak at all of a dawning of an aspect (at that moment at least). Even though, the possibilities are there to the extent that the text reports Isabel's attention to subtle details (their relative positions, their absorbed mutual gaze, the momentary silence…). Those details are, one by one, insignificant, unable to produce a remarkable impression in Isabel's mind, but all together they turn out to produce that impression. Furthermore, Isabel does not elaborate a hypothesis with all those details and the resulting impression, but rather opens a field for a possible hypothesis and may colour events and behaviours. The new field is the selfish attitude of Osmond's and madame Merle's behaviour. The hypothesis will be the definitively selfishly-motivated interpretation of Osmond and madame Merle moves, but it will happen later in the novel. Even better, we can say that the impression of strangely close familiarity between Osmond and Merle does not change (for the moment) the aspect of the facts, but opens up the possibility of possibilities insomuch as Osmond-Merle's relationship may reveal the selfishness of both, or the selfishness of both may confirm that the impression of intimate familiarity was not a pure chance or Isabel's momentary obsession.

Let us finish in the third level of the novel, that is the level of the aesthetic experience of the reader. This person needs to activate her imagination in order to respond to the literary device beyond the dangers of *hypothesism* and *epiphanism*.

Readers' imagination has an obvious role to play concerning the end of the story, and thus the consequences of Isabel's last reactions. We know (after Henrietta, Isabel's friend) that Isabel will return to Rome. Maybe in order to meet Osmond again? What attitude would she adopt towards him? Submissive? Rebellious? Autonomous? Or maybe she will come just to care for Pansy… James has dropped some incomplete clues along the novel supporting all those possibilities. In fact, if we think of *The Portrait of a Lady* in terms of a narrative device based on the idea of the open destiny of a young lady, the reader's experience consists of accompanying the main character in the play of possibilities that will appear in succession, concluding in the discovery (with Isabel) that the chosen possibility has not proven to be what it looked like.

What is amazing in James's literary style is that the novel (and *The Portrait of a Lady* paradigmatically) is a "weave over" in which a complex play of knowing warp is woven, including reader's knowledge about facts and characters. And what makes the story interesting (unlike a thriller) is not the yearning to discover the secret and crucial datum, but rather the literary-(hyphen)moral journey that the reader has to go through with the main character and the rest of the characters. On this journey the omniscient

narrator may be up against the skin of a character, without eventually dismissing the emergence of the narrator talking directly to the reader.

I will try to illustrate that active role with the actual final part of the novel. The ending of the novel narrates the last visit to Isabel of her eternal suitor Caspar Goodwood, the stolen (and flashing) kiss from Isabel, Isabel's escape, and Goodwood's last inquiry visiting Henrietta Stackpole, Isabel's friend. Three kinds of characters meet there.

Goodwood, Isabel's eternal suitor, is someone incapable of seeing a new aspect; his characteristic feature never changes and insists on his attitude throughout all the novel. Isabel has been able to see something new from a new aspect now ("She had not known where to turn; but she knew now. There was a very straight path.", James 1908, 436), but where that path leads up to is an eternal and open work for the imagination of the readers of *The Portrait of a Lady*. And finally, Henrietta melts with the narrator (the last melting of the narrator, James's favourite weapon) building a last micro-device of aspect. I reproduce the last ten lines of the novel:

> Again Miss Stackpole held him--with an intention of perfect kindness--in suspense. "She came here yesterday, and spent the night. But this morning she started for Rome."
> Caspar Goodwood was not looking at her; his eyes were fastened on the doorstep. "Oh, she started--?" he stammered. And without finishing his phrase or looking up he stiffly averted himself. But he couldn't otherwise move.

> Henrietta had come out, closing the door behind her, and now she put
> out her hand and grasped his arm. "Look here, Mr. Goodwood," she
> said; "just you wait!"
> On which he looked up at her--but only to guess, from her face, with a
> revulsion, that she simply meant he was young. She stood shining at
> him with that cheap comfort, and it added, on the spot, thirty years to
> his life. She walked him away with her, however, as if she had given
> him now the key to patience. (James 1908, 438-439)

Then, Henrietta blurts out to Goodwood a "just you wait!" which constitutes
a curious last *aspectist* turn of the screw. Waiting for what? For Isabel's
love? Not at all. The narrator takes the command in the last paragraph in
order to reveal the intention of Henrietta and Goodwood's interpretative
reaction. But James is not content with the omniscient power of the narrator
to solve it: he looks for the support of visual intersubjective details.
Goodwood discovers in Henrietta's face the cruel meaning of her "just you
wait!" (that is: you are young, no hope regarding Isabel now). Is this a
hidden and inner idea inside Henrietta's mind, being simply revealed by the
omniscient narrator? Not at all. She intends for Goodwood to be perfectly
able to grasp the deeper meaning of her "just you wait!" (and in fact,
Goodwood does it). Henrietta "stood shining at him" and, besides that visual
complement, the reader is perfectly authorized by the narrator to think that
Henrietta obtains an intimate and somehow insane (cruel) satisfaction from
her "cheap comfort". The hyperbolic description of the effect of the

meaning in Goodwood's look is "it added, on the spot, thirty years to his life". Here James prompts the visual imagination of the reader, doing his bit especially well. Next, a new visual suggestion: "She walked him away with her, however". There is a "and life goes on as usual" implied message. But just to finish, James puts in the narrator's voice an "as if" which maybe is devoted to confirm the ironic rating of Henrietta's attitude: "as if she had given him now the key to patience". Does James really believe in the existence of that "key to patience"? Maybe we need a wider look at James's work for an answer. Is that "key" maybe the key of the new aspect, the new *seeing* gained by the impatient Isabel in her new "very straight path"? Those and more questions remain open for the readers.

Of course, after all I am just offering my own particular *aspectist* interpretation of *The Portrait of a Lady* and persuading you to imagine James's literary mastery that way.

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Relational Aesthetics and Experience of Otherness

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ABSTRACT. In 1998, Nicolas Bourriaud thematized the aesthetical and political issue of an "art taking as its theoretical horizon the realm of human interactions and its social context, rather than the assertion of an independent and *private* symbolic space" [Bourriaud, Nicolas (1998), *Relational Aesthetics,* Paris: Presses du Réel, p. 14]. Some critics has been raised regarding the real political impact of the art works used by Bourriaud as paradigmatic examples for his claim. In this paper, I argue that one way to explore further what is at stake in the open concept of relational aesthetics would be to consider the first person experience of the encounter with the other and the way it signifies. In this perspective, I then point out three landmarks in phenomenology and cognitive sciences, and use different art works to exemplify them: first I draw on the Husserlian descriptions of intersubjectivity to show how the other's behaviors can be part of an art form; second I refer to the enactive approach of Participatory Sense-Making as a convincing scheme for understanding collective dynamics of emergence in participative art; third I refer to Levinas' phenomenology to show that some aesthetical experiences might rely directly on an ethical sensibility.

1. Introduction

In 1998, Nicolas Bourriaud thematized the question of an "art taking as its

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theoretical horizon the realm of human interactions and its social context, rather than the assertion of an independent and *private* symbolic space" (Bourriaud 1998, p. 14).[2] This new way of understanding and creating art was, for the author, induced by the necessity of a societal change; that is, a change in the way we exist socially. Today, one might think that this preoccupation with societal change is still valid. But what exactly does it mean to exist socially? In a critical paper questioning the real political impact of the artworks that Bourriaud uses as paradigmatic examples of relational aesthetics, and the very quality of the relationships induced by them, Claire Bishop asks: "But how do we measure or compare these relationships? The quality of the relationships in 'relational aesthetics' are never examined or called into question. [...] If relational art produces human relations, then the next logical question to ask is what types of relations are being produced, for whom, and why?" (Bichop 2004, p. 65). We consider that these questions are totally valid and legitimate. But instead of looking for answers directly at the level of political theory as Bishop does, by referring to the work of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, we think something could be gained by taking a step back and first examining the very subjective and experiential dimensions of social relations. What is it like to experience a relationship with the other? How does it feel? What is the meaning of such relationships from a first person point of view? Thus

we postulate that social cognition and phenomenology could provide meaningful insights for appreciating the experiential and embodied substrate of relational aesthetics. We consider this all the more important in regards to Bourriaud's project since the different ways in which we approach the experience of social relations correspond to different ways of understanding society, and thereby to different ways of building a societal project.

We will first try to clarify the context and motivation of our study by specifying its position with regard to Bourriaud's pioneering 1998 essay, and explain why we think the question of experience matters. In the second section, we will focus on the notion of intersubjectivity and explain how, although it is a necessary moment in the phenomenological description of relational art, it seems to us that it induces a somewhat reductive understanding of social relationship by placing it in the realm of universalism. In the third section, we will explain why we consider that the scheme of Participatory Sense-Making –i.e., the enactive approach to social cognition– could provide a first step away from the normativity of the intersubjective scheme by drawing our attention toward the autonomy of the interaction process itself. In the fourth section, we will draw on the phenomenology of Emmanuel Levinas in order to question the ethical significance of the social encounter. For Levinas, such an experience implies a specific sensibility: a sensibility to otherness itself, so to speak. In our conclusions, we will formulate the idea that this sensibility might be the very material of relational art.

Since the question of embodiment is central for both phenomenology and for the enactive approach, it will be used as a prism to highlight the contrasts between those different approaches to the social relationship.

2. Relational Aesthetics and Experience

In Bourriaud's view, any work of art could be considered from the relational prism: as a catalyst and medium for social connection. A painting, a sculpture, or any kind of artwork creates relations. But Bourriaud more specifically points out a group of artists who, in the 90's, were *using social relationship itself as the material of their works*. For this reason, contemporary art historians sometimes consider "relational aesthetics" to be something like a movement in contemporary art, corresponding to a specific period: Rirkrit Tiravanija, Felix-Gonzales Torres, Philippe Parreno, Raoul Marek, etc., being among the main figures of that movement. In this contribution, we want to distance ourselves from this historical concern. It seems unquestionable to us that, within the diversity of arts, artist's interest in the question of social relations far predates Bourriaud's essay. And hopefully it will also postdate it. Therfore we only wish to keep the formal definition of relational art as being concerned with "[art forms] where the substrate is intersubjectivity" as a starting point . And, from there, question what exactly is understood by the concept of "intersubjectivity"; that is, question the very material of relational art.

In his essay, Bourriaud called upon the transformative value of art: "In our post-industrial societies," he writes, "the most pressing thing is no longer the emancipation of individuals, but the freeing-up of inter-human communications, the emancipation of the relational dimension of existence" (Bourriaud 1998, p. 60). More than twenty years after the publication of the essay, the question of the quality of our social relations is certainly still an important one. And it might still be true that art, or the arts, could play a role in the way we understand and create sociality. By drawing attention to some critical issues, by exploring innovative forms of social life, new ways of encountering the other, new ways of caring for the other and building society, art, whether blurred with life or not, could contribute to changing life. This is why we think relational aesthetics, in the sense of the study of the relational dimension of life as explored and realized in art, still matters. Let us now consider how a focus on the experiential dimension of sociality could contribute to this study.

What do we experience when we experience relational art ? We think we can distinguish two levels of experience : a) I can engage in a first person experience of the social relationship; but b) I can also experience the artwork from outside, that is from the distance of a third person perspective, as an observer. Of course, one could experience both viewpoints alternatively, but still, it would not be possible to confuse the two. Let us examine how those two different experiences are articulated.

The experience of engaging in person in the interaction, in the social relationship, could be considered as the authentic experience of the artwork, when staying outside could be considered to be a second hand experience of the artwork. When I am actively engaged in an artwork I somehow take part in its actualization. As a participant, I am part of it. As if it was not fully complete before. When I remain outside the interaction, as an observer, I see – that is, I experience – a system of social behavior. People, in front of me, are socially interacting. And their social interactions are the material the art piece is made of. But what could it mean phenomenologically –that is, not from a classical behaviorist point of view– *to see behavior*? We could phrase it this way; that, for the observer, a behavior has, like a coin, two undetachable sides: one side is the observable body moving as a thing, the other side is the experience that is manifested by the movements (we will come back to this in the next section with the notions of intersubjectivity and empathy). Observing a behavior implies some access to the experience of the behavioral entity, otherwise it would be reduced to solely mechanical movements. Therefore, experiencing a relational artwork as a spectator includes, through the double-sided structure of behavior, some understanding of the participants' experiences.

Behaviors are constrained and shaped by norms and structures: biological structures; material and technological structures, such as architecture and media; cultural structures, such as laws, language, social norms. Relational art makes and exhibits relational forms. By using

manageable norms, artists create a set of constraints and openings in which behaviors are to emerge. Examples might include a meal, a party, a game, etc. Ultimately, a relational artwork is a form, but a form that includes behaviors, that is a form inhabited by experience (it could be argued that this is not only true for relational art, but also for interactive installations).

In this sense, the first person experience of the subject who is directly engaged in the social interaction is indeed at the heart of relational art, for it is constitutive of what a social behavior is, that is to say, constitutive of the very material of relational art. This having been said, the spectators experience, from a viewpoint which remains outside the interaction and that grabs the whole system as a unity that includes the behaviors and the material and cultural system of constraints in which they emerge, is also essential to relational art, since without it there would be no artwork. This overhead view gives the art piece existance as a unity, as an object of the art world. And it is only thanks to this unifying grasp that a relational artwork can have political or societal impact: by showing how the social experience is shaped by material and cultural structures. Finally, both experiences – from the inside and outside– are necessary for relational art: the former as constitutive of the material the artwork is made of; the latter as the viewpoint from which a unity can be grasped as a work of art. In the next section, we will say more about this phenomenological structure through which the subject can access the experience of the other.

3. Intersubjectivity

In Husserlian phenomenology, *intersubjectivity* refers to (at least) two things: 1) the access to the experience of the other, also known as empathy (*einfühlung*), and, 2) reliant on this first step, the constitution of a shared world. Although Husserl's thoughts regarding how the subject accesses the experience of the other follow many meanders -from the empathy model developed in his *Cartesian Meditations* to the emphasis on the notion of flesh in *Ideas II*– we could argue that one central pattern in his approach to social experience is *commonality*.

In the Husserlian description, empathy relies on a mechanism of *introjection*, which could be summarized as follows (Husserl 1999). The subject is embodied. Her body is double sided: first it is a *leib*, living flesh, a body experienced from a first person perspective, as an engagement in possibilities, a body through which the world is constituted; and secondly, it is a körper, that is a material thing, an object in the world. The subject has an intimate understanding of this *leib/körper* articulation for she lives through it. When the subject sees another subject, she first perceives a thing that she identifies as a *körper* because it looks pretty much the same as her own *körper*. And because she has the intimate knowledge that a *körper* is necessarily intertwined with a *leib*, she *introjects* a subjectivity into the other. The other is an *alter ego*: she is another subject just like me. In the Husserlian approach to intersubjectivity, I access the other through the

commonality of our beings. Both of us are instances of a universal and transcendental structure of subjectivity. I constitute the other as another instance of this transcendental structure that unites us in a community: the community of subjects. The other is, like me, just a particular instance of humans in general. The other might differ from me through her properties, she might be the poor, a fool, etc. But those differences would be only deviations from the normative structure of subjectivity that universally defines *us*. If we were to apprehend relational aesthetics from the sole stance of Husserlian intersubjectivity, it would primarily be an aesthetic of universalism and reciprocity.

Switching from Husserl to Merleau-Ponty would not change much as it is again an ideal of commonality that Merleau-Ponty pursues (reformulating and radicalizing Husserl's views in an aesthesiological direction) with his notion of *intercorporeity* (Merleau-Ponty 2001). Indeed, the main idea behind this concept is a universal sharedness of the perceptive experience. Accessing, from my primary viewpoint, the other as another viewpoint, is the essential dynamic that leads to the constitution of a common and shared world. Not only the relationship between the subject and the other is to be said intersubjective. The world itself, as shared, is also to be described as intersubjective. In this sense, intersubjectivity is a precondition for science and politics.

And one could argue that it is often the case that art treats the members of an audience or the public as *just* a multiplicity of generic

subjects. Art approaches people in the same way as politics or science do: as a plurality of essentially interchangeable anonymous entities. As we have argued in the previous section, intersubjectivity as a way to access the other's experience is a necessary condition for relational art. None the less, it seems to us that approaching the social relationship only in terms of (Husserlian) intersubjectivity –a notion that posits the relation to the other as a relation between subjects, that is, a relation where the differences between the parties are abolished in favor of a normative transcendental structure– would limit our understanding of the relational experience, that is of the very material of relational art.

It will be our goal in the next two sections to consider alternative ways of understanding social relations: the first will focus on interaction dynamics as defined by *participatory sense-making*; the second will focus on the very *otherness of the other* as highlighted in the phenomenology of Emmanuel Levinas.

4. Participatory Sense-Making

The enactive approach of social cognition has provided innovative insights for understanding social interaction as a collective dynamic of sense-making. Where classical views of sociality are centered on the question of how an individual subject experiences the other and interacts with her, the Participatory Sense-Making (PSM) approach (De Jaegher and Di Paolo

2007) aims at stepping outside of the individualistic methodology to develop a systemic approach to the interaction process itself. Although this approach might not teach us anything about the first person experience of social encounters directly, it might help us distance ourselves from the classical subject-centered view. In this approach, the autonomy of the individual cognitive agent is none the less a pre-condition for the social interaction to make sense. As rooted in the enactive approach of cognition, PSM takes as a starting point the embodiment of cognition in autonomous experiencing organisms, who make sense of their *milieu* by engaging in sensori-motor sense-making interactions.

However, beyond the individualistic approach of cognition, the authors claim that when two (or more) agents meet, their individual sensori-motor dynamics entangle with one another, giving rise to an autonomous interaction level : like some kind of dance, a dance that is not directed by any individual agent but is the product of the interaction process itself. More precisely, PSM relies on the mutual influences of two sets of causalities:

- (individual) *interaction*, as the process through which the autonomous (cognitive) agent engages with its *milieu* in a sensori-motor loop in which actions influence sensations and sensations causes new actions.

- *coordination* that is the phenomenon observed whenever the dynamics of two (or more) systems sharing the same environment tend to

affect each other: for instance two pendulum clocks on a not too rigid wall would tend to synchronize (Huygens 1669).

In participatory sense-making the effects of (individual) interaction dynamics of the involved agents influence the conditions of coordination phenomena, and vice-versa, the coordination phenomenon affects the conditions of (individual) interactions. (Individual) interaction and coordination dynamics are bound in what system theorists call an *operational closure*. Although it relies on external conditions, this *operational closure* emerges and affirms itself as an autonomous dynamic system. Participatory sense-making emerges from the mutual attachment of individual enactive dynamics but then, as De Jaegher and Di Paolo put it: "interaction is not reducible to individual actions or intentions but installs a relational domain with its own properties that constrains and modulates individual behavior" (De Jaegher and Di Paolo 2007, p. 494). As relying on external conditions, the autonomy of the interactional level is also intrinsically unstable and precarious.

The relational domain transcends the level of individual cognition, and in particular, transcends individual will. The authors give an explicit example of this with the situation of two people walking toward each other in a narrow corridor: if there is not enough space for them to pass each other easily, they will engage in some kind of dance and it will take a little moment, during which their sensori-motor dynamics are entangled, before they succeed to actually cross their paths. This example nicely illustrates the

independence of the interaction level in regards to the individual sensori-motor dynamics which nonetheless support it.

Let us consider -as an illustration of how PSM could shed light on the interactional dynamics of participative art forms- the piece *The Gramsci Monument* by Thomas Hirschhorn, an artwork commissioned by Dia Art Foundation in 2013. The artist created the material conditions for a participative social dynamics to emerge, on the grounds of Forest Houses, a New York City Housing Authority development in the Bronx, New York. A whirlwind of activities such as philosophy workshops, art classes, discussion groups, collective meals, construction works, etc., took place during the few weeks of this participative event. It is interesting to observe how the artist, after initiating the dynamics, avoided a top/down position retreating to the position of a simple participant among others, in order to leave space for the autonomy of each participant. Indeed, as we mentioned before, embodied autonomy of individuals is a precondition for participatory sense-making to emerge. If relational art here exhibits a social form, it is a dynamic form, a dynamic of emergence, floating somehow in an unstable and precarious way over individualities. We believe that PSM provides a convincing explanatory framework for this kind of dynamic form that is at stake in relational art. It shows sociality as irreducible to a sum of individualities. It enlightens the very notion of participation by stressing the precariousness of the autonomous dynamics of sociality. And it does not constrain individual singularity under the hard frame of universalism.

Concerning the question of experience, we consider that the PSM approach does not yet provide a solid account of first person experience of sociality. Nevertheless, it invites us to avoid reducing social experience to the experience of accessing another's subjectivity. The social experience is, so to speak, the experience of sociality itself, that is an experience of taking part in a dynamic of emergence that transcends individual engagement, an experience of being incorporated in such a dynamic (Lenay and Sebbah 2015).

5. Otherness

PSM invited us to take a first step away from (husserlian) intersubjectivity and thereby gave us new perspectives for apprehending the form and the experience induced in relational art. In this last section, last but not least, we want to question the relational experience in the light of the phenomenology of Emmanuel Levinas.

In this section, we will take as an illustration the performance *Rhythm 0* by Marina Abramović, presented at Studio Morra (Naples, Italy) in 1974. During this performance, the artist was standing still for six hours while the audience was invited to do whatever they wanted with her body. Seventy two objects were provided for the interaction, including a rose, feather, a scalpel and a loaded gun. We consider that this performance offers a good example for Levinas' approach to the signification of the relation with the

other as it insists not on the understanding of the other's experience (empathy) nor on the emergence of a dynamically created meaning, but on the ethical asymmetry between an empowered subject and a vulnerable other.

Levinas criticizes classical phenomenological approaches (typically Husserlian or heideggerian phenomenologies) in that, according to him, they don't give justice to the ethical experience (Levinas 1990a; 1990b): that is an experience in which the other is not reduced to an object but respected in her very alterity. For Levinas, the other is not other because she carries different constituted properties, but because she exceeds the power of constitution. When encountering objects in the dynamics of constitution, the subject dominates exteriority as she incarnates the absolute and orignary locus of meaning. But encountering the other *as other* is precisely for the subject to loose her spontaneous and, so far, unquestioned primacy over her world. The body of the other expresses a signification not reducible to that which can be reached through constitution: it calls for care, for *ethics*. The levinassian notion of *face* precisely points towards this peculiar experience of excess.

Let us refer to the paradigmatic situation of murder. For Levinas, the other is revealed as that which can be harmed or murdered, and at the same time, that which resists the possibility of murder. The command "Thou shalt not kill" is not an abstract rule that the subject might apply in a given situation. This command reveals through the very experience of

encountering the other – the revelation of this command is the very signification of this experience. The *face* of the other, through its very vulnerability, its nakedness resists the powers of the subject. The resistance of the *face* to murder is not like the opposition of a physical force: it is an ethical resistance. The alterity of the *face* introduces a new dimension of signification to the world, that is, in Levinas words, *ethics*.

Staying motionless in front of her audience, Marina Abramović is offering the possibility to treat her as a thing, as an object. She is offering the possibility of murder. But at the same time, her very presence as a person reveals a resistance against murder. And, this resistance is felt, endured, suffered by the subjects in the audience, because they are ethical subjects. With Levinas, there is something like an embodied ethical sensibility, an embodied sensibility to the presence of the other.

Let us insist on this point : ethics is not a conceptual concern but a sensitive and embodied matter. Otherness is felt in an embodied way, as a resistance, as a weight. The *proximity* of the other is suffered by the subject in her very flesh, as an embodied contestation of the egoic enjoyment of being, as a resistance against the free deployment of power. Levinas invites us to consider a specific sensibility to otherness, and thereby, an aesthetic of the proximity of the other, an aesthetic of the ethical resistance.

For the sake of explanation, we have referred here to the extreme and dramatic situation of murder. But, for Levinas, the ethical approach of subjectivity applies in everyday situations, in every genuine form of care:

like holding the door for the other for instance (so there would be room here for something like a Levinasian *everyday relational aesthetics*). Moreover, the Levinasian approach to sociality as contact with otherness is not restricted to ethics, but it also reveals through the traits of desire. Levinas provides insights that enable an approach to experiences like *eros*, love, parenthood, etc. That is all those experiences whose phenomenological description relies on a radical asymmetry between the subject and the other.

As we have seen, in Levinas' approach, the relational experience is not one of meeting the other as an alter ego, just like oneself, nor an experience of being caught up in a transcendent social dynamic, but rather the experience of encountering the other as the one I am responsible for, or the one I desire.

6. Conclusion

It has not been our goal here to give a new definition of relational art *as art*, or of art *as relational*. Our goal has been to explore the very "material" this type of art is made of. Through this exploration it appeared to us that, although necessary, the scheme of intersubjectivity was not sufficient to adequately seize the forms and experiences induced by relational art. To overcome these limitations, the PSM approach offered new insights regarding autonomous and emergent forms of sociality, and also concerning the experience of participation. More radically, the phenomenology of

otherness of Emmanuel Levinas led us to consider a specific sensibility to the other's presence, calling for an aesthetic of proximity of the other. In this view, relational art is not only defined by an egalitarian togetherness, but its very "flesh" is *proximity*, that is, responsibility for the other and desire. This primordial sensibility for otherness is possibly the very material societies are made of.

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The Force(s) of Poetry

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ABSTRACT. In the 20th century, philosophy of language and aesthetics seem to have agreed on one point, namely that of placing poetry away from the centre of attention. In philosophy of language, poetic utterances have been considered 'deviant' or 'non-serious'. In aesthetics, attention has turned towards visual arts, music, or literature (mainly in the sense of the novel), thus leaving poetry as a rather peripheral subtopic. This leaving aside of poetry has led to considering it without force, and this at various levels. Two examples: for Austin, poetic statements are without any performative force and, for Sartre, poetry must be distinguished from literature, the latter having a political force and the former not. In my paper, I aim at reinstating the force of poetry by showing it has a linguistic, philosophical, and even political force (and this as much as the novel). Against the idea that literature (as novel) can teach us facts about the world, I argue that literature (as poetry) teaches us a different way of seeing the world and that its force resides precisely in its capacity to bring us (or force us, perhaps) to see things differently. In this sense, poetry is not only doing something with language, by also doing something to language. To rephrase Austin's famous title, and thus reverse his evaluation of poetry, poetry might not reveal us *How to Do Things with Words*, but how to do things *to* words.

I therefore have to say that the poem does something. It does something to language, and to poetry. It does something to the subject. To the subject who writes it, to

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the subject who reads it. (Meschonnic 2006, 43)[2]

This paper explores the force(s) of poetry and how they affect language and our being in the world. I argue that contemporary aesthetics has somehow missed the creative, transformative, and even revolutionary forces that take part in the poetic process. As Meschonnic argues, 'the poem does something.' To understand what the poem does and how it does it, I briefly argue against views which consider poetry forceless, be it linguistically or politically, by discussing Austin and Sartre in the first section. This forcelessness is the result of a certain conception of language and, in the second section, I explore how the concept of force can be brought back in language and art by focusing on Nietzsche and Menke. The relations between linguistic, artistic, and political forces that arise from this exploration lead me, in the third section, to analyse how the transformative force of poetry can be considered political in the works of Meschonnic and Kristeva. Poetry is not only doing something with language, by also doing something to language. To rephrase Austin's famous book, and thus reverse his evaluation of poetry, poetry might not reveal us *How to Do Things with Words*, but how to do things *to* words. The force of poetry is not primarily political, but it becomes political insofar as its force modifies language and, through this modification of language, our ways of being in the world.

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[2] My translation throughout: 'Je suis donc obligé de dire que le poème fait quelque chose. Il fait quelque chose au langage, et à la poésie. Il fait quelque chose au sujet. Au sujet qui le compose, au sujet qui le lit.'

1. The Forcelessness of Poetry

Despite its attempt to systematically analyse the specificities of each and every artform, contemporary aesthetics seems to have surprisingly left poetry aside. From being the paragon of the arts in 18th and 19th century philosophy, poetry in the contemporary world seems to have lost most, if not all, of its philosophical force. Even Plato, who is famous for being rather unkind to poetry, nevertheless admits that poetry has a particular force, one he is afraid of, and his unkindness reveals his fear of poetry more than an indifference towards it. [3]

How can one explain such a change of attitude towards poetry? One of the main reasons for this shift can be found in one of the founding aspects of analytic philosophy: the 'linguistic turn'. If, following this turn, philosophy is a matter of language and solving problems of language, poetry seems to be of no help at all to philosophy of language, be it as 'ideal language philosophy' or 'ordinary language philosophy', the two types of philosophy of language Rorty considers in editing *The Linguistic Turn*. (Rorty 1967, 15) If poetry is a problem for the former, as it presents a form of language which cannot be translated into formal logic and therefore not be given any truth-

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[3] At the beginning of his introduction to *The Philosophy of Poetry*, John Gibson paints a similar picture of the place of poetry in the contemporary aesthetic scene: 'Indeed, until very recently one could fairly say that poetry is the last great unexplored frontier in contemporary analytic aesthetics, an ancient and central art we have managed to overlook more or less entirely.' (Gibson 2015, 1)

value, the latter also shows no interest in it, as Austin suggest that performative utterances in a poem, are '*in a peculiar way* hollow or void.' (Austin 1975, 22) Inasmuch as Austin deprives poetry from any performative force, contemporary aesthetics strips poetry from its philosophical force. Failure for philosophy of language to give a substantial account of the language of poetry might have contaminated the realm of aesthetics and incited philosophers to look at artforms other than poetry, more easily approachable with these new philosophical tools. The great interest in literature and the problem of truth in fiction as well as the distinction between fiction and non-fiction can be seen as a consequence of the 'linguistic turn': philosophers have started looking into aesthetic problems for which philosophy of language could be of use, rather than artforms which are problematic to philosophy of language.

If this account gives a schematic picture of the place of poetry in analytic aesthetics, one might think poetry fares better on the other side of the so-called 'analytic-continental divide.' At first glance, some continental philosophers like Heidegger seem to pursue the 19th century romantic praise of poetry. However, if one takes a closer look, a shift in attitude similar to that of analytic aesthetics seems to occur in continental philosophy. Although it is not a mark of indifference towards poetry, Sartre's theory of literature operates a similar shift from poetry to literature, from the poem to the novel. He defines literature in terms of political commitment and denies

such commitment to poetry.[4] For Sartre, the greatness of literature is proportional to its political force and he denies such a force to poetry. This does not mean that Sartre denies any greatness to poetry, but one which might be of another kind than the novel, and one certainly not of help to any concern in the actual world.

One of the possible reasons for this shift is an inversion of value between literature and poetry. Whereas poetry was literature (or the highest literary form) for 18th and 19th century philosophers, the 20th century marks the rise of the novel and poetry becomes a subcategory of literature.[5] This shift does however not explain the philosophers' indifference towards poetry and why they have stripped it from its force. In my paper, I aim at reinstating the force of poetry by showing that it has a linguistic, philosophical, and even political force (and this as much as the novel). Against the idea that literature (as novel) can teach us facts about the world, I argue that literature (as poetry) teaches us a different way of seeing the world and that its force resides precisely in its capacity to bring us (or force us, perhaps) to see things differently. As Wittgenstein suggests in *Culture*

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[4] 'How can one hope to provoke the indignation or the political enthusiasm of the reader when the very thing one does is to withdraw him from the human condition and invite him to consider with the eyes of God a language that has been turned inside out?' (Sartre 1988, 34)

[5] It can be argued that the rise of the novel begins in the 19th century already but, in terms of defining literature, the Romantic tradition which considers poetry as the overarching concept for literary productions remains strong throughout the whole century. In that sense, Heidegger is still very much influenced by the romantic tradition, whereas other continental philosophers like Adorno move away from it.

and Value: 'The work of art compels us to see it in the <u>right</u> perspective.' (Wittgenstein 1998, 7) More than seeing the work of art itself in the right perspective, it compels us to see the world in the right perspective, in a perspective which makes sense.

2. Nietzsche, Menke, and the Notion of Force

As long as we remain within the Austinian (and the philosopher of language) framework in which poetic statements are considered forceless, there is no way for the poet to affect the ordinary world. The first step towards making poetry relevant again for social and political concerns is to give its force back to poetic language.[6] Nietzsche's views offer useful insights in how force operates within language, and therefore how force can operate within poetic language.

Claudia Crawford's reading of Nietzsche's theory of language provides an ideal starting point to explore the notion of force in Nietzsche's views on language:

> […] Nietzsche begins to lay more stress on the power which each individual instance of language production exerts as an instance of

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[6] In a sense, postulating the distinction between ordinary and poetic language as philosophy of language has traditionally done is already a way of placing a hierarchy. This is precisely the remark Derrida makes in discussing Austin's theory of language in 'Signature, Event, Context' (Derrida 1988) and Searle's reply to it misses this point.

> *value and action*. […] Language becomes a dynamic instance of
> interpretation and valuing, not in a critical sense of a subject who
> interprets values and then speaks or writes about those interpretations,
> but in a creative sense where the speaking or writing itself *is* the new
> value force embodied. (Crawford 1988, xiii)

This characterisation of Nietzsche's conception of language is Austinian in
the sense that language is equated with action. If each instance of language
is 'an instance of value and action', each instance could be considered a
performative. Against Austin's limitation of performativity to a certain class
of verbs, Nietzsche's views on language consider every instance of language
to be performative.

This broadening of the scope of the performative to all speech acts
establishes a connection between language and power. In a parenthesis from
On the Genealogy of Morality[7], Nietzsche makes this connection explicit:

> (The seigneurial privilege of giving names even allows us to conceive
> of the origin of language itself as a manifestation of the power of the
> rulers: they say 'this *is* so and so', they set their seal on everything and
> every occurrence with a sound and thereby take possession of it, as it
> were). (*GM* I, 2)

The relation between language and power lies in the fact that naming is an

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[7] Nietzsche 2006, hereafter *GM*.

act of power. Language does not only mirror the world in a neutral way but crafts it according to those who give names, to those with power. Two conceptions of language are opposed to one another: a 'representational' one in which language mirrors the world and an 'expressive' one which considers that language takes part in shaping the world. Charles Taylor considers the expressive tradition to originate in the 'HHH view' with the works of Herder, Hamann, and Humboldt. Such a view 'allows us to identify a constitutive dimension, a way in which language does not only represent, but enters into some of the realities it is "about."' (Taylor 1985, 273) In *GM*, Nietzsche considers that the keys to shaping the world has been given to the rulers but, in his earlier works, he suggests something quite different.

In *The Gay Science*[8], Nietzsche suggests that those who give names—and hence those with power—are those with originality as they can see what has not yet been named: 'What is originality? *To see* something that has no name as yet and hence cannot be mentioned although it stares us all in the face.' (*GS* 261) This notion of originality brings us back to the realm of art and poetry. Reading this aphorism with *GM* in mind suggests that those who have power are not the rulers but the artists, those with power are those with originality.

As a shaping of the world, originality is a poetic force in the etymological sense of *poiesis*. It is a making of the world which is also, at

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[8] Nietzsche 1974, hereafter *GS*.

the same time, an unmaking:

> We can destroy only as creators.—But let us not forget this either: it is
> enough to create new names and estimations and probabilities in order
> to create in the long run new 'things.' (*GS* 58)

The force of artists, and poets especially as they are primarily concerned with language, lies in their capacity to create new words and hence new things. The poetic force is a destructive-creative force which alters the world we live in.

