

Proceedings of the European Society for Aesthetics

Volume 7, 2015

Edited by Fabian Dorsch and Dan-Eugen Ratiu

Published by the European Society for Aesthetics

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Proceedings of the European Society of Aesthetics

Founded in 2009 by Fabian Dorsch

Internet: <http://proceedings.eurosa.org>

Email: proceedings@eurosa.org

ISSN: 1664 – 5278

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The Need for Art, and the Aesthetics of the Self: A Copernican Turn

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Introduction

In late June 2011 a conference on ‘The State of Aesthetics’ was held in London. An electronic announcement of the event stated that

‘A century ago aesthetics was of central concern for philosophers and psychologists alike. These days the study of the arts is, for both disciplines, a relatively minor enterprise; almost none of the world’s highest profile philosophers specialise in the arts, and it is distinctly outside the curriculum’s core... [Indeed] the Anglo-American tradition in philosophy is regarded, where it is noticed at all, as too passive, distanced and traditional to be relevant to either art practice or art engagement.’¹

There are many reasons for this perceived irrelevance. One of them is that the analytic tradition makes no sustained attempt to negotiate what happens in the making of art i.e., how art transforms the world and changes it into something new. It focusses, rather, on analysis of the formal conventions whereby, for example, we ‘read’ fiction or perceive pictures. The reason why such reading or perception is important in the first place falls away – or is negotiated through the crude notion of ‘expressive qualities’.²

The Continental tradition is somewhat more focussed towards the issues I have mentioned, but, again, very much from the viewpoint of the

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¹ This was an electronic announcement distributed by the online philosophy list PHILOS-L@liverpool.ac.uk, 2011.

² For a detailed criticism of this concept see the discussion of Richard Wollheim in Chapter 1 of my book *Phenomenologies of Art and Vision: A Post-Analytic Turn*, Bloomsbury Academic, London and New York, 2013.

audience's perspective. This tradition also suffers from the problem that in most cases, the explanation of art is derived from the relevant thinkers own general philosophy rather than from close investigative engagement with the work of art itself. Too often, indeed, figures such as Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Deleuze are used as authorities to whom the artwork is made to answer, rather than theorists whose work must be tested critically against the authority of the work itself. As I have shown elsewhere, indeed, this critical test frequently shows the aforementioned theorists' approach to art to be limited or mistaken.³

It follows, then, that a change is needed. Instead of engaging with art mainly through the crude notion of expressive qualities, or making it speak through the voice of 'authorities', we need a Copernican turn – a re-orientation of aesthetics around the art object itself and the unique way in which it transforms how the world appears and the nature of human experience.

Elsewhere, I have propounded a large body of work in normative aesthetics that converges on this transformative power.⁴ In it, I treat the artwork as an ontological event gravitating around *style* in how it is designed or makes its subject-matter appear, *vis-à-vis* the distinctive properties of the medium (or media) of which it is an instance.

To understand this requires a phenomenology of style in the individual work, that is grounded also on a sense of comparative relation to other individual styles in the medium in question. We must be prepared to engage with how the making of art transforms appearance and experience, and how the distinctiveness of such transformations is determined by the individual work considered in relation to other such works. Such comparative understanding enables recognition of what is special about the individual artist's way of doing things.

There is a rather facile objection to this approach which holds that

³ See the relevant Chapters on Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty in *Phenomenologies of Art and Vision...Ibid*, and the Chapters on Deleuze and Merleau-Ponty in my *The Phenomenology of Modern Art: Exploding Deleuze, Illuminating Style*, Continuum, London and New York, 2012.

⁴ See especially *Defining Art, Creating the Canon: Artistic Value in an Era of Doubt*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 2007; and *Art and Embodiment: From Aesthetics to Self-Consciousness*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1993.

an emphasis on the made character of artworks does not square well with modern and postmodern idiom of conceptual art and the tradition of the Duchampian ready-made. However, as I have shown in detail, elsewhere, such idioms can actually be accommodated on the basis of the approach I am proposing.

In the present discussion, then, I will formulate a summary perspective of this approach. However, rather than leap straight into the transformative structure of the artwork we must commence from an equally neglected issue, namely that of why we need to create art in the first place.

Part One, accordingly, outlines the *horizontal* basis of our experience of time and space, and then four key cognitive competences which are involved in this experience. Particular emphasis is given to the importance of the aesthetic in its narrative mode of expression. Part Two outlines how literature, music, and pictorial art engage with this narrative feature in their own unique ways. They transform the aesthetic narrative of experience by embodying it in a more enduring and lucid form than can be attained at the purely experiential level.

Part One

We only inhabit the present in our distinctive human way, insofar as knowledge of other possible times and places, and what it would be like to occupy them, orientates our sense of the present (explicitly or tacitly).⁵

This means that we exist not just in the present of bodily need and the network of spatial and temporal locations that provide routes to its satisfaction, rather *we exist in and across present, past, future, and counterfactuality* - i.e. things that might have happened had circumstances been different.. All our choices – and our valuations – breathe through this *horizon* of factual realities and complex modes of possibility. Feeling and emotions tied originally to encounters with immediate stimuli, are redistributed across the subject's horizontally structured experiences.

Now the question arises as to how this horizon is articulated and negotiated. There are four major cognitive competences involved – each of

⁵ My general theory of epistemology and the unity of the self is set out in some detail in a book entitled *Philosophy After Postmodernism: Civilized Values and the Scope of Knowledge*, Routledge, London and New York, 2014.

which is involved reciprocally with the genesis and operations of the others. It is to these I now turn.

The first competence is that of *symbolic form*. It is constituted by language, and related competences that are enabled by the learning and applying of language in specific ways. In this respect, for example, history and geography are symbolic forms with a special distinctiveness through their comprehension of particular regions of time and space. Philosophy and religion address the more general character of humanity's relation to the world. Other symbolic forms such as mathematics and the various branches of science allow the expression of much more general patterns of structural order in the characterization of phenomena. At the opposite extreme, the arts offer clarification of the particularity of human experience, in ways I shall describe later on.

It should be emphasized that initiation into symbolic forms is not a static once-and-for-all achievement. For whilst one can receive a basic education in them, the education can be deepened insofar as symbolic forms admit of *progressive articulation*. This means more than change *per se*. For the basic semantic and syntactic structure of symbolic forms can often be extended so as to allow the expression of new levels of meaning. There is not only change of style and/or choice in what is represented, but, more fundamentally in terms of what can be represented.

Symbolic forms, then, enable knowledge of self and world in a way that allows that knowledge to be developed, in principle, to ever higher levels.

I turn now to a second cognitive capacity, namely *imagination*.⁶ Imagination is one of the most important cognitive competences, even though its philosophical importance has scarcely been recognized. Of the great philosophers, Kant alone, saw its key importance, and I will follow his basic sense of it - as a capacity for generating quasi-sensory images of items and states of affairs that are not immediately given in perception.

This *trans-ostensive* function (as I shall call it) is far from being a mere

⁶ I have argued this theory in detail in two lengthy papers. 'Imagination, Language, and the Perceptual World: A Post-Analytic Phenomenology', *Continental Philosophy Review* 46 (1) 2013, pp. 37-56; and 'How Images Create Us: Imagination and the Unity of Self-Consciousness', *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 20, No.11-12, 2013, pp.101-123. See also the Chapter on 'Imagination and Objective Knowledge' in *Philosophy After Postmodernism...* Ibid.

luxury. At the most basic level, for example, one cannot make sense of the acquisition and application of concepts – indeed, of the learning of language in general – without presupposing the mediation of imagination as a necessary factor.

All sign and concept acquisition at some point presupposes a capacity for engaging with things not immediately present, that is not itself merely another variety of sign or concept. If there was not such a capacity, our explanations of the learning of signs and concepts would presuppose more fundamental signs and concepts, and even more fundamental signs and concepts to explain them, and so on, in an infinite regress. Imagination is the feature that allows to get a trans-ostensive ‘take’ on things not present thus allowing signs to be learned.