Following Nietzsche, Christoph Menke also considers art to have a force. He suggests that 'there is no aesthetic making without the action of "unconscious forces" (Herder). This action is play: the connection and disconnection and the new connection and again disconnection of images in the acts of imagination.[9] (Menke 2013, 67) The play of forces connects and disconnects (in Nietzsche's terms: creates and destroys) images. In poetry, such images are words and the poets are those who connect and disconnect words, not only between one another, as in a sentence or spatially on the page, but also between language and the world, thus shaping the world with words, as Nietzsche says: 'Those with originality have for the most part also assigned names.' (*GS* 261)

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[9] My translation throughout: 'denn es gibt kein ästhetisches Machen ohne das Wirken "unbewußter Kräfte" (Herder). Dieses Wirken is Spiel: das Verbinden und Lösen und Neuverbinden und Wiederauflösen von Bildern in Akten der Einbildung.'

Originality is a poetic force that shapes the world by shaping the words. Menke considers this force to be opposed to capacity, in the same sense that 'expressive' language is opposed to 'representational' language: one is creative and the other passive.

> *Capacity* makes us subjects who successfully take part in social practices, insofar as they reproduce their general form. In the play of *forces,* we are pre- and over-subjective agents who are no subjects; active, without consciousness; inventive, without aim.[10] (Menke 2013, 13)

If the play of forces is creative, it also creates the agent. The poet is not subject to language, she exists even before this first determination. In poetics, the unconscious always plays a role, not in the sense that the originality or genius of the poet lies within what Freud calls the unconscious, but because 'the world of which we can become conscious is only,' as Nietzsche argues, 'a surface- and sign-world, a world that is made common and meaner.' (*GS* 354) The poet's play with the unconscious is therefore a broadening of the scope of language and hence an expansion of the world.

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[10] '*Vermögen* machen uns zu Subjekten, die erfolgreich an sozialen Praktiken teilnehmen können, indem sie deren allgemeine Form reproduzieren. Im Spiel der *Kräfte* sind wir vor- und übersubjektiv—Agenten, die keine Subjekte sind; aktiv, ohne Selbstbewusstsein; erfinderisch, ohne Zweck.'

3. The force(s) of Poetry

We have seen that Nietzsche's views of language bring force back into poetic language, and that Menke's conception of art brings to the fore the idea that art is a play of creative and destructive forces. In this play, the poet is a pre- and over-subjective agent who does not operate on the world of consciousness, but on that of the preconscious. This notion of 'subject' is at the heart of Meschonnic's and Kristeva's conceptions of poetry and both of them reveal the importance of the transformative force(s) of poetry: transformation of language, of the subject, of society.

Poetry does not leave the subject (as reader or writer) unchanged as she undergoes a transformative process due to a transformation of language. As Meschonnic clearly states: 'there is a poem only if a form of life transforms a form of language and if reciprocally a form of language transforms a form of life.'[11] (Meschonnic 2006, 292) This double transformation of a form of life and a form of language—both being intimately related to one another—is precisely where the force of poetry operates. Because of this transformation of her form of life, the reader or writer cannot maintain the same attitude within and towards her surrounding world. In taking poetry seriously (unlike Austin's rejection of poetic utterances in the realm of the 'non-serious'), she must accept this

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[11] 'il y a un poème seulement si une forme de vie transforme une forme de langage et si réciproquement une forme de langage transforme une forme de vie.'

transformation of her form of life.

Against the views which argue that poetry is remote from the everyday politicised world—and hence remote from ordinary life— Meschonnic considers poetry and life to be intimately bound to one another. The poem must therefore not be understood in terms of work, i.e. in an essentialist way, but in terms of activity. The poem as a work of art is a working at changing the world. Against the idea that poems have a truth, Meschonnic argues that they have an activity, an effect, a force. Thinking about poetry is not something which concerns only small details of our lives. Quite to the contrary according to Meschonnic as 'to think the poem, one must rethink the whole of language, and the whole relation between language, art, ethics, and politics.'[12] (Meschonnic 2006, 256) Insofar as poetry transform our form of language and our form of life, it has an ethical and political impact. For Meschonnic, thinking poetry requires rethinking language and, through this reconceptualisation of language (from a representational to an expressive framework, as we have seen), rethinking our being in the world. If our ways of being in the world are dependent on our language, i.e. if our form of life is dependent on our form of language, and if a conception of language must account for poetry—because one can hardly argue that poetry is not related to language—we must modify our conceptions of language which fail to account for poetry and by changing

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[12] 'C'est pourquoi, pour penser la poésie, le poème, il y a à repenser tout le langage, et tout le rapport entre le langage, l'art, l'éthique et le politique.'

those, change our ways of being in the world. It is in this sense that poetry has political, ethical, and foremost existential dimensions.

In a different way, Kristeva agues for something similar. According to her, there is a revolution of poetic language, i.e. poetic language affects our ordinary politicised world and transforms it. A revolution of poetic language is not only a *Revolution in Poetic Language* as the translator suggests: it is not only a changing in the way poetry is written at the end of the 19th century (although it is an important aspect of Kristeva's book), but it is also a revolution from poetic language. Poetry affects language in such ways that our conceptions of language—and thereby our conceptions of the world—cannot remain unchanged.

In order to conceptualise what is at play in poetry, Kristeva elaborates the notion of practice and, as we have seen with Meschonnic, a poem is not a work but a working, an activity, a practice: 'The text thereby attains its essential dimension: it is a *practice* calling into question (symbolic and social) *finitudes* by proposing *new signifying devices.*' (Kristeva 1984, 210) The notion of text that Kristeva substitutes to that of poem broadens the scope of what poetry is and can do. Shifting from poem to text undercuts all formal definitions of poetry and moves towards the notion of practice. This practice is, according to Kristeva, a critical one as it questions finitudes, i.e. established symbolic and social aspects. This criticism is however only one side of the practice as, following Nietzsche's idea that we can destroy only as creators, the criticism of finitudes occurs only through the 'proposing [of]

new signifying devices.' The text therefore becomes a signifying practice in which the subject comes to living language in a creative way. It is in this sense that poetry is a revolutionary force: it proposes new signifying practices which replace the old ways of thinking.

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"How food can be art?"
Eating as an aesthetic practice.
A research proposal

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ABSTRACT. After the blooming of cooking as art and food as an artistic medium, we have to find the reasons that justify the inclusion of taste within the aesthetic dimension. By using traditional art theory with respect to the gustative question, we are probably assuming that an aesthetic experience is taking place through non-metaphorical taste. An approach based on the gesture of eating could be both a richer way for the aesthetic thought and a more accurate procedure for reflection on food practices. It situates the eating body at its centre and defines art as an emerging condition. As key points for further research, we find the eater as a living creature, the body as a cavity, the transformation of matter, the sensitive body and its plasticity and the passive temporality.[2]

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1. Once Again… Is This Art?

Over recent years, we have witnessed the blooming of cooking as art and food as an artistic medium. Enumerating the artists who have worked with food and their motivations for doing so, or justifying the introduction of cooking in the art world has become unnecessary. In the end, aren't we facing a paradox, when we agree that "art is over" and, at the same time, we extend its concept to the edible? In one of his first articles about the end of art, Danto himself mentions gastronomy as one of the examples of "happiness", which will arrive in the post-historic period (1984: 54). According to his point of view, as I understand it, given that anything can be art, there is no need to strive too hard in order to define a practice as art. Art has freed itself from the quest of its own concept. The same occurs with any practice, which could be lived as art (let's say as an aesthetic form) without suffering a challenging discussion with the tradition of Art and, at the same time, without having to deny or exceed any previous practices with its discourse.

Nevertheless, assuming that everything could be art and, going further still, that everyone can be an artist, theorists still have to find the reasons behind the current inclusion of taste within the aesthetic dimension. The hierarchy of the senses has been one of the first and main issues dealt with since the beginnings of gustatory aesthetics (see Carolyn Korsmeyer or Michel Onfray) til the ongoing research, which tries to connect sensitive and

conceptual thought.[3] The position can be summarized as follows: tradition has avoided taste in any theoretical discussion, mainly due to its relation to the body and its compulsory trespass of the subject-object distinction, among other reasons. After an important philosophical shift with respect to the body's significance, minor senses (taste and smell) can be reconsidered for philosophical work. Their features can be play a fundamental role in discussions which previously were considered only in relation to visual and auditory practices. Going back to Danto, we have to admit that "the indiscernibles" were visual and objectual; thus, they are linked to a very specific art tradition that takes into account only some aesthetic conditions. "Food as art" or "food for thought" could become the impulse for an expansion in the aesthetic inquiry.

Not looking for criteria at all, we still have to work on the question of how the edible can be art. Even if we don't connect art to an end (neither its end in history), we usually agree that it has a sort of function (linguistic, sociological, emphatic). We cannot define it, yet we usually assume it. In other words, we do know there is something within a work of art that radiates outward: there is a push, a re-consideration or even a nascent point

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[3] Having considered art through the crystal of language, recent research attempts to account for the creation of meaning through the body (see Thompson, 2007, 2019), a way of special use for gustatory aesthetics. Now, to what extent will the body and, especially its brain and neurons explain the meanings of taste (see Shepherd, 2012)? The concept of "the gesture of eating", which will be explained below, seeks to draw bridges between sensation and language (see Bocos, 2016: 15-28).

of view, which can open up unexpected territories. The question I want to propose is how the edible or the gustative can be such a catalyst.

2. The Insufficiency of Theory

Practices involved with food have been a fundamental part of all cultures. From an anthropological point of view, an aesthetical dimension for eating is a primary reason in order to explain the particular development of cooking in time and space. *What* and *how* we eat are material phenomena, but it is a conceptual register that goes beyond hunger and accessibility which accounts for the many efforts humanity has taken to define the edible, to present it in certain ways, to relate it with a precise occasion, to envelop it with rituals, myths...and so on. Its current definition as art could be understood as the recognition of the practice itself as a conceptual practice, which medium had been used for embodying discourses from religious, political and other normative spheres and now released to its own purpose. Chefs have been the most accurate in pointing out what its purpose could be. In fact, we can consider their work as a research on it. As an example, consider what Ferran Adrià noted as one of the most astonishing proposals: Mibu's strawberry (Japan). The elaboration consists of a strawberry served with its red and sweet part on one side, and the white and acid on the other[4].

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[4] For a quick reading, https://www.gq.com/story/ferran-adria-5-best-meals. Consulted January 13, 2019.

The interest here lies in the possibility of distinguishing the taste of a strawberry in its different modes while eating, calling to mind Hume's explanation about how taste (in both a metaphorical and literal sense) is about perceiving details (1757).

As chefs explore a gustative explanation on language and try to characterize its features, modern cuisine can in many aspects be understood as modern art. Furthermore, thanks to the rise of the chef as an author, and his elaborations as *oeuvre*, we can reconsider past culinary expressions as art and promote the conceptual transmigration from ethnographic studies to the history of art in food medium, too. Food critics could point to and describe the aesthetic dimensions of every well-known elaboration. By doing so, they would help include sensorial aspects within philosophical discussion. There are some attempts in this sense, which basically follow wine critics' consideration on qualities and its long history on tasting and evaluation of wine. However, there are still few comments about how any gustative quality such as spicy, hot, fresh, crunchy, vanilla fragrance or greasy are the channels for an ever-evolving thought. Isolated qualities will indeed not cross the dense path to the understanding of how the gustative can be perceived as art. Despite the efforts of sommeliers to focus on nuanced fragrances and tastes, to adopt a standardized vocabulary and to understand it on the basis of a cause-effect relationship with the vineyard,[5]

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[5] One of the issues that the world of wines offers as a matter of study to gustatory aesthetics is the understanding of taste/flavour in terms of causality ("from the vineyard to

the *terroir* and wine making techniques, none of this information they will certainly help understand an aesthetic experience – a question that would takes us back again to the eternal discussion of whether or not knowledge and information are indispensable for the appreciation of art.

The need for reflection on gastronomy could be approached from an art theorist's perspective. There are many levels we could consider. To begin with, we could think of the "art world" as a "best restaurant world", and make a blueprint of its dynamics until we could explain how a raw strawberry on a dish is art in a restaurant and not at home. The restaurant itself could be understood as the machinery for art: linking its origins to the gallery's appearance in Diderot's time, we could pay attention to its democratic meaning in the context and ask for its effects in the current social and urban fabric.[6] Examples such as *El Internacional*, run in the eighties by the Antoni Miralda and Montse Guillén, go further and place the restaurant as a space for art to happen. Their strategy was to present Spanish food, along with its cultural, anthropological and religious background, in New York. Customers got involved in both routine and novel gestures, such as drinking wine with a *porrón*. It was not only about food, but also about

the glass"). From this perspective, qualities are wine's qualities and not qualities of its tasting. Thus, a concrete position on the process of knowing is defended. Thanks to concepts such as "saboer", the action of eating seems to be able to argue its arguments (see Moraza, 2009).

[6] Recent projects work in this direction, see as an example the *Dreijahre Dining Room Project*: Bonino, P., "For a Good Time. *Dilettantin produktionsbüro:* Transitory Spaces of Art Production, Presentation and Distribution" in van der Meulen, N. And Jörg Wiesel, 2017: 189-206; and Bippus et al., 2012.

the *atmosphere* that enveloped it.[7] We could sum it up by explaining that the atmosphere is created mainly by the architecture and the design, its relationship with the past and the present, the alteration of the communication system, as well as the continuum of actions, happenings, performances –even the unplanned, spontaneous ones... Through these elements, we could introduce many art theory concepts to the restaurant and extend preceding definitions of art to the edible. Would any of them, however, account for its specificity? How does a gustative approach grasp a symbolic and conceptual theory? Does it necessarily use an external apparatus (such as the atmosphere) for doing so?

Most of the reflection on gustation has dedicated its efforts to connecting it to a tradition of so called Art (there are many books whose narrative goes from still life to chefs), and this has also been the museums' strategy for including degustation in its rooms. Explaining its nexus with the already known, gustative thought has found reasons why food can be understood as art. One possibility has been the borrowing concepts from other fields within art theory, as in the case where some dishes are called "minimalism" or chefs that classify themselves as being "postmodern". Another frequent option has been the alliance to certain definitions of art, which take into consideration actions, bodies, and relations… In this

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[7] The atmosphere was one of the ten ingredients commented on *El Internacional* newspaper. The definition they offered said: "The Atmosphere: An architectural and cultural wonder dedicated to yesterday's charm and tomorrow's convenience" (Miralda and Guillén, 2016: 23).

respect, we cannot forget how relational art was described mainly by Tiravanija's action of eating together in a gallery. Even so, from a theoretical point of view, we can agree that gustative particularities *per se* are not taken into consideration. By using traditional art theory on the gustative question, we are assuming that the aesthetic experience is taking place within the sense of taste.

The history of the word "taste" may show some kind of connection, that we can trace at least to the times of Hume, Voltaire and Kant (Jaques, 2014: 63). This archaeology shows, nevertheless, that the sense of taste may be out of the so-called metaphorical taste, or at least that its reasons are still to be found. There is no doubt that this is a broad issue. While bringing to the discussion the reasons why a mouthful (in its specific context) can be considered as an artistic experience, we are taking part of a definition of art, in a way that may involve the acceptance and the denial of the philosophy of art's corpus and its most representative theoretical problems. At this point, I wonder: in order to talk about taste's aesthetic dimension, do we need to step back to such discussions about art? Or are we instead intending to refresh them, giving them a new opportunity to engage in the conversation?

3. The Gesture of Eating

Taking into consideration Mibu's strawberry again, I will try to point out what I consider to be a more satisfactory way of addressing how the edible

could be art. By satisfactory, I mean both a fertile way for an aesthetic thought and an accurate procedure for reflection on food practices. For doing this, we will need to shift the question from art's definition and aims to a more humble understanding of the sensorial, which I have been calling "aesthetic dimension". Due to the historical meaning of the first, and its vindicated *non plus ultra* capacity in terms of a conceptual discussion, a lower and more extended ground seems to be needed in order to address our concern. At this point, I would like to follow Gerard Vilar's conclusions about the art as a must for human beings:

> I believe, anyway, that art is a need because it is one of the most fundamental ways we have to think the world and transform it. The need for art surely has its anchorage in the learning process in which we got ourselves as a species many tens of thousands of years ago. I am referring to the learning process in symbolization and communication of all kinds of conceptual and emotional content (Vilar, 2010:18).

Certainly, we need to step back to the human being as such, a perceiving, acting, living creature (Dewey), in order to admit ingestion as an aesthetic practice. Doubtlessly, we can imagine eating and cooking practices being part of the growing complexity in symbolization and communication. Just consider smoke and the incredible symbolical power of being able to control

and produce fire[8] or the intense conceptualization that storage introduced in society. Both social phenomena stand beside gustative exploration and definition, that is, gustative thought and gustative transformation of the world around. We could understand food as art when cooking and eating look for something beyond the known, when they offer novel perspectives that open up new meanings, which point further. Obviously, there is a historicity of what we can consider art, since artistic discoveries become part of culture (e.g. culinary foam).

As with many current elaborations, Mibu's strawberry points to this expansion of the possible on taste's aesthetic dimension. Somehow, Hiroshi Ishida's approach pushes our edible concepts further: it makes us consider the edible in a particular and novel way that can open new horizons. Thanks to the chef's proposal, we cannot simply describe the taste of the strawberry, but consider that, while eating, we are building the conception of taste as such. By the decision of how to mix, modulate and incorporate its different nuances into experience, the eater gives form to the conceptual taste *through* the strawberry and not simply due to it. Ishida is recognized for its Zen consideration on the practice of cooking. I shall not extend myself on this point, but I would like to bring to the discussion the fact that the Zen priest Dogen (XIII century) not only wrote about how to cook (considering it one of the main lessons on the practice of *zazen* he received in China), but also

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[8] At this respect, I profoundly recommend the film *Quest for fire*, directed by Jean-Jacques Annaud (1981).

about how to eat.[9] Undoubtedly, behavior within the community is the chief issue here, but this is an aspect consistent with the fact that "food is dharma", that is to say, a way to enlightenment. I am not capable of doing a profound or significant reading on the importance of practice in Buddhist philosophy. My focus aims to take care of another side, that is, the possibility of eating as a medium for achieving conceptual, philosophical even religious enlightenment.

As I have written somewhere else (Bocos, 2016), we shall consider the practice of eating as a gesture by which meaning emerges in our body at the same time as it emerges in the field to which the body is a center. The gesture makes every perception or construction conditional to itself and establishes the positions upon which the whole device is defined. If something edible opens a door to a never-ending conceptual exploration, we shall delineate that door in our gesture of eating, being our body, its active actions and its passive reactions the fundamental medium for the aperture to happen. I do not mean that the body requires only itself to look for a breakthrough into a wider reality, nor claim that an aesthetic attitude is a prior condition to appreciate the edible as aesthetical. What I consider a matter of further research is the fact that a sensibility profoundly rooted to our body as living –and, therefore, voracious creature– it is also the starting point for a conceptualization in which we frame the edible as such and the

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[9] "Fushukuhanpo" included on Dogen, 1996: c.1227-1247. I thank professor David Casacuberta for its help on Buddhism philosophical understanding and his generosity on gustative thoughts and precious examples.

world as having gustative features. We also draw the real and its imageries through our tongue. As the child described by Hegel, who enjoys its capacity to transform the surface of the water by throwing stones on it,[10] we reflect ourselves on what we taste and drool on the world in the quest for our own taste. The possibility of a theory on eating that follows this path goes beyond the conditions in which degustation takes place or the qualities we can perceive and describe: it opens an unattainable space of desire (never to reach), of encounter (attendance of the other), of sensitive reflection (taste as reflected and reflective). Now, we can understand food as art not because it expresses or shows, but because it makes our own image of tasting and, therefore, because it implies a practical thought about our tasting in its context. Gustative particularities emerge in the discussion since our body relates to them in a specific way.

4. Drawing the Diner Figure

For further research on this topic, which I would title "Eating as an Aesthetic Practice",[11] I propose five key points to take into account and to reconsider alongside the aesthetic tradition:

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[10] "Already the first impulse of the child carries in itself this practical transformation of external things; the boy who throws stones in the river marvels at the circles that form in the water, like a work in which he gains the intuition of his own " cited in Vilar, 2009: 63.

[11] These key points are research subjects of "Eating: from sensation to language", PhD research at the UAB. FPI 2016 – MINECO FFI2015-64138-P: The generation of

1. The aesthetic subject is a living creature, being the aesthetic dimension one of the main tools it has in order to recognize reality and make decisions on it for its own benefit. We certainly can consider art as one kind of higher experience but, as Dewey pointed out, for better comprehension we cannot separate art into an autonomous sphere, but consider it just as the tip of an iceberg. Reducing aesthetic qualities to what "we can see above the sea" means to ignore that its power lies below. In this respect, gustatory aesthetics may have to once again re-examine the kantian disinterest and its translation on hunger, since hunger and appetite are not pre-conceptual definitions of the edible, but bodily conditions of ingestion.

2. The body is *passible* to matter in a gustative way; in other words, it is affected by the materiality in a gustative order. We can consider being *passible* as being affected by that which is not broken down, analyzed or expected (Lyotard, 1988: 113). This aspect is totally involved with knowledge and, more specifically, with the kind of knowledge that the aesthetic experience provides: non conceptual or, better said, beyond the conception. At the same time, the body produces effects on what affects it: just consider that every time we taste something we also taste our saliva. We could describe the way the body affects and is affected as *plastic*. Within the framework of a set of interactions of reciprocal affectation, the plasticity is the capacity of shaping and formation that accounts for the material

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knowledge in artistic research: towards an alternative explanation. A meeting point between philosophy, art and design.

resistance and, at the same time, for its transformation (Malabou, 2010: 87-89). Here, we have to consider not only what we eat as a material, but also what we are, and, to sum it up, the *states* we reach while eating as a material condition.

3. Ingestion is the opening (of the mouth) to the materiality of the body. It withdraws an internal silhouette – the ingestion process – only comparable to respiration. So, eating not only describes our position and action (gesture) in the world, but also the cavity that we are, a cavity that we can consider also ontological[12]: the cavity of being always forming, needing matter, or in other words, the cavity by which we activate and give form to our *indigent freedom* (Jonas, 1994: 123).

4. Far from considering food as and object (we do not eat objects), we need to redefine the importance of matter in aesthetical thought, considering it as *a matter of acts* – that is to say not a representation, nor a lattice on which to place concepts, but irreducible sensation (Deleuze, 1981: 5). On the one hand, matter shall be understood in its process of dissolution, admitting every appearing feature as a quality. Following the research on material technology applied to the edible, matter matters since we see and touch it, until the aftertaste it creates with every new mouthful (Rosenthal, 2001). On the other hand, dissolution must not be understood as dematerialization: the edible includes a wide range of changes of scale that

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[12] For an ontological consideration of eating, see Mellamphy, Dan and Nandita Biswas Mellamphy, "Ec(h)ology of the Désêtre" in Negarestani and Mackay, 2012: 413-435.

must be taken into account. Only this variation in the order of magnitude can provide a consistent explanation to what is edible and what is not (e.g. poisons, which are such only after the ingestion process has concluded). If we insist on food as ephemeral, long-term effects on our body remain ignored.

5. Last but not least, a theory on eating relies on concepts of time: since eating is an action, it moves in time. Indeed, it crosses different time scales by opening a mouth-anus transit[13] that refers to different temporalities, measured in different scales, occurring in different registers, levels of action and significance unattainable to each other. Temporality has to do with passivity (Osswald, 2016): before appearing to the conscious subject, sensitive contents establish the continuum of a present moment upon which every association arises, such us the definition of "this tastes like this".

Exploring these topics will bring us close to a sort of "phenomenology of the edible". By viewing the figure of the eater as such, I believe we can consider the implications of being a subject for art *by way of our mouth*. We can no longer simply approximate the eater to the spectator, at least not without considering profound issues on "being subject to" and especially on

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[13] Consider the song "Life before death" (1978), by R. D. Laing (All divided selves, 2011): "Remember that to live is to metabolize./ So don't forget en route to the sublime/ To check on your mouth-anus transit time/ Look at the ground as well as the skies". Cited in Martínez, Chus. "Food in metabolic era" in van der Meulen, Nicholas and Jörg Wiesel, 2017: 164.

"being alive". In our case, the artistic experience needs to be explained as something that emerges from within us, not only through sensual appreciation, intellectual reasoning or a spiritual dimension, but also through the body itself. The eater as a subject for art invites us to reflect upon the biologization of the transcendental (Malabou, 2017) within the aesthetic thought.

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'In General'
On the Epistemological Mission of Kant's Doctrine of Taste

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ABSTRACT. The fact that Kant's critique of taste fails to sufficiently clarify the relation between aesthetic judging and cognition – which is the main source of the so-called 'everything is beautiful' problem – prompts the assumption that his aesthetics has more (or even more) to do with the theory experience than usually thought. My main claim is that his doctrine of taste should be read as a response to a danger evoked in the first *Critique*: the threat of (a kind of) solipsism. Judgments of taste, necessarily relying on the principle of common taste, thereby manifest a cognitive uniformity of subjects, as a condition of the objectivity of empirical judgments. I will show that this epistemological commitment leads to some distortions in the doctrine of taste, but also that Kant tacitly corrects his original approach in the theory of art.

1. Introduction

Friedrich Schelling makes a baffling remark in the Introduction to his (posthumously published) *The Philosophy of Art*, a series of lectures he first held in 1802/03 in Jena: 'From the Kantians themselves one could naturally expect the most extreme tastelessness […]. A multitude of people learned

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the Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment by heart and then presented it both from the lectern and in writing as aesthetics.' (Schelling, 1989, p. 12)[2] Unfortunately, Schelling does not explain why it is a mistake (unless he means 'tastelessness' as a praise) to present what we know to be Immanuel Kant's aesthetics – the first part of his third *Critique* – as aesthetics and how it should be presented instead. So I take myself the liberty to outline an answer of my own to this question. More specifically, I will argue that Kant's doctrine of taste is motivated – and distorted – by a certain epistemological interest.

That this doctrine does have to do with epistemology is nothing new, to be sure. I will not be concerned here with the (less than obviously successful) venture of the two Introductions to the third *Critique*, aimed at establishing the principle of the overall purposiveness of nature by connecting it to the subjective purposiveness of aesthetic reflection. But even apart from the Introductions, it has for long been clear that Kant's taste is closely related to the formation or acquisition of empirical concepts. Many of the books and papers dealing with this affinity come up against what has become to be called the 'everything is beautiful' problem. What I will *not* do in the present paper is try to provide yet another solution; chiefly because I do not think the problem can be solved within the framework of the doctrine of taste. I regard its persistence as an epiphenomenon of Kant's

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[2] In Stott's translation the title reads as *Critique of Judgment*, whereas Schelling clearly refers only to the first part of the book, see Schelling, 1859, p. 362.

decision to tie aesthetic judging to 'cognition in general' (section 2). Then I show that the first *Critique* evokes the danger of (a kind of) solipsism, without being able to fend it off (3). My main claim is that the doctrine of taste, with its central notion of 'cognition in general', is a response to this threat: On the surface, a judgment of taste requires common sense as a principle of aesthetic consensus, yet what its true accomplishment is – what makes it so valuable for the transcendental theory of experience – is that the common sense it requires is at the same time the uniformity of the cognizing subjects as such, a uniformity that must exist as the condition of the objectivity of judgments of experience, but which cannot be assumed other than aesthetically (4). Finally, I will indicate some shortcomings of the 'Analytic of the Beautiful', resulting from the epistemological utilization of taste, but also that Kant tacitly revises this approach in his theory of art (5).

2. 'From a Transcendental Point of View'

What I have chosen as the title of my paper is one Kant's favourite terms in his doctrine of taste. He uses it some fifty times, mostly in the phrase 'cognition in general'. It first occurs in §9, where Kant describes the tasteful harmony of the imagination and the understanding as a 'subjective relation suited to cognition in general', adding that 'any determinate cognition […] always [!] rests on that relation as its subjective condition' (Kant, 2000, 5:

218).[3] He repeats this several times, although never in exactly the same wording. This is where the 'everything is beautiful' problem stems from. Just briefly: If determinate cognition is 'always' conditioned by the subjective, pleasure-inducing harmony of the two faculties, then every object of determinate cognition must cause satisfaction and be found beautiful before it is subsumed under a concept (where 'before' means a structural or logical rather than temporal priority).

It is hard to imagine that Kant was not aware how close he came to declaring everything to be beautiful. If I were writing a treatise on taste and arrived at the verge of the conclusion stating the ubiquity of beauty, I would do my best to avert this outcome; not the least because if everything then nothing is beautiful, nothing excels. Remarkably, Kant is not exactly at pains to assure his readers that this is not what he means. At the end of §38 he even brings up the possibility of 'assum[ing] nature as a sum of objects of taste *a priori*', adding that this question 'is related to teleology' (5: 291). The 'Critique of the Teleological Power of Judgment' does not come back to the question. But some five years earlier Kant had a positive answer: 'in the course of nature everything is beautiful' in the sense of being 'regular' (Kant, 2012, 25: 1378). This notion of beauty is not, properly speaking, an

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[3] With the sole exception of the *Jäsche Logic*, I will refer to Kant's works using the volume and page numbers of the German Academy Edition. References to the third *Critique* (Kant, 2000) will henceforth be made simply by volume and page numbers in brackets, where the volume number 20 indicates the First Introduction. In a few cases I have amended the text using Werner Pluhar's translation (Kant, 1987). Also, I sometimes omit the boldface emphases.

aesthetic one. Related to regularity, it seems to have more to do with the cognition of nature than with taste. But is this distinction really so sharp if aesthetic judging is conceived of in terms of 'cognition in general'?[4]

As a translator of Kant, I personally hate the German word for 'in general', *überhaupt*, because it can be rendered into Hungarian in three different ways that are not hundred percent equivalent. This bias aside, I do not know what 'cognition in general' means. It is the opposite of determinate or particular cognition, yes. But it looks as if Kant simply translated this logical or even just nominal opposition into a mental act, into something real that happens in us: aesthetic reflection is 'the free play of the powers of representation […] for a cognition in general', a 'state of mind' in which the faculties 'agree with each other as is requisite for a **cognition in general**' (5: 217-18). How can you cognize in general *vis-à-vis* a particular object?

There are some other phrases reflecting various aspects of 'cognition in general'. We have (a) 'faculties of cognition in general' (5: 286,

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[4] 'Everything in nature, both in the lifeless and in the living world, takes place *according to rules*, although we are not always acquainted with these rules. – Water falls according to laws of gravity, and with animals locomotion also takes place according to rules. The fish in water, the bird in the air, move according to rules. The whole of nature in general is really nothing but a connection of appearances according to rules; and there is *no absence of rules* anywhere. If we believe we have found such a thing, then in this case we can only say that we are not acquainted with the rules.' (Kant, 1992, p. 527) These are the opening sentences of the *Jäsche Logic*. Waterfalls, (certain) fish and birds could just as well be examples of the beauty of nature. Three birds indeed are, see 5: 299, though here they do not fly.

translation corrected to plural), (b) 'a judgment in general' (5: 287), (c) 'the power of judgment in general' (5: 286 and *passim*), (d) a reflection of this faculty 'by means of which it strives to rise from intuitions to concepts in general' (20: 249), or (e) 'to bring the empirical intuition of [an] object under some concept in general (it is indeterminate which [*unbestimmt welchen*])' (20: 220), and (f) 'the lawfulness of the understanding in general' (5: 241). Kant apparently has difficulties explaining how the understanding, as the faculty of concepts, participates in a mental act that is by definition free of concepts. Determination, as he uses the term, means the application of concepts to intuitions. Aesthetic judging does not conceptualize its object, that is fine. But how does it follow from this that the understanding dissolves into an entity functioning in general? I am sure my understanding cannot work with *unbestimmt welchen* concepts. It is probably not by chance that Kant sometimes talks about the free play of the imagination, full stop.

But the difficulties do not stop here. Although Kant does not use the phrase 'imagination in general', he writes something very close to that: 'Taste, as a subjective power of judgment, contains a principle of subsumption, not of intuitions under **concepts**, but of the **faculty** of intuitions or presentations (i.e., of the imagination) under the **faculty** of concepts (i.e., the understanding).' (5: 287) With due (and true) respect, this is nonsense. There is no such thing as a reflection connecting the faculties *as* faculties. Try to imagine something in general, reflect on it in general and

find it agreeing with the lawfulness or the concepts of your understanding in general. The last quote was from the Deduction, and it is while reading this part of the doctrine of taste that it really becomes difficult to resist the impression that Kant regards aesthetic judging as the enactment of a mere form or structure, devoid of content or at least completely content-neutral. In §38, which is the deduction proper within the Deduction, he even mentions (g) 'the judging of a sensible object in general' (5: 290). This equals to the judging of whatever. Kant might be right in claiming that aesthetic judging is 'without any matter' in the specific sense that 'neither sensation nor concept' can serve as its determining ground (5: 290). But this is something else than depriving it of every content. The 'sole' factor that a judgment of taste takes 'into consideration' is 'the **formal condition** of the power of judgment' (5: 290, fn.).

The source of this extreme formalization is the 'transcendental point of view' from which 'the investigation of the faculty of taste, as the aesthetic power of judgment, is here undertaken' (5: 170). A transcendental inquiry abstracts from any particular content and highlights the constant forms that organize those contents. This was a viable method in the first *Critique*, as it yielded a set of mental forms: The categories could be given separately from any particular act of empirical cognition. The question is whether the same approach works in the case of taste. Kant thinks it does. That is the point of his distinction between the critique of taste as 'art' and the critique of taste as 'science', the latter being the 'transcendental critique'

(5: 286). But the reason why the power of judgment makes just a short appearance in the first *Critique* (before being forced into a transcendental role in which it loses its true self) is that there simply are no general rules for subsuming the particular under the general (see Kant, 1998 [henceforth *CPR*], A 132-36/B 171-75). The identification of taste with the subjective power of judgment implies that the same holds for it. The only option left for the 'transcendental critique' is to present the rule or form as happening in or, rather, *as* the particular act of judging the beautiful; or, conversely, to present the particular act as a form. And since the only form that can be said to inhere in every reflection on an intuition is the harmony of the imagination and the understanding as such, i.e., as unspecified to any intuitive or conceptual content, aesthetic judging is doomed to become 'cognition in general'.

A passage in the First Introduction shows how that occurs:

[S]ince in the mere reflection on a perception we are not dealing with a determinate concept, but are dealing only with the general rule for reflecting on a perception in behalf of the understanding, as a faculty of concepts, it can readily be seen that in a merely reflecting judgment imagination and understanding are considered in the relation to each other in which they must stand in the power of judgment in general, as compared with the relation in which they actually stand in the case of a given perception.

If, then, the form of a given object in empirical intuition is so

constituted that the **apprehension** of its manifold in the imagination agrees with the **presentation** of a concept of the understanding (though which concept be undetermined [*unbestimmt welches Begriffs*]), then in the mere reflection understanding and imagination mutually agree for the advancement of their business […]. (20: 220-21, translation amended)

Kant's decision to take aesthetic judging to be a 'mere refection' is the key to why it takes place as a 'cognition in general'; I will return to this in section 5. What 'can readily be seen' in the passage is a confusion. The first sentence promises a comparison – and thereby suggests a difference – between the 'actual' and the 'general' relation of the faculties. But in the second, the difference disappears and the 'actual' relation becomes a phantom. No intuition can be found agreeing with the presentation of *unbestimmt welches Begriffs*. Or, alternatively, any intuition will present an unspecified concept.[5]

On a more benevolent reading, aesthetic judging is not itself a 'cognition in general'. The imagination has a specific content that is special as well in that it anticipates a concept in a way which is somehow exceptional, i.e., not common to all cognition. In §9 Kant mentions 'the

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[5] The beautiful has 'a form that contains precisely such a composition of the manifold as the imagination would design in harmony with the **lawfulness of the understanding** in general if it were left free by itself' (5: 240-41). Whatever I draw will never/always correspond to this unspecified lawfulness.

facilitated play [*erleichtertes Spiel*]' of the imagination and the understanding and goes on to write that an intuitive

> representation which, though singular and without comparison to others, nevertheless is in agreement with the conditions of the universality that constitutes the business of the understanding in general, brings the faculties of cognition into the well-proportioned disposition that we require for all cognition [...]. (5: 219, translation amended)

This is one of the few formulations that can be used to solve or at least alleviate the 'everything is beautiful' problem (and there is a similar one in the First Introduction, see 20: 223-24). The 'well-proportioned disposition', though required 'for all cognition', is still distinguished, for it occurs in a 'facilitated' manner. Hence aesthetic judging is not a mental operation that precedes all cognition, but one which eminently represents the relation underlying or conditioning all cognition: the fitting together of the imagination and the understanding. The comparison involved in aesthetic reflection is one between this fitting together as brought about by a particular intuition – but without it being subsumed under a concept – and as a general form pertaining to all cognition. It finds the promise of a concept, as it were.