And this centrality of imagination extends equally to memory. In order to recall facts about one’s life, one must articulate them through linguistic descriptions. This in itself, *qua* linguistic, presupposes the mediation of imagination for the reason just mentioned. However, much of our remembering – indeed, the remembering that really counts for us emotionally – involves not just descriptive facts about the past, but the generation of images that are consistent with these facts.

I emphasize the term ‘generation’ here, for such *episodic memory* does not consist of the retrieval of mere faded ‘pictures’. Our reliving of the past is a *creative* thing – it is an imaginative interpretation whose character is strongly influenced by our present interests and orientations.⁷

The phenomenology of the mental image, itself, reveals this intrinsically creative character. When we remember or imagine something episodically, we do not project an exact simulacrum of that which we are positing. Our images select, exaggerate, omit, sometimes even falsify, the appearance of their object. They are interpretations whose character is in large part determined by our personal interests in the present.

And this is all to the good. For if our imagining did not have this character, and our recollections of the past and projections of possibility had the vividness and intensity of present perception, there could be no experience. If moments from the past or projected possible experiences were

⁷ For a more detailed account of the phenomenology of the mental image see especially ‘How Images Create Us...’ Ibid.

to be imagined with the same sensory immediacy as present perception, we would lose our sense of reality. It is true that the existence of objects given in perception are not subject to the will in the way that imagined objects are. However, if the sensory intensity of the image were on a par with that of perception, then the very power of willing itself lose its cognitive bearings and lapse into psychosis.

It is through imagination directed by language that we inhabit the past, and project future and counterfactual possibilities in quasi-sensory, episodic, terms. Our sense of who and what we are and our place in the universe is shaped profoundly by the character of these images, and how we link them through descriptions that themselves involve imagination, albeit in less direct terms.

I turn now to the third cognitive capacity that is decisive to the horizontal basis of substantial freedom, namely *empathy* – the ability to identify, in affective terms, with how others experience the world.

Initiation into language and the exercise of imagination both enables and draws upon this decisive emotion. No one can be conscious of self except insofar as one has a sense of identity with and difference from, other members of the same species. In this context, empathy is more than mere intellectual recognition or subjective affective response, because it serves as both a motive for positive action towards others and a basis for mutual felt recognition in relation to, and through the other. It is the supreme, as it were, *reciprocal* and societal emotion.

Of course, there are psychopathic personalities devoid of empathy, but even in these cases, such a person must at least know, in principle what it is like to be a other person, even if this does not issue in any positive emotion.

Now, whilst empathy is a relatively straightforward notion, the final cognitive component of substantial freedom that I will consider is much more complex and controversial. It is the *aesthetic*. The concept of the aesthetic as such was first formulated in eighteenth-century Europe, and in terms of post-colonial and gender studies orthodoxy, it might be thought to be no more than a reflection of the preferences and dominance of white, male, middle-class, heterosexist, patriarchy.

However, there is rather more to it than this. For whilst the theorization of the aesthetic *qua* aesthetic is historically specific, what *is* so

theorized is an idiom of experience that is intrinsic to the unity of self-consciousness.

This is because of the extraordinary scope of its basic character - which centers on the enjoyment of, and finding fulfilment in, the harmonious relation between the parts and whole of a sensible or imaginatively-intended structure. Because such fulfilment does not logically presuppose any beliefs that the significance of the particular part/whole relation is of practical significance, it has the character of disinterestedness.⁸ Indeed, this is of special cognitive importance in that it involves judgments whose relation to their object is relatively free, rather than constrained by the discursive rigidity of the means/ends logic of everyday life.

It is often supposed that disinterestedness makes the aesthetic into no more than a culturally specific western 'luxury' experience. How, for example, can a wild tribal dance intended to invoke victory in battle be counted as disinterested? But this question puts the cart before the horse. The more interesting question is that of why anyone in the first place should imagine that dancing or, indeed, any other mode of artistic mimicry should have the power to influence reality external to the image.

Such a belief presupposes that mimicry and image-making has already been found fascinating in its own right. It allows creator and audience to engage with subject-matter that has been adapted to expression in a medium by human artifice. The subject-matter appears to be controlled, and it is this embodiment that is fascinating.

Of course, one might retort that such an observation shows that the fascination is not aesthetic but just a sense of practical power over what is represented. But again one must press the question of why this should involve belief that real control is at issue when the image or mimicry manifestly has arisen through human artifice alone.

This question is answered by the an intrinsic aesthetic satisfaction arising from the creation of, or experience of a whole of meaning embod-

⁸ Disinterestedness has been addressed in detail in every book I have written. Whereas most theorists take it to be some impartial psychological attitude taken towards the aesthetic object, I argue, in contrast, that it is a logical characterization concerning the grounds of our enjoyment of it. Put simply we enjoy something disinterestedly insofar as such pleasure does not presuppose belief that the object is of practical or theoretical significance.

ied in the parts of an artifact (or, in the case of dance, a quasi-artifact). This satisfaction may be psychologically overwhelmed by uses to which the work is put subsequently, but it remains embedded as its logical core.

These putative objections to the scope of the aesthetic have been considered for a specific reason. The deep-seatedness of the aesthetic in self-consciousness, has scarcely been realised by most philosophers and cultural theorists. This is profoundly unfortunate, as there is a case for arguing that our very sense of who and what we are, and our place in the universe, has a quite specific aesthetic character.

It constellates around the need for narrative meaning in life – narrative in the sense of a ‘real-life’ story (albeit with fictional elements) where what one does, and the things that happen to one, are made sense of, *and enjoyed*, as factors contributing to, and emerging from, a continually changing meaningful whole of experience.

Of course, it might be argued that the notion of narrative does not *have* to be invoked here. Surely, the unity of experience can be sufficiently explained by reference to our capacity to recall, and to anticipate the future, as mere dispositions, i.e., things we can do as, and when, circumstances demand. Through such recall or anticipation we identify the continuity of our experience as a self-conscious Being. This sense of continuity is sufficient for grounding the unity of experience.

But again, this just defers the evil day. The factual continuity of experience is not created *just* by our recall of the past or anticipation of the future. Indeed, if such capacities are not to be overwhelmed by the excess of facts and details concerning one’s life – not to mention the huge complexities introduced by our sense of the future and counterfactual possibility - they must access memory or imagination in a form that is already amenable to recall or anticipation.

The exercise of such capacities is not usually a struggle but engages, rather, with facts and episodes that have been prioritized in terms of significance over the claims of other such facts and episodes. (Indeed, the grouping of experiences into a specific sense of an episode in one’s life entails that a selective principle of unity in experience is at work in experience, beyond than that of mere continuity.)

We should recall, also, in this respect, the nature of imagination. Imagination is necessarily involved in language acquisition and use, and has a

central role in episodic memory. The mental image itself is a quasi-sensory interpretation rather than a reproduction or copy of its objects. This means, accordingly, that a key competence involved in self-understanding, has itself, a creative character. It presents a kind of narrative of its object, rather than a neutral description.

Now in the case of referring to events surrounding inanimate objects or basic biological life-forms and processes, we are content to use the language of description. But the continuity of a human life demands narrative, because it has, in fundamental terms, a self-created, and creative unity of direction, however, vague. One's choices are exercised on the basis of one's sense of how one got here, and where, and with who, one wants to go next, and how soon, and in what order.

On these terms, in other words, the unity of self is determined by a set of interpretations of past, future, and counterfactuality, that converge on, and are realigned through the individual's developing present. It is in these terms that the continuity of a human life forms a narrative – existing in, and across, the horizontal factors. Its unity involves a maintained satisfaction in how the meanings of past moments and episodes reconfigure in relation to our sense of the present, as the story of our life advances

Most animals are content with the gratification of basic needs and societal roles – such as 'alpha-male' – that constellate around these needs. But the human animal is very different. Many are content to exist, of course, within the terms and scope of identities which they have inherited through family and/or broader social contexts. But even this simple conformity amounts to rather more than simply 'knowing one's place'. For it is always shadowed by, and plays-off against, the knowledge, that, at least in principle, one's life might have been different, and always has the possibility of changing radically through unexpected circumstances. The pleasure of conformity is that of a complex whole. It is emergent from an understanding of what we are, in play with a sense of more disruptive possibilities.