It should be added, however, that such an explanation runs the risk of bringing the beautiful too close to the regular. After all, what could be more

conducive to that fitting together than an intuition whose manifold can be united by the imagination with the least possible effort and which thus poses the least possible difficulty for the understanding? And it should also be added that immediately before the sentence last quoted, Kant invalidates this reading in advance: 'an objective relation can only be thought, but insofar as it is subjective as far as its conditions are concerned it can still be sensed in its effect on the mind' (5: 219). This leaves a merely aspectual difference between aesthetic judging and objective cognition, and reinforces the constellation in which former is always the condition of the latter.

I do not want to commit myself either for or against the view that Kant's doctrine of taste implies that everything is beautiful. I simply leave open the question whether, on his premises, aesthetic judging is identical with or eminently representative of 'cognition of general', and whether, accordingly, the beautiful itself is identical with the object of cognition in general taken in a pre-objective mode, or 'something must lift [it] out of the endless succession of non-saying and empty objects' (Schiller, 2003, p. 161).[6] There is a single moment that could change the game, but it is almost completely missing from the doctrine of taste; it relates to the question of 'mere reflection', so I shall come to talk about it in the final section. But let me note again how remarkable it is that Kant nowhere explicitly denies a consequence that sometimes appears so hard to avoid (namely, that

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[6] Given that Schiller's *Kallias*, written in 1793 (but published first only in 1847), is an attempt to critically reformulate Kant's aesthetics, he seems to be the first to realize the 'everything is beautiful' problem.

everything is beautiful). More broadly, it is remarkable that while he begins the 'Analytic of the Beautiful' with the warning that a 'judgment of taste is […] not a cognitive judgment' (5: 203), the whole analysis is centred around there being a strong affinity between aesthetic judging and cognition, and Kant remains conspicuously vague about how exactly they differ, except that the former is subjective and general, whereas the latter is objective and determinate, a difference which easily translates into their being just the complementary sides of the same mental act. There are excellent interpretations aimed at disentangling the intricate relationship between aesthetic judging and cognition and at distinguishing the beautiful from the object of cognition.[7] But, given that Kant is so truly vague about truly elementary issues, is it not possible to assume that it was, for some reason or other, not important for him to separate, or important for him not to (let) separate, what we intuitively think should be separated in an aesthetic theory?

3. Regarding 'the Difference among the Subjects'

In a relatively neglected chapter of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, called 'On the Canon of Pure Reason', Kant makes a distinction between conviction

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[7] See Guyer, 1979 and 2005, Allison, 2001, Hughes, 2007, Ginsborg, 2015. The list could be much longer, but these are works no one can ignore. For an overview of debate around the 'everything is beautiful' problem (which includes the question concerning the possibility of ugliness, too), as well as for an attempt to solve it, see Küplen, 2015.

and persuasion. The latter is merely subjective.

> Truth, however, rests upon agreement with the object, with regard to which, consequently, the judgments of every understanding must agree [...]. The touchstone of whether taking something to be true is conviction or mere persuasion is therefore, externally, the possibility of communicating it and finding it to be valid for the reason of every human being to take it to be true; for in that case there is at least a presumption that the ground of the agreement of all judgments, regardless of the difference among the subjects, rests on a common ground, namely the object. (*CPR* A 820-21/B 848-49)

We are in one of the last chapters of the first *Critique*. Kant has already said a few words on the formation of object-consciousness and the overall constitution of objectivity. Now he bumps into a problem that deserves to be called fatal: the threat of a kind of solipsism.[8] As far as I know, he does not ever use the word 'solipsism' in epistemological context. But he does use a term that means the same: 'egoism'. Although, and this could be of some interest, the *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* is his single published work in which he mentions egoism, otherwise he deals with it only in his university lectures.

In 1783 he characterizes it as follows:

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[8] Michela Massimi, 2017, also interprets the passage in terms of solipsism, suggesting a solution that builds on the regulative use of reason.

> Egoism is when someone maintains that there is nothing present
> outside him, but rather everything that we see is mere illusion […]. I
> cannot refute the egoist by experience, for this instructs us
> immediately only of our own existence. We do experience mediately
> that other things are there through the senses; but the egoist says that
> in these senses there lies only the ground by which we would become
> aware of appearances. But they would be nothing in themselves.
> (Kant, 1997, 29: 927)

Far be it from me to equate transcendental idealism with egoism. Yet in a
crucial respect the two positions overlap. That what we 'become aware of'
are 'appearances', 'nothing in themselves' for us, is something on which
Kant agrees with the egoist. In his words: 'space and time' are the '*a priori*
conditions under which alone things [can] be outer objects for you, which
[*viz*. the objects] are nothing in themselves without these subjective
conditions […], in relation to which therefore all objects are mere
appearances' (*CPR* A 48-9/B 66).

In the section on the fourth paralogism (deleted in the B edition) Kant
argues at length to refute the combination of transcendental realism and
empirical idealism. As I do not want to get lost in the circles of
transcendental idealism, let me simply accept his claim that this 'doctrine
removes all reservations about assuming the existence of matter based on
the testimony of our mere self-consciousness' (*CPR* A 370). In this respect,

transcendental idealism (complemented by empirical realism) is the opposite of egoism.[9] That is why I labelled the problem emerging in the above quote from the Canon chapter as *a kind of* solipsism. What is important here is the way in which one becomes aware of the existence of external objects. This happens through sensation or perception, 'perception' being nothing but 'sensation […] applied to an object in general without determining it' (*CPR* A 374). What is 'really given' in space is just 'something real […], or the material of all objects of outer intuition' (*CPR* A 375). Albeit, and this makes Kant's argument so difficult to follow, 'these external things – namely, matter in all its forms and alteration – are nothing but mere representations, i.e., representations in us' (*CPR* A 371).

What does all this have to do with the Canon passage? Kant's formulation seems unnecessarily complicated, even by his standards. Why does he not simply say that judgments are true if they agree with the object – which is the traditional correspondence or adequacy view of truth –, and that the agreement of the subjects is based on this 'common ground'? Why does he (have to) say that even the mere presumption of there being a common object requires the consensus 'of every human being'? Transcendental idealism seems to have an unexpected side effect.

The novelty of Kant's transcendental notion of truth is that objects are not given: they are made by the cognizing subjects. Not in a material sense,

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[9] For a detailed analysis, see Heidemann, 2011. See also his first book (Heidemann, 1998), dealing with Kant's idealism in the context of egoism.

to be sure, but formally, by means of the categories. These are mere forms of articulating and structuring perceptual data. They do not – because cannot – guarantee that the outcome of this structuring, i.e., experience, will be 'normal', orderly in terms of its content. Kant is well aware of this problem. He has three different solutions for it. None of them works, however. First, in the 1781 version of the Deduction of the categories he complements these mere forms by the principle of transcendental affinity, which roughly means that there is a material or contentwise regularity in the totality of appearances. By this, Kant introduces a further criterion of truth: coherence. Empirical judgments must not only correspond to their objects, they also must fit into a coherent whole of cognition. But the only source from which the principle of affinity could be drawn is the transcendental unity of apperception, which, however, being just a numerical identity, does not rule out disorderliness. Whereas I cannot think and, consequently, experience without the categories, I can synthesize in my mind contents that are – or seem to me – irreconcilable with what I have experienced before and what I am used to regard as normal.[10] It is not surprising, then, that the B Deduction tries to make do without affinity.

The second solution – in fact a variation of the first – is the dream argument. In the first *Critique*, Kant wavers between two positions. According to the A Deduction, the categories are sufficient to distinguish experience from dream (see *CPR* A 112), which is obviously false, as they

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[10] See Westphal, 2004, especially pp. 110-115.

are mere forms. In another place he writes that it is empirical laws that distinguish the two (see *CPR* A 492/B 520-21), which is correct in itself, but the argument does not work, for the same reason as why the principle of affinity was illusory: I can tell a dream-like experience in categorial syntax without giving up the numerical identity of my self-consciousness.[11]

Thirdly, Kant goes back to where the trouble began. In the 'Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic' he tries to revive, to a certain extent, the cosmological and theological ideas God. But the so-called regulative use of reason is too weak compared to what it should serve for. The idea that nature is to be regarded as a totality purposively ordered by a supreme intelligence (an idea that involves the affinity of appearances, too) is just a heuristic notion or principle. Of course, I must expect that the appearances will behave regularly, and must do my best to achieve coherence among experiences. But this self-regulation does not preclude chaos. (And there will be a fourth solution, too, a non-theological variation of third: the project carried out in the Introductions to the *Critique of the Power of Judgement*.)

On the one hand, objects are made by means of the categories. On the other hand, they are made of perceptions, and perceptions are 'in us' in the emphatic sense that they are pre-objective representations. Kant seems to believe, at least for a while, that the categories are sufficient to orchestrate a synthesis of perceptions such that it results in the consciousness of an object

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[11] The *Prolegomena* combines the two versions of the argument, see Kant, 2002, 4: 290.

that is necessarily the same for everyone. In the *Prolegomena* he develops a complete doctrine (dropped again in the B edition of the first *Critique*) to show how the categories transform judgments of perception into judgments of experience. Whereas the former 'do not require a pure concept of the understanding, but only the logical connection of perceptions in a thinking subject', the latter

> always demand, in addition to the representations of sensory intuition, special *concepts originally generated in the understanding*, which are precisely what make the judgment of experience *objectively valid*.
> All of our judgments are at first mere judgments of perception; they hold only for us, i.e., for our subject, and only afterwards do we give them a new relation, namely to an object, and intend that the judgment should also be valid at all times for us and for everyone else; for if a judgment agrees with an object, then all judgments of the same object must also agree with one another, and hence the objective validity of a judgment of experience signifies nothing other than its necessary universal validity. (Kant, 2002, 4: 298)

First, the requirement that there be, in the a case of judgments of perception, a 'logical connection of perceptions in a thinking subject' begs the problem, or a part of it, as it presupposes the orderliness of what can be perceived. In the absence of affinity (and God), this 'logicalness' is not warranted.

Second, even when perceptions become synthesized in the concept of

an object or in an objective judgment, what is thus created does not cease to be mind-dependent: 'external things' are still 'representations in us', as Kant himself said. A judgment of experience might want to be valid 'for everyone else', but poor 'thinking subject' cannot point at the object as an entity detached from her. And if I add up the two factors, the result is not exactly cheerful.

> [C]onsider the following: If the sun shines on the stone, it becomes warm. This judgment is a mere judgment of perception and contains no necessity, however often I and others also have perceived this; the perceptions are only usually found so conjoined. But if I say: the sun *warms* the stone, then beyond the perception is added the understanding's concept of cause, which connects *necessarily* the concept of sunshine with that of heat, and the synthetic judgment becomes necessarily universally valid, hence objective, and changes from a perception into experience. (Kant, 2002, 4: 301, fn.)

But what if I do not perceive that the stone 'becomes warm' in the sunshine, while someone else does? There is no principle that could rule out this possibility. How shall we decide which one of us is right? 'Don't you know that a stone *must* become warm in the sunshine?' she will ask. Reply: 'No, I don't.' 'But don't you perceive that it is cold?' I will ask. Reply: 'No, I don't.' Standoff.

  This is absurd, of course. I am not claiming that solipsism is a tenable

position. I just wanted to indicate that the problem emerging in the Canon chapter is a challenge that cannot be met within the framework of transcendental idealism, at least as it stands in the first *Critique*. What a subject reliably possesses are her perceptions. Perceptions provide 'something real […], or the material of all objects of outer intuition', but this material is not yet articulated or processed in any way. It is up to the subject to transform it into objects. Whatever she produces this way will be and remain the product of her mind, even though she sets it against herself (objects/*Gegenstände* are the results of *obiecere*/*Entgegenstellen*; in a passage of the 'Second Analogy' Kant uses the word *Gegenverhältnis*, translated as 'contradistinction', for this, *CPR* A 191/B 236). And it is not only that she has no access to the object in itself, independently of her mind. She has no access to the minds of others, either. What the first person plural in the phrase 'representations in us' refers to is not a single universal ego, a supersubject, as it were, but a multitude of individual subjects. The categories might delineate the structure of human understanding as such, but the way people perceive individuates them.

In the light of these considerations, the Canon passage is not an incidental observation. On the contrary, it is a short but sharp account of what follows – maybe undesirably, yet inevitably – from transcendental idealism. If I may simplify the second sentence of the quote, the truth of an empirical judgment becomes dependent on 'the possibility of communicating it and finding it to be valid for the reason of every human

being'. It is only after its being found valid for everyone that you can make the 'presumption that the ground of the agreement of all judgments, regardless of the difference among the subjects, rests on a common ground, namely the object'. Objectivity is not simply mind-dependent: it turns out to be a function of intersubjectivity. Something is the same for everyone in its status as an object because it determines how everyone has to perceive it, and serves as an independent control instance for checking and, if necessary, correcting the judgments about it – this is, roughly speaking, the old way of seeing things. Something can be endowed with the status of an object if and only if everyone agrees on what it is – this is the new way.

That said, I do not know to what extent Kant realizes the turn. On the one hand, he seems to be clearly aware of it. Indeed, the *Prolegomena*'s doctrine of the two types of judgments can be read as a (failed) response to the passage in question, for it tries to reverse the logical order and ground the consensus of the subjects on the object. On the other hand, the scenario described in the passage – in both editions of the first *Critique*, i.e., both before and after the *Prolegomena* – is obviously unachievable. That the universal consensus yields no more than 'a presumption' concerning the existence of the object as a 'common ground' is an inconvenience transcendental idealism must learn to live with. The only way to get rid of it would be a kind of suicide: Kant would have to return to the mind-independence of objects (as given in themselves), which is certainly not an option for him.

But even the ‘presumption’ seems to be hopelessly distant. Suppose we somehow manage to agree that the stone is warm(ed by the sun). In order to be able to presume that our agreement rests on the object, we should reach out to ‘every human being’. Quite a task, not the least because some human beings are already dead, while others are yet to be born. And even if we managed to poll all of them and find a truly universal consensus concerning the stone, this is just one out of, well, many objects (or object-wannabes). Kant arrives at an insight truly entailed in transcendental idealism, but at the same time he evokes a danger against which he has no weapon in his transcendental arsenal: the danger that what is supposed be a common world of objects, one which is the same for everyone, falls apart into an uncontrollable diversity of subjective views. So what shall critical philosophy do? It needs to find a better way to overcome ‘the difference among the subjects’, a solution more viable than that doubly endless poll.

4. ‘Mankind in general’

There is a somewhat mysterious sentence in §17 of the third *Critique*:

> The universal communicability of the sensation (of satisfaction or dissatisfaction), and indeed one that occurs without concepts, the unanimity, so far as possible, of all times and peoples about this feeling in the representation of certain objects: although weak and hardly sufficient for conjecture, this is the empirical criterion of the

derivation of a taste, confirmed by examples, from the common ground, deeply buried in all human beings, of unanimity in the judging of the forms [*der Formen*] under which objects are given to them. (5: 232-33, the definite article before 'forms' is my insertion.)

As far as I understand, Kant says that the aesthetic unanimity that can be empirically detected by looking at the 'examples' does not as such prove the existence of 'the common ground'. §17 is the last section of the Third Moment. The Fourth Moment is devoted to common sense. When making a judgment of taste, '[o]ne solicits assent from everyone else because one has a ground for it that is common to all' (5: 237). I surmise that this common ground is the same as the one mentioned in §17. If so, the function of the Fourth Moment is to provide a stronger-than-empirical argument for the common ground. And this ground has a role broader than just facilitating aesthetic consensus: it secures the 'unanimity in the judging of the forms under which objects are given'. Not beautiful things – objects (in general). In the Canon chapter, objects could only be presumed to serve as 'a common ground' on which 'the agreement of all judgments, regardless of the difference among the subjects, rests', and even this required an impossible operation: that of *actually* 'communicating' empirical judgments all over the world and 'finding [them] to be valid for the reason of every human being'. Now the common ground gets translocated into 'all human beings'. It is 'deeply buried' in them – let it be brought to light.

Kant takes it for granted that judgments of taste demand universal and necessary assent – that this demand defines them as judgments of taste, not only for the philosopher, but also for all who happen to find something beautiful (see 5: 214). I think he is wrong on that, although his insistence on the strict universality of taste can be regarded as a heightened version of a view that was not uncommon in the 18th century. '[A] pleasure to be felt and at the same time to be presented *a priori* as proper for mankind in general' (5: 301, *cf.* 5: 356) can have nothing to do with what is culturally conditioned and specific. Kant dismisses empirical aesthetics because it remains confined to 'these and those circumstances of place and society' (20: 237). But this is where taste usually lives, and it will not necessarily be grateful if taken to a transcendental adventure. Kant's insistence on its universality could be made plausible by another conviction on his part – were this not even more problematic. He sees natural beauty as the paradigm case of beauty and the judging of natural beauty as the eminent function of taste. This is atypical even in the 18th century. The so-called pure taste preferred by Kant is a slightly (or not so slightly) anachronistic faculty. Fixated on natural beauty, it is unable to deal with anything that is intentionally meaningful; 'designs *à la grecque*, foliage for borders or on wallpapers' are its favourite objects, for 'they do not represent anything' (5: 229). I have mentioned these two points because they relate to what I deem to be the epistemological mission of Kant's doctrine of taste. In this respect, nature is superior to art (and anything man-made), and universality is a

must. Indeed, Kant's sole argument for why aesthetic judging must be (or have to do with) 'cognition in general' is that this alone makes its subjective universality possible (see 5: 217).

§40 identifies taste with common sense or, more precisely, with 'a kind of *sensus communis*' (5: 293). The other kind is the 'common human understanding' (5: 293). It appears in the *Prolegomena* as well, where it has another name, too: *gesunder Menschenverstand* ('sound common sense' in the English translation).[12] Kant fiercely criticizes the advocates of this common sense, i.e., the Scottish School of Common Sense, saying what they claim to be immediately certain knowledge lacks universality and necessity, and cannot be used to beat off David Hume's attack on metaphysics. Transcendental philosophy alone can save the concept of causality and other *a priori* concepts (see Kant, 2002, 4: 369-71 and 258-60).

The aesthetic common sense is a newly found one, therefore, not a revival of the 'sound common sense'. Its function is different, too, though not as one might expect. 'Whether one has good reason to presuppose a common sense' asks the title of §21 (5: 238). As Kant has already introduced common sense as a subjective principle without which no judgment of taste can be made, one has good reason to hope the answer will be positive. Surprisingly, however, §21 does not even mention taste.

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[12] To make the picture even more colourful, the Hungarian equivalent of this common taste translates as 'sober reason'.

> Cognitions and judgments must, together with the conviction that accompanies them, be able to be universally communicated, for otherwise they would have no correspondence with the object: they would all be a merely subjective play of the powers of representation, just as skepticism insists. (5: 238)

This opening sentence and, accordingly, the whole section can be read in two ways. First, the words 'must' and 'otherwise' might mean that cognitions *are* in fact universally communicable, *since* they correspond with their objects. In this case, the section's argument is an external support, as it were, for the theory of taste, in that it demonstrates the existence of a common sense by taking as *faits accomplis* both the 'correspondence with the object' and the universal communicability of cognitions as *ensuing* from the correspondence. But such a reading has to disregard that it is exactly this priority of the object that Kant denies in the Canon chapter of the first *Critique*. With some generosity, I take 'skepticism' to be referring to what I above called a kind of solipsism. The latter, too, translates into a 'a merely subjective play' in that the subjective objectifications of perceptual data do not produce an independent and binding objectivity (unless and until 'every human being' agrees on everything). My claim, then, is that the section must be read the other way round: It is high time to make sure there is a common sense as a medium that facilitates the universal communicability of

cognitions, 'for otherwise' they will never have objective reference. And this is where taste has a crucial role to play.

Although not mentioned by its civilian name, taste does appear in the section: as 'cognition in general':

> [I]f cognitions are to be able to be communicated, then the mental state, i.e., the disposition of the cognitive powers for a cognition in general, and indeed that proportion which is suitable for making cognition out of a representation (whereby an object is given to us) must also be capable of being universally communicated; for without this [*viz.* without this proportion: *ohne diese*], as the subjective condition of cognizing, the cognition, as an effect, could not arise. (5: 238)

The way Kant formulates this step of the argument is telling. He does not say that particular cognitions *are* universally communicable, hence the same must be true of cognition in general. On the contrary: the universal communicability of cognitions, which, according to the Canon passage, precedes and conditions objectivity, requires that 'cognition in general' be universally communicable. Given that 'cognition in general' is, roughly speaking, synonymous to aesthetic judging, this means that objectivity will depend on taste.

To make matters more complicated, the following steps of the argument can be taken as a proof both for and against the 'everything is

beautiful' consequence:

> And this [the cognizing] actually happens every time when, by means of the senses, a given object brings the imagination into activity for the synthesis of the manifold, while the imagination brings the understanding into activity for the unification of the manifold into concepts. But this disposition of the cognitive powers has a different proportion depending on the difference of the objects that are given. Nevertheless, there must be one in which this inner relationship is optimal for the animation of both powers of the mind (the one through the other) with respect to cognition (of given objects) in general; and this disposition cannot be determined except through the feeling (not by concepts). (5: 238-39)

That the disposition is proportioned differently due to 'the difference of the objects' and that there is a distinguished proportion 'optimal' for the play of the faculties 'with respect to cognition […] in general' seems to suggest that beautiful objects are just a segment of objects in general. But this implies that cognition *in general*, presented three sentences earlier as the proportion that serves 'as the subjective condition of cognizing', is restricted to *certain* objects, which is unlikely. From this perspective, the last sentence of the quote reads like a reduction of the different proportions to one which is to be detected in every act of cognition. But for my purpose this ambiguity does not make a difference.

The conclusion is as follows:

> Now since this disposition itself must be capable of being universally
> communicated, hence also the feeling of it (in the case of a given
> representation), but since the universal communicability of a feeling
> presupposes a common sense, the latter must be able to be assumed,
> and indeed without appeal to psychological observations, as the
> necessary condition of the universal communicability of our
> cognition, which is assumed in every logic and every principle of
> cognition that is not skeptical. (5: 239)

To put it pointedly, common sense, introduced in the preceding sections as
the principle of taste – and, not incidentally, to be identified with taste in
§40 –, advances to a condition under which alone empirical cognition
claiming objective validity is possible. This claim is a limited one, to be
sure. As mentioned above, the mind-independence of objectivity is not an
option for Kant; this would amount to annulling transcendental idealism.
According to the Canon chapter, the most that can be done is to presume an
object that is identical for everyone. But even this requires a universal
intersubjective consensus, which, however, cannot be brought about by way
of actual communication (for this would have to be an endless poll). It is
taste that makes it indispensable, with its (alleged) claim to universal assent,
to assume a common sense – one which, in mediating the aesthetic
agreement of all subjects, provides for the universal communicability of

cognitions, too.

Before I proceed, let me make a remark concerning the above duality, namely, that common sense appears first as a principle of taste, then as taste itself. This uncertainty is justified due to what I mentioned in section 2. Identified with the subjective power of judgment, taste has no form or rule separable from its actual reflection. The same pertains here. Kant formulates this in a seemingly paradoxical yet very exact way in §18: aesthetic 'necessity […] can only be called **exemplary**, i.e., a necessity of the assent of **all** to a judgment that is regarded as an example of a universal rule that one cannot produce [*die nicht gegeben werden kann*]' (5: 237). Taste exemplifies a rule that cannot be given independently of its being exemplified. This might explain why Kant promises to answer later, but never answers an extremely long question formulated in §22, a question that concerns, among other things, whether 'common sense' is 'a constitutive principle of the possibility of experience' or just 'a regulative principle' (5: 240). The most likely answer is that it has an in-between status. (As far as the whole alternative is concerned, it must probably be left undecided, and probably because common sense is in a permanent *Werden*.)[13]

Be it as it may, the fact that common sense figures here as a 'principle of the possibility of experience' is in itself a proof that Kant's doctrine of taste is a genuine contribution to the theory of empirical cognition. Common

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[13] For a comprehensive interpretation of common sense, extending over its historical and 'disciplinary' aspects, see Zhouhuang, 2016.

sense did not yet exist in the first *Critique* as such a principle or 'as the necessary condition of the universal communicability of our cognition'. That it now exists is a feat achieved by taste and its transcendental doctrine. But what exactly is the trick? Why does Kant need this complicated game involving taste? Why does he not simply declare that the possibility of experience requires a common sense, so we are compelled to assume it?

First, doing so would amount to overtly acknowledging that the two editions of the first *Critique* and the *Prolegomena* did not sufficiently explain the possibility of experience. Second, and this is far more important, it is not that Kant overcomplicates a situation; the situation itself is unusually complicated. To begin with, a judgment of experience *is* possible, *to a certain extent*, without a common sense. What do I mean by that? A judgment of experience or a determinate cognition is always limited to a particular content and the particular way we cognize it. Further, it is limited in the sense that even though it might be meant to be universally valid, the actual consensus, if there is one, will extend to a limited number of people who get in touch with that content; for instance, to those who can touch that stone in the *Prolegomena* at least once in their lives (in sunshine), and, which is just as necessary, can share their views about it with each other. And how will this not so universal consensus come about? You will make your own judgment on the basis of what you must believe to exist independently of your representation, even though you are, or should be, aware that it does not exist like that. For how else could you expect that

others agree with you? Or, for that matter, how else could you disagree with others? (Solipsism is a headache for the philosopher, primarily.) But the lesson of the Canon chapter is that objectivity is a function of intersubjectivity and that the consensus among the subjects cannot be derived from an allegedly independent existence.

It is here that taste jumps in to save the day. An aesthetic judgment is not objective, it is in no way about an object and has no objective criteria for its validity. It is about something that goes on within the subject. And this mental event, although occasioned by a particular intuition, is in a specific sense not limited either to a particular content or to a particular way of cognizing. It has to do with 'cognition in general', is either identical with or eminently representative of (I am still noncommittal about this) what is the condition of each and every case of determinate objective cognition, regardless of its particular content: the subjective, pre-conceptual and pre-objective fitting together of the imagination and the understanding.[14] Further, a judgment of taste is unlimited in the sense that it demands universal assent: it is made in the name of 'mankind in general'. On Kant's account, a judgment of taste has, on the one hand, no objective criteria to rely on, yet it must want to be universally valid, on the other. How can that be achieved? What the judging person senses to be going on within herself *hic et nunc* belongs to (in either of the two possible ways) the subjective

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[14] For Kant, conceptual consciousness and object-consciousness are the same: "**object** […] is that in the concept of which the manifold of a given intuition is **united**" (*CPR* B 137). Strictly speaking, this also means that the beautiful is not an object.

condition of any determinate cognition. So she has no choice but to declare *this condition* to be universal, to be universally communicable, to be able to be shared by everyone.

In the *Metaphysik Mrongovius*, the paragraph after the passage quoted above begins with this sentence: 'Dualism (pluralism) is opposed to egoism' (Kant, 1997, 29: 928), the word *Pluralismus* being written over *Dualismus* in the manuscript. Indeed, both are appropriate. Dualism in the sense that transcendental idealism requires empirical realism. Pluralism as the recognition of the existence of others. But how will this multitude of subjects have a common world of objects? 'If the judgment of taste must not be counted [*gelten muss*] as **egoistic**, but necessarily […] as **pluralistic**, then it must be grounded in some sort of *a priori* principle' (5: 278). Once again, the Canon chapter made objectivity a function of intersubjectivity. But it could not provide for the latter, except that it suggested an impossible procedure, that of actually finding empirical judgments valid for 'every human being'. A judgment of taste claims universal validity in the mode of intersubjectivity (Kant does not, of course, use the word). This requires common sense as a principle or medium. But just as aesthetic judging rises into the sphere of cognizing, so too common sense proves to be a principle that supports cognition. Aesthetic reflection can be directed only to the subjective conditions of the use of the power of judgment in general (which is restricted neither to the particular kind of sense nor to a particular concept of understanding), and thus to that subjective element that one can

presuppose in all human beings (as requisite for possible cognitions in general), and a 'judgment of taste […] asserts only that we are justified in presupposing universally in every human being the same subjective conditions of the power of judgment that we find in ourselves' (5: 290).

This is not necessarily the first thing that would come to my mind if I, in writing a treatise on taste, began pondering about what exactly a judgment of taste asserts ('only'). Anyway, what Kant has found is a real transcendental *trouvaille*. Whereas you can make a judgment of experience without necessarily having to think that everyone else will perceive and objectify the given content in exactly the same way (you can just hope that), you cannot make a judgment of taste without consciously presupposing or exemplifying common sense as the uniformity of human cognitive constitution, the uniformity of everyone with respect to the way the mental faculties operate in 'cognition in general', i.e., both in aesthetic judging *and* in all cognition. Ultimately, a judgment of taste is the enactment or celebration of this uniformity, which *must*, at long last, be assumed *because* there has appeared on the scene a certain type of judgment, called the judgment of taste, that cannot be made other than manifesting it. Objectivity remains mind-dependent. But 'the difference among the subjects' that once threatened to block even the 'presumption' of a common world of objects is not a concern anymore for the transcendental theory of experience. In practical terms, there might still be cases in which the subjects disagree on what the object is. As a matter of principle, however, their difference has

been overwritten by unanimity – thanks to taste.

(Although I said I would not be concerned with the two Introductions, let me point out the structural similarity of the arguments employed there and in the doctrine of taste, respectively. After three failed attempts, Kant again tries to provide for the coherence of possible experiences. This coherence is, in itself, a human need. For this need to be fulfilled, nature must be purposive (ordered as if by intention). But a human need does not, as such, warrant a transcendental principle. Even if the purposiveness cannot be more than a subjective presupposition, in that it is not a condition constitutive of object-consciousness (and, consequently, of objects of possible experience), it must somehow gain in status. What makes a transcendental principle a transcendental principle is that a certain type of judgment is not possible without it. Aesthetic judging, as 'cognition in general', is subjectively purposive in the sense of an inner, i.e., mental, harmony. This harmony, however, entails the promise of conceptual object-consciousness, and this in a way not restricted to any particular cognition. A judgment of taste, since it necessarily claims universal validity, since this claim defines it as a judgment of taste, requires an *a priori* principle without which it would not be possible, and which thereby proves to be a transcendental principle. Unlike the doctrine of taste, where it is common sense that serves as such a principle, the Introductions ground the universality of judgments of taste on the principle of nature's purposiveness, which might at first seem surprising within one and same book – until you

realize that 'cognition in general' is a master key. But even so, Kant has to conflate the two meanings of subjective purposiveness. Aesthetic reflection is subjectively purposive in the sense of being a pre-objective mental state, whereas the principle of nature's purposiveness is itself subjective in its status, in contradistinction to the constitutivity of the categories.)

5. 'We Linger over the Contemplation of the Beautiful'

I mentioned in section 2 that there is a single moment, almost completely missing from the doctrine of taste, that could change the game with regard to the 'everything is beautiful' problem. I did not mean to say that this could help decide between whether aesthetic judging is identical with or just eminently representative of 'cognition in general'. As a matter of fact, I do not think it can be conceived of in terms of 'cognition in general'. One of the reasons that make me sceptical about the viability of Kant's doctrine of taste and unable to read it as aesthetics proper is that it fails to answer, even to ask, a crucial question. According to the 'General Remark' after the 'Analytic of the Sublime', '[t]he **beautiful** […] requires the representation of a certain **quality** of the object, which also can be made intelligible and brought to concepts (although in the aesthetic judgment it is not brought to concepts)' (5: 266, translation amended). Question: Why is it not brought to concepts if it could be? Which is the same as asking why aesthetic judging is a mere reflection. Or as asking why it remains a 'cognition in general'

instead of getting concretized into a determinate cognition.

Kant has an answer, to be sure: because it is 'without concepts' (5: 211 and *passim*). But this is just begging the question. In the First Moment, where Kant excludes the two (or three) types of interest from aesthetic reflection, he forgets to mention the interest of cognition, of mastering things by means of concepts. As if this were not at least as important as enjoying and utilizing them. Kant might be right in emphasizing that 'there is no transition from concepts to the feeling of pleasure' (5: 211). But this is not the point. Note well, I am not claiming that aesthetic theory should commit itself to the objectivity of aesthetic properties or values. It can choose a subject-oriented approach. 'In order to decide whether or not something is beautiful, we do not relate the representation by means of understanding to the object for cognition, but rather relate it by means of the imagination (perhaps combined with the understanding) to the subject and its feeling of pleasure or displeasure' (5: 203). This is the first sentence of the 'Analytic of the Beautiful'. The problem with it is that we (usually) do not proceed like that. We do not pick something 'in order to' make an aesthetic decision about it, and do not vow to relate its representation to the feeling.

To put it more comprehensibly, Kant presupposes a prior attitude on the part of the subject. As if she knew in advance that she was going to see something beautiful, and as if she had already made up her mind to abstain from applying empirical concepts and making objective judgments; or as if

she were entering a museum when encountering natural beauty. In fact, Kant even stipulates such an attitude: if you are to make a judgment of taste, you have to suspend your otherwise normal behaviour of turning perceptual representations into objects of experience. You have to leave your concepts in the cloakroom. (*Mutatis mutandis*, Kant does the same in the first half of the 'Analytic of the Sublime': the magnitude of an object which *is to be* judged as generating the feeling of the sublime must not be estimated mathematically, by concepts, because in this case the imagination has no opportunity to collapse).

The transcendental doctrine of taste is seriously imperfect in providing what could be called a phenomenology of aesthetic experience. And I suspect that this has to do with its epistemological mission. I am seriously wrong, you may reply. After all, the description of aesthetic judging in terms of 'cognition in general' is a genuine phenomenological approach, though perhaps less clear on certain points than one might expect it to be. Yes. But one of these points is exactly how it happens – as opposed to being stipulated by the theory itself – that the mind remains in the mode of a non-conceptual, non-objectifying reflection, instead of proceeding, as usual, from intuitions to concepts. The satisfaction in the beautiful

> has a causality in itself, namely that of **maintaining** the state of the representation of the mind and the occupation of the cognitive powers without a further aim. We **linger** over the contemplation [*Betrachtung*] of the beautiful because this contemplation strengthens and reproduces itself […].

(5: 222, translation amended)

This is the almost completely missing moment: an isolated observation in the doctrine of taste (although there is a similar one in the First Introduction, 20: 230-31). Yet at the same time this is the only adequate description of why and how the reflection on some intuitive content does not result in determinate cognition. And I have guess why the observation remains isolated. Try to combine it with Kant's claim that the aesthetic relation of the 'cognitive powers' is (or, again, represents) the condition of determinate cognition. The result is an absurdity: We linger over the condition of determinate cognition because it maintains, strengthens, and reproduces itself. A condition is something like threshold. It must be possible to move on from it to that which depends on it, and the latter must occur, provided the condition is there, unless some other factor (but not a theoretical stipulation) prevents it from occurring. By contrast, a self-maintaining pleasure is purposive in and for itself.