It should be emphasized that in societies which enjoy advanced standards of living, there is actually much more scope for choice in terms of creating one's narrative. The pleasures of a career may involve the satisfactions of power, authority, or of 'making a contribution', but how one sees these in relation to the story of one's life, and that of society, is again, surely a key consideration. One wants a story that satisfies in terms of its

structure and content, as well as in terms of the money it earns and/or the practical good it achieves.

Not least in such satisfaction is the way in which one locates what one has done or might do, in terms of broader possibilities which might have come to pass, but did not. Again, one's choices are not mere singular events but have, rather, a deeper content or texture that plays off actively against experience's horizontal depth.

All this is testimony to the fact that over and above brute practical considerations in making one's way through life, there is a need to find satisfaction in the making of the way – a pleasure in the story or narrative of one's being for its own sake.

This may only be a vague or blurry kind of aesthetic satisfaction, but it is such a satisfaction. It is embedded in, and directed by, practical considerations and instinctual drives, but equally it serves to recontextualize the satisfaction of these drives as a part of a broader whole of meaning that is more than the sum of their satisfactions. Indeed, whilst the various episodes and moments in life are packed with practical and instinctual meanings that are far from disinterested, our pleasure in who we are emerges from how these fit together in a satisfying unity. Viewing the self as an emergent whole, our pleasure in it has an, at least, *relatively disinterested* character. It is the aesthetic narrative of a life.

This narrative has by no means has to form some single grand story. There may be many stops and starts where the individual takes new directions, maybe even entertains alternative strategies that are actually in conflict with one another. In this case, the narrative structure of substantial freedom is itself an aesthetic effect of wholes that have become parts or are being explored in such terms

It should not be thought, either, that narrative is no more than a psychological need. It is, rather a conceptual presupposition of the unity of self-consciousness. The horizontal basis of experience – wherein we exist in and across present, past, future, and counterfactual – enables unity of self. But the character of this unity reciprocally determines and is determined by, the individual's creative interpretation (no matter how minimal) of who or what he or she is, and the relation to the universe. Symbolic form, imagination, empathy and the aesthetic as such, cohere and find mutual enhancement in the aesthetic narrative of experience.

Without such a narrative, moments of experience would not accumulate *as* moments of experience. They might be lived-through, and even inform our future behaviour in tacit terms (as in animal consciousness) but there would be no way in which such moments could be retrieved and linked to form a knowable unity. Language and other symbolic forms cannot be used to present an alternative explanation, because it can be argued that the learning and use of them is reciprocally correlated with the development of personal narrative

I am arguing, then, that the unity of self-consciousness is creatively based; it focuses on a highly selective narrative or narrative interpretations of the temporal continuity of experience. Narrative in this sense is a loosely aesthetic structure within which desires and decisions and our sense of others become meaningful beyond their individual consideration. Such narrative develops as we are initiated into symbolic forms (most notably language) and through the complex functions of imagination and our empathy with others. In effect, each human being has his or her own style of dealing with things that happen and with the persons and institutions who they have to deal with. This existential style is determined by the narrative in terms of which they negotiate the world.

Now it is true that this narrative capacity does not have to be developed through conscious pursuit. Indeed, it is the exception rather than the rule to be experienced in this way. However, the point of capital importance is that it can be cultivated. The idea of 'self-formation' or 'self-improvement' are, of course, familiar terms. They can apply to the development of individual skills or experiences, but there is a more global sense of them – bound up with the deepening of one's life-narrative and substantial freedom. It should be emphasized that this is not a means to an end. Rather, it is an end in itself. Its pursuit might even be described as the purpose of a human life (in the secular sense).

I have identified, then, four cognitive competences – symbolic form, imagination, empathy and the aesthetic – which in combination, are the basis of human experience. They allow us to negotiate the horizon of space time, by making it meaningful through understanding and the projection of possibility, and through emotional involvement with others and the development of our own selves. In concert, they are the basis also, of an aesthetic narrative that is basic to self-consciousness. In effect, the self is an

aesthetic structure.

Part Two

We can now begin to understand the significance of the artwork. As we have just seen knowledge of self and world is a process. It is not one that definitively resolved; but it can be developed into higher stages. Both these points are decisive in terms of our need for the arts.

Consider first the constant process of experience. We organise it very much in the expectation of episodes of consummation that will give meaning to the whole. And, of course, if one is lucky there will be such episodes in our lives. However, none of them can be complete in any definitive sense because as soon as the desirable state has been attained, we have to work to maintain it, or search for some even deeper goal to fulfill. The narrative of life brings aesthetic fulfilment, but it is not something we can opt out of – unless we die or suffer some terrible cognitive deficit. These moments of fulfilment are part of the experiential continuum; we do not possess them so much as the drive towards them possesses us.

The making and appreciation of art, however, intervenes on this. It projects imagined possibilities of experience on the basis of another person's style in embodying and presenting these possibilities in an enduring physical medium.⁹ The possibilities in question here, are ways of imagining how things might happen or appear on the basis of the artist's interests and values. It should be emphasized that in making the artwork, the artist does not translate pre-given mental images into reality. Rather the very process of making these is the real act of imagination. The give-and-take between idea and medium in writing, composing, and painting, or whatever, brings the image to completion through physical embodiment.

This embodiment enables, in effect, permanent possibilities of experience which are no longer physically tied to the being of the artist who created them. The audience can identify with how the artist's style transforms the world's appearance, but because the work now exists independently of the artist, it can identify with this transformation on very much

⁹ For more concerning this major point, see Chapter 4 of *Defining Art, Creating the Canon...* op.cit.

its own terms. It is disinterested appreciation insofar as it does not presuppose reference to any knowledge about the artist's personal circumstances in order to be enjoyed.

In this way, the artwork integrates symbolic form, imagination, empathy, and the aesthetic – constitutive features of experience – at the level of objective reality. This objectification offers both creator and audience a release from the narrative continuum of life – but in a way that feeds back and clarifies it. Whereas moments of fulfilment in one's aesthetic narrative emerge, flourish, and are then left behind in the flow of experience, what the artwork embodies is a (notionally) timeless concretion of this flow.

The concretion is embodied differently on the basis of the individual medium involved. Literature, for example, involves temporal realization – that is to say a succession of successive developing events, where the principle of unity is such that these events must be apprehended in a strict linear order. If one simply read material from the end of the work and then things from the beginning and then the middle, one would not have comprehended the work *as* a unity. One would have reduced it to fragments.

Poetry and fiction both centre on the presentation of narrative. In the literary context, a narrative describes a related succession of events concerning sentient beings or which has relevance to the experience of such beings. One might describe changes that happen to certain inanimate objects but this would not count as poem or story unless it figured in the story or was being described from the experiential viewpoint of the author, rather than as a mere descriptive presentation of information. There is an 'as-if' dimension involved. We are invited to consider these happenstances from a personal perspective – sometimes of a character in the narrative, but always from that of the author (even if the author is trying to hide his or her own perspective from the reader).

In the real world, events happen and pass away, each of them generating – where humans are involved – narratives that also emerge and pass away in the nexus of other events. In the literary work, however, the emergence of the narrative, its development, and resolution happen within well-defined parameters and never pass away. The locks and hinges of events and human immersion in them are displayed with a completion that is not available

from real-life experience. The work remains as a permanent elucidation of how things come to be and how the individual human perspective can make these eloquent in terms of their broader human significance.

Even if a poem, play, or story describes actual events or states of affairs, they always remain in the realm of possibility. The author imaginatively projects on the basis of the facts rather than simply making a documentary out of them. The way they are recounted and the human responses to them involve creative imaginative variation rather than transcription. They allow the audience to inhabit the author's experience – to witness the events or state of affairs described as-if from another person's viewpoint.