Kant conspicuously does not say anything essential about the phenomenon of play in his doctrine of taste. He calls the relation of the imagination and the understanding a play, but fails to present it as play.[15] Again, I have a guess why. The same guess, actually. A play proper, be it either physical or mental, is that autotelic activity that maintains itself.

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[15] See Alexander Wachter's excellent analysis of the insufficiency of the notion of play in the doctrine of taste, Wachter, 2006, pp. 88-120.

Aesthetic reflection as condition *and* play at the same time: that does not work. Kant should choose: *either* condition *or* play. In the doctrine of taste, he opts for condition. But only a credible account of play could explain why we linger over the contemplation of the beautiful; for play itself is this lingering. And a credible account would have to stress that a play will not maintain itself, indeed, will not even begin unless there is a tension that sets and keeps it in motion. A complete equilibrium is no play.

In §49, which already belongs to the doctrine of art – and which I tend to regard as one of the most important texts in and for the history of aesthetics –, Kant returns to topic of the self-maintaining character of aesthetic reception. And this time he explicitly connects it to play:

> **Spirit**, in an aesthetic significance, means the animating principle in the mind. That, however, by which this principle animates the soul, the material which it uses for this purpose, is that which purposively sets the mental powers into motion, i.e., into a play that is self-maintaining and even strengthens the powers to that end. (5: 313)

As if Kant wanted to make up for something he failed to do. As quoted above, the doctrine of taste holds that '[t]he **beautiful** […] requires the representation of a certain **quality** of the object, which also can be made intelligible and brought to concepts (although in the aesthetic judgment it is not brought to concepts)'. Compare with this the sentence that immediately follows in §49:

> Now I maintain that this principle is nothing other than the faculty for the presentation of **aesthetic ideas**; by an aesthetic idea, however, I mean that representation of the imagination that occasions much thinking though without it being possible for any determinate thought, i.e., **concept**, to be adequate to it, which, consequently, no language fully attains or can make intelligible. (5: 314)

I have a long list of questions I would like to ask Kant should we once meet; after all, he might be right with the first postulate of practical reason, although I am not sure whether immortal souls feel like conversing about such worldly things as taste and art. One of the questions concerns the relation of these two sentences. Until Kant clues me up, I cannot but think of a deliberate correction. He first asserts then denies the possibility of conceptualization.

This is not the place to go into the details of Kant's theory of art. Let me confine myself to two points. First, the notion of aesthetic ideas is the only plausible explanation for the phenomenon of play, as it pinpoints the tension that sets and keeps play in motion. What is given in the 'representation of the imagination' challenges the understanding, invites it to play but does not let itself be fully conceptualized. It never becomes an object of cognition, strictly speaking. It maintains play, animates the mind by providing more than can be captured by concepts.

Second, it seems to be misguided to play the doctrine of art off against

that of taste (and, accordingly, to talk about a correction on Kant's part), for this presupposes that the aesthetic judging of natural beauty (to which the doctrine of taste is basically restricted) and the reception of artworks are comparable, whereas they are not, the latter being concerned with intentionally meaningful artefacts calling for comprehension and interpretation. Yes, this surely must be kept in mind. And it is pretty easy to keep this in mind in the present case, as the doctrine of art reads almost like it was another book. Kant mostly drops the epistemological vocabulary he was so keen to use in the doctrine of taste. No 'cognition in general', no 'subjective condition of cognizing', nothing like that. Definitely refreshing. Even taste is but a supporting actor.

One of the few points of connection between the two doctrines is the first sentence of §51. 'Beauty (whether it be beauty of nature or of art) can in general be called the **expression** of aesthetic ideas' (5: 320). To be sure, Kant hastens to add, in the same sentence, that in the case of 'beautiful nature the mere reflection on a given intuition, without a concept of what the object ought to be, is sufficient for arousing and communicating the idea of which that object is considered as the expression' (5: 320). Honestly speaking, I do not know what idea a natural beauty, e.g., a 'parrot' (5: 299), expresses; unless it is the idea of the supersensible, which is a different story. I am quite sure, however, that 'mere reflection' cannot mean the same as it meant in the doctrine of taste (if it meant anything at all there). 'What makes judgments [of taste] *merely* reflective is that in them, the effort of the

activity of judgment to form concepts *fails*. And it fails because it *cannot* succeed.' (Longuenesse, 1998, p. 164.) So simple it is.

Well, not so quite simple. Whereas a work of art can be said to be unconceptualizable in the sense that no interpretation exhausts its meaning, a parrot has no meaning to offer (at least no intended meaning, even when it recites a poem; or in this case the meaning is intended by its master, which makes the bird a living work of art). Yet by introducing the notion of aesthetic ideas into the explanation of natural beauty and its experience, Kant brings in the motif of tension, too. Parrots do not have the tendency to fatally challenge ornithology. But natural beauty also proves concept-resistant in that the 'quality' that makes it beautiful – and which Kant originally said to be conceptualizable – keeps it irreducibly different from objects of cognition as such, and/or (depending on what route/s an aesthetic theory chooses to follow) in that the mind finds itself reluctant, even unable to proceed from intuition to conceptual consciousness proper as a result of reflection. This mental occurrence, though markedly different from the interpretation of artworks, is still something to which the notion of play applies: a sort of back-and-forth oscillation between the way I know and the way I see, animated by the latter proving, *hic et nunc*, untranslatable into the former. 'Cognition in general'? Maybe, but in a completely uninformative sense at best. Condition of determinate knowledge? Clearly not. Kant's doctrine of art suddenly takes back the aesthetic judging of natural beauty from the transcendental theory of empirical cognition. (And opens an

entirely new horizon, on which there appears, faintly, the twofold possibility that, first, things can be seen – as opposed to cognized – in a mode of being other than that of empirical objects, and that, second, aesthetic judging is an experience of freedom in the modest yet valuable sense that its subject feels herself – as opposed to, or least as distinguished from, knowing herself to be obliged by the law of practical reason – in a mode of being other than that of a cognizing subject of objects in the world of appearances.)

A final remark. I said in the Introduction that Kant's doctrine of taste gets distorted by an epistemological interest. I have tried to show how I mean that. But I in no way meant to suggest that Kant intended to distort taste. Most of the components of his theory of taste – including common sense – had already been there long before the third *Critique* (see Kant, 2005). If I may guess again, he presumably believed they would blend in well with transcendental epistemology. Just another question to ask him over there.

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Everyday Aesthetics and its Dissents: the Experiencing Self, Intersubjectivity, and Life-World

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ABSTRACT. This paper investigates the aesthetic experience in everyday life, chiefly the relationship between its subjective-private and intersubjective-public dimensions, addressing two related core issues that still allow room for dissent in Everyday Aesthetics (EA): the nature and structure of *everyday life* and *experiencing self*. At stake, here are some critical philosophical questions, such as the unity or disunity of the self and the continuity or discontinuity of experience. I claim that consistent conceptions of the experiencing self, the structure of one's everyday life and life-world as well as their constitutive intersubjective dimension are required as a compelling framework for understanding the aesthetic dimension of everyday life. Yet most of current EA's accounts do not provide such conceptions, "the self" still sitting as a blind spot. Instead, I will make several theoretic claims about the nature and structure of the experiencing self and, accordingly, the everyday aesthetic life. Unlike other authors, I do think that one can find valuable insights on this matter in philosophical tradition. These are notably the intersubjective aspect of everyday life and the dialectic of fragmentation-and-continuity, highlighted by the phenomenological research on *life world* (Husserl, Schutz) and *life* (Simmel), and the dialectic of continuity-and-discreteness of experience in the *unity* or *totality of one's life* emphasized by Gadamer's practical philosophy.

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1. Introduction

In this paper[2], I investigate the nature of aesthetic experience in everyday life focusing on the relationships between its subjective-private and intersubjective-public dimensions and with the experiential subjectivity. I will address two related issues that still allow room for dissent in Everyday Aesthetics (hereafter EA): the nature and structure of *everyday life* and *experiencing self*. Since these concepts actually shape EA's accounts on the above-mentioned topics, they require further discussion. At stake, here are some critical philosophical questions, such as the unity or disunity of the self (the experiential subjectivity) and the continuity or discontinuity of experiencing aesthetically the everyday and the art. I claim that key in answering is the attempt to showing how to both preserve and integrate different layers of experience – aesthetic and ethical, art-related and ordinary – within the continuity of one's experience as well as the personal and inter-personal dimensions within the unity of one's life. The subsequent methodological claim is that a proper framework for grasping the aesthetic dimension of our everyday life requires consistent conceptions of the *whole* experiencing self, the structure of one's everyday life or life-world as well as their constitutive *intersubjective* dimension.

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[2] This paper is a revised and augmented version of two sections in the Chapter: Dan Eugen Ratiu, 'Everyday Aesthetic Experience: Explorations by a Practical Aesthetics', in Carsten Friberg and Raine Vasquez (eds.), *Experiencing the Everyday* (Copenhagen: NSU University Press, 2017), pp. 22–52.

Yet most of current EA's accounts do not provide such conceptions. By this remark, I do not contest the worth of so many interesting and substantial approaches of different aspects of everyday aesthetic life, some of them below mentioned. Rather I aim for a meta-aesthetics approach able to boost up Everyday Aesthetics' consistency by highlighting its blind spots. In EA's studies, the question of the phenomenal presence of the experiencer is usually ignored: "the self" is invisible, I might say, since one can hardly find an explicit account on this topic. Moreover, some assumptions of the "strong" version of EA – especially the hypothesis of the *private* and radically *discontinuous* nature of everyday aesthetic experience – are inconsistent with or contradict other main assumptions, such as its on-goingness and its fundamental repeatability and practical nature, and are detrimental to EA's endeavoring to highlight and comprehend the ethic–aesthetic interrelations in everyday aesthetic life.

Therefore, I will make several theoretic claims about the nature and structure of the experiencing self and, accordingly, the everyday aesthetic life. Unlike other authors (e.g. Forsey 2014), I do think that one can find valuable insights on this matter in philosophical tradition. Such insights are notably the intersubjective aspect of everyday life and its dialectic of fragmentation-and-continuity, highlighted by the phenomenological research on *life-world* (Husserl, Schutz) and *life* (Simmel), and the dialectic of discreteness-and-continuity of experience in the unity and totality of one's life, emphasized by practical philosophy (Gadamer).

2. A Brief Overview of Everyday Aesthetics' Main Assumptions & Dissents

Since I provided elsewhere (Ratiu 2013, 2017) an extended overview of main accounts in Everyday Aesthetics, here I will not tell the whole story, just pinpoint some basic assumptions and dissents that are important in this discussion. One of the most consequential disagreements is that between the so-called "weak" or "moderate" and "strong" formulations of EA (or "Aesthetics of Daily Life Intuition"–ADLI, according to Dowling 2010), concerning the relationship between aesthetics of the everyday and art. One can also frame this disputed relationship (as Leddy 2015 did), in terms of the *continuity* hypothesis of an "expansive" approach to the everyday as a continuum of experiences *versus* a "restrictive" concept and a *discontinuistic* approach of everyday aesthetic experience or life.

The "moderate" account (e.g. Leddy 2005, 2012, 2015; Dowling 2010, and other scholars) holds a monist framework for the aesthetic discourse and a concept of the "aesthetic" integrating both differences and resemblances between experiencing aesthetically the everyday life and art. Among these resemblances, there is the *normative* aspect, which is able to secure the significance of the aesthetic and to support a communicable experience consistent with a compelling view on *intersubjectivity*. The more radical, "strong" version (e.g. Saito 2007, 2017a; Melchionne 2011, 2013,

and others) holds instead a pluralist account that challenges the regular assumptions of art-centred aesthetics and the model of a spectator-like "special" aesthetic experience, aiming at a radical rethinking of the realm of everyday aesthetic life. Major proponents of the "strong" EA such as Yuriko Saito and Kevin Melchionne hold a notion of the *aesthetic* as mere private feeling and sphere and, thus, support the idea of everyday aesthetic experience as *private* as well as *radically distinct* from the art's standing-out, public experience and world. For example, in Saito's view the alternative notion of "aesthetic life" is meant to replace in daily occurrences the concept of a spectator-like "aesthetic experience" or "attitude" molded on our special relationship with art. This notion is founded on the assumption that our everyday aesthetic experience operates independently, *discontinued*, and isolated from our experience of art. Thus, these two worlds of our possible aesthetic experience, the *public* "art world" and the *private* "life world", are separated as completely distinct spheres. Hence the radical distinctiveness of EA's concepts too, which are reassessed beyond the strictures of art (Saito 2007; Melchionne 2011, 2013).[3] The private dimension is indeed constitutive to experiencing aesthetically the everyday. Nonetheless, one should not ignore or neglect its intersubjective dimension – which, I will argue, is also constitutive to our everyday aesthetic life.

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[3] For a detailed discussion, see Dan Eugen Ratiu, 'Remapping the Realm of Aesthetics: On Recent Controversies about the Aesthetic and Aesthetic Experience in Everyday Life', *Estetika*, vol. L/VI (1), 2013, pp. 9-13, and Dan Eugen Ratiu, 'Everyday Aesthetic Experience: Explorations by a Practical Aesthetics', pp. 23-29.

The lively debate on the nature of the *everyday* and its *aesthetic* experiencing is carried on in some issues of *Contemporary Aesthetics* from 2014 to 2018 (Melchionne 2014; Puolakka 2014, 2015, 2018; Leddy 2015; Saito 2017b)[4] as well as in other recent publications (e.g. Forsey 2014; Saito 2015, 2017a; Matteucci 2016; Friedberg and Vasquez eds. 2017; Iannilli 2019). In spite of differences between them, one can detect in some recent accounts a shift in emphasis towards the *relational* nature of the everyday or the *subjective attitude* toward it, that is, the subjective character as an essential aspect of experiencing the everyday.

For example, Ossi Naukkarinen and Raine Vasquez in their study 'Creating and Experiencing the Everyday through Daily-life' (2017) emphasize the *relational* nature of the everyday and non-everyday as well as the difference between the former and "daily-life". Such emphasis is based on their view of the "everyday" as an *attitude*, as "merely one (special)

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[4] John Dewey's *Art as Experience* (1934) is a key reference in this debate, with his distinction between ordinary "experience" – continuous but distracted, dispersed – and "*an* experience" – as a closed, unified moment, standing-out from the ordinary humdrum. Some authors, in line with Dewey, hold a thick concept of the "everyday" and defend the continuity hypothesis and an "expansive" approach to EA – including the entire range of aesthetic experiences, from the ordinary to extraordinary, and arguing for continuities and the dynamic interaction between the aesthetics of everyday life and of art (e.g. Leddy 2015) – over a "restrictive" concept and discontinuistic approach that focuses on some core ordinary activities, which are ongoing, common or widely shared, and mostly pursued in private (e.g. Melchionne 2014). Other authors defend a pragmatist view of everyday aesthetic experience – attentive to the "aesthetic rhythm of the everyday", which makes an aesthetic experience in the Deweyan sense not quite an exception to the quotidian flow of experiences (e.g. Puolakka 2014, 2015, 2018) – over the theories that build an EA on the ordinariness of the everyday and see its aesthetic character as constituted by a particular feeling of "familiarity" (e.g. Haapala 2005 and Saito 2007).

mode of being" – situated, specialized and interpretative, separate from the lived daily-life towards which it orients us. Yet this approach which aims "to challenge the traditional conception of aesthetics itself, by beginning with the everyday rather than the aesthetic" (Naukkarinen and Vasquez 2017, pp. 181, 183-186), left unexplored precisely the *aesthetic* aspect of the everyday and daily-life.

Previously, an overview of developments in the "Aesthetics of the Everyday" published by Yuriko Saito in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2015) has also critically revisited its approach to the features of the everyday and the aesthetic. She suggests that the best way to capture the "everyday" is to locate its defining characteristics not so much in specific kinds of objects and activities but rather in the *subjective experience* and the *attitude* we take toward them. The typical attitude is, in this view, full with pragmatic considerations while the everyday experience is generally regarded as familiar, ordinary, commonplace, and repetitive or routine. She also advocates the inclusion of bodily sensations into the realm of the "aesthetic" and the return to its classificatory use or root meaning as "experience gained through sensibility, whatever its evaluative valence may be" (Saito 2015, pp. 4-5). This line of thought is further developed by Saito in her recent book *Aesthetics of the Familiar: Everyday Life and World-Making* (2017).

The reference to a subject intentionality, sensibility, affect and corporeality is indeed necessary when characterizing everyday aesthetic

experience. A proper analysis cannot ignore its *embodied* dimension or the subject's corporeality, since the experiencing subject is not a mere mind, but also a living-body. However, on the one hand, this reference is not sufficient for capturing entirely the phenomenological *twofold nature* – both subjective and objective – of the experience, which is crucial to its proper understanding (for a detailed discussion of this issue, see Ratiu 2017, pp. 38-42). On the other hand, it lacks an explicit conception of the *experiencing self* that should underlie the AE's account, especially when proposing such a shift in focus toward the experiential subjectivity.

3. The Experiencing Self

A question can be raised as to whether an explicit view of the "selfhood" is requested when approaching everyday aesthetic experience or "aesthetic life". This is indeed debatable, and Everyday Aesthetics usually ignores the issues related to the "experiential self", such as the duration or persistence issue – its diachronic identity or unity in the flux of various experiences. It is true that not all philosophers give a similar answer to another, previous, "universality question", i.e. whether all our experiences are with necessity accompanied by a sense of self. The subject of experience is a condition and a principle of its formal unity in the Kantian-type approaches, but not in all approaches (see Zahavi 2019, p. 3).

Apart the "narrative" account of the self, there is an opposition in

current philosophy of mind between different approaches of selfhood. Briefly, between the defenders of a strong "eliminativist" position, which support a "thin notion of the self" (such as Prinz 2012), and those who consider that any experiencing is necessarily and essentially a subject-involving occurrence (Strawson 2017) or defend at least an "experiential minimalism" (such as Zahavi 2005 and his further writings on the "minimal self"). As Dan Zahavi states in his study 'Consciousness and (minimal) selfhood: Getting clearer on for-me-ness and mineness' (2019), a minimal claim in selfhood theory is that all experiences, regardless of their object and act-type or attitudinal character, are necessarily subjective in the sense that they feel like something for *someone*. One could reasonably concur at least with this minimal claim and the statement that "the experiential self should be identified with the ubiquitous dimension of first-personal character". Accordingly, even if the "experiential self" is not conceived of as a separately existing entity, it is not reducible to any specific experience, but can be shared by a multitude of changing experiences (Zahavi 2019, pp. 2-3, 7-8, 19-20).

If applying to EA's accounts these findings of the selfhood theory, it follows that a proper analysis of everyday aesthetic experience has to address the questions of the "duration of the self" or its *diachronic identity* in the flux of various experiences as well as their interpersonally constitution that EA's accounts fail to recognize or deliberately left unattended. The arguments to support this methodological claim are as

follows:

1a. The radically *discontinuistic* approach of the everyday aesthetic experience logically implies the notion of a *discontinuous* or *transitory*, *not-enduring self*. **1b.** This is similar to the "thin notion of self" supported by the eliminativist position in philosophy of mind: the identity of the experiencer is so tightly linked to the identity of the experience – either daily or art-related –, that the cessation of the experience entails the cessation of the experiencing self, while the arising of a new experience entails the birth of a new self (see Zahavi 2019, pp. 15-16). **1c**. Consequently, there is an endless displacement or opposition between an *everyday life–self* and an *artworld-self*, fully disconnected. Yet such a theoretic position is unable to secure the diachronic identity of the self and cannot endorse the on-goingness of everyday aesthetic experience and its fundamental repeatability, generally accepted premises in EA's accounts.

2a. EA's "strong" postulation of the exclusively *private* character of the everyday aesthetic experience logically implies the notion of a *monadic* or *isolated self*. **2b.** This notion entails the lack/neglect of intersubjectivity or the self' situatedness in the *public* "space of normativity". **2c.** Such isolationist notion of the self and neglect of intersubjectivity undermines EA's potential to incorporate various layers of experience into a compelling explanatory framework and to secure an adequate comprehension of the *aesthetics–ethics interrelations* in our everyday life and its fundamental *practical* nature (another major premise of EA).

3. Therefore, a coherent conception of *selfhood*, at least minimal, and of the essential structure of the *everyday life* or *life-world* are needed for such an attempt of EA – especially when it is also tied in with a conceptual shift from "aesthetic attitude" to "aesthetic life", as in Saito's account.

In order to sketch out briefly the nature and structure of the experiencing self I will draw on Hans-Georg Gadamer's practical philosophy. This allows us to freshly attend the question of the diachronic identity and unity of the self through an examination of the faculties of a *social-and-moral human being,* which is also engaged in experiencing and appreciating *aesthetically* the everyday (and the art), or in Saito's terms, has a complex "aesthetic life" with practical-moral implications. In Zahavi's terms, it is about a "full-fledged human self", since he recognizes that the "minimal account of the self", concerning the relationship between phenomenal consciousness and selfhood, is not an exhaustive one. As he rightly adds, "there is certainly more to being a human self that being an experiential self", such as its situatedness in the "space of normativity" and the "role of sociality" in its interpersonally constitution (Zahavi 2019, p. 12).

The reference to the *self* and the mutual implication between theoretical interest and practical action are essential to the practical philosophy, as developed by Gadamer in *Truth and Method* (1960/1988) and other writings. For example, if ethics is a teaching about the right way to live, it still presupposes its concretization within a living ethos (Gadamer

1990, pp. 97, 111). The same is true for aesthetics if considering the *dialogical* and *dialectical* or *transformative* nature of the aesthetic experience and generally of the process of understanding, which is seen by Gadamer not as a specialized attitude, but as a human way of being in the world. To sketch briefly his account of the structure of experience, in particular the *aesthetic experience*, which includes a living relationship to its "object" and transforms the experiencing self, I point out here its main standpoints as against other limited or dogmatic accounts:

- versus the one-sidedness of the concept of "lived-experience" (*Erlebnis*), his account is an inquiry into the essential structure of "experience" (*Erfahrung*);
- versus the idea of the aesthetic experience as "discontinuity of experiences", this is integrated into the *hermeneutic continuity of one's experience*, through the unity and continuity of self-understanding and its element of self-knowledge;
- versus the notion of *absolute discreteness* of one's aesthetic experiences, the discrete aspects are eventually integrated into the unity and continuity of the flow of experience, hence into the *whole* of one's life;
- versus "the dogmatism of everyday experience", its fundamental *repeatability* does not abolish the historical and dialectical elements of any human experience, thus sharing the paradox of "being one and the

same and yet being different" (Gadamer 1988, pp. 55-63, 85-89, 311-324, 423, 430).

Within the framework of this hermeneutic ontology, the subject or the self is conceived of as a *dialogical subject*, that is, as a *self in formation*, open to transformations by means of dialogue with other subjects, cultures, and histories. The dialogue or conversation with tradition – which encompasses institutions and life-forms as well as texts/works – entails a dialectics of self-understanding, as do other ontological characteristics captured by the Gadamerian notions of "correspondence between subject and object" and the "fusion of horizons" of the present experience and tradition in the process of understanding, which is the proper achievement of language. Thus understanding, and implicitly the aesthetic experience as an experience of understanding, is for Gadamer also a key means of an ontological self-constitution, *Bildung* (Gadamer 1988, pp. 230-232, 271-278, 340-341, 416-419).

The notion of *Bildung* (theoretical, practical, historical and aesthetic), seen by Gadamer as the proper way of developing the whole self, not only one's natural talents and capacities (1988, pp. 13-18), calls for the intersubjective engagement as an essential element when analyzing the subject/self experiencing aesthetically the everyday. The idea of *intersubjectivity* is of special interest here, as it lays emphasis on some characteristics of the self which are often ignored by EA: the openness to

the one other, the selflessly attending to the ordinary reality of others, and the enlargement of vision that is at stake in aesthetic experience and judgement or in noticing the everyday (Dyer 2008, p. 63). Intersubjectivity is also called in by the principle of "the linguistic (*sprachlich*) nature" of the human experience of the world, stated by Gadamer when posing language as the "horizon" of such a hermeneutic ontology. For individuals are bound to one another in a community of understanding by language, in which "the individual I's membership of a particular linguistic community is worked out". This common language precedes experience, is "already present in any of its acquisitions" and thus "is at the same time a positive condition of, and a guide to, experience itself" (Gadamer 1988, pp. 311-313, 342, 414). Everyday Aesthetics would definitely strengthen its philosophical basis by acknowledging as well this intersubjective nature of a subject's self-constitution, language, and experience.

This philosophical foundation has significant implications for the study of everyday aesthetic life, by conveying a heuristic network of concepts – *Bildung* (self-formation), *sensus communis*, judgment, taste, practical knowledge, and so on – that allow us to make sense of complex interviewing of aesthetic, ethical and political aspects in everyday life and to clarify its ontological assumptions. All these aspects are in fact parts of the *whole* of one's life. In other words, to contemplate, decide, deliberately act, and so on, are experiences that only a *whole* human being can do. Yet it does not mean that this *whole (self)* is uniform, indistinct and unchanging.

Rather it means that the discreteness of experiences or aspects of life is preserved in the "hermeneutic continuity of human existence", as the experiencing self is structured as a "unity in division and articulation" (Gadamer 1988, pp. 86, 222-223), or as an *identity in difference*.

In two previous articles (Ratiu 2013, 2017) I defended this idea through the notion of an embodied self, seen as a *body-and-mind unity*, which not only perceives, feels, reflects, deliberates, appreciates, and reacts, but also decides, acts, communicates, relates with others and participates in different practices. The conceptual framework provided by practical philosophy supports the account of the self as *embodied* and developed through cultural-social interaction, by emphasizing the inseparable virtues or faculties – judgment, common sense, taste – of a social-moral being engaged in aesthetic experience as well as its context-embeddedness and the openness to one another. This view of selfhood is better suited to providing a consistent framework to the analysis of an aesthetic experience grasped as intertwined with different social and cultural practices in the flux of everyday life (see also Mandoki 2007, pp. 54, 62-64). Apparently, all participants in the EA debate hold (implicitly) such conception of selfhood. Yet in some cases (Saito, Melchionne), as previously shown, this compliance is undermined by the monadic-isolation premise they embrace when considering everyday aesthetic life as a mere *private* world in absolute discontinuity with the *public* world – not only the art-world, but also other forms of public everyday aesthetic experience –, and thus ignoring or

neglecting of its intersubjecting dimension.[5]

4. The Everyday and the "Life-World"

Next, for better conceptualizing "everyday life" within Everyday Aesthetics, it is useful to call in the phenomenological research regarding the intersubjective aspect of the "life-world", or "world of lived experiences" (Edmund Husserl, Alfred Schutz). This offers powerful lines of argument in defending a conception of the everyday as inter-subjectively shared with others and thus allows us to outline a coherent ontology of everyday aesthetic life.

The concept of "life-world" (*Lebenswelt*) was introduced by Husserl in his *Ideas II* and largely analyzed in the third part of *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (1936/1970). It enfolds a rich, multi-faceted sense. To put it briefly, it can be understood as: a dynamic "horizon" in which one lives; a pre-given "basis" of all shared human experiences; and a communal "world" of socially, historically and culturally constituted meanings. Hence, it includes both *personal* and *intersubjective* dimensions, and constitutes the *unity* of the flow of experience that is anterior to the discreteness of experiences and necessary to it (Husserl 1970, pp. 102-268; Gadamer 1988, pp. 217-221).

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[5] For a detailed discussion, see also D. E. Ratiu, 'Remapping the Realm of Aesthetics', pp. 13-14, 20-22, and D. E. Ratiu, 'Everyday Aesthetic Experience: Explorations by a Practical Aesthetics', pp. 30-37.

Within the EA accounts of the everyday, the concept of "life-world" was already referred to by Naukkarinen, in the sense of a "basis" on which other layers of life and culture are built, when developing his idea of everyday (life) around the kernel of "my everyday now" (Naukkarinen 2013, pp. 2, 7). Thus, he stresses the *personal* dimension of the everyday.

Other authors have mostly considered its *intersubjective* aspect, the "everyday" being qualified as the common ground of experience that connects individuals, activities, and histories.[6] Of course, the two dimensions of the everyday do not oppose each other, but suppose each other. Likewise, the everyday should not be thought of as absolutely one and the same for all. In fact, as evidenced by the phenomenological analysis, "the world of everyday life is neither unique nor uniform; there are always private worlds in which we find ourselves always-already immersed". Yet, even if "everyday life vanishes in a changing plurality of objective contexts or symbolic formations that hardly could be brought together under one clear-cut name" (as noted by Copoeru 2011, p. 281), philosophy can search for the common features that emerge from the background of such multiple particularities.

The intersubjective dimension of the everyday is even strongly emphasized in the seminal analysis of life-world by Schutz (1962) in the

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[6] See, for example, Stephen Johnstone's anthology *The Everyday: Documents of Contemporary Art* (London: Whitechapel Gallery, and Cambridge Mass.: The MIT Press, 2008), and the review by Jennifer Dyer in *Invisible Culture: An Electronic Journal of Visual Culture*, vol. 13, 2008, pp. 62-66.

context of "the problem of social reality". According to this phenomenological-sociological viewpoint (summarized by Eberle 2014), the world of everyday life is our paramount reality; it is the inter-subjectively shared reality of pragmatic action, where we are awake and working in standard time. The everyday world of working is the archetype of our everyday experience of reality, as distinct from other realities experienced as "finite provinces of meaning", such as the personal worlds of dreams, of imageries and phantasms, as well as the worlds of art, of religious experience, of scientific contemplation, and so on (Schutz 1962, pp. 231-232; Eberle 2014, p. 139). Thus, the everyday world is experienced as meaningful, as pre-interpreted, and as inter-subjectively shared with others. Within such conception of the mundane world, which includes the aesthetic, the aesthetics of everyday does not constitute a separate, finite province of meaning (Eberle 2014, p. 140), to be opposed the world of art.

EA-"strong" version faces unescapable difficulties in dealing with the complex structure of the everyday and its aesthetic experiencing – Melchionne's struggle to develop an appropriate ontology of everyday life for grounding Everyday Aesthetics is a case in point. Among the EA's main proponents, he has devoted a particular interest in developing an appropriate ontology of everyday life to ground EA. In his view on daily life, its characteristics of "ordinariness" and "everydayness" mean a flow of experiences and actions, in which the aesthetic ones should not be taken as isolated, cut off slices, nor as lacking aesthetic value or significance. This is

because "what matters is the routine, habit, or practice, the cumulative rather than individual effect", and "how each discrete aesthetic experience is rooted in the pattern of everyday life". The *pervasiveness* of "the aesthetic", built into the fabric of everyday life, and the *on-goingness* of its experience are, in his view, foundational for a properly construed EA (Melchionne 2011, pp. 438-440).

Any proponent of EA, "strong" or "moderate", would endorse these features. The interesting analysis by Melchionne of the ongoing nature of the aesthetic experience in daily, ordinary occurrences – yet in them alone, in his account –, is nonetheless impeded by the way in which this feature is thereafter subordinated to the idea of the overall, radical *discontinuous* nature of one's aesthetic experience – in everyday context *versus* art world contexts. In his view, any break in the ongoing daily, private aesthetic experience is also a radical change in nature for the experience itself, as "everydayness substantially changes how we value our experiences" (Melchionne 2011, p. 440). This is because he fails to recognize the full dialectic of discreteness-and-continuity of experience in the *unity* and *totality* of one's life. It is therefore important to consider everyday aesthetic experience as both distinct and integrated into the flux of one's experiences, as well as related to one's *whole life*.

The philosophical background on which this idea makes sense can be sketched by drawing on Simmel's analysis of the so-called "fragmentary character of life" (written in 1916, republished in 2012), which could help

us to understand the dialectic of fragmentation-and-continuity of our *worlds of life*.

Simmel conceptualizes human "life" in a dynamic, holistic manner as an embodied stream of consciousness directed toward "contents" of experience. The matter of experience is shaped by "forms", evolved in life's higher stages of self-reflection, and in that process life constitutes for itself a world of mental contents. Thus the "world", which according to him is a formal concept, primarily designates a discrete "totality of contents of mind and experience" (Simmel 2012, pp. 237-39). By "world", is also meant "the sum and order of possible things and events that can be arranged into a continuum of some kind according to any kind of overarching principle" (Simmel 2012, p. 242). Hence, there exist for the human mind multiple discrete and self-subsistent worlds of value and meaning: not only a "real" world in a practical sense of the term, but also a religious, a scientific, and an artistic world, which fundamentally share the same and all content of experience, but articulated into very different forms. As mental contents, these worlds are distinct from their historical realizations, which as worlds within the historical life remain particular and one-sided, and do not achieve any full and ideal completeness (Simmel 2012, pp. 241, 243-244).

Within this framework and considering the thesis of the parallelism of categorial worlds (mental contents), the idea of life as "fragmentary" in character is a matter of perspective on life – in other words, a matter of different views of life's contents. Specifically, this idea results from a view

of life from the perspective of these particular-discrete categorial worlds, which is a view of life's contents "from the outside", as things and events, as works and bodies of knowledge, as regularities and values. According to Simmel, life is *fragmentary* in the sense of a unique relationship that an individual led life takes up to these various worlds, that is, acting at the "intersection", "in-between", or "oscillating" constantly between these worlds seen as different layers of existence, and from each of them taking away only a fragment. However, a different perspective – from within *life as life* and its dynamic process –, shows life as making up *a whole*, a self-sufficient flow of occurrences, present in all its moments in all its entirety. As Simmel makes clear: "Always only one life pulses through these particles as beats of the same life, inseparable from it and therefore also inseparable from each-other" (Simmel 2012, pp. 246-247). From this perspective, then, life's character is not fragmentary, and Simmel emphasizes the constant movement of life moments and fragments and their overcoming in the *unity* and *continuity* of one's life (Simmel 2012, p. 247).

Therefore, the fragmentary aspect or discontinuity in experiencing aesthetically the everyday and the art, as distinct worlds of life, is not a final ontological feature or structure of experience or life as such, as Melchionne (2011) and others supposed. Rather it is a matter of analytic perspective that is complemented, from a broader perspective of life as a whole, by the continuity of experiencing in one's life. Moreover, the apparent paradox of completeness *versus* fragmentation is overcame or solved in the idea of the

inherent unity and continuity of life. This is made clear in this essay by Simmel's notion of life as a flow of experience shaped by "form", and developed later in his theory of life as a limitlessly creative flow of embodied will, feeling and understanding (Simmel 2012, p. 247; see also the "Editorial Note" by Austin Harrington in Simmel 2012, p. 237).

5. Conclusion

To sum up, I have shown that the "strong" EA's discontinuistic approach does not provide a conception of the experiencing self and everyday life consistent with its shift in focus towards the experiential subjectivity and its complex, practical "aesthetic life", where aesthetic and ethic interwove. Yet it is possible to address differently these issues on this basis of some different, new claims on the nature and structure of *everyday life* and *experiencing self*:

> 1) the intersubjective nature of a subject's self-constitution and experience as well as of the everyday life;
>
> 2) the structure of the experiencing self as an identity in difference, to which the relationship to otherness is constitutive;
>
> 3) the essential structure of the everyday life-world (and its experiencing) as constituted by the dialectics of *discreteness-and-continuity* and *unity-in-differentiation*.