It cannot be emphasized strongly enough that this does not involve trying to merge with the artist's own emotional states. The focus is on how style in the work transforms our own way of interpreting the world. Empathy arises here through following the artist's stylistic guidance – through identifying with the perspective on things that the work presents, rather than with fantasies of how he or she actually felt in creating it.

Music is also an art of temporal realization. True, there are some avant-garde works where the order in which one hears the parts of the work do not matter, but these are highly marginal. However, the narrative content of music is much more ambiguous and I have described it at great length elsewhere.¹⁰ Music has an intimate connection with the emotions. These are involuntary states but they can be expressed through features – such as the voice – which are amenable to voluntary control.

The voice, in fact, provides an important clue as to the basis of meaning in music. When listening to a conversation – even at a distance where we cannot actually hear what is being said – as the conversation develops, the protagonists' vocal tones will undergo change. We may find transitions from, say, a matter-of-fact character, to a sense of urgency; or, alternatively, a mere sense of accumulating significance. In such cases, simply listening to the vocal tones of the conversation exclusively, we can follow the cumulative progression of a narrative of emotional intonations.

The tonal system of music allows this narrative of developing inton-

¹⁰ The theory of music presented here is given a full exposition as Chapter 7 of *Defining Art, Creating the Canon*,... op.cit.

ations to be applied in a context that is not tied to any actual real-life situation. Major keys have strong general associations of positive and assertive feeling and/or movement, whilst minor keys have more introspective or melancholic association. The meaning of individual musical units and phrases within such keys and, indeed, the transitions from one to another is a function of their place in the developing whole of the work in which they are parts. They anticipate both that which is yet to come, and reconfigure the meaning of parts that have preceded them.

The upshot of all this is that the tonal scale-system is a kind of formalization of the intonations of auditory conversational narrative. Indeed, it enables the relation between units of sound (be they vocal or instrumental) to be formalized to such a degree, that the developing narrative of emotionally intonated notes, rhythms, and harmonies becomes much more complex. An emotional narrative structure is formed not just through the evocation of vocal tones but also of gestures and patterns of interaction or conflict between them. They can be described in terms akin to those which pertain to the emergence and development of emotional states in personal and group narratives.

Of course, one might describe a piece of music as 'cheerful' or 'sad' but if that was all that could be said about it, the piece would be fairly mediocre. The real substance of musical meaning and expression lies in the way that tense, relaxed, or anticipatory phases are transformed into others – usually in an extended way on the basis of melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic factors. The point is that music engages us not just emotional associations as such, but through the way these are given narrative development of a unique kind.

Why describe this as unique? Because in music emotion and, more importantly, emotionally charged auditory narratives are expressed in virtual terms. Whereas in the actuality of real life, emotions are enacted as states of persons, or are described second-hand in purely linguistic terms, music offers a virtual expression of them. This means that it is an *image* of emotional intonation and its narrative development – one that is presented quasi-sensuously, but which is not tied to any actual emotionally significant narrative of tones or gestures that ever existed. (Even in the case of programme music meant to evoke some specific real life situation, how the music evokes this is open; it cannot reproduce the emotional narrat-

ives involved in some kind of documentary way.)

It might be objected that music is surely not so distant from the actual circumstances of reality. Surely the composer felt the kind of narrative emotions that are embodied in the musical work, and the performers and audience simply rediscover and identify with these states through listening. However, the problem with this query is its false idealization of the creative process. It may well be that Beethoven felt dramatically angry when composing the opening bars of the Fifth Symphony, but he might also merely have felt cheerfully replete and inspired after an notable round of beer and bratwurst, humming the bars to himself and saying 'My God, what a grand sequence ! I must remember to use that'. The point to gather here, is that no one can ever know how an artist feels when creating a work. He or she will very likely move through a whole range of ideas and states of mind. And even if he or she writes down afterwards what was felt in creating the work, the account is not some mechanical transcription of the events, but an interpretation of them.

And this is the point, when it comes to music as virtual expression or any other mode of art, what we identify with is the possibility of experience that the work presents, and not those unknowable personal states of the artist that were involved in its creation. What makes music's virtual expression so unique is that it significantly diminishes the division between music and those who compose it, perform it, or simply listen to it as an audience. Precisely because the narrative emotional intonations of the work as embodied in the music are not tied to any actual individual then all the aforementioned parties can appropriate it, enjoy it, and even live it on their own terms to a degree that other art media do not allow.

Other representational media, in contrast, tell stories about definite individuals and/or represent them visually. Even if the individuals in question are not identified except in schematic terms and even if they never existed in real life, they are still presented *as* individuals - that is to say as beings presented as existing independently of the reader or viewer of the work. Music, in contrast, involves expression which arises from particular narratives of intonation that, nevertheless, are not assigned to any represented individual either fictional or real. They represent a kind of purely imaginary possibility of experience.

It is for this reason that, in music the composer, performer, and listener

inhabit one another without significant restriction. The impression arises that we are actually 'in' the music rather than merely encountering it as an object of auditory experience. Indeed, whilst (as I argued earlier) any artwork allows empathic identification with its creator's style, the lack of individual reference in the musical work allows this identification to attain a unique level of phenomenological intimacy for the reasons just described.

Two other factors should be emphasized. First, the very fact that music's emotionally charged content is embodied in an aesthetic whole means that, here, narrative structure is represented more lucidly than in our introspective or observational emotional experiences. To perform and listen to music is follow the narrative development of emotion in aesthetic terms rather than be pressurized and controlled by its everyday occurrent and involuntary structure. In the experience of music one possesses emotional intonation, its gestural correlates, and narrative development in a way that one does not in everyday life.

Let us now consider the relation between visual art and self-consciousness.¹¹ For reasons of brevity I shall focus on pictorial art alone. Every picture has a frontal plane that is notionally 'closest' to an *external* viewer. This frontal plane also defines the position of a notional *internal viewer*, who might immediately behold the represented scene from within the picture. The external viewer occupies a place in real physical time and place, whilst the internal viewer beholds the scene represented as if he or she were within the pictorial space itself. Hence whilst it does not make sense to ask how far the external viewer is from a building represented on the picture's horizon, it makes perfect sense to ask this of the notional internal viewer.

In aesthetic terms identification with the internal viewer's position is decisive. For in order to attend to its pictorial qualities, we must see *into* the work's pictorial space, imagining ourselves being *in* there. Such imaginative identification involves a disregard for the real physical surroundings in which the identification takes place. In effect, the external observer comes to identify with what the notional internal viewer might 'behold'.

¹¹ The topics I am about to deal with are addressed more fully in Chapter 3 of *How Pictures Complete Us: The Beautiful, the Sublime, and the Divine*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 2015. It also features in Chapters 2 and 3 of my *Phenomenology of the Visual Arts (even the frame)*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 2009.

However, this disregarding does not necessitate the suspension of all beliefs and expectations bound up with our existence in real time and space. (If it did, there would be no distinction between the work's pictorial content, and the contents of the real physical world.) Indeed, the wonder of picturing centres on how it opens a space that is at once ontologically different from, and perceptually discontinuous with the normal perceptual order, yet, at the same time, is still orientated by some existential demands made by that order, and by the external observer's own personal experience. The key feature of this, indeed – the major focus of all aesthetic responses to pictorial art – is how the work's style enables and opens up this pictorial space. The viewer both inhabits that space (through the internal viewing position just described) and enjoys how it has been brought forth by artistic creation. It is the inter-relation between these two aspects that makes aesthetic responses to the arts so complex.