From this viewpoint, the discontinuity in experiencing aesthetically the everyday and art as distinct *worlds of life*, backed by the "strong" EA, is not an absolute ontological feature or structure of experience. This preliminary analytic perspective should be integrated into a final, broader perspective of *life as a whole*. Yet it does not mean that this *whole self* is uniform, indistinct and unchanging. Rather it means that the discreteness of experiences and aspects of life is both preserved and integrated in the unity and continuity of one's whole life. Likewise, the "everyday" is not a mere private world in absolute discontinuity to the public world, such as the "art world", since as part of our "life-world" it includes both personal and intersubjective dimensions. *Private* and *public* are both possible *worlds of life* in Everyday Aesthetics.

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The Use of Imaginary Artworks within Thought Experiments in the Philosophy of Art

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ABSTRACT. The paper offers a view that if we regard the actual practice of art as manifested in his history and current extension as the object of analysis then thought experiments that use hypothetical, counterfactual, or otherwise non-actual situations and artworks can *only* be justified in very limited circumstances.

Two pillars of support, one methodological, the other epistemological, are given for this: Firstly, that art, as a practice makes *no* claim internally within its own methods that any particular putative art-making activity or particular artwork's existence should have experimental-type relevance beyond the actual result actually obtained within that practice. Indeed, the actual history of art suggests there is a positive reason *not* to assume that artworks function like this. Secondly, the range and valence of variables involved in real world art-making situations cannot be adequately reproduced in the descriptions of imaginary artworks. Thus, the paper argues imaginary artworks within thought experiments have to be described in such a way that they are not, and do not function, as artworks, whilst being required to have the presumed status of artworks.

The paper then considers whether a form of experimental aesthetics that constructs thought experiments *within the practice of art* by could retain the advantages of thought experiments. Three challenges to this suggestion are set out - each of which, it's argued, illustrate aspects of philosophy's

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relationship with art. The paper concludes on an open note as to whether this suggests a need for *any* philosophical view of art to have some element of normative criticality, or whether 'art' is the sort of concept for which philosophy's role can *only* be to provide a descriptive practice-based account.

1. Introduction

Les Expositions des Arts Incoherent were exhibitions in the 1880's in Paris set alongside the Salons Ds Beaux-Arts, and Les Salons Refusé. The productions of this group do not feature in the standard histories of art for that period, nor were they valued as art by their contemporary audience: Not because they produced *bad* artworks – but because they did not produce *artworks* at all – Les Incoherents produced *satires* of artworks, to satirise the contemporary art world. Presented as they were, when they were, they were *not* artworks. However, the artefacts presented there *could,* at other times, and presented in a *different* way, have been artworks.

That's because within the Expositions Incoherent, however, some of the productions anticipated, both in terms of the material objects produced *and* the themes explored, some of the major innovative and iconoclastic artistic achievements within the visual arts from high modernism onwards. For example, Alphonse Allais produced monochrome canvases – of black, white and other colours; and wrote a score entirely consisting of rests for a silent musical piece; another contributor, Eugene Bateille produced a mock-

up of the Mona Lisa smoking a pipe; and contributions included sculptures from perishable materials, a mirror declared to be a universal self-portrait or works that invited the audience to contribute contents that the artist had neglected to include. Yet, the histories and theories of visual art do *not* state that some of the formal experiments of high modernism occurred first as farce in the late 19th Century, before revealing themselves as history when made as art rather than satire. Nor do they suggest that the innovators in artistic practise took their inspiration from, Allais and others of the Salon's Incoherent, or used their products materially or conceptually to make their works.[2]

Such examples are good prompters for philosophical questions about art. That these products were not regarded as artworks when they were made and are not treated as artworks now, despite there being later artworks that they clearly in some way physically and thematically prefigure, might prompt us to think that there are historical and institutional, or otherwise purely indexical factors in play about whether something is an artwork at any particular historical time or cultural situation. This suggests in turn that the generalisations that we make about art as a practice may be tied to a particular set of complex circumstances. They provide *real-world* actual examples that can be plugged into thought experiments to test questions about making, artefacts, history and contexts, each of which play pivotal

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[2] See Welchman, (1997) pp.105-112 for a discussion of Les Incoherents and Allais with particular reference to the relationship between the works and their titles.

roles in philosophical thinking about art – so we can ask, for instance what makes Bateille's image of the Mona Lisa smoking a pipe *different* to Duchamp's image of the Mona Lisa sporting a moustache?[3]

But what would it mean if we were to regard the products of Les Incoherents as artworks? Philosophy of art can approach cases in which the status of an historical artefact as an artwork is in doubt, or accepted, or denied, either when made or now, in *two* fundamentally different ways: Firstly, of a disputed artefact it can suggest that these things *were* artworks at the time and *are* artworks now. This suggests that informed judgements made that it was or wasn't art, both at the time, and since, are *mistaken* and that there is some standard, external to these judgements, for arthood. Secondly, it can say that these things were *not* artworks and are *not* artworks because of the informed judgements made about them then and since. This suggests that the informed judgements *themselves* made at the time and since are the arbiters of what is, or is not, an artwork, at least for the time that those judgements hold good (they can of course change). This is a difference that can be described through the basis upon which mistakes can be made: One view says that *the practice of art* can be mistaken about the status of an object so that its attributions can be corrected, whereas for the

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[3] There are others of course: Examples in which objects that were *not* originally made as art become recognised as artworks, or things that *were* made to be artworks but which somehow failed to become artworks.

other view the *practice itself* would have to be deceived about an object's art status so that it *itself* would correct an attribution.

These two different approaches to questions, and the reasons provided in support of any conclusions, are manifestations of two different conceptions of the relationship between the philosophy of art and art. They may be called respectively the 'conceptual view' and 'the practice view'.[4] Broadly, the 'conceptual view' seeks to analyse the concept of 'art' and draw conclusions for artistic practice from that, and the 'practice view' regards the actual practice of art as manifested in its history and current extension as the object of analysis. So, for Les Incoherents, for both concept and practice views they were potentially the *right* kind of objects made in the *wrong* kind of context, but for the concept view this is because of the *concept of 'art'* didn't allow them to be art at the time, and for the practice view it's because of the *historical record* doesn't show them as such. Similarly, other real-world examples, will be decided against these different evidential backgrounds. Most of the time the historical record and the concept will be in agreement - indeed the practice view seeks to form the concept of 'art' from the practice. Philosophy, however, tends to seize on moments or instances when they may not be, or when differences in views

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[4] Within the 'practice view', since status is established by practice, it's possible for something to gain or lose its artwork status according to the relationship an artefact has with current practice – that is, an artefact can be recognised as acquiring art status *from* a certain time ad *to* a certain time – and these times are potentially, at least different to its lifespan as a physical artefact (if indeed it is one at all).

about art status is marked by which of the concept and the historical record defers to the other.

I will now discuss some methodological constraints that follow from taking the practice view and its presumed deference towards the historical record as evidence in disputed or uncertain cases. The particular constraint moves on from the situations so far discussed, to involves instead, and exclusively, the use of *imaginary artworks* within thought experiments. This is, since they are not art, what we would be doing if we treated the things made by Les Incoherents as art within a thought experiment about art.

2. Thought Experiments in the Philosophy of Art

What are thought experiments for in the philosophy of art, and how are they used? They are commonly constructed to test a theory or idea through applying it to a new situation or set of circumstances. Indeed, this is the *point* - to discover the applicability of a theory beyond actuality and into possible situations. The thought experiments ask questions in the form of "What would happen if we applied position X to situation Y", where position X is something that's happened in the real world, and from which we have generalised out. The 'situation y' is often one that is not actual but is possible as a plausible new situation given the theoretical generalised extension of position X.

When we do this in the philosophy of art we will often construct descriptions of *imaginary* artworks – those that have not actually been made, but which, given an artwork that has actually been made, would, on the basis of a theory, seem to be unproblematically a further artwork.[5] So, we take the actual art of the world, and use it to construct a description of a new artwork that could exist. These imaginary artworks have the role, within these thought experiments, of throwing light on our actual concept of art. Often they are used to make points about the kind of work that's needed to make an artwork, or the kind of things that could be artworks at any given time. The method of arguing is 'given this set of real world artworks, or way of making art, then this artwork, or circumstance too'. So, given a ready-made that's a bicycle wheel, it's unproblematic to posit a ready-made that's a tractor tyre, for instance – where the tractor tyre is, of course, the imaginary artwork.

This is then used to propose a general proposition which provides a test of the proposed theory: Based the actual real-world example of Duchamp's actions, we form a generalisation something along the lines of "readymades can be art", or "designation of an object as an artwork, is or

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[5] Three classic examples that function this are: Danto's (1980, 1-8) array of red squares; Levinson's (1980) that Strauss wrote a piece in 1897 with the same sound structure as Shoenberg's "Pierrot Lunaire"; Walton's (1970) suggesting a painting could be a "Guernica". Each of these different examples use that same basic methodology – faux artworks are posited to explain to extrapolate real artistic practice into the unknown.

can be, sufficient" or the such like[6]. This kind of thought experiment in the philosophy of art uses an historically particular actual occurrence to generate an ahistorical general proposition on the basis that the circumstances of this occurrence are replicable.[7]

The point I want to drive at now is that is that if we adhere to the view that the real artworks that *have* been made forms the evidential basis for our philosophical judgements about art, then there are problems for using thought experiments using *imaginary artworks* or counterfactual, or otherwise non-actual situations to produce and describe generalisations or theories.

3. Two Problems with Imaginary Artworks

I'll provide t*wo* pillars of support for this claim: The first is a *methodological* problem about the appropriateness of describing imaginary artworks in thought experiments as *artworks* given the role they need to play in those thought experiments: The second is a related *epistemological* problem about the results supposedly gained from thought experiments.

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[6] Of course, many of these will be more nuanced than these bold examples, but it is the *point* of generalisation, rather than the content of any generalisation that's my concern here.

[7] This assertion can work in two ways: Firstly, that the particular circumstance has revealed something actually, that has always been true been never actualised (Danto(1964)) or that it the particular instance creates a general proposition from the moment of its actualisation (most historical/narrative/institutional theories).

They both point, in my view, to an underlying appropriation and simplification of art by philosophy.

The first problem is this: It's that art, when considered as a practice, provides *no* reason to think there should be *any* validity of *any* result beyond the *actual* result that has *actually* obtained within that practice – i.e. the artworks that *were* actually made in the precise historical contexts in which they were made. Moreover, the practice of art makes *no* claim from within its own methods that any actualised case of art production, need cover non-actualised cases or thereby provide a template, or set a precedent, or license a theory or generalisation about art making or artworks.[8] However, philosophy, when constructing artworks to play a role in thought experiments, requires them to do just this, or at least to be able to function like this – it requires them to function *as if* they had *experimental* force or agency.

Indeed, the actual history of art suggest there is a positive reason *not* to assume that artworks do this or that art practice sets a precedent or template that could act as a theory or generalisations for non-actualised cases. For example, the purely theoretical possibilities supposedly opened-up by Readymades were *not* immediately seized upon by artists, nor were

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[8] Something similar may be said for politics, where incidents seem particularised and context performer and audience is all, for the effectiveness of any action. Perhaps by extension, this is true of the 'philosophy of' any cultural practice that may have its own existence, developmental history and practical and theoretical rules, separate to those of philosophy.

the non-art provocations of Les Expositions Incoherent - even though, each can be seen as enfranchisers, enablers, or anticipators of later artistic activity. Actual art history shows that art doesn't always take the theoretical route, it quite often, takes what might be called, the material route to its theoretical expansion. This might be puzzling for us philosophers, but it is not so for puzzling for art I'd suggest.

That's because whenever art is made by an agent this involves an historically situated performance of an articulation in a materially inflected language. Where, when this happens, philosophy sees a theoretical innovation, art and artists may not, or may not see *that* as important, or as relevant, to *why* and *how* a work is valuable as art, which may be for a whole host of other reasons, that completely pass philosophy by. As much as philosophy might regret it, artistic activity is *not* primarily in the business of investigating its theoretical conceptual boundaries through its productions. That's what we philosophers might extract from it, but it might, at best, be one component part of the occasional piece of artistic activity.

One consequence of this is that in the real world, individual artworks do not give clear results or have predictive power for future artistic activity, in a way that can be read off as a generalisation from one particular achievement and art as a practice is not one that seeks to use its particular achievements from which to extrapolate general positions. However, the use of artworks in thought experiments, *does* tacitly assume a *direct* route from artistic practice to the opening up of theoretical possibilities of that practice.

This is, in effect, philosophy extracting from the complex practice of art, what it needs for its own purposes and casting *that* as paramount. That's why we get some artworks being more philosophically interesting than others. They are those that seem most amenable to be regarded as experimental in nature. It is philosophy's needs which attribute to artworks an obligation to provide experimental results. However, artworks do not have an experimental structure as *artworks*. Their use within thought experiments requires this to be true of them. As such, their use within thought experiments requires them not to function or exist as *artworks,* but yet to give the thought experiments force and locus for art, to simultaneously have the *status* of artworks. These thought experiments in giving artworks this role, are then not imagining *artworks*, but imagining philosophical positions outside the practice of art, as if manifested in art.

More than this, in order to extrapolate the possibility of imaginary artworks from existing artworks we need to treat those actual artworks as giving something closely akin to experimental data, to treat them as if they, in combination with whole history of art before them, have predictive power for the next step in artistic activity. However, the ground that's opened up by an artwork is not the ground opened by a proposition, or a proof, or an experiment, it's like the ground opened up by the existence of a new person - just because I exist doesn't mean that 'things like me' can also exist, or that my parents could have made other things just like me – in fact they couldn't do that *because* I exist.

Secondly, the epistemological problem: Given a philosophical account which suggests that a particular set of complex circumstances of an artwork's manufacture (however cashed out) are necessary to an artwork's identity, then it's difficult to extract from *actual* examples, both the *extent* of the context required for the successful art-making activity, or the *weight* and *interplay* between different aspects of that context. Indeed, in extremis, if the historical moment of the practice's development is *also* an important factor of the circumstances, extending out to *any* qualitatively similar set of circumstances beyond that which actually obtained might not be possible. If it is part of the identity of *Trebouche* that it was made by Duchamp at that time, then if we change any of those variables in play for its presentation and acceptance as an artwork – author, piece, title, show, the Bourgois Art Gallery, the audience etc. then it may not have been successful to present that artefact as an artwork. We don't know. The historical record of *Trebouche* being an artwork means it was sufficient for Duchamp to have done that then in those circumstances, for sure, but precisely why and how is unknown.

Indeed, if the historical moment of the practice's development is *also* an important factor of the circumstances, extending out to *any* qualitatively similar set of circumstances beyond that which actually obtained will be of dubious applicability. Just because 'this' real circumstance has been possible, does not mean that 'that' imaginary one is possible – 'that' imagined circumstance might require a whole host of other contributions from a range

of artworks and non-artworks, from both near and far history, that together with 'this' actually existing make the conditions right for 'that' to be attempted, for it occur to an artist that its worthwhile for 'that' to be attempted and then for it actually to be accepted, not only as successful attempt, but also as a worthwhile attempt. The problem is that the real-world context is so rich it can't be adequately described, let alone taken account of in any thought experiment that moves from the actual to the imagined.

That said, minor changes to any *one* variable involved, such as deciding to make a readymade on a Wednesday instead of on the Tuesday, seems on a pragmatic basis unlikely to change either the success of the art making activity or the identity of the particular artwork. It may be then that the imaginary artwork that is *Trebouche* being made one day later than it actually was but otherwise a the actual *Trebouche* was it was, is one that is more well founded, because it sticks much closer to actual reality. An imaginary artwork of that kind, based on a single modification of an actual artwork, would have little explanatory or argumentative force, and it would certainly not allow much generalisation - i.e. it would be legitimate to use that imaginary artwork to argue that some individual variables within an historical context of art making and artwork identity might not have to be fully determined, or that not all parts of a context were equally contributory to artwork identity, but not to suggest that wider changes (such as the authorial identity) could also be countenanced. However, the point here is that we have no warrant either to isolate some individual parts of the overall

context, or ignore the richness of the context that each art-making activity requires – both of which are required in forming the kind of imaginary artworks that can provide the experimental type data for thought experiments.[9]

Put simply, even if we do accept, against the first methodological objection, that artworks can set theoretical precedents, the actually existing artworks we've got to work with won't tell us *how* to expand into the non-actual – and we can't get an adequate description from anywhere else apart from those actual artworks. In art, neither the past nor the present is a reliable guide for the future.

This makes the 'possible' in the 'it is possible to make...' type generalisation that thought experiments seek to test *much more* problematic than it might first appear. Again, the construction of the imaginary artwork requires that we describe the imagined artwork in as far as it meets our philosophical purpose, but, if we are holding a position that their identity and existence conditions necessarily involves the precise context of its creation, then that description is far less than is actually demanded by the very philosophical theory itself subscribed to by the philosophical thought experimenter. Indeed, even for such philosophical positions, lurking behind the use of thought experiments using imaginary artworks may well be the shadow of the thought from philosophy's past that artworks are so because

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[9] I am grateful to conversations with James Hamilton for my thinking on this point.

of the kind of object they are, rather, than the kind of context in which they are enmeshed.

To sum up these two problems, it is first that artworks may be not the sort of things that are generalizable out from their particular instantiation, and that their being artworks makes no demand on them that must, or even might be, but that the construction of an imaginary artwork demands that real artworks can be treated as such. Secondly, that the real-world context of an artworks' production is too complex to be reproduced in thought experiments and/or is always radically under-described in terms of its identity and existence conditions as an artwork. Both problems point to the same underlying position – that imaginary artworks constructed in philosophical thought experiments cannot actually be artworks, as they are in the real-world.

4. Experimental Aesthetics or Philosophical Anthropology?

If the problem is that philosophy imagines things with the status of artworks, but which function as theoretical experiments, rather than as artworks on their own terms, then perhaps a solution is to actually make artworks? Could this replicate some of the intended clarificatory effects of thought experiments using imaginary artworks without the problems? Consider a form of experimental aesthetics that amounts to 'philosophical anthropology': Imagine a 'thought experiment tester' constructing

experiments within the *practice* of art by *making* artworks from those conceived within philosophical thought experiments, so instead of describing them in a paper, they perform them through their actions. They make the philosophically theoretical, artistically actual. Would this let them exist as artworks?

This proposal faces (at least) 3 challenges[10] - each of which illustrate aspects of philosophy's relationship with art.

The first is whether the work of the philosophical anthropologist would get *accepted* as art by the practice of art. It would need deep deep cover I suspect, at least a deep as Kosuth or Art & Language and require it to be explicit that is was an *artistic* project. If the underlying philosophical nature of the project was discovered, it may lead to the works being rejected by art, as somewhat ersatz, and relegated to some secondary realm of things about art, but not art, like the satires of Les Incoherents, or indeed fakes or forgeries.

Then there are two worries about the effect – artistically and philosophically – of doing this. For art, if the philosophical anthropologist's works *do* get accepted as artworks, the effect of these philosophical experiments will have been imposed from outside that practice and done for philosophy's need, and not for art's internal logic, (which may be weak or strong or non-existent, but whichever, is not the same as philosophy's need).

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[10] There are more – what for instance does occasional failure look like and what does it mean for the philosophical project?

For *philosophy*, the effect of doing the practical version of a thought experiment within the practice will change that practice so that it is different from that which was to be initially tested by the experiment. We effectively set up a parallel version of art – 'art*', which by admitting the thought experiment situation as definitely relevant to its analysis, diverts that analysis away from art as a practice in this world, and into describing the practice of 'art*' – which now contains all the art in this world and the imagined artwork added as real by the experimental thought experiment. The version of the practice that includes the actualised thought experiment is no longer 'art' as it was, but now art, given our theoretical extension via our manifested thought experiment. In doing so they may license possibilities in 'art*' that would, like the Les Incoherent products, not be licensed by the actual practice of art in this world.

We have tested to see if art will accept our philosophical extension of it and if it does, the conclusions are retrospective, looking back to the practice as it was, not as it now is. So, the philosophy of art, by subsuming itself within the practice of art, will always through its experimenting render the results of that experiment obsolete, even though part of its philosophical project will have been to scope the future of art, through testing its present.

What this means is that we have, in effect, moved beyond making experimental thought experiments about art as a practice, to making experimental thought experiments about 'art' as a concept. The use of experimental philosophy to cover non-actual situations and artworks will

have become conceptual analysis, not practice analysis – they are about the concept of 'art' but not solely about how it is used and forged in practice. In order to defeat these worries the experimental philosophy would have to break free of the practice. But then we are back with philosophy once more, looking from the outside in, adjudicating, on the basis of possibilities, what can count as actual instances of the practice.

Thought experiments using imaginary artworks will inevitably be a tool for *philosophy*, rather than getting to a description of the possibility of art on art's own terms. Using them relies on extracting only, and taking as paramount, the supposed *theoretical* possibilities arising from actual artistic practice - but does not recognise it as an historically and materially particularised activity. As such they are of definite philosophical value, but their use indicates moving beyond a purely practice-based approach to art. This is the root cause of the tensions so far highlighted – that thought experiments in philosophy do conceptual analysis, but this is alarming for any philosophical project that seeks in its view to respect art's parvenu to decide what is and what is not, art and so their use within any practice analysis based on a practice view of art is more obscure.

This is why, if you are using actual art of the past as a substantial part of your enfranchising reason for why art of the present gets accepted as such, then using thought experiments containing imaginary artworks will very likely be illegitimate, as it augments the history of art, as it was, with theoretical extensions of it as you'd like it to be. It not only changes the

history of practice, it warps it so that it includes all actual art and this philosophical interloper inserted for philosophy's need but allowed no full artistic articulation - and without allowing for its consequent (and unknown) historical ripples for art. It's like imagining if the products Les Exposition Incoherents *were* artworks: That would change everything in the actual history of art the later experiments of modernism, if they happened at all, would be radically different if they were evaluated in an art history in which those experiments had initially been the subject of humour. Thus, there is at least a tension, if not outright contradiction, in having a philosophical theory that suggests that the actual history of art is the basis for the reason of the acceptance of new proposed artefacts etc. as art, and the use of thought experiments within that theory that imagine artworks that don't actually exist, but yet which have the appearance of being situated within real art historical time and contexts. Nor, if you take the practice view and accept that the actual practice of art is the evidential basis for judgments about whether something is art or not, can you test that theory using imaginary artworks within thought experiments. We don't have a sufficient warrant to invent artworks that were not in the history of art and insert them into the same history of art that we currently enjoy. Our current history of art is here now because of what it has been in the past, and because it is no different to how is has been in the past - change the history and you change the concept (or at least change the extension of the concept). One can't use imaginary art to support the causal and explanatory sufficiency of actual art.

Yet, this does offer those who commit to a practice view both a potential *freedom* from the results of such thought experiments, and a *constraint* on their legitimate construction. The freedom it gives is a potential immunity from attacks from thought experiments using non-actual situations. They become, potentially irrelevant as outside the scope of the theory or can be cast as illegitimately constructed. The answer is always open, that there is some reason why the non-actual situation would be defeated in the real-world practice.

However, the potential freedom becomes a *prison* when trying to argue positively *for* such positions philosophically. If we discount the relevance of imaginary artworks in our thought experiments, then *all* we are left with for our comparison set to test these theories of art is the manifestation of the practice in the *actual world* – the artworks (and non-art, like the productions of Les Incoherents) that *actually exist.* This may lead such positions to collapse into little more than descriptions of that one actualised world. The philosopher, is in effect, trapped within the history of art.

5. Conclusion: Nettle Grasping

Finally, to end on this, this suggests to me an open question as to whether we need to grasp some nettles: Firstly, to say there's an inevitability for any philosophical theory of art to have some element of normative criticality to

it, even if it takes the actual practice of art as the evidence basis for its judgements. This would let us carry on doing conceptual analysis sticking as close as we can to actual practice.

Alternatively, perhaps that given the sort of practice art is, there may be no *need* for a philosophical theory to range over the non-actual as well as the actual in order to be adequate from art's viewpoint. This would mean that philosophical theories of art do not *need* proofs and generalisations or future proofing, they simply *need* to be able to track *actual* practice. So, for art, as a concept that's given in practice, adequate theories only require one-world extensional equivalence and validity: That is - the manifestation of the practice in this actual world. This does of course require a prior commitment to the existence of artworks. Perhaps the empirical historical generalisations (such as "some contexts have produced readymades") are the best we can hope of getting from art. Perhaps, more mysteriously, and even more philosophically, 'art' is the sort of radically contextually sensitive concept for which philosophy's role can *only* be to provide a descriptive account of what is going on. Each nettle has its stings.

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To Be a Bat: Can Art Objectify the Subjective?

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ABSTRACT. My goal here will be to observe the way art may claim to capture, represent, and indeed transmit subjectivity. I argue, following Bertrand Russell, that it is *knowledge by acquaintance* that is at the heart of subjectivity. To answer the question raised by the title of this paper, I will examine the potentialities and the limits of works of art that attempt to show us "what it is like" to experience something – works that strive to objectify the subjective. Can art really capture all of the depth of our affects and our qualia? Is it capable not only of shaping our subjectivity but of transmitting to us the subjectivity of the artist? Exploring these issues will involve returning to the Mind-Body problem and to the work of Thomas Nagel and Rosalind Krauss.

To Marguerite: Continued

Yes! in the sea of life enisled,

With echoing straits between us thrown,

Dotting the shoreless watery wild,

We mortal millions live *alone.*

– Matthew Arnold, 1852, 1857.

Is the visual image automatically a source of knowledge? Can it capture and

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transmit all sorts of cognitive information? In *Echo Objects : The Cognitive Work of Images* (2007), Barbara Maria Stafford offers a radical answer to these questions. She argues that the visual image inherently embodies a sort of objectivity and cognition that goes far beyond everyday concerns. Indeed, she claims that basic geometrical shapes remind us of the creation of the solar system and of the total history of our species:

> Upward or downward-inclined lines, upright or inverted isosceles triangles, circles, and squares schematize the sublimated violent tale of the formation of the solar system and suppressed recollection of the battle-to-the-death for the survival of the fittest.[2]

Here seeing is not only perceiving, it amounts to grasping via an image the fundamental and objective truth of our ontology and metaphysics.

This kind of radical claim for the objectivity of the visual often goes hand in hand with a certain determinism. On this point, Stafford concurs with many other theorists who see art as an activity over-determined by natural selection and/or our neurological make-up.[3] Yet if this determinism

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[2] Stafford, Barbara Maria, *Echo Objects: The Cognitive Work of Images*, Chicago, U of Chicago P, 2007, p. 31.

[3] On this point, see Shusterman, Ronald, « Effet immédiat, satisfait ou remboursé : les impasses du déterminisme matérialiste en art, » Pau, PUP, 2014, pp. 53-61 ; "Aesthetic Effects and Determinism," *Proceedings of the European Society for Æsthetics*, Vol. 3, 2011, pp. 267-280; « Atavisme et animalité : la nouvelle esthétique matérialiste anglo-saxonne », *in Animal / Humain : passages*, *Figures de l'art 27*, 2014, pp. 33-45.

is consciously endorsed by many theorists, there are also visual artists who seem to adopt, consciously or unconsciously, a similar position. I intend to examine how the visual image might be a vector of knowledge by discussing the question of subjectivity. If the image is in some way inherently cognitive, then perhaps it may indeed transmit both the visible and the invisible. If visual art is in some way a source of fundamental knowledge, then it should be able to objectify the subjective.

Obviously, one could spend hours defining in detail the notions of objectivity and cognition, notions that have been rejected or reworked in various ways by various movements in poststructuralism, postmodernism, deconstruction, pragmatism, and so on. One would also have to spend time working out the boundaries of the visual image in its relations to the theory and practice of art. Such endeavours are beyond the scope of this short paper, but I would like to recall the distinction, established long ago by Bertrand Russell, between *knowledge by description* and *knowledge by acquaintance*. Knowledge by description is propositional knowledge based on reasoning, logic, and the workings of the language used to express the information involved. If I'm told that the Tower of London is in London, I can infer that it is in England. On the other hand, I cannot know what it is like to be imprisoned there unless I undergo the experience. Only this direct contact can provide the sensory data, the affects – all of the subjective phenomena philosophers sometimes call *qualia* – that being shut up in the Tower of London entails.

Knowledge by acquaintance is thus at the heart of subjectivity. To answer the question raised by the title of this paper, I will examine the range and power of art that seeks some kind of sensorial objectivity. This investigation is only indirectly related to the question of the propositional knowledge that may or may not be transmitted by figurative or narrative art. No doubt the analysis of the "truth" of figurative painting will be roughly analogous to the analysis of the relation between literary fiction and reality. My interest here, however, is the extent to which visual art, representational or not, can embody all of the wealth and particularity of our sensorial existence. Clearly a work of art modifies the spectator's subjectivity, but the question becomes: can it produce in the spectator some kind of correspondence to the qualia the artist experienced during the conception and the production of the work. This, after all, was the idea behind the theory of the "objective correlative" formulated by T.S. Eliot back in 1921:

> The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an "objective correlative"; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that *particular* emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked.[4]

If the artist externalizes his interiority via the objective correlative, it might

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[4] See Eliot, T.S., "Hamlet and his Problems," *in The Sacred Wood*, New York, Knopf, 1921, p. 92.

be hoped that the spectator could reach an analogous state via his contemplation of the work.

We might add that this notion of an objective correlative is not far from the Joycean concept of the *epiphany*. And to move from the sublime to what may be considered the ridiculous by some, we could argue that Tracey Emin's *My Bed* (1998) is clearly the objective correlative of her inner life.

Figure 1: Tracy Emin, *My Bed* (1998)

The art of self-expression, be it confession or braggartry, is indeed both objective and subjective. But it remains to be seen whether or not such objective correlatives can become the source of truly analogous qualia or corresponding emotion for the spectator. Can the artist really *objectify* her subjectivity?

Those of you who have recognized the allusion to Thomas Nagel in my title have probably guessed that my answer is going to be essentially

negative. In "What is it like to be a Bat", Nagel questions the possibility of a transfer of subjectivities between different species, concluding that the only way to know what it is like to be a bat is to be one.[5] Nagel's approach provides the foundations of my analysis, but before I come back to it, I should like to examine how several artists *imagine* the subjectivity and alterity of different species.

We can start with Damien Hirst and Jan Fabre. One could say a lot about Hirst's relation to the animal world, but here, for example, is his rendition of a chiroptera:


Figure 2: Damien Hirst, *Caroliae perspicillatae* (2014)

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[5] See *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 83, No. 4. (Oct., 1974), pp. 435-450.

And here is what Fabre has to offer:

Figure 3: Jan Fabre, *Ik heb vannacht een vleermuis gezien in het Peerdsbos* (1986)

While both works can indeed tell us what it is like to *see* a bat, neither is going to help us experience the qualia involved in *being* one.

One amusing attempt to embody hybridity and interspecific subjectivity can be found in the following self-portrait by Fabre, something that might have been called "*What it's like to be a worm*":

Figure 4: Jan Fabre, *Autoportrait en plus grand ver du monde* (2008)

Once again, whatever we might think of this work, it seems clear that it fails to provoke in us the qualia of a worm. Nor is it likely that Fabre in some way experienced worminess himself at the moment of its conception. Wittgenstein made the point long ago: "If a lion could speak, we could not understand him."[6] Nagel adds that in order to feel the subjectivity of a bat, it is not enough to imagine how it would affect *me* to fly in the dark, use ultrasound to navigate, or to hang upside down from a branch:

> Insofar as I can imagine this (which is not very far) it tells me only
> what it would be like for *me* to behave as a bat behaves. But that is not

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[6] Wittgenstein, Ludwig *Philosophical Investigations*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1986,p. 226.

the question. I want to know what it is like for a *bat* to be a bat. I am restricted to the resources of my own mind and those resources are inadequate to the task.[7]

There have also been various literary efforts to capture interspecific qualia – one recent French novel by an art critic involves the author imagining himself as a bird[8] – but *imagining* foreign qualia isn't the same as actually experiencing them, and the connection between a literary text and sensation is going to be even more problematic.

Yet it must be admitted that in other contexts the visual image does provide a sort of objective knowledge, in some flexible sense of the term. One might establish a rough typology of the objectivity of images, distinguishing between:

1. Objectivity via contact or impression: Here the information transmitted via the visual image is «true» in the sense of being produced by a causal relation. One could count Muybridge's form of chronophotography as an example of this: the camera objectively captures light in a way that gives us knowledge about the movements of a horse.

2. Perceptual Objectivity: Despite what I have said about the impossibility of transmitting the artist's subjectivity to the spectator, it would be foolish to deny that the work of art provokes certain inevitable

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[7] Nagel, Thomas, *Mortal Questions*, Cambridge, CUP, 1979; Canto, 1991, p. 169.
[8] See Ardenne, Paul, *Comment je suis oiseau*, Paris, Passage, 2014.

perceptual responses. I don't *choose* to see an Yves Klein monochrome as blue; this is a given, and to that extent one might speak of the "objectivity" of this percept.

3. Propositional Objectivity: In this case, one might speak of the "objectivity" or of the "truthfulness" of the image's narrative or factual content, a content that needs to be corroborated by other sources of cognition, whatever their status may be. This corroboration may of course be problematic and debatable, to the extent that my recognition (for example) of a portrait of Napoleon depends on no actual knowledge of him, but on my contact with other portraits that I deem authentic.

I've put "scare quotes" around the various usages of the rem "objectivity" here as there is obviously some slippage in the senses being used in these differing contexts. But since the topic is the relation of the visual image to questions of knowledge and truth, it seemed useful to make these brief remarks.

We can see that categories 1 and 3 involve both knowledge by description and knowledge by acquaintance. When I examine the image of the galloping horse, I combine the perceptual experience of visual data with the logical analysis of propositional information. My second category, on the other hand, only involves percepts, with no propositional content other than the knowledge that this particular image produces this particular percept. It is thus this second category that interests me here.

I would like to pursue the question by examining the following work presented in Paris in 2012:
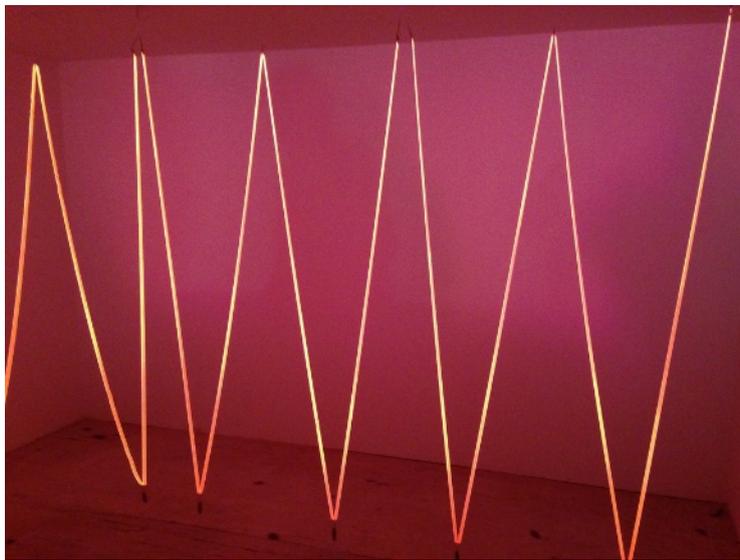

Figure 5: Jan Van Munster, *Warmte* (1983, 2012)

It would be imprudent to limit this work to one dimension only, but I would like to argue that the visual is not really what matters most here. Perceptually, the dominant feature is the extreme heat one feels as one approaches the incandescent lines. We can say that this heat is an objective quality of the work, and also note that the work isn't giving us an *image* of heat – it is actually producing it automatically for any spectator who is sufficiently nearby.