Some of the special ramifications that this has for pictorial art can be brought out through a contrast with photography. The photographer takes the picture (at a specific time and a specific place, and then the camera mechanically captures a momentary appearance of what is actually present before it. Here the relation between the photographic content and the photograph's notional internal viewer involves a *real* immobilization of *real time*. The events captured in the photograph are from a spatio-temporal continuum whose existence as a continuum is independent of the will of the photographer and the spectator. To put it another way, the things in the photograph had a real existence and history before the photograph was taken, and went into a real future afterwards. We might imagine what this history or future might be like, but it existed irrespective of our imagining. The photograph's notional internal viewer witnesses an arrested visual reality rather than an imaginatively constructed one.

Here, of course, we find the major difference from picturing. Pictorial art involves the *creation* of a virtual space that relates to the continuum of real space and time but not in the way that the photograph does. When the artist creates a picture, he or she projects a *possible* appearance of some three-dimensional item or state of affairs. That which is in the photograph must have existed at some time or other, whereas what is represented in a picture need not have.

This is decisive. As a *created* three-dimensional appearance the picture

represents a pictorial content that – in contrast to the photograph – has no past or future independent of the creator's or audience's will. The picture represents only a possible object of visual perception – its contents are virtual projections alone. True, the creation of the picture as a material manufactured thing means that it has a real past, and (once created) a real future as a made physical object. However, the virtual content of the picture *qua* pictorial exists at a different ontological level through being created in a medium such as drawing or painting.

The key point to gather from this is that the virtual reality represented by the picture – by virtue of having been created rather than 'taken' – is something apart from the temporal flow of the real world. The picture's notional internal viewer and what that viewer beholds exist a relation of *idealized immobility* (as opposed to the real arrested immobility of the photograph). I call this relation *presentness*.

Throughout history, philosophers have pondered the 'present' understood as an occurrent moment or instant in time. But the human experience of the Present (which I will henceforth capitalize) is more than just a temporal instant or point. This is because it both connects and separates our experience of the past and anticipations of the future. Experientially, as cognitive act or orientation, the Present may last only instant; or it may seem more prolonged – as when we become engrossed in a continuous act of scrutiny.

In broader terms, the Present is of the profoundest significance in terms of the goals and fulfilments of what I have called the aesthetic narrative of self-consciousness. We desire these goals and fulfilments to be realized in sustained terms, but their realisations tend to converge mainly on high points – on specific Presents of achievement and gratification. But, whilst the Present is a central focus of human existence, as soon as we reflect on it, it has already gone. One Present replaces another even in the very act of contemplating it. We strive to possess it, but to no avail.

This elusiveness has another aspect. The Present's content is determined by the relation between the perceived and the character of the one who perceives. In relation to the latter, how the human subject perceives the Present involves different existential emphases – different *styles* of experiencing. These styles are organized by the narrative history of the perceiving subject and by the social and cultural context of his or her activity.

Such factors mean that the basis of our style in how we regard the Present is of the most unfathomable complexity. One can reflect on it, but it is formidably difficult to comprehend what is at issue at the level of our immediate experience of the Present. However, this is all to the good. For if our experience of the Present constantly involved reflection on the factors at issue in it, then cognition would be overwhelmed by an excess of information.

Now, it is these various aspects of the elusiveness of the Present that pictorial art intervenes upon and transforms. To recognize the pictorial content of a picture *qua* pictorial is to perceive it as a possible (that is to say, virtual) visual Present – and not one that has been mechanically extracted from a real continuum of past and future. As pointed out earlier, the notional internal viewer and what that viewer beholds are in a created and idealized relation of immobility. *The transitoriness of the Present is symbolically possessed and fixed in place* through being represented in a picture. Indeed, the artist's choice of materials and specific modes of handling, mean that the personal existential style that informs any experiential Present is here manifest at a publically accessible level. In effect, it shows a possible way of seeing that is brought to enduring completion through the artist's making of it into a picture.

In this way, then, the Present's striving for self-possession, and the style which both informs it and makes it meaningful, both find objective expression through pictorial art. The otherwise transient Present and the existential style that sustains it are realized in a *symbolically autonomous form*. In this way, pictorial art intervenes upon and transforms our relation to the aesthetic narrative of self-consciousness.

Conclusion

I have, then, discussed the unity of self-consciousness in terms of four symbolic competences which work together allowing us to inhabit the spatio-temporal continuum as a meaningful horizon of experience. I gave special emphasis to the aesthetic narrative of the self as central to this meaningfulness. It was then shown how literature, music, and pictorial art, engage with this narrative allowing features of it to be adapted into more enduring

forms that further clarify some of its main features – such as the importance of style. Each medium does this in its own unique way – which is why assigning privileged features to each medium has no hierarchical implications. Each mode of art has its own special area of distinctiveness.

Finally, then, by clarifying the main features of this distinctiveness *vis-à-vis* literature, music, and pictorial art, I hope to have not only signposted how the major question of explaining why the arts are intrinsically significant for us can be solved, but also to have set forth concepts and relations that can be developed much further by others. By developing these it is to be hoped that aesthetics as a discipline will overcome the problem of its marginalization from art practice.

Turn, Turn, Turn: Civic Instrumentalisation and the Promotion of Autonomy in Contemporary Arts Funding

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ABSTRACT. Over the past twenty-five years aesthetic practice, theory and Arts policy in Europe and North America has been subject to three different yet interrelated and international “turns”: creative, social and ethical this has been exemplified by Arts funding policy in Ireland. Combined, these three turns produce a tone of cultural production that is pitched toward a more measurable and overtly instrumental direction. This paper explores the trends regarding the critical terms of instrumentality and autonomy and their relevance to arguments relating to criteria employed in current Irish Arts funding policy. We argue that that existing Arts funding criteria relegates the autonomy of the domain of the amateur by instrumentalising “professional” practice through criteria of “quality” and “excellence.” We outline the history of Arts policy in Ireland in its journey towards an explicit and totalising economisation of the Arts characteristic of “the creative turn.” Our analysis of this turn is informed by the two other turns. We highlight the debate between Claire Bishop and Grant Kester as representative of the discourse surrounding the autonomy of consumption advocated in “the social turn.” We also examine the notion of participation and the strict regulation of roles envisioned in “the ethical turn.” Here we employ Jacques Rancière’s conceptual resistance to the notion of autonomy in aesthetics as the basis of our critique of these turns which we see as promoting a contestable instrumentalisation of the Arts in Austerity Ireland.

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i. Introduction

There has been a tangible shift in Arts funding policy over the past twenty-five years. This shift coincides with the end of the Cold War and the saturation of Neo-liberal politics and economics across the West. Looking at how this has been articulated in aesthetic practice, theory and policy we connect three different yet interrelated, “turns”: creative, social and ethical. Combined, these three turns produce a tone of cultural production that is pitched toward a more measurable and overtly instrumental direction.

This paper focuses on the critical terms of instrumentality and autonomy and their relevance to arguments relating to funding policy in Ireland in 2015 where new expectations of brand development, cultural diversity and social inclusion are now explicit priorities for funded organisations. We will outline tensions between conceptions of autonomous production and autonomous experience of the artwork in the instrumentalisation of the Arts. The Arts have always been instrumentalised to a degree.¹ Today the instrumentalisation of Irish Arts policy includes a concern for civic education, the marketing of national identity and economic growth; specifically employment.

We will argue that existing Arts funding criteria relegates the domain of the amateur² by instrumentalising professional practice through criteria of quality and excellence. The elastic domain of the amateur includes all of those individual and group artistic activities that are not legitimised by the institutions of art as professional. Professional practice, by its very nature, is mediated. From the perspective of the institutions of art, the domain of the amateur has been understood in terms of an interested relationship to the work, parochial convention and privileging of the community with limited autonomy. By only conceiving of autonomy in terms of professional practice, existing arts funding is unable to recognise the autonomy within

¹ For example, autonomy itself was instrumentalised for political purposes throughout the West during the Cold War (Vuyk, 2010, pp. 173-183).

² Our understanding of this domain is informed by its mobilization in the work of Bernard Stiegler. Stiegler recognises positive potential for the figure of the amateur in the digital age. Stiegler mobilises the notion of the amateur from the etymological Latin origin of *amat*, as in, to love. He juxtaposes this amateur to the loss of the amateur in relation to contemporary creative and cultural industries.

the domain of the amateur, unless it too is mediated.