Of course, the term "image" is a slippery as "objectivity". Some theorists limit it to its representational sense – an image is always an image *of* something. Others extend the term to make it synonymous with "sense data" – this is the kind of usage that enables one to speak of "auditory images". And here I would indeed like to turn to music, since the following example will help us perceive the limits of certain fashions in art theory today.

Anthony Braxton is an intellectual jazz musician, a specialist of free jazz who was influenced by John Cage. Back in 1975, I bought his album, *Five Pieces*, for his absolutely sublime version of a jazz standard, *You Stepped Out of a Dream* – the first track on the album. The other 4 tracks had the following titles:

<div align="center">

"G - 647 (BNK - [ ]"

"4038 -- NBS 373 6"

"489 M 70 - 2 -- (TH - B) M"

"BOR - - - - H - S N - K64 (60) - - M"

</div>

At this point in his career, Braxton had abandoned titles in English, replacing them with symbols or graphs such as these:
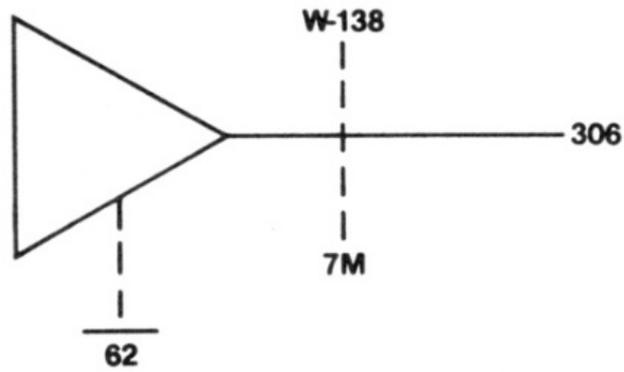
Figure 6.
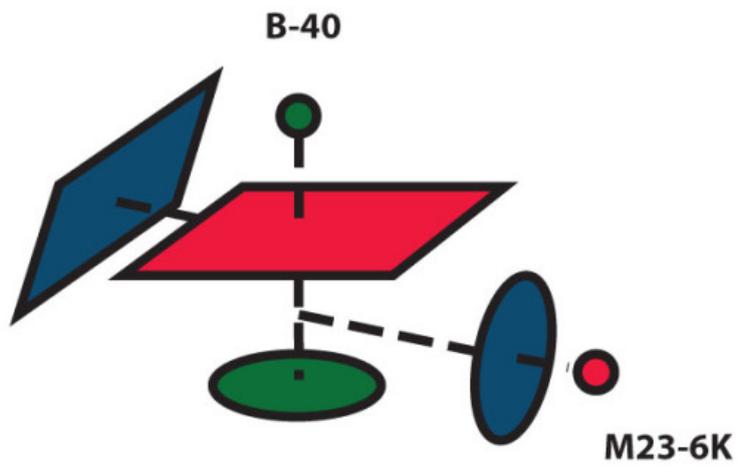
Figure 7.

Here is what one online jazz encyclopaedia observes:

> Braxton eschewed conventional titles for his compositions, and
> instead identified each with a diagram consisting of a few lines and
> letters, some resembling circuit diagrams. Braxton later added
> sequential numbers to the diagrams, making it easier to track his
> expanding bodies of work, but the compositions themselves were still
> hard to define.[9]

Theoretically, this seems to be some kind of visual notation of the musical
score, but it is not at all clear how such a notation would work. Does the
drawing really represent the music? Perhaps for Braxton himself there is
some obvious connection between the diagrams and the music, but can the
rest of us make the same claim?

I would like to argue that the Braxton example teaches us two lessons.
First of all, we can see the limits of all the "transaesthetic relations" that
have become so popular in university studies over the last 20 years or so.
One cannot simply affirm peremptorily some fundamental connection
between image and sound or image and text for there really to be some
mystical relation between them all. This might help us reject some of the
radical claims of people like W.J.T. Mitchell for whom there is, in the final
analysis, no difference between a text an image, for whom "…there is no
essential difference between poetry and painting, no difference, that is, that

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[9] See http://www.jazz.com/encyclopedia/braxton-anthony

is given for all time by the inherent natures of the media, the objects they represent, or the laws of the human mind."[10] Secondly (but perhaps it is really the same idea), the arbitrariness of the sign and the ultimate incommensurability of our different senses erect a insurmountable barrier to any attempt to achieve a total transmission of subjectivity and a total erasure of the boundaries between the arts. The images provided by Braxton do not capture the music, they do not allow us to *see* it, nor even to *hear* it, no matter how we try.

But perhaps we could find some more positive examples of how art might provide a kind of objectivity by controlling the spectator's subjectivity while at the same time providing some sort of knowledge. James Turrell's *Roden Crater* is a site conceived for the contemplation of the cosmos. It controls our qualia for cognitive purposes. To place yourself in a particular position at a particular moment in the history of time is to observe some predetermined celestial phenomenon. Turrell himself underlines the objectivity of the visual experience that is produced:

> *Roden Crater* has knowledge in it and it does something with that
> knowledge. Environmental events occur, a space lights up. Something
> happens in there for a moment, or for a time. It is an eye, something

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[10] See Mitchell, W.J.T., *Iconology. Image, Text, Ideology*, Chicago, U of Chicago P, 1986, p. 49.

that is itself perceiving. It is a piece that does not end […] When you're there, it has visions, qualities, and a universe of possibilities.[11]

We could also mention Olafur Eliasson in this context. His explicit goal is not to get us to contemplate the cosmos, but to observe our own sensory mechanisms. As we know, his oft-repeated slogan – "to see yourself sensing" – is exemplified in works of art that plunge us into sensory environments where our subjectivity is overwhelmed. To take just one example, here is *Your Spiral View* (2002):

Figure 6: Eliasson, *Your Spiral View* (2002)

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[11] See Turrell quoted in Bright, Richard, *James Turrell – Eclipse*, Ostfildern, Hatje Cantz /Michael Hue-Williams, 1999, p. 21.

Eliasson does things with colour as well, and we can find the same approach in earlier works by Carlos Cruz-Diaz, an artist interested in controlling subjectivity by "disrupting retinal activity".[12] I will return later to the question of *why* artists might want to deconstruct our perceptions and sensations, but right now the obvious point is that they can indeed do so, as long as we are willing to experience their work.

But this obvious point is *not* an answer to the question initially raised. For art to objectify subjectivity, for art to provide total knowledge, it would have to do more than simply objectify the affects and percepts of the creator, more than simply modulate our own. For their to be some sort of objective knowledge of subjectivity, the affects and percepts on both sides of the exchange would have to be identical. And this brings me back to Matthew Arnold:

<div align="center">

To Marguerite: Continued

Yes! in the sea of life enisled,

With echoing straits between us thrown,

Dotting the shoreless watery wild,

We mortal millions live alone.

– Matthew Arnold, 1852, 1857

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[12] See the official webpage of the artist : http://www.cruz-diez.com/work/chromosaturation/.

Alas, not only can we never know what it is like to be a bat, we can never fully know what it is like to be another human being.

Ultimately, the whole question of objectifying subjectivity is linked to that perennial question in philosophy, the mind-body problem. The American artist Robert Morris playfully alluded to this problem in a series of works that also inspired an important essay by Rosalind Krauss. In "The Mind/Body Problem : Robert Morris in Series,"[13] Krauss connects Morris to what she sees as the hopeless dualism at the heart of Nagel's approach. For Krauss, a work such as *Box with the Sound of Its Own Making* (1961) underlines both mind-body dualism and the distinction between inside and out:

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[13] Krauss, Rosalind, "The Mind/Body Problem", *in* KRENS, Thomas et al., *Robert Morris. The Mind/Body Problem*, New York, Guggenheim, 1994, pp. 2-17.

Figure 7: Morris, *Box with the Sound of Its Own Making* (1961)

In the same way that a human cranium contains, in a sense, both the physical brain and the nonmaterial memory, this box contains an immaterial trace of its production – a tape recording to which we have no access – and this trace is, in a sense, its own memory:

> …the box seems to confront the viewer from the other side of that divide that separates the object from subject: 'What is it like,' it seems to say, 'to be a box?'" (4)

For Krauss, works such as *Box* or *Card File* (1962) eliminate dualism by transcending it, by making so-called private states visible and public. Here is *Card File*:

Figure 8: Krauss, *Card File* (1962)

And here is Krauss's conclusion:

> To reduce the "mental" to "language" is to transform the presumed
> privacy of thinking into the public medium of speech and the logic of
> propositions. It is as well to exchange the mysterious domain of what
> can be known only to the knower for the overt space of shared events.
> (4)

For Krauss, the logical positivism of A.J. Ayer established long ago that the mind/body distinction was simply nonsense since consciousness and sense data can be translated into propositions, propositions that can be made public in the same way that Morris provides public access to his card file. Krauss calls Nagel a "postbehaviourist neodualist" (p.3) and claims that Morris manages to transcend this dualism.

I don't think that mind-body dualism can be erased by simply translating sense-data into propositions. Indeed, the very term "translating" implies that *there is something different there to translate*. For Krauss, Nagel is saying "that there are two different types of *substances* in the world, the physical and the mental" (p.3) but Nagel never speaks of "mental substances", and offhand I don't know of any contemporary philosopher who does. The mind/body problem is not a debate about propositions. It concerns the link between the thoughts and qualia experienced by a subject and the physical body that is in some way the seat of these experiences.

For Krauss, Morris manages to externalize inner experience in order to defeat dualism. The best example of this is *Self-Portrait (EEG)* (1963), a

work where Morris recorded his electroencephalogram while he was thinking of himself:
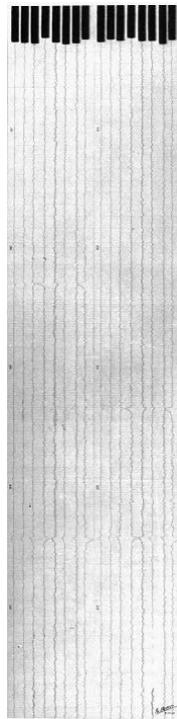

Figure 9: Morris *Self-Portrait (EEG)* (1963)

The EEG lasted long enough for the lines to correspond to Morris's actual height, so it is indeed a self-portrait, in a sense. Krauss concludes that Morris manages here "to transform the density of the body and the complexity of the mind into a linear trace" (p. 12); the artist thus shows us "what [it is] like to be a brain" (p.3).

Krauss's style in this article is rather allusive and mysterious at times, and perhaps I am being unfair to her arguments. But she does seem to be using Morris to defend a radical form of behaviourism and to convince us to abandon the entire concept of inner life in favour of a public and visible existence that could be considered either fully objective and objectified, or at least sufficiently *intersubjective* to count as truth.

However, one could draw totally opposite conclusions from these works by Morris. One could argue, for example, that the *Box* underlines what we humans have and what it does not: actual qualia and a rich and infinite inner life. One could argue that *Self-Portrait (EEG)* teaches us that no visual image or physical manifestation can actually give us the *content* of subjectivity, even if it may in some way be the trace of this subjectivity. For Morris's EEG is to his own mental life what Braxton's odd titles are to his music: they pretend to be signs, but they cannot really represent consciousness, cannot really transmit inner subjectivity.

Of course, artists always try to do what cannot be done, and there have been many attempts to imagine what it is like to be a brain. Here is *Wonderland* (2013), a monumental work in the centre of Calgary:

Figure 10: Jaume Plensa, *Wonderland* (2013)

A portal allows the visitor to enter Alice's head, and once inside I do indeed see the world through her eyes:
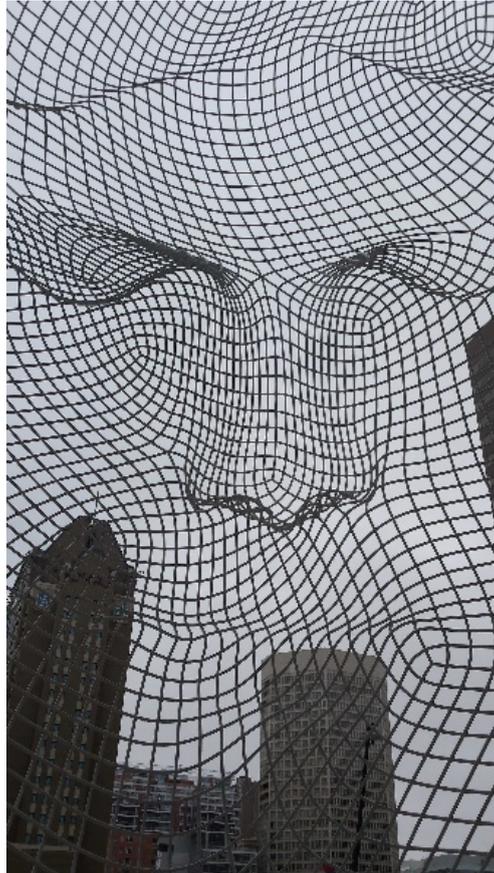
Figure 11.

But, alas, I remain the one doing the seeing, I can never be Alice, nor more than I can ever be a bat.

In the final analysis, the visual image can indeed give us knowledge by description of an object or event. It can give us knowledge by acquaintance of various sorts of percepts. What it cannot provide is direct

access to the internal qualia of another human being. *We mortal millions live alone.*

Yet we still can wonder why so many artists attempt nonetheless to transmit their subjectivity, why they try to determine our own, why they seek to transform art into some sort of total communion. Even if there is no chance of success, art seems to aspire to the condition of objectivity and total exchange. For example, there is at times a quasi-mystical dimension in the approach of James Turrell, something that is visible in quotations such as this:

> I am interested in a place where the imaginative seeing and the seeing of the external world meet, where it is difficult to distinguish the seeing from within from the seeing from without.[14]

Turrell also evokes the idea of a "Simultaneous Dreamer" – a being capable of experiencing "the Infinite Simultaneous Dream, when multiple points of consciousness can observe different perspectives at the same time." (p. 48, note 17). Can this be done? Can this exist? Can art objectify inner life in order to achieve communion? I think not. But artistic dreams will never be thwarted by this sad truth.

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[14] James Turrell quoted in Govan, Michael & Kim, Christine Y., *James Turrell: A Retrospective*, LACMA / Delmonico / Prestel, Munich, London, New York, 2013, p. 95.

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To Be Performed: Recognizing Presentations of Visual Art as Goodmanean 'Instances'

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ABSTRACT. If artworks are distinguishable as the kinds of things that not only elicit interpretations, but require interpretations in order to be presented to a public, then every artwork presentation reflects a particular interpretation, and is thus effectively a *performance* of that artwork. Visual Art interpretations, whose forms include exhibitions, reviews and discussions, entail time-intensive processes that attempt to understand: why an artist created something, how best to categorize it, or its influential status. That presenters invite spectators to experience artworks in whatever manner performers deem the best interpretation no doubt influences cognition, but are experiences of performances sufficiently concrete to count as "instantiations"? In order to demonstrate that "instantiation" and "instances" are applicable for visual art, I first employ the Presentation-Reception model (PRM) to show that jazz is a two-stage art form whose performers interpret works. By extension, I argue that all publicly presented artworks are "two-stage" art forms, including visual art. I then distinguish curatorial work as presenters' performances from artists' performances, thus framing curators as artistic directors (conductors, directors, or publishers). When treated like performances, exhibitions instantiate instances of the work in light of performers' interpretations. I end with a discussion of the way curators, as well as the artworld more generally, employ visual art's presentational

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histories as a kind notation, which helps them perform artworks. In the end, notationless visual art is no less performable than jazz music.

1. Introduction: Instantiating Interpretations *qua* Public Performances

If artworks are distinguishable as the kinds of things that not only elicit interpretations, but require interpretations in order to be presented to a public, then every artwork presentation reflects a particular interpretation, and is thus effectively a *performance* of that artwork. Visual art interpretations, whose forms include exhibitions, reviews and discussions, entail time-intensive processes that attempt to understand: why an artist created something, how best to categorize it, or its influential status. By contrast, nonart (billboards, car lots, or curated exhibitions) doesn't warrant interpretations, unless one is testing whether something ought to count as art. Being nonart, one readily infers: what the billboard is advertising, that cars are positioned to sell or the exhibition's multiple hypotheses. I imagine most readers having experienced artworks that required them to do something extra to see them as art. As it turns out, "extra something" involves developing an appropriate interpretation. On par with itches in need of scratching, the interpretive urge is often insatiable.

That presenters invite spectators to experience artworks in whatever manner performers deem the best interpretation no doubt influences

cognition, but are experiences of performances sufficiently concrete to count as "instantiations"? Thanks to Nelson Goodman's *Languages of Art* (1968), "autographic" visual art, whether one-stage like painting or two-stage like prints, are considered ontologically distinct from "allographic" forms like performable scripts, scores, and texts. For example, Andrew Kania considers performances "different kinds of things from works of art," since not all artworks require performances. He claims that jazz has only performances and sculptures feature only work, while classical music comprises both works and performances (Kania 2011, p. 400). To my lights, all three demand work and performance. To prove that all publicly presented artworks are "two-stage" art forms, I begin by framing jazz performances as interpretations indicative of work. Each visual art presentations request spectators to focus on different aspects of the artworks, so temporary exhibitions proffer instances on par with classical music concerts. When treated like performances, exhibitions instantiate instances of the work in light of performers' interpretations. Moreover, notationless visual art is no less performable than jazz music.

Although Goodman sometimes called the printed copy of a score an "instance," he mostly used this term to refer to an allographic work's myriad performances, as I do here (Goodman 1968, p. 112). For coherency purposes, I reserve Goodmanean "instances" for second-stage performances, not copies of first-stage notations. Goodman's referring to both as instances risks mixing apples and oranges.

> Performances may vary in correctness and quality and even in 'authenticity' of a more esoteric kind; but all correct performances are equally genuine instances of the work. In contrast, even the most exact copies of the Rembrandt painting are simply imitations or forgeries, not new instances, of the work. Why this difference between the two arts? (113).

With this passage, Goodman identifies second-stage performances as "genuine instances of the work," by which he means score presentations. Meanwhile, he claims that copies of one-step art forms such as paintings are forgeries. Although I recognize that copies of scores are not forgeries, the way copies of paintings are; I consider painting a two-stage art form, whose first stage is autographic, whereas its second stage is allographic (Pillow 2003, 372) since "all correct performances are equally genuine instances of the work." New instances of works arise from interpretations that engender opportunities for fresh cognitive experiences, rather than twin copies of the work.

The twin hallmarks of Goodmanean "instances" are reproducible, yet unrepeatable. That is, instances are non-identical presentations (reproducible, yet unrepeatable), rather than "identical copies" of some underlying notation. In fact, the very notion of "instance" would be redundant, were it not for some confusion that prevents immediate

recognition of two presentations' identity, linked as they are to the same notation. Since philosophers tend to split hairs over whether instantiations are: unique (jazz), identical limited (prints), singular unlimited (symphonies), or not at all (a painting experienced differently in consecutive exhibitions), the term performance seems most suitable. Curators' performances invite spectators to see artworks *as* some interpretation. This elicits what Ludwig Wittgenstein termed "aspect-seeing," since one sees something differently, even as one admits that it has not changed at all. Given each artwork's numerous aspects, curators draw attention to aspects as evidence for their interpretations, not unlike filmmakers or theater directors staging each scene to direct the audience's attention to the appropriate information.

In order to demonstrate that "instantiation" and "instances" are applicable for visual art, I first employ the Presentation-Reception model (PRM) to show that jazz is a two-stage art form whose performers interpret works; then distinguish curatorial work as presenters' performances from artists' performances, thus framing curators as artistic directors (conductors, directors, or publishers); and end with a discussion the way curators treat a visual artwork's presentational history as a kind notation, which helps them perform it.

2. Jazz Interpretations

The two-step PRM accounts for the significance of reception and explains why neither appreciation nor presentation is sufficient for artworks to be received as art. Aestheticians have proffered various explanations for what Arthur Danto termed "the transfiguration of the commonplace" (Danto 1981). Most views focus on presentation, downplaying the significance of reception. Philosophical approaches that emphasize presentation include: 1) Platonic forms/essences (Plato/Heidegger), 2) Artworld theories/Baptism (Danto 1981), 3) Institutional Theory of Art (Dickie 2007), and 4) Intentionalism. On the other side of the spectrum is John Andrew Fisher's "Realization Model," which emphasizes reception, yet neglects presentation. Alternatively, PRM credits audience appreciation (reception) with jazz performers' interpretations (presentation) of m, where m might be a score, a jazz standard, another performer's string of notes, a bodily gesture, a color, a hand signal, etc. I prefer interpretation to expression, since expression suggests that something has been conveyed (expressions of x), which likely require the audience's further interpretation.

Musical performers charged with making jazz presentations *happen* are engaged in interpretative acts, whether they are performing "free

jazz" or interpreting scores.[2] Although audience appreciation could be caused by some extraneous influence such as the whiskey imbibed during intermission, my focus here is listeners' avowed appreciation of particular jazz performances. Although I accept Fisher's view that listener appreciation signals a jazz work's realization, my two-step model ties audience appreciation (reception) to performers' particular interpretations (presentation) and leaves open the possibility that jazz performances are not "realized," and thus remain nonart sounds.

Unlike classical music conductors, who don't ordinarily perform instruments while conducting, jazz performers regularly signal their collaborators to: begin/stop musical numbers, encourage/discourage particular structural elements, and showcase/arrest soloists. Jazz musicians thus perform in expectation that they please/impress listeners, in the near-term hope that collaborators will afford them greater air time, with the long-term goal to be invited back, as their reputation as performers grows and their skills in responding to players' signals improves. In fact, one might make the case that the singular goal of any jazz performance is the musicians' success at impressing all listeners, including all performers, with their capacity to produce musical works on the spot, whether as soloists or accompanists. The jazz musician's special skill is "fitting in," that is, playing his/her part as an ensemble.

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[2] I thank Brazilian-jazz guitarist Henri Griendl and composer/conductor/guitarist Van Stiefel, Ph. D. for their invaluable insight into jazz performances.

For Fisher, a jazz realization is invariably unique, as opposed to merely singular (an instance of a musical work). By unique, he means that "the experience is genuinely of music-making-in-the-moment; the performance is heard as spontaneous *as a whole* even when also heard as partly structured by an external pattern" (158). Moreover, "[t]he performers respond to each other and to the music that has gone before —with the piece or the arrangement in their heads as well; they strive to play something in the moment appropriate to what has gone before and is going on in that moment" (159). Most important, "[h]earing that appropriateness is a key part of the listener's experience of the moment-to-moment organic development of successful jazz performance" (159). No doubt, jazz musicians' performances influence what listeners *hear*. Those performances that Fisher qualifies as "jazz realizations" succeed because audiences hear the performers' interpretations of *m* as works of art.

In privileging audience reception, Fisher's Realization model effectively liberates musical performances' dependence on extant scores, or "work." Eschewing the music critic's role, he remarks that "critical attention is not what makes a musical piece a musical work." While "every musical work affords critical attention," whether it actually "elicits critical attention depends on the interest of the listener...More central than critical attention is *musical appreciation* (emphasis mine): what gives musical pleasure, what do knowledgeable listeners attend to in jazz" (154). Alternatively, classical "composers came to see themselves as producing works that had the

properties of 'autonomy, repeatability, permanence, perfect compliance-concepts associated with the work concept'" (Goehr 1992, p. 119; Fisher 2018, p. 155). To realize these properties, conductors *supposedly* adopted the ideology of *werktreue*: faithfulness of the composer's intentions indicated by the score. I write "supposedly," because Gunther Schuller's monumental *Compleat Conductor,* which compares hundreds of symphony recordings to their scores, reveals performers veering from scores, making *werktreue* an ideal, not reality (Schuller 1997).

2.1 Jazz "Works"

Although most philosophical accounts *pace* Goodman treat notations availed by scores, scripts, and texts as arbiters of authenticity, Schuller's account suggests that performers, and not scores, drive musical performances. One imagines some composer conducting his/her own score requesting all sorts of tempos, dynamics, and breaths not visibly noted. Would that make the performance any less authentic? Philosophy's excessive focus on scores qua musical works has overstated their authority, enabling notions like "work-concept" to be perpetuated without reservation.

In contradistinction to Kania, who denies the existence of "musical works in jazz," Fisher (2018: 151), Julian Dodd (2014) and Young and Matheson (2000) claim otherwise. Fisher notes David Horn's definition of "work" as crediting some identifiable author with the work's originality and

thus potential for "status, rank, and canonization" (153). Fisher rightly notes that there's nothing here that doesn't apply to many musical works in jazz, and in fact, "jazz standards" are canonized, even those identified as "unauthored." Moreover, the availability of software programs for transcribing audio recordings into notation renders obsolete David Davies' limiting musical works to "actions, in particular the compositional actions of their composers" (Davies, 2004).

Additionally, jazz's musical artifacts are a sort of composition, even if the only remaining artifact is a rather illegible, crumpled up song list, whose titles the performers consider familiar enough to be what Dodd calls "performable entities" (Dodd, 2014, p. 277). In this case, the performers effectively perform song lists, just the way conceptual artists implement instructions. And of course, jazz renditions may bear only passing resemblance to said titles and it often takes title awareness to trigger audience recognition, but this "thinness," as Stephen Davies terms it (Davies, 2001, p. 20), is really only a problem for philosophers who tie authenticity to some ideal performance, which Schuller's research complicates.

In lieu of an agreed upon song list, now imagine that the plan is for each performer to take turns initiating a song that he/she believes the others know, and then everyone else is supposed to join in and try to integrate their part. In effect, the baton is passed after every song. Those who don't actually know the song still play along, trying not to stick out too much.

Surely Kania would dismiss this as exemplary of a musical work, but is the actual outcome so different than a classical music performance, whereby not all of the musicians are familiar with the conductor's particular interpretation of some extant score? Soon after Paavo Järvi's arrival, the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra's second harpist Elizabeth Motter told me that working on a familiar score with a new conductor is like learning an entirely new composition. Thus, an extant score neither guarantees an adequate performance, nor garners audience appreciation.

Fisher notes that when it comes to jazz, the musical work is merely descriptive, but this seems like splitting hairs. Ever since Goodman (1968), scores are noteworthy because they exemplify "notated references," which is effectively a description written with notes and rests, rather than words and punctuation. Does it really matter how jazz standards, let alone contemporary classical works, are written? If not traditional scores, they could be strings of emoji characters, graphic music scores (this is a huge field these days)(Sauer 2009). What matters most is that the listeners, which include the musicians, appreciate jazz musicians' interpretations of some *m*, making jazz, contra Kania, a work-performance tradition after all. As we shall see, this formulation also works for visual art, such that what matters most is that "spectators, which include the artists, appreciate the performers' interpretations of works, *w*."

In sum:

1) A performance is a public presentation of a presenter's interpretation(s) of a(n) artwork(s).

2) The performer(s) presenting his/her artwork-interpretations need not be the artist.

With jazz performances, interpretive processes often occur on the spot, while curators sometimes take decades to formulate their interpretations. I imagine classical music conductors carrying out several years of research and focused reflection, including repeat rehearsals in their mind's ear.

3. Curatorial Work

Artists create artworks that await performances, and thus routinely collaborate with artwork presenters and/or curators to determine how best to perform them. Kania is right that performances and artworks are different kinds, though both are necessary, otherwise only artists ever experience their artworks. Like jazz performances, curated exhibitions present particular interpretations of visual art. Consider Marcel Duchamp's assisted-readymade *Apolinère Enameled* (1916-1917), which has been included in three wildly different exhibitions (a 1989 Los Angeles County Museum of Art exhibition that explored Dada/Surrealist text art, a 1996 Whitney Museum of American Art exhibition that re-introduced New York Dada and a 2012 Philadelphia Museum of Art exhibition that probed the boundaries

between art and life).[3] Each exhibition invited spectators to focus on different aspects of the sculpture. Just as conductors invite audiences to hear works *as* they've interpreted them, these curators invited spectators to see *Apolinère Enameled as x*, where *x* is either text art, New York Dada or the border between art and life. The physical experience of seeing *w* as *x* in an exhibition makes the instantiation concrete.

The notion of curators performing artworks on artists' behalf avoids Rossen Ventzislavov's thesis that "curating should be understood as a fine art" (Ventzislavov 2014, p. 83). To summarize curatorial work: 1) Curatorial work concerns artwork presentation, not artwork production, though curators sometimes physically produce and/or install artworks on behalf of artists. 2) Curators contribute cognitive value (novel reasons to appreciate the works), though not artistic value. 3) Curatorial work introduces *temporary* classification systems that rarely have lasting value. 4) The curator's exhibition checklist requires someone to stage it, but it does not prompt interpretations the way conceptual art does. Thus, all artworks await interpretations, which consecutive performances manifest (Spaid 2016, p. 87).

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[3] Although the original *Apolinère Enameled* (1916-1917) at the Philadelphia Museum of Art and its 12 replicas (1965) each has its own presentational history, I am treating these three (possibly distinct) objects as though they are coeval, since an interpretation belonging to one covers all. Even more amusing, the two that Schwartz produced expressly for exhibitions likely have greater provenances, yet they are probably in worse shape.

Some claim that the things themselves are the actors that motivate ongoing thoughts among: their owners, the various curators and conservators handling them, and finally the myriad spectators, all of whom contribute to how things are presented and eventually received (Monroe Beardsley 1982: 288-290; Jane Bennett 2009). Either way, that someone esteems something as art indicates that an interpretation is afoot. One could draw an analogy here between suspects, trials and verdicts, such that suspects, who arouse suspicion prompt prosecutors to present persuasive cases, yet juries still have the final say.[4] Just as the verdict determines whether suspects are seen as innocent or guilty, the audience's response to a particular presentation determines whether the presenter's interpretation is convincing; independent of spectators' admiration for either the objects/events on view or their particular presentation. Objects/events received as art inspire further interpretations, leading art lovers to value/protect/defend them, even though they may not personally appreciate them. Since artworks are "thought-things," their significance extends far beyond subjective taste (Arendt 2000: 184).

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[4] I thank Rossen Ventzislavov for bringing this analogy to my attention.

4. Artist's Performances vs. Presenters' Performances

Several philosophers, most noticeably Denis Dutton, Gregory Currie, and David Davies have developed ontologies that characterize artworks, though not their presentations, as performances. In 1979, Denis Dutton noted that "As performances, works of art represent the ways in which artists solve problems, overcome obstacles, make do with available materials" (Dutton 1979, p. 305). Currie's 1989 account proposes two theses: the Action Type Hypothesis and the Instance Multiplicity Hypothesis. With his first thesis, an artist "in composing or creating, discovers a certain structure –of words, of sounds, of colors, or whatever. …Not all action types of this sort are works of art; but all works of art are action types of this sort" (Wolterstorff 1991, p. 81). Currie's hypotheses seem to resonate with my view that artworks, including visual art, are types that prompt myriad interpretations, and thus inspire multiple instantiations (Fedoryka 1991, p. 255). His describing works as "types of events" suggests that he considers each instance a token of that type. However, Currie uses instantiation to mean "twin" copies, rather than alternative interpretations that modify cognition. Thanks to Schuller's extensive study, any notion of twin instantiations, let alone score resemblance, is sheer fantasy. Recall my notion of instances as reproducible, yet unrepeatable.

Davies aims to create a correlative position between artworks and instruments, whereby artists perform their artworks, the way musicians perform instruments. Davies' *Art as Performance* (2004) thus challenges the prevailing view that visual artworks are just static objects occupying space in galleries and museums, but his view doesn't address presentation, let alone reception. In identifying artworks as "action tokens," he characterizes artworks as "a 'doing' or generative performance" (Livingston 2016). According to Michael Weh, Davies considers "[t]he artwork rather the performance that cumulated in bringing x into existence" (Weh 2005, p. 114).

Rather than being *products* of creative activities, Davies considers artworks to be "intentionally guided generative performances that eventuate in contextualized structures or objects...or events...performances completed by what I am terming a focus of appreciation" (Davies 2004, p. 98). So long as artistic directors are charged with presenting artworks, then audiences respond more to presenters' performances, than those of originating artists, as Davies insists. No doubt, artists envision ways that future presenters will contextualize their works. With PRM, "performance completion" occurs during reception. If by "contextualized structures," Davies means presentation, then his view could be a version of PRM, but his performer is an artist in the throes of making, whose performance ends before the first curtain call.

There are thus two main differences between Davies' view and my own. Although artists' intentions typically guide their works' earliest instantiations, the vast majority of artworks outlive their authors, leaving future presenters to continue performing them. Although I respect artists' intentions, I don't see them as necessarily *driving*: the artwork's performance. Artists often provide definitive reasons for their actions, but intentions change over time as artists gain introspection and distance. Some visual artists change their artworks' hanging instructions, which are rarely inferable just by studying or handling them. In one context, the artist might say, "Yeah, go ahead, hang my painting over the doorway," while in another context the artist might insist that his/her painting needs its own wall. It's not that artists are mercurial. Rather, changed contexts either open up or close down performance possibilities. A painting slung over a doorway, or squeezed between two tiny pendants, might be afforded greater presence than if it has its own wall. Furthermore, artists have been known to re-title and/or backdate works.

Davies' characterizing the artist-performer as aiming to be "appreciated and evaluated" seems suitable for performers whose livelihoods as jazz musicians, conductors, theater directors, or curators are "consciously guided in what [they] do by the exposed eye or ear of an intended qualified audience" (Davies 2004, p. 6). By contrast, when artists produce their artworks, they rarely know who their audiences will be, let alone where their artworks will be performed, but at least they have the

pleasure of conceiving the work, even if they lack an opportunity to present it. By contrast, artistic directors responsible for presenting artworks in particular venues usually select and interpret the artworks with that venue's audience in mind. Davies' artist rather performs in his/her studio for imaginary sites and audiences, just as Kania's conductors sight-read scores for imaginary performances (interpretations absent performances). Absent live performances, Davies' artist-performer never generates an actual instantiation.

According to Paisley Livingston, "Neither a particular agent nor a specific time is essential to the action type that is the work of art: someone else could discover the same structure at a different time yet instantiate the same work" (Livingston 2016). This actually corroborates point 2) above: the performer instantiating the work need not be the one who originated its structure. In contrast to those philosophers who characterize "making" as a performance, my notion of performances accounts for the fact that artworks are repeatedly interpreted "instances," which are presented to a public who hopefully sees the artworks on view anew and thus feels compelled to interpret them differently. Moreover, changed venues counts as instances, since audiences respond differently to different contexts, such as when a painting is moved from a church to a museum, a *boisserie* remains on view while undergoing conservation, a rare film is projected at auction, or an installation featured in consecutive exhibitions is repeatedly reconfigured to fit the exhibition space.

Goodman problematically characterized visual artworks as never changing entities, though of course, when curators perform particular interpretations of artworks, they modify people's experiences. Jerry Fodor notes that "Nobody, radical nativists included, doubts that what leads to acquiring a concept requisition is typically *having the right kind of experience"* (Fodor 1998, p. 127). For example, the same Brice Marden abstract painting is experienced differently in a "landscape" exhibition than in a "stripe-painting" exhibition. Data gathered by vision scientists testing people experiencing actual exhibitions proves that exhibition features, such as information, seating, and recognizable artworks notably influence cognition (Kirchberg and Tröndle 2015, pp. 169-192). In 2000, Falk and Dierking found a "close causal relationships between [1)] the physical context (alluding to the assessment of the exhibition itself: the choice of artworks; installation labeling; and didactics) and the scope of a contemplative experience, and between [2)] the socio-cultural context (alluding to group dynamics: talking while visiting, visiting for social reasons; seating opportunities) and the social experience" (180).