2. Ireland's Journey to The Creative Turn

From its inception, the aims of Arts policy in Ireland have included concerns of national identity, national branding and social cohesion. The Arts Act, 1951, was concerned with the formation of an independent national identity articulated through the development of a national brand built on excellence in native design. Pat Cooke, for example, notes “the core rationale is one that seeks to prioritise the visual arts as the basis on which the design standards of Irish goods and services can be raised to allow them to compete internationally and to enhance the quality of the Irish tourism product.”³ Later criteria maintain this ambition by aspiring “to stand alongside the best of the past and the international present and challenge both creators and viewers to the [*sic*] extend themselves beyond the norm.”⁴

The aim of social cohesion, in this first Arts Act, was expressed through the ambition of promoting the Arts to the public. The Arts Council was tasked with “stimulating public interest; with promoting knowledge, appreciation and practice; and with assisting in improving standards in the arts.”⁵

The figure of the artist was not mentioned in the original Arts Act and at that time it was not the function of the Arts Council to directly fund artists. Artists, for the most part, were expected to fund their own activities. In 1965 the writer and former Arts Council director, Seán O’Faoláin, reflected an attitude that earmarked the romantic autonomy that was the hallmark of true artistic creativity where “art within the Republic shall itself be a republic”.⁶ In reference to dependant artists, O’Faoláin wrote; “We could so easily be treated as a sort of wet-nurse or Father Christmas!”⁷ Instead, “all that he [*sic*] should ask for was liberty and all that he should

³ Cooke, 2011, p. 101.

⁴ Matarasso, 2000, p. 4.

⁵ The Arts Council of Ireland, 2013, p. 6.

⁶ Cooke, 2011, p. 106.

⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 106-107.

promise was disloyalty”.⁸

This position developed after 1973 when there was an explicit attempt by the Fine Gael-Labour coalition (1973-1977) to bring the artist to the centre of policy as a means to increase “public access and engagement.”⁹ This approach saw the appointment of artists to the board of the Arts Council. 1973 marks a second age in the history of Arts policy in Ireland. From now on the core aims of national identity; national branding and social cohesion were articulated in terms of the artist’s obligation and responsibility to society. This new artist-centred policy placed a quasi-ethical and social responsibility upon the artist. In the period 1973-2009 the notion of the autonomy of the artist continued to be instrumentalised. Now the artist and “his” autonomy were seen as the provider of culture as a public service.

In this period, Taoiseach Charles J. Haughey introduced policies that prioritised a romantic notion of the autonomous artist as central to the image of Ireland’s heritage. His policies saw the introduction of tax exemption for artists, the establishment of Áosdana, IMMA, and Temple Bar etc. Central to these projects was the positioning of Haughey as a patron of the Arts and as a man of taste. Inherent in this relationship was a certain complicity of the funded artist and the institutions of art with the State. This political branding served to collapse the critical distinction between the autonomy of the artist and the national interest. Haughey’s approach tended toward an attitude that valorised the artist as a person of exception, wisdom and high standing. The funding criteria employed, particularly later in this period reinforced this valorisation of those legitimated as artists. Under Haughey’s Fianna Fáil led governments, policy, including Arts policy, was instrumentalised in terms of a narrow account of national identity branded in the service of producing a modern Ireland that could perform on a European stage.

Later, the emphasis on the ethical and social responsibility of the artist and the Arts was institutionalised in 1993 through the appointment of the first Minister for Culture, Michael D. Higgins. Higgins responded to the instrumentalisation experienced under Haughey, by articulating a

⁸ *Ibid*, p. 107.

⁹ The Arts Council of Ireland, 2013, p. 9.

clear national vision for the Arts rooted in contemporary theories of ethical memory and citizenship that re-emphasised a commitment to public service on behalf of the Arts. The renewal of national identity through social cohesion was emphasised through a policy whereby “facilitating access to culture meant facilitating access to a more representative and complete historical narrative and facilitating participating in the Habermasian public sphere.”¹⁰ The autonomy of the indigenous artist remained instrumentalised as public service, which could now resist the “colonization of the imagination.”¹¹

The final age, coinciding with the Celtic Tiger (1997-2002) and subsequent bubble (2002-2007), witnessed an explosion in funding. Funding policy increasingly instrumentalised the Arts as a public service that could provide access to, and participation in culture. Issues of access and inclusion were the primary aims behind projects such as the building of regional Arts centres, the Per Cent for Arts Scheme, the funding of community Arts, the decentralisation of national cultural institutions etc. The funding criteria, from this period, expect artists to make “work of excellence” that privileges *technique, originality, ambition, connection, and magic*.¹² These criteria continue to form the basis of arts funding that valorises the role of the professional artist. However, Robert Hewison, in his analysis of recent cultural policy in the UK, observes that ‘excellence’ is an empty category without comparison with other work, with an implicit hierarchy of values.¹³

With this emphasis on access to the Arts, there is an increased focus on the quantifying and measuring of cultural experiences and an explicit turn toward the private sector for funding. From the mid-2000’s the Arts Council amplified the language of business, and encouraged arts organisa-

¹⁰ Slaby, 2011, p. 78.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 83. Here Slaby is quoting Michael D. Higgins keynote address at the conference on “Irish Film - A Mirror Up to Culture,” Virginia Centre for Media and Culture, Charlottesville, May 9, 1996.

¹² Matarasso, 2000, pp. 4-5.

¹³ “However much a performance or a work of art had a value in itself, that value was expressed [in the UK since 1997] in terms of how its ‘experience affects and changes an individual’. It went without saying that this change would be for the better.” Hewison, 2014, p. 94.

tions, both local and national, to secure private investment.¹⁴ Aesthetic experience has now become subject to economic measuring.¹⁵ The aims of national identity, national branding and social cohesion continue to be articulated in terms of the artist's obligation and responsibility to society. However, artistic creativity is increasingly understood as the production of exportable cultural goods and services.

3. The Creative Turn

Since 2008, Ireland has experienced a new faceless age of the instrumentalisation of the Arts. In response to the global recession and Ireland's loss of sovereignty, Arts policy, under the regime of austerity, has turned towards an explicit and totalising economisation to harness the potential of the Arts. This economic yield is to be achieved through the imposition of funding cuts to ensure efficiency and compliance with national economic targets. Central to this regime is the micro-management of cultural production and increasing demands of accountability and transparency in the service of national debt.

The government policy action plan, *Building Ireland's Smart Economy: A Framework for Sustainable Economic Renewal* (2008) situated Ireland, belatedly, within the "creative turn".¹⁶ This turn theorises that economic prosperity is created in cities through the harnessing and growth of a knowledge/creative class. The creative turn is part of a broader international narrative linking economy and culture.¹⁷ Robert Hewison has identified the history of the creative turn in the UK context. He dates this turn specifically with New Labour government policy from 1997. Hewison criticises the economic and political mobilisation of the idea of 'access to the Arts' as a policy tool for creating citizenship.

¹⁴ Slaby, 2011, p. 84.

¹⁵ For example, see Hewison's description of "public engagement experiences". Hewison, 2014, p. 118.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 81-82.

¹⁷ Writers such as Landry (1978), Matarasso (1997), Florida (2002) *et al* popularised this approach. It was first embraced by the New Labour government in the UK in 1997 and later informed European policy (The Lisbon Agenda, 2000). See also Hewison, 2014, p. 51 and Slaby, 2011, pp. 81-82.