5. Notationless Visual Art

For Goodman, scores, scripts, and texts are allographic, because they have the requisite *notation*. He claimed that the "allographic won its emancipation not by proclamation but by notation" (Goodman, 1968,

p.122).   Philosophers of Music such as David Davies, Jerrold Levinson, Stephen Davies, Darren Hudson Hick and Andrew Kania all offer strategies for defeating Goodman's reliance on notation. They view everyday tools such as recordings, archived documents, artist and estate sanctions, printing plates, molds and the like as capably authenticating instances. For them, notation itself is no longer the *sine qua non* of allographic scripts and scores, so visual art's changed contexts that elicit novel responses are effectively performances. Visual art performances can finally be understood as requiring two-stage completion steps that offer legitimate instances, despite the absence of notation.

These days, many exhibitions feature exhibition copies; replicas or digitized versions that stand in when originals are unavailable, making it possible for one-of-a-kinds to be multiply instantiated, something that has been true for Sol Lewitt since 1968, the very year Goodman published his *magnum opus* (Pillow 2003).[5] Not all second stages of visual art are allographic, and those that are may not be allographic in perpetuity. Sometimes, visual art is only fleetingly allographic, as some spectator imaginatively reperforms it, producing a chain of instances, some more authentic (faithful to the artist's era and capacities) or well-performed than

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[5] When the Barnes Foundation could not lend their Van Gogh *The Postman* (1989) to MoMA for its 2001 exhibition "The Portraits of Joseph Roulin," MoMA exhibited a life-size poster of this painting in its place. Another great example is Robert Smithson's *Hotel Palenque* (1969-1992), which is a unique slide show, unlike its DVD version. Over one twelve month period, I saw it presented in six different exhibitions.

others. What is at stake is play, and the restricted play afforded autographic works should have been cause enough to suspect that visual art ought to have greater allographic capacities.

As already noted, each public presentation of an artwork (or performance) is an instance of that work, a detail that the artworld finds invaluable, otherwise auction house catalogues and artist's catalogue raisonnées wouldn't publish each artwork's provenance, exhibitions and literature, the respective lists of owners, exhibitions and publications connected to this particular artwork. An artwork's exhibition list is akin to its presentational history, no different than a score's "performance" history or the myriad recordings that influenced later presentations. An artwork's presentation history is thus a kind of "notation," since curators routinely scour earlier reviews and past exhibitions to get a handle on how to interpret the artwork.

Philosophers since Goodman have strangely overlooked the role of curators, who routinely evaluate the most valid approach for interpreting and thus performing visual art for a public. When planning a performance, the artistic director's particular interpretation takes numerous factors into consideration, some that go beyond notation. Authentic performances arise from instances that reflect performers' fidelity to the artist, and the public's appraisal of the work's "appropriate interpretation" as a significant instance.

6. Conclusion

Long ago, Goodman categorized visual art as autographic because such artworks lack notated references. In this post-conceptual era, curators generate hypotheses that they aim to test on the public. Artists (or artwork owners) decide whether their work ought to be included or not. If they agree, they set certain limits that the curator must follow, limits that are sometimes more whimsical than intentional. There are numerous advantages to describing the curator's practice as "performing the artwork." Curatorial practice is durational. Unlike recordings, which preserve conductors' interpretations in perpetuity, all that remains from a public exhibition are the check list and an exhibition's narrative threads, which engender endless discussions for influential exhibitions. Sometimes, narrative threads gleaned by spectators stick and become art history. The rest survive as seldom-noticed catalog footnotes. It is thus the exhibition curator, and not the artist who is charged with performing visual art for some public.

Were Goodman to revisit his 1968 question, "Why this difference between the two arts [musical performances and visual art]?," he might genuinely be surprised by contemporary philosophers denying differences that were once so blatantly obvious to Goodman. Consider Goodman's three notions- instance, notation, and forgery-resistance. These days, instances vary from "instantiations" (exacting performances of original scores and

scripts) to "manifestations" (performances with minimal errors) to performances (barely recognizable performances or performances of arrangements). Whether a curator's interpretation of visual art is helpful or unhelpful, great or terrible, memorable or forgettable; his/her contribution approximates that of the "performance hero" whose greater fidelity to the artist's original artwork wins points and garners esteem, even when he/she could not produce the work himself/herself (Derksen and Hudson-Hick). Because so few artistic directors "strict[ly] adhere to the [artist's] creation," notation has lost whatever authority it once held. Rather than split hairs between manifest and authentic performances, as Kania and others do, I credit presenters whose actions reflect their genuine concern for the artist as the first performer of the artwork they are charged to perform.

Whenever I describe curators as performing artworks, aestheticians roundly resist this possibility[6]. Despite their resistance, I believe this position offers the best way to explain the curator's role. Critics of this view consider the curator a mediator who facilitates artwork meanings, but they have difficulties imagining how curators could possibly *perform* artworks. If conductors decide the appropriate tempo, how loud to play the mezzo forte, or how dramatically to perform the crescendo, then the curator's role is quite similar. The curator must decide how much space to allocate each

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[6] Variations of this paper have been presented at the European Society for Aesthetics (2019), American Society for Aesthetics-Eastern (2019), Dutch Association for Aesthetics (2017) and the American Society for Aesthetics-Eastern (2015).

artwork, which sometimes requires persuading artists to show: only part of a work, or a version in an altered scale or different medium. Sometimes curators not only have to figure out where to position the works, but they must first figure out how to install/assemble them. Similarly, the curator determines how the artworks fit together, so that the exhibition prompts particular responses. Most important, audience reception includes the views of living artists, whose professional rapport ensures the performers' next gig.

Artwork interpretations are hardly immediate: they involve ongoing, temporal processes which includes determining which artists are appropriate, which works are relevant, how to access the artworks, and how to stretch the budget so that one can produce a meaningful experience. Being temporary, artworks are eventually released to reappear as new instantiations. As Jennifer Judkins notes, the "curated display, just like the musical work, is ultimately revealed to the audience through time, as the audience picks and chooses their path through and around it" (Judkins 2019).

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The Experience of Music: From Everyday Sounds to Aesthetic Enjoyment

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ABSTRACT. There are many examples of natural sounds that are welcomed into musical works. Yet, in Western artistic music tradition definition as well as understanding of music from traditional to modern theories considers music to be first and foremost an effect of artistic creation; a product of compositional working, a composer's work. The dominating element in definition of music seems to be its rational source and a good design. From the Ancient understanding of music, which sees in it a careful combination of sounds and rhythms (Augustine, Boethius), to twentieth century definition of musical work as sound structure indicated by X at t (Levinson 1980, p.20), music is conceived, pre-arranged, and executed to the point. The idea that music may just happen is contrary to intuitions as much as it is to most of its descriptions. How then are everyday sounds present in the experience of music? How is music made of everyday sounds? Can wind blowing, or sea roaring be truly considered music? In other words, there seem to be a huge disparity between expectations that music is rational and created by man containing complex design and the fact that anything sounding may be heard as music, and that essentially music is perception. The paper discusses difference between understanding music as primary rational and artefactual and considering it a matter of perception. Can music be seen as pure sounding? Where the listeners' willingness to hear certain phenomena as

significant, beautiful or culturally potent is what's important. Discussing contemporary accounts of music of Jerrold Levinson's and Roger Scruton's among others, and contrasting them with musical experiences of different kinds. Author suggests that music was always born out of perception. And willingness to hear music is as important and the ability to listen for it. The primacy of perception doesn't have to be in conflict with the studies showing human cognitive abilities to be musical (Honing 2011). The natural tendencies and biological grounds of human cultural functioning cannot hide the fact that the will to hear music going hand in hand with the perceptive readiness to listen for the music is crucial to any music experience.

1. Introduction

How is music made of everyday sounds? In what way, if any, is music made in response to environment? Can wind blowing or sea roaring be truly considered music? And if so, how does the theory of music and music philosophy deal with that?

The premise I would like to start with is such that there are many examples of everyday sounds that are welcomed into musical works. Traditional wind chimes, the chirping of the birds, the sounds of rain drops or the sounds of the thunderstorm are represented in musical works and also sometimes incorporated into them[2]. The more contemporary examples

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[2] The best example might be Ottorino Respighi's Pines of Rome (1923) or Einojuhani Rautavaara's even more impressive Cantus Arcticus op. 61 (1972) were composers have called for recordings of birds' voices to be used in performance. See

include sounds of car engines in the *City Life* by Steve Reich or street shouts in Luciano Berio's *Cries of London.*[3] Yet, Western artistic tradition defines music as first and foremost an effect of artistic creation; a product of compositional working, an effect of intellectual careful fashioning.

> The composer fashions his work in a creative effort, over a certain period of time. This labor fashions something – the musical work in fact – that previously did not exist but from the moment of its coming into being does somehow exist quite independently of whether anyone performs it, listens to it, or takes any interest in it whatsoever. (Ingarden 1986, p. 2)

Similar assumptions may be found in Jerrold Levinson and Roger Scruton among others. (Levinson 2011, p. 63, Scruton 1997, p. 20) The dominating element of such definitions of music seems to be its human and rational character and an ordered design ("composer's fashioning" and "creative effort"). From Ancient understanding of music, where it is seen as carefully chosen combination of sounds and rhythms (Augustine, Boethius), to twentieth century definition of musical work as a sound structure indicated by X at t, musical work (a composition) is believed to be conceived, pre-arranged, and executed to the point. (Levinson 2011, p. 82) The idea that

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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TO3YRZWLvQo (accessed on 01.11.2019).

[3] In Steve Reich's work there is an actual recording of street sounds as well as the instrumental sound acting as double of that sound scored in the piece.

music may just happen is, therefore, contrary to most of its theoretical descriptions as much as it is counterintuitive. And yet, in contemporary musical compositions as well as in literary descriptions of music the everyday sounds are found a part of music. There is a need to explain or perhaps to diminish the disparity between expectations that music is rational, created by man and contains a complex design and the fact that anything sounding may be heard as music, that essentially music is perception. This last realization, however, I would like to put in context of a wide understanding of perception and an array of examples of what I mean by everyday sounds being part of music. Finally my own believes, are that (1) music appears in perception of a willing listener and therefore it is a matter of willing inclusive interpretation or a response to environment, and therefore music may be seen as a relationship between being and her/his environment. In support of these claims I would like to refer to John Dewey (Dewey 1980) as well as to Eric Clarke (Clarke 2005) before turning to contemporary examples of musical works. I would like to suggest that music is always born out of perception rather than fashioned from physical processes. However let me say that the traditional belief that music [musical work] is always a matter of artistic creation doesn't have to be in conflict with that aforementioned view. And (2) the artistic creation is in fact – as the contemporary neurological research shows and phenomenological philosophy have been saying for years – based on perceptual impulses much more than it is rational and individually pre-thought the claim that music is

created doesn't have to be in conflict with the first belief.

2. The Problem of the Theoretical Incompatibility

There seem to be a considerable difference between understanding music as primarily rational and artefactual and considering it to be a matter of perception. The first of part of the problem seems to span from considering music, a work of music, to be an independent entity, which seems to be discordant with considering it to be a perceptive data or an effect of perceptual processes. The second part of the problem consists in seeing music as primarily created that seems to contradict considering it a matter of perception. I would like to address the first part of the problem first.

Despite the fact that the aesthetic theory has been considering music and its place since Antiquity, the difficulty with establishing what exactly is that which we call music, has been as taxing today as ever. The existential status of the work of music has been dubious or wavering at best for a long time now. Nonetheless, some of the most widespread assumptions about music are what affects the definition and description of music. The most widespread beliefs about music are that music is met and understood in a form of a singular artefact, a piece of music or a work of music, which is finished, endures in time and is a product of someone's creative effort (Levinson 2011, p. 66). The product like treatment of music is certainly very

common although historically it is no more than two hundred years old.[4] Even though we may think that music has always been seen as an individual artistic creation, perhaps such understanding of music is truly modern in its core as suggested by historians and philosophers alike. (Goehr 1992, Dahlhaus 1989)

Let us ask, instead, if music is truly experienced as a complete individual work, a structure of auditory elements that have been assigned and arranged in a certain way or perhaps, could it that music is found playing freely in our heads and that it is only divided into artistically independent pieces through a reflective effort? While theories of music ontology are abundant, none has solved the problem of the music's character quite completely.

2.1. The Theories of Musical Work

From the Ancient understanding of music, which sees in it a careful combination of sounds and rhythms to twentieth century definitions of musical work as sound structure indicated by X at t, music is seen as conceived, pre-arranged, and executed to the point. Most of all music is seen as created by man in an artistic process and therefore rational at core. Even

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[4] "What we understand today to be perfect compliance has not always been an ideal and might not be in the future. Actually it is quite peculiar and rather unique. It has characterized classical music practice only for the last 200 years" (Goehr 1992: 99).

in theories like Levinson's where music is seen as a preexisting structure, it is a human endevour to fashion it further (as determined by X at t) that truly makes it what it is – a musical composition. (Levinson 2011, p. 82) However, many theories recognize the problem of ontological interdependency of music. As Roman Ingarden's theory describes a work of music as a dependent and insufficient entity, which is nevertheless both artistically and aesthetically brilliantly potent. Still Ingarden sees music as an individual work experienced independently rather than as a succession of processes. The form, the technique, the structure recognized and qualified as music. (Ingarden 1986). Even through in Ingarden's theory the music – as a particular work of music – is experienced through its different manifestations and lives in its different forms – in and out of aesthetic experience, music is carried out through a different types of entities.

2.2. The Problem of Creativity and Rational Design

If music is a matter of perception it is no longer seen as created and exclusively man made but rather as found, a matter of realization. There is a difference not to say a clash between music understood as rational creation, artistic or otherwise, and music seen as perception, rather than cognition, where it is primarily the listeners' willingness to hear certain sounding phenomena as significant, beautiful or most of all culturally potent that counts. While in traditional aesthetic theory music has been perceived most

of all as the creation of man by way of her/his imagination (talent), skill and knowledge. I would like to come back to that argument at the end of the last section.

2.3. The Rational Grounding of Music

In *The Aesthetics of Music* Roger Scruton declared that music is perceived as ordered sounds. As Scruton further suggests to hear music as tones, one needs to know the language of music or the implications of that language, that of theory of music, of harmony and inner musical structure.

> (…) to hear sounds as music is not merely to hear it but also to order it. The order of music is a perceived order. When we hear tones, we hear their implication in something like when we hear grammatical implication of words in a language. (Scruton 1997, p. 18)

The thesis as Scruton explains it is evidently true but not for everyone and not all of the time. To hear music is also simply to perceive something as music, to hear something as having a peculiar order or inner structure to it – not the order or the structure but a structure – any possible structure. So when, for example, we hear language as having a certain melody within it we listen to it in the same way that we listen to music, even though we still recognize it as language – a system that is supposed to be understood

immediately and which, when understood is almost completely see through – almost. So with music we are talking about perception and – what I would like to stress here – there is the way to hear music, which is primary or elementary perhaps, in which we hear something as music before we can recognize its building blocks, before we can say w h a t music is it.

3. Avant-garde Music and the Performance Uses of every-day Sounds

In contrast to traditional believes that music is rational and created by man or in fact geniuses, it might seem strange that the avant-garde music of the 20th century has been filed with attempts to make music out of almost anything. In John Cage's *Livingroom music* (1940) players are expected to use coffee tables, window frames, newspapers and other household objects to play the piece. In Steve Reich's *clapping music* the music consists of rhythmically clapping of hands and in his *Pendulum music* (1966) the sounds or the event/process are the minor sounds that happen when the microphones swinging by the loudspeaker produce an audible sound(s). That last example would not even qualify as everyday sound, where it not for the fact that such sounds do happen as byproducts of some situations. In Pierre Schaeffer's *Suite pour l'homme* composer uses multiple concrete sounds like laughter, parts of speech or door slamming at cetr. These or

similar examples are multiple: from Alvin Lucier's *I am sitting in a room* to Tan Dun's *Water Concerto,* sounds have been found and converted to form musical compositions. Yet the use of those sounds is quite refined. These sounds are often products of sophisticated and hardly ever really random activities, quite the opposite: they happen as a consequence of a pre-thought and fully prepared activities. However, there are sounds, which happen unexpectedly and which are everyday or random and yet become music.

British dance group "Stomp" proclaims that music may happen anywhere regardless of whether one plays an instruments or not. Anything may become music and all the sounds and rhythmical patterns may be considered music. This idea may sound preposterous to many music lovers, but in truth it isn't any more irrational or difficult to accept than the idea that we perceive something as blue or green on the bases of a cultural agreement.

In the performance by *Stomp* players perform music by using their feet, sweeping the floor, blowing in glass bottles, swinging wet socks and using everyday objects and producing everyday sounds. Their performances are choreographed and theatrical but at the same time they apply the natural ability to make music out of any possible sound and rhythmical pattern. Groups such as Stomp show in a way more persuasive that any theory ever could that the phenomenon of music is born out of perceptive attitude first and foremost.

Even though music has been developed in cultures throughout thousands of years and the standards for music practice as much as its

various theories and theoretical systems have changed in time, in many cultures and for many people music occurs spontaneously, out of nothing, unexpectedly and without reference to a formulated system of knowledge. It is safe to say that music happens as much as it is created. In traditional cultures and in many ethnic cultures music appears because of the social occasion and grows freely without any plan or a score. Random outdoor listening or a MR scan examination may induce experiences of listening to percussion music even though the sounds produced are machine made and even quite unpleasant. The point of this example is that unexpected listening experiences may turn into music experiences depending on an attitude. Music may be found when walking in a forest with the wind blowing through the tree leaves.

The idea behind those examples is that listening is much more than passive receptive activity. It is a perceptual adjustment and as such it is most important in hearing something as music. In other words despite the rational design origins of most of the works of music, music as such – music in general – is founded on an ability to hear sounds in a special way, to hear sounds as music.[5]

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[5] Roger Scruton believes this to be the case, yet he insists that it is the sign of rational grounding of the music. He may be right, still I believe that it more important to stress the perceptual character of our 'discoveries' of music, in which we transgress the functional premises of our existence and chose to listen reflectively.

4. The Experience of Music

I suppose that for many listeners these outer qualities of music are melodic contours while for others these would be rhythmical patterns. Regardless of which one is it, when they hear music, they know that it is music, before they know what music it is – what kind of music or anything more specific about it; let's say on which instruments it is played or in what style, what century at cetr. I would like to suggest, furthermore, that music exists on a more general plane – when it is being recognized as music even when there is no music, not only no style, no instruments and no composer, but no humans to conceive of it, as well. The music in this sense is evoked by poetry and literature all the time. "The music of the forest", "the music of the sea" and "the music of human body". We perceive those expressions as metaphors that draw our attachment to instrumental music on the one hand and to ancient metaphysical theories of music (the cosmic music, the music of the universe) on the other.

> What I would like to propose instead is that in spite of many complex systems of music that exists and has existed throughout ages, there is music in the simplest sense, when we hear something as moving or melodious. Roger Scruton suggested something very similar, but as he is very cautious he offers more conditions for anything to be considered music. (ibidem)

The difference between these ways of seeing music is not easy to qualify as it is a difference of approach. I have a deep respect for the theory, in which music is understood as a set of sounds related to each other, forming an ordered (usually pre-conceived) structure. Yet, in some general sense and in a very important way, music is perception based, so anything is music if so perceived. The theories that claim that music is a rational, pre-conceived structure, usually suggest that to call music something that has not been conceived and executed by humans is a mistake – an error of judgment, or a frivolous, playful if irrational attempt to disqualify music. And as much as I would like to agree with that, as much as often times I think to myself that this [composition] certainly is not music, I believe that there are many ways, in which music is found[6] rather than produced.

4.1. Perception of Music as Dialogue

Let me pause for a moment to consider a well-known musical example of *Different trains* (1988) by Steve Reich. This composition in uses both found sounds – the noises of trains, the recordings of conversations – and "musical" sounds made by instruments. Although a minimalistic piece, this

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[6] By "found" I mean sounds that were not previously considered or even noticed – in musical context – but that aren't in any way changed or adapter for the purpose of musical composition. In that sense the 'found' sounds would be the sounds of microphones swinging by the speakers in Reich's *Pendulum music* or the sounds of trains et cetr.

composition uses a very complex and varied material. In one way at least the material for this composition is far from just being found, as the author has thought out this composition in detail, even though the sounds used in the composition are everyday sounds. Again, it is not the point of the composition to mistake the sounds in the music for the actual historical sounds – the historical material in the composition are the voices of the survivors and the interviews recorded, the sounds are nonetheless evocative of the other sounds and whole historical soundscapes. The point I am trying to make is that to hear something as music a listener has to adjust her/his ears and be ready to perceive these sounds as music.

The other example I would like to turn to is Tan Dun *Water Concerto* (2007). It is an orchestral piece with lots of instruments, in which however the major part is played by set of percussion instruments that have never existed before. These percussion instruments are plastic balls filled with water, in which there are other object of different sizes and materials that create a spectrum of water like sounds that are unique and fascinating. And again, listeners hear this piece as music and the water instruments as percussion instruments clearly because of the context, the performance practice that is a part of, the orchestra, the conductor, the instruments and the stage, all of these play its part in allowing the listener/viewers to recognize this as music.

It is very different than the water sounds that Tan Dun – as he says in interviews – has used as inspiration, his memories of water being splashed

and water sounds surrounding him since his childhood. Let me give another example – the water drum. In 1992 when I was studying musicology at the University of Warsaw, we were told about the water drum in Africa, what is was and how it was used. I never imagined what it was until sometime in 2010 I saw the video on you tube: *Water drumming by Baka women*.[7] The water drum is an instrument as much any percussion instrument of today could be and yet it is also a way of playing with water. All the sounds connected with that playing are everyday sounds and if it weren't for the way in which the woman splash the water I doubt that anyone would treat this as an example of a musical instrument. This is music only as much as you as a listener wants it to be. A perfect example of perceptive change needed to cognize such sounds as music. However, it is also one of examples from the area of ethnic music of considering an everyday sound as music in a given musical practice.

5. Everyday Sounds in Concert Music

There are many examples of concert music that uses every day sounds as its part. In Steve Reich's *The City Life* (1990) composer introduced car engine's sounds and the sounds of slamming of the car doors that have been recorded and then added to the sound spectrum of the electric piano. Reich

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[7] See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZNzX5t5S4Ls (accessed on 7.06.2019).

used these to make the orchestra burst with the actual street sounds. The other example that is perhaps less popular is Luciano Berio's composition *The Cries of London* (1976). The composition is made of the sound of street venders that shout out the name of their merchandise. These shouts are rarely considered music – and they exist in many countries around the world, where usually they are considered noise, even though most "musical" people would admit that these shouts are very musical not to say that they represent music. Berio doesn't use the actual cries but the texts of such vendor's cries and also comments in the vocal lines.

Last but not least the vocalize and scat music are made out of sounds such as "na na na" or "dib ba ba ruba" and the like. Such vocalizing uses part of everyday speech yet turns it into music by stretching the melody line, which has been traditionally part of music since Middle Ages, where in plain chant the choirs or cantors would use the simple "la" or "a" for singing the most complex melodies in clauses.

6. Everyday Sounds as Music in Literature

One particular example of everyday sounds or nature sound represented as music that has stuck with me over time is Hans Christian Andersen's story "The Bell". In this story the sounds of the sea and the forest are perceived by everyone around as the music – very soft music of the church bells to be

precise, which no one knows where it comes from – people living in the town, didn't recognize these sounds as they were always busy with their lives and distracted by daily struggles and loud sounds around them. Only the pure of heart could hear those sound clearly and not knowing what they were they followed them to discover their true meaning. In Andersen's tale the unknown sounds turn out to be the sounds of the sea and the hidden truth was revealed as the magnificent beauty of the nature, which can be experienced as a perfect enchanting music but only to those, who are capable of listening.

7. Music as Perception – Ecological Theory of Music

As much as in tradition of acoustics music is described as set of sounds or a sounding process in ecological theories the tress in placed on listening. Music phenomena appear when people perceive sounds and sounding phenomena [around them] as meaningful. As Eric Clarke explains "Perception is the awareness of, and continuous adaptation to the environment". (Clarke 2005, p. 4). Our human way of perceiving sounds is functional and driven and for that reason alone far from being passive or simple. The perceptive experience may be direct and instinctive or reflective and elaborate, but it is always at the same time an attentive and imaginative way of responding to environment.

Clarke explains further:

> Perception is a *self*-tuning process, in which the pick-up of environmental information is intrinsically reinforcing, so that the system self-adjusts so as to optimize its resonance with the environment… (Clarke 2005, p. 19)

When listening to music, we use our concept of music and understanding of music's place within our world but at the same time, there are various ways in which, listening to music is risky and challenging.[8]

8. Conclusions

In conclusion, let me say that the disparity between music as explain in philosophical theories and the music as an experience is not as wide as it has been believed. The primacy of perception doesn't have to be in conflict with the studies showing human cognitive abilities to be musical. (Honing 2011) The work done in terms of material, form and means of production may just as well be explained in terms of forces of nature resolving their natural tensions and the deliberate artistic work in its carefully designed shape may not necessarily be different to the naturally occurring waves of tensions that

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[8] Musical sounds inhabit the same world as other sounds, and while the majority of writing on music, and music perception, has tended to cordon off music from the rest of the acoustical environment, it is self evident that we listen to the sounds of music with the same perceptual systems that we use for all sound (Clarke 2005, p. 4).

drive the music situation in the rain (Dewey 1980). The natural tendencies and biological grounds of human cultural functioning do not hide the fact that the will to hear music going hand in hand with the perceptive readiness to listen for the music is crucial to any music experience. That willingness to hear sounds as music, and moreover as interesting, pretty and harmonious is crucial in receiving music, and the most important difference is not between the rational and irrational ways of recognizing music but between the exclusive and inclusive ways of thinking about music. The difference is in approach.

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Biotechnological Art Performing with Living Microbiological Cultures

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ABSTRACT. Within the biotech era, art that addresses the issues of life, and aims at showing biological life in the artistic context, cannot avoid using biotechnology as the technology that enables interventions into the living matter. In the 1950s the artistic mode addressing the biotechnological subjects was rather representational, meaning that the artist would not *do* biotechnology, but would rather *depict* the biotechnological subject on the canvas. Later on, art has gone through a *performative turn*. In the article the author claims that because of the imperative of performativity, art addressing biotechnology necessary comprises the presence of living tissues and other living substances in the gallery spaces or spaces meant to show art to public. The galleries have turned from spaces for showing artefacts into spaces of events, performances and workshops. In this context, the idea to grow living entities within art might sound self-evident, yet it actually testifies of a performative turn, a shift from pictorial modes to performative modes of visual art. For biotechnological art the performative imperative leads to a novel idea of performativity, micro-performativity, which means a real-time action of the living bio-engineered tissues within the artistic context and in front of the public.

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1. Introduction

Visual art has very often had interest in indicating life in the dead matter, such as marble or stone. For Michelangelo Buonarroti evoking life meant to establish such statue of Pietà to assure the perception of the presence of Mary with slithering Jesus in her arms. Since 1990s biotechnology has been established as *the* technique of treating biological life. It has become the promising science contributing new chapters on revitalization of organs and therefore to the quality of life and longevity. Considering this framework, in contemporaneity art that has aimed at evoking life in the situations it establishes or at addressing the issues of biological life cannot avoid using biotechnology as the technology that enables real interventions into the living substances. In the 1950s biotechnology was at its beginnings and the artistic mode addressing the biotechnological subject was still rather a pictorial representational, meaning that the artist would not yet use real biotechnology, but would depict the biotechnological subject on the canvas (Salvador Dalí, *Butterfly Landscape, The Great Masturbator in Surrealist Landscape with* DNA, 1957). Chronologically later on, biotechnology has become the actual technology, which is able to manipulate biological life. Technically, the options to grow living entities or cultivate living cells have opened a palette of possibilities for art. Art, on the other hand, has gone

through a *performative turn*, which has been well presented by Erika Fischer Lichte (*Ästhetik des Performativen*, 2004). Because of the performative turn and the imperative of performativity, art addressing biotechnology necessary comprises the presence of living tissues and other living substances in the gallery spaces or spaces meant to show art. The galleries have turned from spaces for showing artefacts into spaces of events, performances and workshops. In this context, the idea to grow living entities within art sounds self-evident, yet it actually testifies of a performative turn, a shift from pictorial modes to performative modes of visual art.

1. "Why Is that Dogs Aren't yet Blue with Red Spots"

An early stimulation for doing real interventions into the living world has come from a philosopher Vilém Flusser. In the late 1980s he suggested that the artists should actually become biotechnologists: "Why is that dogs aren't yet blue with red spots, and that horses don't yet radiate phosphorescent colors over the nocturnal meadows of the land? Why hasn't the breeding of animals, still principally an economic concern, moved into the field of esthetics?" (Flusser, 1988, p. 9) At the end of the millennium art has begun to actually manipulate biological life as artistic doing. Art has started to use methods that enable manipulation of the living substances. The earliest were the announcements of the transgenic art from the late 1990s. Eduardo Kac has defined it is as "a new art form based on the use of genetic engineering

techniques to transfer synthetic genes to an organism or to transfer natural genetic material from one species into another, to create unique living beings." (Kac, 1999b) Significant for this discussion is the fact that much of the early transgenic art was presenting the seeming artefacts or even pictures of the supposed products that resulted from the prior laboratorial manipulation. For instance, the most known biotechnological work of art, Kac's Green Fluorescent Protein rabbit Alba, was even never presented to the public as a living animal. This triggered suspicions about its actual existence. Another project by Kac, *The Genesis* (1998/99), was rather different. In it the performative dimension is well counted upon. This is an artistic situation with a real-time manipulation of the living substance. The installation contains a culture of living bacteria with synthesized genes, which multiply. In addition, there is a recurrent loop established in the installation with web participants, who activate UV radiation. The UV light disrupts the DNA sequence in the plasmid and accelerates the mutation rate.

Much of biotechnological art is product-oriented. Many artists tend to deliver real world products with using biotechnological manipulation within art, such as for instance Symbiotica produced stakes, leather or an extra ear for Stelarc; Maja Smrekar produced Maya YogHurt with modifying the genome of yeast in such a manner to add a part of her own DNA to it. In all these cases, the products are the results, while the artists show the living processes in the real time of the art show. The projects are communicated with the public as living cultures or performing biotechnological

manipulations of living substances.

2. The Presence of Life

The central question here is tied to the issue of presence, the presence of the living substances, of the living cells, living tissues, and the manipulation of these living substances. The presence and manipulation of the living substances establishes a performative dimension of the biotechnological art. Without these interventions into the living material, any addressing of manipulation of the living substances would render art to pictorial representations. Using substitutions of living substances in the art projects that announce the use of living substances, for instance using inorganic or dead organic substances for showing the supposed cultivation of a "cell culture" in a petri dish installed in an incubator, would be a fake. Addressing biotechnological interventions with openly using nonliving material, such as wax or clay, for representing tissues and living cultures, would bring such doing close to representational theatre. In a representational theatre an actor plays a character and uses color for representing blood. For the performance art it is crucial that the performer is really who she or he represents and that she or he really does what she or he as a performer does – cutting her flesh means real cutting which results in leaking blood, a shot with a gun makes a true hole in the body, Marina

Abramović and Ulay actually break up their relationship on the Great Chinese wall etc. For biotechnological art it does not make much sense, if nothing can be *done* with the materials used in the sense that no life is *performed*. There would be no process, nothing would evolve, if there would be nothing living there. Using any kind of media that would introduce mediality in this communication process would establish only representations and not real life situations. Instead, cells have to actually divide there in the real time and species have to be hybridized for real, with the means of biotechnology. The significance is that with the performative dimension, biotechnological art is not establishing fictional discourse. It aims at surpassing the status of secondary reality, as it had been established with the traditional representational media. It does not re-present reality, which would mean to present again, for the second time. It does not re-produce reality, which would mean to produce it for the second time, but it *produces* it. It *does* it. This is achieved through the performative dimension, but also with the act of intervention, which is not a passive stand of an artists as regards the situation, but an action.

3. Différance and Repetition

Biotechnological art tends to minimalize the *différance* between the context of origin and the situation of installation and aims to affect reality with intervening into living substances.

To discuss the issue of presence and *différance*, we need to open the question of *representation*. The presence in the differentiated mark of writing, in the representation, was discussed by Jacques Derrida (1971). Representation here should be considered as inseparable from *communication*. According to Derrida, the issue of communicability (possibilities, conditions and ways of communicating) of marks, the representativity of a medium of writing, cannot be simply understood in a sense of substitution, supplementation of presence[2] in a sense of continuing, homogeneous modification of the presence in representation or the progressive weakening of the presence, but for the medium of writing the most essential is the break with presence. (Derrida, 1988, p. 6)

The written sign has, according to Jacques Derrida, its specificities. The first is the absence of the addressee, in respect to which we can ask ourselves, "[b]ut is not this absence merely a distant presence, one which is delayed or which, in one form or another is idealized in its representation?" (Ibid., p. 7) It is coming to some distance, divergence, delay, différance; however, this can no longer be an ontological modification of presence, but the written communication, "[i]n order /.../ to retain its function as writing,

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[2] In French, which Derrida uses, the word *le supplément* means substitution, a substitute and replacement, a surrogate.

i.e., its readability, it must remain readable despite the absolute disappearance of any receiver, determined in general." (Ibid.) It has to be repeatable, iterable (*iter* as again). According to Derrida the iterability structures the mark of writing itself. The essential predicates for the minimal definition of writing are, according to Derrida: 1. a written sign is a mark that subsists and gives rise to iteration (this separates written and oral communication); 2. a written sign allows a force that breaks with its context, with the collectivity of presences, which organize the moment of its inscription (the so called "real" context includes the "present" of the inscription, the presence of the writer, the entire environment and above all the intention; the sign possesses the characteristic of being readable even if the moment of its production is irrevocably lost, when we don't know the author's intention) – because of iterability we can always detach the written syntagm from the connection in which it is given without causing it to lose the possibility of functioning; 3. this force of rupture is tied to the spacing that constitutes the written sign.

In the processes of embodiment as performed in *The Lips of Thomas* and in other performances, Fischer-Lichte recognizes aesthetic and *delayed* (in the Derridian sense) *reenactments*. According to Fischer-Lichte, performances do stylized repetition of performative acts. Here it is also relevant that John Austin, who actually introduced the notion performative, and likewise Fischer-Lichte recognize "the accomplishment of performative acts as ritualized, public performances." (Fischer-Lichte, 2008, p. 28) Yet,

Fischer-Lichte adds a crucial remark, namely that Abramović's performative acts of the historical patterns are not reenacted just to repeat them, but to significantly modify them. Analogically, biotechnological patterns, for instance techniques and methods, as well as the enactments of the historical possibilities, are not established in biotechnological art as just repeated patterns, but they are significantly transformed. Maja Smrekar addresses the historical possibility in the age of Anthropocene, of a global food deficit, and proposes a solvation, i.e. a production of a biotechnological food product, but with a surprising element, an extract from a human blood.

Although the reenacted patterns and historical possibilities are present also in biotechnological performances, it is additionally highly relevant that an aesthetic performance is a unique event and that the level of uniqueness required is much higher than that for a theatrical performance. Chris Burden got himself shot only once, Gina Pane cut her belly once, Abramović and Ulay broke up once. Performance is a unique event. Therefore, the issues of a delay and a break with presence, which are not acceptable for performative biotechnological art, need to be readdressed.

4. Delayed Communication and Performativity as Instant Communication

When John L. Austin introduced the notion performativity back in 1955, his objective was to contribute to the interruption with the tradition of thinking about characteristics of statements as being true or false and called the attention to statements or utterances which "do not 'describe' or 'report' or constate anything at all, are not 'true or false'", (Austin, 1962, p. 5) therefore they are not constatives. With examples, such as the groom would say during the wedding ceremony: "I do" (namely, take this woman to be my lawful wedded wife), declaration of the competent person: "I name this ship *Queen Elisabeth*", the record in a will ("I give my watch…") and uttering a bet ("I bet you it will rain tomorrow"), Austin ascertained that "it seems clear that to utter the sentence (in, of course, the appropriate circumstances) is not to describe my doing of what I should be said in so uttering to be doing or to state that I am doing it: it is to do it." (Ibid., p. 6) He suggested that we call the utterance of this kind performative. The name originates from the English verb to perform, which is usually connected to work, action and also with act, therefore "it indicates that the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action". (Ibid.) The performative does not mean just to say something, it represents "said-done", respectively it happens when said means to do something or *when we do something in such a way, that we utter it and by uttering it*. The performative is doing something by uttering it.

The performative is essentially realized through communication, in Derrida's words: "The performative is a 'communication' which is not

limited strictly to the transference of a semantic content that is already constituted and dominated by an orientation toward truth". (Derrida, 1988, pp. 13–14) From Derrida's perspective, Austin's insisting on perlocution and especially on illocution shows the consideration of the acts of the discourse only as acts of communication. In that his category of communication is relatively original as his conceptions of illocution and perlocution do not denote the transfer or transition of the content of sense, but they denote the communication of original movement, the procedure and the production of the effect. Communicating, in the case of the performative, in Derrida's terms, means communicating a force through the impetus of a mark. (Ibid., p. 13) As opposed to the constative utterance "the performative does not have its referent /…/ outside of itself or, in any event, before and in front of itself. It does not describe something that exists outside the language and prior to it. It produces or transforms a situation, it effects." (Ibid.) It therefore has an interventional character.

If the performative does not describe and does not report about the outside of the discourse reality, and in such sense cannot be true or false, does it refer to any reality? The performative is not representational but it demands equalization between the utterance and the act, which has the power of liability. According to Émile Benveniste (1966), the performative is self-referring, for it is referring to the reality which is being reestablished. "The signified is identical to the referent." (Benveniste, 1971, p. 236) This is because it is uttered under the conditions which make it an act. "The act is

thus identical with the utterance of the act." (Ibid.) The reality to which the performative is referring to is therefore the same reality that the performative is reestablishing itself.

As regards the break with the context of inscription, the collectivity of presences, which organize the moment of inscription, as discussed by Derrida in regard to the medium of writing, one can establish that the discourse of a performance is rather closer to the medium of speech than to the medium of writing. It is happening here and now. The performance is not telecommunication, remote or delayed communication, whereat writing is.

With a notion performative turn, Erika Fischer-Lichte refers to a whole wave that reached different domains of art, for which significant was that the performances have transformed the spectators to the participants of the performance. Performance, as contemplated by Fischer-Lichte holds some features of rituals and spectacles, so that these actions are linked to various cultural fields from the past or from diverse cultural contexts. The new form of action and performance was practiced in the 1960s by the visual artists, such as Joseph Beuys, Wolf Vostell, Fluxus and Viennese actionists. In music, the performative turn took place with events and pieces by John Cage already in the early 1950s. Different actions and noise, mainly produced by the listeners, became sound events, while the musician, for instance the pianist David Tudor in *4'33* (1952), did not produce any sound on the piano. However, Fischer-Lichte recognizes performative character of

visual art already in the action painting and body art, as well as in the later light sculptures and video installations. A visit of an exhibition often became participation in a performance. In literature, she recognizes performative turn in within the genre, for instance in the novel-labyrinth or "interactive" novel. According to Fischer-Lichte, with performance, it has become impossible to distinguish between the artist (the subject) and the work of art (the object). (Fischer-Lichte, 2008, p. 20)

5. Micro-Performativity and Possibilities of Communication Between the Species

Derrida annotated that any differential mark is separated from its origin. In writing, the rupture of the marks with the context of origin is obvious and the reader is shifted to the future, the communication process is delayed, it is not instant here and now. In speech acts differential marks are as well used. These too are, according to Derrida, separated from their origin. Because of differentiation, the differential mark does not assure the experience of pure presence. Derrida even claimed that no one can experience the whole communication with anyone, not even with himself, as he is not possessing the pure, immaculate meaning, intention or experience which would afterwards fall apart, break or blend with cracked medium of a language. I can never have the pure meaning or experience for: "there is no experience

consisting of *pure* presence but only of chains of differential marks." (Derrida, 2008, p. 10) In other words, any communication is differentiated. And every production of marks is already a production of reality.

In the case of biotechnological in vitro installation, the medium is alive. Working with living entities requires to give an assurance of special conditions, such as warmth, humidity, special nutrition, oxygen, etc. which are needed for the preservation of life. The presence of living entities and the establishment of particular conditions construct special environment, to which the living material pours into. There is a break with the context of origin, the cells taken from one's body represent that body and are differentiated from it, yet they are still the biological cells of that body, they have a potential to grow into something more, build tissues, organs, organisms – particularly with the support of biotechnology. So these situations do open new chapters as regards the issues of presence, break with the context of origin and the performing reality.

To speak of performativity in the sense that the micro living beings would do action that would be observable to the human observers, is difficult and rare. The human observer cannot see the cells dividing for the ear cultivated by Symbiotica. In that sense, the observer does not perceive that something is actually going on there, a process of life and some physical action related to it. This is comprehendible only through the fact of the installation of an ear in a liquid colored medium in an incubator and the whole surrounding to this central spot.

There is some action of microorganisms that establish performative situation in the case of *Bacterial Radio*, an installation by Joe Davis (2003). Installed is a microscope, which is connected to a computer that is further connected to loudspeakers. A sample of living culture is placed in the microscope, whereat the sample is full of microorganisms found in the muddy waters from the neighborhood, which the observer can notice through the magnification that is projected on the walls of the space. The sound is being produced with the moving of microorganisms, which is translated into sounds. The result is a kind of music that sounds similar to free jazz performance. In this case, the microorganisms are communicating, "over the abyss", with the human observers, whereat the artist is absent. His role is similar to a composer. Here he just installed the platform and defined the sounds.

Guy Ben-Ary has established a neural synthesizer for the installation *CellF* (2016). "It is an autonomous instrument that is composed of a brain, made of biological neural networks, and a body, made of analogue modular synthesizers that work in synergy." (Ben-Ary, 2016) The neural networks are bioengineered from the artist's skin cells, transformed into stem cells, which were finally differentiated into functional neural networks. These were grown over a multi electroded dish to become Ben-Ary's "external self", as this is said in the project documentation. The "alter ego" produces a tremendous amount of data as responses to stimuli, as for instance those by a human musician. During the performance communication and

responsiveness happens between the human and the nonhuman musician. A result is a sort of posthuman music that is produced by both, the human and the bioengineered musicians. The project acknowledges the dichotomy between the body and the brain, which could be discussed separately. Yet, with establishing the brain for an installation that is capable of some autonomous action during a performance, the artist challenges the contemporaries with a question about the eventual self of this organism.

6. Conclusion

In the project documentation Guy Ben-Ary is not called an artist, but a project initiator. In this case, the performer is the bio-engineered organism. Art that is speaking about the living processes and manipulation of living entities is necessary performative. However, there are various sorts of performativity involved in these projects. On the one hand, the presence of an artist is ceasing, on the other hand, the presence of the living cell cultures is leading to an ability of autonomous action of the engineered living material or organisms. For biotechnological art the performative imperative leads to a novel idea of performativity, micro-performativity, a real time action of the living bio-engineered tissues within the artistic context and in front of the public.

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Appreciation and Evaluative Criticism: Making the Case for Television Aesthetics

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ABSTRACT. Taking as my reflective starting point the notion that television does more than statically mirror prevailing contemporary cultural traditions, this paper explores the conceptual framework of televisual aesthetics as a means to appreciate and evaluate shifting aesthetic sensibilities in television. I will start by briefly reflecting on the various aspects, comprehensions and interpretations of television. The next section will discuss how the field of television aesthetics approaches aesthetic issues and judgment and provides a broad calculus for aesthetic appreciation. The following section will focus on the question of quality as it is comprehended within the field. The succeeding section develops the idea of what constitutes 'extraordinary' television. The final section reflects on the notion of value in television aesthetics before concluding with a metaphysical overview.

1. Introduction

Television has drastically changed since it was invented in 1927 by 21-year-old inventor Philo Taylor Farnsworth of Beaver, Utah (Schatzkin, 2002). Of course, this is a gross simplification as Farnsworth merely encased together the work of two other inventors, Russian Boris Rosing's cathode ray tube

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and Englishman A.A. Campbell-Swinton's mechanical scanning system, to capture moving images using a beam of electrons (basically, a primitive camera). The first transmitted image was a line.

Since this first rudimentary broadcast (if we can call it that), the television ecosystem has become unimaginably complex, simultaneously representing the neoliberal commercial imperative of advertisers, fulfilling the career ambitions of creatives on the production side, acting as a communicative medium that edifies as well as entertains, mediating our free time, and ideologically shaping viewer opinion about various issues (Bignell, 2012), to name a few. Yet, given that watching television also fundamentally effects an "experience of visual mobility, of contrast of angle, of variation of focus, which is often very beautiful" (Williams, 2003: 75-76), it is surprising that conventional television studies still shy away from aesthetic questions and judgment, methodologically omitting them in favour of representational, theoretical, socio-political or ideological concerns (Morley, 2003). I propose adopting an aesthetic perspective that "acknowledges the roles of evaluation and aesthetic judgment to frame our research and drive our field" Mittell, 2009: 122) and which therefore complements and extends existing television scholarship.

2. Television Aesthetics

As a subfield of television studies, television aesthetics tends towards close

stylistic analysis and an interest in philosophical aesthetics as applied to television (Cardwell, 2006). Tapping into both strands – stylistic analysis as a methodology and an interest in what aesthetics can bring to the evaluation of television programmes – allows us to explore how our sensorial relationship with televisual spaces depends on their affective power as aesthetic objects. I therefore argue for an approach to appreciating and evaluating television derived from Kant's moments of "aesthetic judgment" (2000: §1-22). My aim is to contribute to the refinement of the 'weak understanding of what close textual analysis means" (Cardwell, 2006: 72) for television.

It entails an appreciation of televisual forms and formats, celebrating the specificity of individual programmes as self-contained units with their own stylistic intentions, creative aspirations and technical achievements that govern "the ways in which [their] formal devices work to create expressive meaning" (Sikov, 2010). This does not discount the significance of genre as a means of organising affective expectations or cinematographic conventions. On the contrary, these are used as reflective starting points; because you care and are invested, what you like is important to you, and these can sustain one's interest. In particular, I suggest using a kind of stylistic calculus that (1) takes an inductive approach to "television as an art form" (Nannicelli, 2017), (2) isolates the existential factors of television's' "basic image elements (light and shadows, colour, two- and three-dimensional space, time and motion, and sound) and (3) shows how they

interact with one another! (Zettl, 1998: 86) in relation to our specific embodied subjectivity.

Distinct from the subjectivism of Merleau-Ponty (2012), this phenomenological mode is rooted in a relativistic ontology that sees the nature of reality as collaborative and dependent on the experiential interactions of humans with the external world and accessible through actively evolving constructs of language and consciousness (Crotty 2003, Clough 2000). It is opposed to the positivist epistemological paradigm that assumes reality is entirely objective and that it can only be properly observed and measured without bias using standardised instruments. Instead, this approach aims to evaluate personal excavations from 'the field sites' of quality television programmes by engaging in a detailed examination of their phenomenal affect through the lens of embodied subjective experience. Though not a truth claim, an evaluative criticism purports "to see a series differently, providing a glimpse into one viewer's aesthetic experience and inviting readers to try on such vicarious reading positions for themselves" (Mittell, 2015: 207).

3. A Question of Quality

Establishing the criteria for quality television is complicated because there is no consensus among television scholars. In its most general meaning, the term 'quality' refers to the degree of superiority that an object or body

possesses. According to the *Random House English Dictionary,* something 'has' quality if it is marked by "a concentrated expenditure of involvement, concern, or commitment." In television aesthetics, quality is "understood as a discursive category used to elevate certain programs over others" (Mittell, 2015: 210). In this definition, quality is a claim of excellence in/of content and formal style. Though not entirely without controversy, most television scholars would likely concur with this formulation.[2]

In turning to the subjective experience, I am, in fact, returning to the original Greek roots of aesthetics which regarded it as 'sensitive, perceptive,' that is, perceived by the senses or the mind, which Kant sees as 'the treatment of the conditions of sensuous perception.'(2000: §13) This *aisthesis* is his central concern since he argues that the "subjective condition of all judgements is our very ability to judge…that requires that there be a harmony between faculties" (§35) is aesthetic pleasure. In focusing on the phenomenon of aesthetic pleasure as a unique configuration of our sensible and cognitive faculties in harmonious relation with television works, I argue that is it possible to make aesthetic judgements about specific television programmes precisely because they are good, and moreover, that we enjoy – feel pleasure – watching them, and that we can judge them in terms of their aesthetic affectivity. I contend that it is the density of aesthetic cues that occasions judgements of quality.

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[2] Debate continues in their interpretation of the term, divided between three perspectives or categories: generic, discursive and anti-evaluative.

This orientation is "the only way we make sense of the world" (Mittell, 2015: 217) in relation to others. In positioning television works as works of art, or at least having the potential to be, it opens television programmes to an array of aesthetic possibilities. Of course, coupling the formal materiality of programmes with a claim of excellence suggests the set of features be judged according to the 'subjective factors' of "personal taste, income, and time" (Brunsdon, 1990: 74) which actuate judgment and give rise to the relationship between generic classification and the function of choice. Like any good work of art, judgments of quality are necessarily contextual and contingent on time and place.

Moreover, the spatiotemporal properties of artworks (e.g. the elements of design: point, line, shape, form, space, colour, texture) correspond with the elements of televisual style (e.g. cinematography, act(or/ing) choices, direction, sound, POV, editing, mise en scène, plot (narrative trajectory), characterisation, theme, etc.) via the aesthetic principles of design: balance, proportion, perspective, emphasis, movement, pattern, repetition, rhythm, variety, harmony, unity). While it is beyond the scope of this article (and my lifetime) to list all the potential regional, cultural, temporal permutations of quality, I posit that the features which constitute quality in American television programmes – high production values, naturalistic performance styles, recognised and esteemed actors, careful (or innovative) camerawork and editing, original music, fragmentation in the form of abstraction or defamiliarisation, an intense level of audience engagement characterized by

a complex narrative structure, intricate themes, use of specialised language, and fast-paced delivery – reliably contribute to the pleasure that people obtain from the work (Cardwell, 2007).

4. Extraordinary Television

Mittell focuses on evaluating the excessive narrative transformations in quality television forms and develops a concept of "complexity as criterion of value" (2013: 46). He identifies "two distinct modes of narrative complexity" (2013: 52): vast "centrifugal complexity," where the force of the narrative expands outward with the addition of characters and settings create "complex webs of interconnectivity," and dense "centripetal complexity," where narrative turns inward around central characters with rich 'layers of backstory' and internal psychological dynamism. Brett Mills notes that the development of digital technology, changing viewing practices, and the innovations of cinematographers have helped to transform television framing from close/medium to more medium/long shots to establish a "density of visual texture" (2013: 58). 'Cinematic' style frequently uses a single-camera setup, changes the visual field horizontally to a 16.9 ratio, increases the clarity of sound and image, and even manipulates it with special effects, though the subtler cinematographic practices may still be assessed using Caldwell's "videographic" modes of the painterly, the plastic, the transparent and the intermedia (1995: 139).

Mills equates this cinematic style with extraordinary television because it constitutes itself as an opposition to 'regular' television, arguing it is rendered in high production costs and consumer expenditure since "the growth of high-definition television equates technology with expense and quality" (2013: 60).

Applying Mittell's definition of "forensic fandom" (2006: 32) as a mode of viewing that invites viewers to dig deeper and probe into the very materiality of quality television programmes' stylistic signatures to show how our subjective sensitivities can be used as both as justification and legitimate foundation for making empirical evaluations about television and determining its value by carefully attend to the formal execution or techniques that enable its visual, sonic or otherwise striking stylistic and artistic particularities, and which contribute to its specific extraordinary aesthetic qualities (e.g. feeling and tone, or beauty). This suggests that a judgement of extraordinariness is a derived value that itself takes many forms – crucial here is the "subjective experience of an appreciative viewer who feels something towards it' and that that affect is fundamentally a *positive* one' (Cardwell, 2013: 32, emphasis author's own).

Moreover, I link extraordinary television to the experience of the sublime. The sublime as excess of quality features is accomplished emotively with exceptionally fast-paced language, diegetically synchronous maudlin music, novel material integration of extant comedic references and "already existing and validated art forms" (Brunsdon, 1997: 113) and a

powerfully affective biomediation of the face (sometimes pejoratively referred to as melodramatic acting). Sublimity also manifests in the manipulation of genre insofar as it registers my preference for feelings of apprehension, suspense, confusion, tension, shock, surprise, heightened anticipation, anxiety, hope, arousal and thrilling sensations (excitement and pleasure) structurally embedded in thrillers.[3] This extraordinary television instantiates Kant's "dynamically sublime," which represents how the negative feeling of fear can be transformed into pleasure. That is, because the aesthetic medial distance is ontologically afforded by television, we can take pleasure in overcoming that fear because "it is impossible to find satisfaction in a terror that is seriously intended" (§28, p. 144), Thus, sublimity is not contained in anything in nature, but only in our mind and, by extension, our perceptive prowess.

5. Appreciating Value in Television

While stylistic analysis tends towards the evaluative, aesthetic appreciation, on the other hand, entails the philosophical reflection on the ideas, concepts, connections and orientations that emerge in the course of the analysis. This

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[3] I hope that is it clear at this point that the subjective positionality of a viewer determines which genre and affective states they value. It is up to the viewer to work out which television programmes succeed in drawing their attention, stimulating their imagination and sustaining their interest.

extension, according to Nannicelli, is the apprehension of value wherein the determination of creative "agency is central" (2017: 17) to making objective evaluative judgments about subjective observations (2016). He asserts that being sensitive to the details of a programme (and episodes within) not only permits the work to be individuated from other arts, artworks and artistic practices, but also demands that any account of television aesthetics "respect the material conditions" (2017: 22) of the television production. Despite George Dickie's stance that "no special kind of aesthetic appreciation exists" (1971: 105) that 'transforms' an ordinary work into a work of art, much more recent research in cognitive and psychological aesthetics is beginning to show that

> aesthetic appreciation is grounded in the relationship between the amount of information of stimuli and people's capacity to process this information. This relationship results in information load, which in turn creates emotional responses to stimuli. As an individual learns to master information in a domain (e.g., photography), the degree of information load which corresponds to aesthetic appreciation, increases (Axelsson, 2011: 4).

This suggests a fruitful way forward is by looking at the different ways individual viewers process particular stimuli and see hidden relations to assess the value of their evaluative claims about their subjective televisual aesthetic experiences. Indeed, since "the extent to which experiential aspects

may be understood depends in part on our knowing the medium's technological capabilities" (Degge, 1985: 94), this approach strives to bridge the gap between theoretical academic models and the actuality of production practices via philosophical aesthetics. Of course, determining what one values in television happens when the critical viewer experientially mediates a "final blurring of boundaries" (Peacock: 2010: 108) between the television (as medium and work and art) and their own evaluative criticism.

6. Conclusion

This "attunement or synchronizing of body with [televisual] technology" (Blackman, 2012: 22) is at the heart of television aesthetics. Insofar as televisual style is affecting, one of its central qualities lies in its capacity to move people through the arousal and fulfilment of formal expectations – getting them to *feel through* the evocative power of their resonant associations. Oddly, by self-consciously engaging with our own biases and values, we can contribute to both a broader and more nuanced understanding of what it means to derive pleasure from television.

Akin to Kant's modal concept of necessity in which a unique arrangement in the presentation of an art object instigates complex feelings of pleasure (Kant, 2000) that enable us to shift our apperception of the television works from the quotidian to the aesthetic by acknowledging both

their instrumentality as mediums of entertainment and as aesthetic conduits of affect, this disposition is a psycho-subjective state where the unity of form and content correspond with percept and feeling to produce a double apprehension, simultaneously experienced as a socially-situated physical detachment from the aesthetic object and positively as an investment of psychic and emotional energy in the televisual moment (Caldwell 1995, Geraghty 2003, Mittell 2006, Cardwell 2013). This goes beyond a mere description or simple synopsis of what is happening onscreen to a careful and close observation of the textural features that isolates what we perceive are exemplary aesthetic cues and expressions, describes them, and finally posits the ways in which their various affects configure our perception and subsequent affects. Instead, it proceeds by valuing television as art and thereafter developing a carefully tailored analytic approach that combines close stylistic analysis with the philosophical tools that address the specific issues and feelings the programme raises.

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Artificial Creativity and Generative Adversarial Networks

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ABSTRACT. This paper argues that although past and current attempts at programming creative machines have yielded noteworthy results, these attempts ultimately fall short of genuine creativity. Most importantly, we are yet to see machines and programs which not only traverse a creative domain to produce novel products, but which do so in a manner which itself is creative and where this creativity is not better ascribed to the creator of the program. Until we know whether it is possible in principle for a machine to achieve these feats, it remains unclear whether genuine artificial creativity is at all possible.

1. Introduction

Computer programs already compose music, write poetry, paint paintings, and assist in scientific discoveries. Does this mean that such programs are creative, or that they have the potential to be creative? This question is sometimes used to raise fears of a future in which artists and scientists have been replaced by creative machines, but philosophically it also raises further questions about the nature of human creativity. Even if machines will never

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make human creativity obsolete, seemingly creative programs may still offer us a glimpse into the workings of human creativity.

In this paper, I argue that it is still an open question whether artificial creativity is at all possible. Although classical and contemporary attempts at producing artificial creativity yield many noteworthy results, they ultimately fall short of genuine creativity. Most importantly, we are yet to see machines and programs which not only traverse a creative domain to produce novel products, but which do so in a manner which itself is creative. As long as machines cannot achieve this feat, it remains unclear whether they can teach us anything about human creativity.

2. Classical AI

According to Margaret Boden (2005), creative machines can dispel some of the romantic myths that stand in the way of a scientific understanding of creativity. In particular, artificial intelligence can help dispel the claim that human creativity must remain outside the scope of scientific explanation because creative acts are the unpredictable acts of geniuses who bring something new into existence - a new theory, a new work of art, etc. - which could not have been foreseen. If we can use AI to program machines that simulate such creativity closely enough, perhaps we may eventually also uncover the rules and heuristics that govern human creative thought.

Boden's sentiments are shared by many computer scientist, but what is perhaps more surprising is that they are also shared by many artists. One example is Harold Cohen who in addition to being an accomplished painter became rightly famous for programming AARON, a drawing program intended by Cohen to demonstrate that artistic creativity is governed by rules which artificial intelligence can help elucidate. AARON comes in a range of versions. Early versions could draw abstract forms resembling rocks, sticks, or even birds whereas later versions are able to draw human figures such as acrobats. Abstract-AARON produces its drawings by first selecting a starting-point at random and then completing the drawing by following a set of IF-THEN rules that specify what should be done next depending on what has already been drawn. Abstract-AARON, however, cannot consider its drawing as a whole or learn from what it has drawn, as it has no memory (*ibid.* p. 157).

Later versions of the program are more complex. Contrary to abstract-AARON, acrobat-AARON can both plan its drawings before it begins to draw and check if it is following the plan as it is drawing. The later versions of AARON are able to draw human figures because a computational model of the human body is incorporated into them. This model provides an outline of the human body that can be varied and coupled with a range of details so as to produce an indefinite number of drawings that are all different from one another. AARON, however, cannot draw any kind of figure. A number of constraints limit what it can do. For example, the

figures must have two arms and the composition must obey certain strictures (*ibid.* pp. 162-3).

Can Cohen's program tell us anything about how creative artist work? According to Boden, it can so long as we do not try to claim too much on the program's behalf. AARON is not creative in the substantive historical sense that it creates something which has never been seen before. Rather, Boden argues that AARON is creative in the more modest sense that later versions of the program can do something which earlier versions could not. According to Boden, "[c]reativity is the ability to come up with ideas or artefacts that are *new, surprising and valuable*" (*ibid.* p. 1). If we see earlier and later versions of AARON as one continuous program, AARON seems to satisfy all three of these features. The program is able to come up with new artefacts, since none of its drawings are the same. Moreover, those artefacts are surprising, since one cannot predict what the next drawing will look like based on previous drawings, even if the program makes its drawings all by itself using strict procedures. Last but not least, AARON can produce artefacts that are valuable given that many of its drawings are aesthetically pleasing.

It should be noted immediately that AARON is creative only on the assumption that all versions of it are part of the same program. Boden admits that if we do not grant this assumption, AARON's creativity is much less radical, since each version only does what Cohen has programmed it to do. There is no autonomous development from one version to another.

Cohen has to step in and do the necessary programming before the next version can do anything new. On its own, AARON cannot go from drawing abstract landscapes to drawing acrobats. Yet, notwithstanding this limitation, Boden argues that AARON's performance is comparable to that of an artist painting in a personal style.

This comparison is apt up to a point. There are, however, significant differences between AARON and an artist painting in a personal style. Whereas each version of AARON gets its style instilled into it once and for all when Cohen programs it, artists develop their personal style over time. An artist who merely adopts his or her style from another artist is not recognised as creative and may not even be recognised as an artist at all. When we read about the great painters of the Renaissance in Vasari's account of the period, they are invariably compared and esteemed by their ability to change the course of painting (Vasari 1998). The same goes for modern painters. Mondrian's creative achievement did not consist in his ability to paint abstract pictures using lines and rectangles of different colours – most people can do that with some practice – but in his developing this style.[2]

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[2] The above is in line with Kant when he says that rather than being a matter of following rules "[g]enius is the talent (natural gift) that gives the rule to art" (Kant 2005, 5: 307). Kant seems here to agree that there are rules of art, but argues that the people we recognise as being the most creative, geniuses, do not produce art by following these rules. They give us new rules. Yet, 'rule' here does not mean the kind of rule used by AARON. Instead, it is an exemplar that stands out as an excellent example setting a new standard for

It therefore seems that AARON lacks something fundamental to be called creative. To be truly creative, the program should also be able to develop its own style. The criticism put forward here does not contradict Cohen's claim that painting is rule-governed. Judging from their appearance, it seems likely that Mondrian's paintings are constructed according to certain rules. What makes Mondrian a truly creative painter, however, is that he developed those rules himself. Perhaps we could say that the development of a new set of rules was the primary act of creation that made a new kind of painting possible whereas Mondrian's following of those rules was merely a secondary act of creation that realised his artistic vision. This of course leaves open whether the production of rules is itself governed by further rules. Yet, Cohen's failure to come up with a program that can change its style of drawing suggests that the answer is no, or, if yes, that the rules must be significantly different from the ones used by AARON.

With the distinction between the production and the following of rules, we are also nearing the distinction between creativity and skill.[3] It is rules of skill that most resemble the rules used by AARON. These are rules that trained artists must often master, but how creative the artists are depends on how inventive they are in applying the rules. Like a trained artist, AARON can be said to master a range of skills. However, unlike a creative professional artist, AARON is not free to employ its skills in

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other artists to emulate.

[3] Gaut (2009) explores this distinction in more detail.

inventive ways, since it has been programmed to use the rules a certain way. In this respect, AARON strikes us as anything but creative. This problem cannot be circumvented through the addition of more rules. Even if we could somehow add second-order rules which specify how to select and apply a given set of first-order rules so they increase inventiveness, a new space would only open up for unruly creativity, since the second-order rules could themselves potentially be applied in more or less inventive ways by a human artist.

3. Generative Adversarial Networks

AARON's failure to emulate a genuinely creative artist is symptomatic of a general flaw afflicting all attempts at reproducing creativity using classical AI. They all rely on pre-given rules and heuristics which a computer then applies in a plodding manner which would not be described as creative had it been performed by a human.[4] Even if such computer simulations can deliver seemingly creative results, this does not mean that the procedure issuing in those results was itself creative. As Hubert Dreyfus notes, when we aim for psychological explanation, it is not enough that a computer simulation manages to imitate the input/output functions performed by a human being when these functions may be satisfied in many ways. The

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[4] Cf. Novitz (1999), p. 74.

program must also simulate the cognitive processes that people actually go through when they generate the output from the input (Dreyfus 1972, p. 80).

This is an issue that current research on computational creativity seems increasingly to recognise. Much of this research does not attempt to identify the supposed rules and heuristics which define a given style of thought. Instead, this research aims to generate creative outcomes by training neural networks on databases of manmade artworks until these networks are able to produce similar works themselves. So-called Generative Adversarial Networks are made up of two sub-networks: a discriminator which has access to a training set of manmade images and a generator which produces new images. When these sub-nets are set up so that the generator tries to produce images which the discriminator will mistake for a real manmade image, the two sub-nets will eventually reach an equilibrium at which they begin to produce outputs which look like already existing art.

These networks have two advantages. The first is that they do not follow heuristics like the programs of classical AI, but do instead seek to emulate how the brain processes information. The second advantage is that they have access to and respond to a database including canonical works much in the way that artists respond to exemplary works of art. Yet, these networks do not generate anything creative in their current form. After all, they are set up to produce works which look like already existing art. They

can therefore at most be likened to an artist who has learnt to imitate a certain style.

Perhaps it is possible to augment these network, however, so that they generate genuinely creative outputs. Elgammal et al. (2017) describe a program which represents an attempt to do just this. This program, which Elgammal et al. call a Creative Adversarial Network, is set up so that instead of trying to generate images in an already existing style, it attempts to generate novel images which are ambiguous between different pictorial styles. This type of network has produced some remarkable results. When asked to compare a series of abstract pictures generated by the network with a series of abstract pictures from the Art Basel 2016 art fair, a group of respondents rated the images by the network as more aesthetically pleasing than the works from the art fair (the program is less successful when it is asked to produce figurative work).

It is, however, still too early to say whether this type of network holds any promise of producing genuine creative works of art. As the authors themselves admit, an evaluation of aesthetic pleasantness does not entail that the work is also creative. One might indeed expect the opposite. Radically creative work is almost by default less likely to be found aesthetically pleasing than derivative work which is made to please the aesthetic sensibility of its time. The history of art is full of artists whose work was initially derided only to be recognised as groundbreaking by later generations. Even after Manet had made a name for himself in Paris, his

paintings continued to be ridiculed not only for their unfinished look, but also for their subject matter. "I cannot imagine what can have made an intelligent and distinguished artist choose so absurd a composition", one critic wrote of *Le Dejeuner sur l'herbe*.[5] Conversely, the history of art also contains many examples of artists who found instant success, but who are now thought of as little more than opportunists who knew how to pander to the aesthetic taste of their time.

The main reason for attributing creativity to Elgammal's network can therefore not be that people find its outputs more pleasing than some comparison class of paintings. Rather, the main reason for attributing creativity to the network lies in its ability to deviate from stylistic convention while still producing images that are recognised as having aesthetic value. It is this feature that puts the network in contention for satisfying all three of Boden's marks of creativity: *novelty*, *surprisingness*, and *value*. This also exempts the network from the main objection that was levelled at Cohen's drawing program. In contrast to AARON, the network does not adhere to a single style that it has been programmed to explore. Elgammal et al. do not employ exactly the same criteria as Boden, however. Instead, they follow Colton (2009) in taking novelty, skill, and an ability to

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[5] William Bürger (Théophile Thoré), *Salon de 1863*, in *Salons de W. Bürger*: "Je ne devine pas ce qui a pu faire choisir a un artiste intelligent et distingue une composition si absurde […]". Quoted in Fried (1996), p. 297 and p. 570, n. 83.

assess its own creation as the relevant criteria for judging whether a system is creative:

> Our proposed system possesses the ability to produce novel artifacts because the interaction between the two signals that derive the generation process is designed to force the system to explore creative space to find solutions that deviate from established styles but stay close enough to the boundary of art to be recognized as art. This interaction also provides a way for the system to self-assess its products. The quality of the artifacts is verified by the human subject experiments, which showed that subjects not only thought these artifacts were created by artists, but also rated them higher on some scales than human art. (2017, pp. 20-21)

Is this enough to render the network creative? I wish to raise two worries that it is not. First, even if the network is able to depart from existing styles, this does not mean that the network is able to generate its own distinct style as opposed to producing work which is merely ambiguous between different already existing styles. This is akin to an artist experimenting with different styles at the same time. Such a process can lead to creative outcomes, but stylistic ambiguity by itself does not suffice for creativity. The way in which an artwork is ambiguous between different styles must itself be inventive for the work to be creative. Yet, it is not clear that the network achieves stylistic ambiguity in an inventive manner.

The second worry grows out of this first worry. It is worth noting that the way in which the network deviates from stylistic norms is modelled after Colin Martindale's evolutionary theory of artistic creativity. According to Martindale (1990), all artists work within a set of conventions which define a particular style. Yet, creative artists are also under pressure to maintain the "arousal potential" of their art in response to spectators becoming habituated to their art. Creative artists therefore have to produce ever more novel and surprising works while still remaining within the parameters of what spectators deem aesthetically pleasing. Eventually, however, this process will lead to a breakdown of stylistic conventions, thus making a shift in style inevitable only for the whole cycle to be repeated.

Elgammal's network therefore presupposes a specific theory of creativity. This in itself is a significant methodological concession. Whereas Boden's hope was that artificial intelligence could be a means to understanding creativity, the explanatory order has now been reversed. Now we first have to possess an adequate theory of creativity before we can construct machines which emulate this creativity. This is to relinquish one of the original missions of artificial intelligence, namely to elucidate the nature of thought via the construction of thinking machines. Instead, the human capacity for creative thought reappears as the crucial explanandum in need of an explanation.

Yet, it is not clear that we will ever possess an adequate theory of creativity that can be applied in the building of creative machines.

Creativity may well be what Morris Weitz (1956) terms an "open concept" which resists definition, since it is by nature emendable and corrigible. If that is the case, we cannot give a general theory of creativity, since it will always be a matter of contention whether we should extend or restrict the concept to include more or less things in its domain. What we can do, of course, is to close the concept by restricting ourselves to a certain historical context much as Martindale does when he describes past creative cycles. In that case, we are using the concept in a purely descriptive sense to describe how creativity manifests itself at a specific time and place.

What we cannot do, however, is to generalise from such a contextualised description of creativity to a general theory of creativity. Even if Martindale's theory is adequate as a theory of past creative cycles, it may not generalise to future instances of creativity. If the concept of creativity is an open concept, it also has an evaluative component which invites us to consider whether an idea, object, or procedure deserves to be classified as creative regardless of whether it has been classified this way in the past. For the same reason, a machine may not be creative even if the procedure that it is instructed to follow has proved to be creative in the past. After all, it will be open to contention whether a procedure which is designed to mimic past creative achievements itself deserves to be called creative or merely repetitive.[6]

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[6] Indeed, some might argue that it is impossible to program a machine to follow a procedure which mimics past creative achievements without thereby making the machine

4. Conclusion

If what I have argued is correct, we are still some way from seeing genuine artificial creativity. Although past and current attempts at producing artificial creativity yield many noteworthy results, they ultimately fall short of genuine creativity. Most importantly, we are yet to see machines and programs which not only traverse a creative domain to produce novel products, but which do so in a manner which itself is creative. What is more, we are also yet to see programs which are able to develop their own distinct style where this style amounts to more than mere ambiguity between already existing styles. Until we know whether it is possible in principle for a machine to achieve these feats, it remains unclear whether genuine artificial creativity is at all possible.[7]

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uncreative. This, one might argue, would remove the element of surprise and originality which is characteristic of creativity. Far from being free to come up with surprising and original solutions to creative problems, the machine would merely be predetermined to re-enact the trajectory which some past creative achievement has originally formed. I develop this point in a longer version of this paper.

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