Although it is true that the arts are generally pursued for other than monetary or directly political reasons, the autonomy of art and its irrelevance to questions of power is a convenient idea if your class or social capital already gives you access to culture.¹⁸

In the Irish context, Alexandra Slaby (2013) and Pat Cooke (2013) both locate this turn toward an economisation of culture in the First Global Irish Economic Forum (also known as Farmleigh 1), October 2009. This Forum broadcast terms such as “Smart Economy”, “the Innovation Island”, “Build the Ideas Economy” and “Brand Ireland” as defining the role that cultural production would have to take to fix a broken economy.¹⁹ Already, within the aforementioned funding criteria, François Matarasso’s explanation of the criterion of *originality* anticipated a dilution toward “[t]he more fashionable idea of innovation.”²⁰

Policy has generally been enunciated through ministerial statements and broad directions to institutions of Art in the context of funding, rather than formal Departmental publications. However, it is difficult to discern a clear set of policy principles that would govern the allocation of funding and supports for the Arts through appropriate bodies such as the Arts Council. Historically, the role of policy has generally been devolved to the Arts Council.²¹ The Departments view is that the Arts Council “is completely independent in its funding allocations and the Minister has no role to play in its funding or executive decisions.”²² For example, the most recent published document: ‘Arts and Culture (Practitioners) National Interactive Strategy - Approach to Arts & Culture Support in a challenged

¹⁸ Hewison, 2014, p. 20.

¹⁹ Cooke, 2011, pp. 100-103.

²⁰ Matarasso, 2000, p. 4.

²¹ Within The Arts Council there is ‘The Council’ which rotates in a staggered manner and is comprised of practitioners and the staff of The Arts Council. In the absence of a National policy the closest thing to published policy are The Arts Council’s regularly published ‘Reports’. Decisions are made pragmatically while occasionally pursuing a particular direction and that direction currently is a focus on ‘audience’. Arts audiences are being researched by semi-autonomous small pilot surveys. See <http://www.artscouncil.ie/Arts-in-Ireland/Strategic-development/Mapping-your-audience/>

²² It is the stated objective of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht to “provide an appropriate resource, policy and legislative framework to support the stimulation and development of the Arts in Ireland”. <http://www.ahg.gov.ie/en/arts/>

funding environment' (2011), has not led to a concrete policy.

The Arts Council, as the key body in determining, mediating and ratifying who and what is funded, have embraced the creative turn:

I am more convinced than ever that the arts confer enormous public benefit. That benefit is manifold: it ranges from truth and beauty, through social cohesion and community identity, via innovation and the creative industries, to cultural tourism and foreign direct investment. Viewed from any of these perspectives, the arts are Ireland's signature, our hallmark, our calling card.²³

This catalogue firmly positions the Arts in Ireland as primarily an instrument of political economy and the production of a sellable national brand. In this context the Arts funding criteria use of terms like 'quality' and 'technical excellence' whilst allowing the mobilisation of the amateur within 'participatory practice', serve to exclude artistic practice originating from the domain of the amateur. For example, in the key reference document used by the Arts Council, Matarasso's 'Weighing Poetry', claims that "[m]ost people will be aware that the technical level of a community play is lower than a production by a company of trained actors, though they may find it harder to explain where the weaknesses of the first lie."²⁴

In order to be funded the work of the amateur requires the mediation of an artist/curator who is in turn, subject to requirements of professional validation. The domain of the amateur prioritises a community aesthetic, whereas professional practice prides itself in notions of excellence. Not only is the amateur diminished in terms of production but also reception, the amateur is considered to have "straightforward approaches to judgement."²⁵ The individual artist is also judged as "always" incapable of reliable (in Kantian terms "disinterested") judgement in relation to their own work "according to their own unique, internal criteria."²⁶

²³ The Arts Council of Ireland, 2013, Chairman's [*sic*] message, p. 2.

²⁴ Matarasso, 2000, p. 4.

²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 1.

²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 1. Although Matarasso does not use the term "disinterested", the text relies on a Kantian approach to aesthetic judgment as seen in its use of the terms "taste", "enthusiasm" etc.

In our article on the pharmacology of the avant-garde, we argued that the deployment of new digital technologies, mark the possible site of resistance and potentially new beneficent forms of individuation.²⁷ These new forms of individuation inform new conceptions of the domain of the amateur, not necessarily bound to limited autonomy. These potentials are envisaged in Hewison's mobilization of Matarasso's later work where there is an understanding that:

The arts are not divided into two separate and antagonistic worlds: the amateurs and the professionals. It is better understood as a complex ecosystem in which people may play different roles at different times or in different aspects of their career.²⁸

Contrary to this, Arts Council funding and the institutions of art re-enforce this distinction between amateur and professional while remaining happy to mobilise the domain of the amateur in the service of professional practice. We contend that the domain of the amateur, whilst not autonomous, can still be redemptive of economic instrumentalisation.

4. Economic Instrumentalisation in The Social Turn

The roots of the economic instrumentalisation and aesthetic depoliticisation, visible in Ireland's journey to the creative turn, can be traced beyond the current crisis. They can be seen in the recent social and ethical turns in art practice and theory. Concurrent with the Post-Cold War era and the rise of consumer capitalism, Arts practice increasingly privileges participation and interaction over contemplation. Artworks and exhibitions seek to engage, activate and harness new conceptions of public exchange. Socially engaged art practice, in addition to social cohesion, aspires to therapeutically cultivate participant's autonomy. The idea of autonomy, here, is again problematic because it is intentionally and consistently governed, particularly where the participant is only afforded the role of an 'extra'.²⁹

²⁷ The Aesthetics Group, 2015b.

²⁸ Hewison, 2014, p. 143.

²⁹ See Foster, 2003, pp. 21-22.

Autonomy that is afforded and accorded cannot be capable of instigating fundamental socio-political change. It can however be instrumentalised in terms of labour. In participatory projects, 'creativity' is instrumentalised as productive of public value at the service of cultural capital and knowledge production where arts practices become a form of an unpaid and underpaid "immaterial labour"³⁰ hence their appeal for institutions of art squeezed by austerity policies.

The academic institution is among the institutions of art. Like, other funding bodies, the Irish Third Level Sector and in particular Arts education is experiencing increased pressure from the State to justify its decisions on economic terms. This instrumentalisation of Arts education and research pressures the artist and the academic to justify their work on economic grounds as professional practice. Aesthetic research is seen as a mode of practice that identifies audiences and increases access to works of excellence. Universities are increasingly charged with producing creative entrepreneurs and consumers who are small autonomous self-organising units who are capable of self-employment and generating economic growth and employment.

The nexus of institutional approbation mediates a shift away from a conception of autonomy of production and reception towards autonomy conceived in terms of consumption. Autonomy conceived in terms of consumption collapses the traditional distinctions of production and reception, work and leisure, artist and audience. Consumption is productive and today its labour contributes to the production of what counts as the social.³¹ Art experiences, that cultivate engagement, attendance and participation, are expected to activate productive creativity in the populace, repair the social bond and drive economic growth through the production and accumulation of knowledge.³²

³⁰ See Lazzarato: Immaterial Labor "involves a series of activities that are not normally recognized as "work" [...] defining and fixing cultural and artistic standards, fashions, tastes, consumer norms, and, more strategically, public opinion (Lazzarato, 1997, p. 1).

³¹ For more on the capitalist command over subjectivity see *Ibid.*

³² This turn, in fact, discourages *dissensus* and what Rancière regards as true politics. For Rancière autonomy "carries the baggage of liberal individualism which is far from the project of any democratic politics." May, , 2008, p. 59.

Contemporary understandings of participatory art, that emphasise the role of the social, trace a lineage to the anti-spectacular praxis of the historical avant-garde.³³ For Nicolas Bourriaud, the production involved in contemporary socially engaged art practice is equivalent to an aestheticisation of the social,³⁴ where the social is the material of the artwork. The artist acts as the creative moderator of this productive exchange. Any work can potentially be a site of “social interstice”.³⁵ Bourriaud labels this discursive aesthetic “relational”. The artist is now, the creator of situations, albeit, they are now called relations. No longer are only objects reified but social relations themselves are reified as producing an immaterial “phantasmic social bond.”³⁶ The degree of participation offered in relational practices is, according to Bourriaud, up to the discretion of the autonomous artist. An effect of this approach is an instrumentalisation of the participation of the productive exchange under the sign of the artist.³⁷

Theorists such as Claire Bishop and Grant Kester have both complicated and delimited the boundaries of the social turn in aesthetics. Bishop, following Bourriaud, claims that effective critique is best enacted through a leader or author figure within the community of the artworld. For Bishop, art’s political efficacy relies on aesthetic quality. The autonomy of the artist is crucial to the critical function of collaborative art. From Bishop we learn that social collaboration in art is not effective resistance because it perpetuates unequal hierarchies and a particular distribution of

³³ Key examples include Yves Klein’s ‘L’exposition du Vide’, Iris Clert (1958) and Fluxus, On Kawara, ‘I AM STILL ALIVE’ (1968 – 1979) and Gordon Matta-Clark’s restaurant ‘Food’ (1971). Bishop embeds the roots of participatory practice within a terrain of anti-spectacular rhetoric associated with Debord, Artaud and Brecht.

³⁴ “What nowadays forms the foundation of artistic experience is *the joint presence of beholders in front of the work*, be this work effective or symbolic.” See Bourriaud, 2002, p. 57.

³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 16.

³⁶ “the society of the spectacle is thus followed by the society of extras where everyone finds the illusion of an interactive democracy in more or less truncated channels of communication...” *Ibid*, p. 26.

³⁷ Foster considers the confusion over the status of the addressee of the relational work as often alienating: “Bourriaud... sees art as ‘an ensemble of units to be reactivated by the beholder-manipulator’...[yet] At times, ‘the death of the author’ has meant not ‘the birth of the reader’, as Barthes speculated, so much as the befuddlement of the viewer.” Foster, 2003, p. 5.

the sensible that divides a population in to active and passive sides.

Kester, in contrast, is willing to accord a more radical role to the heteronomy of the collective. Regarding the reductivist approach to the collective witnessed in Bishop as an abdication of the political force of the collective, Kester emphasises the organised political resistance available in collectives. Crucially, such “projects challenge us to recognise new modes of aesthetic experience and new frameworks for thinking identity through the thickly textured haptic and verbal exchanges that occur in the process of collaborative interaction.”³⁸

Bishop criticises, “Kester’s *Conversation Pieces*...[for advocating] an art of concrete interventions in which the artist does not occupy a position of pedagogical or creative mastery.”³⁹ Kester counters that only ethical discourse can be productive of a desire for a critical cultural response to hegemony of neo-liberal politics. Kester sees that in recent collaborative practices, aesthetic autonomy is being “recoded or renegotiated”.⁴⁰

In Kester’s approach, the spectator and the artist are only effects of the collective. Socio-political change then, if it is to be accorded in terms of aesthetic practice, needs to be seen in terms of concepts such as communal and collective action.⁴¹ He maintains that collaborative projects must resist the temptation to prescribe and describe the frame of reference for a ‘community’. For example, he challenges Miwon Kwon who, like Bishop, places the artist in a privileged position in such collaborative encounters.⁴² The artist in Kwon’s approach is responsible for instilling a community with a properly “self-reflexive attitude.”⁴³

The use of competing claims of community/collective in this exchange, often utilising diverse histories and philosophies of art practice, remains bound to the role of the author and the role of the critic in relation to the

³⁸ Kester and Strayer, 2005, p. 30.

³⁹ Bishop, 2006, p. 6?

⁴⁰ Wilson, 2007, p. 114.

⁴¹ In the words of Nancy, “the individual is merely the residue of the experience of the dissolution of community.” (Nancy, 1991, p. 3).

⁴² Kwon contends that Kester himself has invested his concept of “politically coherent community” with an essentialism - a reductive “nostalgic fantasy of pre-urban existence that is assumed to have been without alienation, mediation, or violence.” (Kwon, 2004, p. 149).

⁴³ Kester, 2004, p. 162.

space of the community. Bishop explicitly describes the collective as a managed space, while for Kester; there is scope within collective art practices for new forms of political engagement and autonomy that challenge the authority of the traditional art practice and theory. In Ireland we have seen these positions paralleled by Haughey and Higgins respectively.

Kester and particularly Bishop, reference Jacques Rancière's writing on the egalitarian potential of aesthetic experience. For Rancière, however, art practice and its institutions do not have the ability to eek out any pure space of autonomy. Informed by the etymology of the term autonomy as a place and law apart, Rancière regards autonomy as paradoxical, particularly when applied to art. It is this aporia at the heart of the notion of autonomy that sees Rancière distance himself from this concept.

Autonomy is not one of my words. My words tend to indicate a movement out of a situation. I prefer terms such as: dis-identification, dissensus and emancipation. My ground words don't relate to the idea of an autos, but refer to the idea of a move –from a situation, from a place, from an identity, from an autos.⁴⁴

Instead Rancière's stated preference is for the term *dissensus*: "the notion of the autonomy of art goes against one of my main affirmations – art never gives itself its own law."⁴⁵ Rancière seeks to overcome the language of autonomy. For Rancière, autonomy cannot be isolated or fulfilled.

As far back as Immanuel Kant, autonomy is conceived as self-legislation and opposed to heteronomy. Rancière's approach, is to collapse this distinction. The Romantic notion of the autonomous artist, however instrumentalised, is an ideology. Autonomy is but a discursive feature of "the aesthetic regime of art". Freedom of expression is the defining feature of the "aesthetic regime of art", yet freedom is not autonomy. Aesthetic agency is possible but only in a limited sense.⁴⁶ For Rancière, at the

⁴⁴ Rancière, 2011, Newspaper 3, p. 32.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p. 33.

⁴⁶ Rancière offers us events in the shape of the examples of Gillard, Jacotot and Blanqui. From these we learn that an event is something that shows a radical equality whereby those who are excluded by the political count are made to count. The aesthetic is useful because it can best welcome this change. These events are but moving the deck chairs. The expansion of the franchise is not an overturning of the distribution of the sensible.

heart of the claim of aesthetic autonomy there lies a politicisation of the aesthetic. The relationship instituted by this regime blurs traditional distinctions between art's specificity and the social/political. The autonomy of aesthetic experience, in this regime, is crucial to political efficacy and is capable of reframing divisions of the sensible. A work is autonomous (or at least deemed so) if it "stands out as an exception. Thus: art is art to the extent that it is something else than art."⁴⁷

Art, in this regime, is not autonomous from politics. Autonomy in this regime of art is "alleged"⁴⁸, "staged"⁴⁹, "idea"⁵⁰, "claimed", "invented", "so-called"⁵¹, "contradictory", a "modernist doxa"⁵² "paradoxical"⁵³, "kind of"⁵⁴ (all words used by Rancière to describe autonomy, *our emphasis*) by art in terms of experience. We could add 'funded' to this list. Art is not autonomous, yet the aesthetic regime institutes "the autonomy of a form of sensory experience. And it is that experience which appears as the germ of a new humanity, of a new form of individual and collective life."⁵⁵ This appearance is being wielded in Irish Arts policy at the service of the goal of economic recovery.

For Rancière, the key point concerning the possibility of art to rework the social is to recognise its embedded nature within the distribution of the sensible. "The autonomy [the Arts] can enjoy or the subversion they can claim credit for rest on the same foundation"⁵⁶ as the regime they seek to undermine and distance themselves from. In colluding with the partition of the sensible the subversive anti-aesthetic is merely playing the artworld game allotted them.

In professional Arts practice the anti-aesthetic historically has coa-

"Autonomy [...] only exists in the moment in which an individual presents his inner belief in his equality against all hierarchies, thereby disrupting the social order but never supplanting it for the risk of becoming it. (Rancière, 2011, Newspaper 2, p. 67)

⁴⁷ Rancière, 2002, p. 137.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p. 134.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p. 135.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, p. 136.

⁵¹ Rancière, 2005, p. 20.

⁵² Rancière, 2003, p. 205.

⁵³ Rancière, 2000, p. 12.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*.

⁵⁵ Rancière, 2009b [2004], p. 32.

⁵⁶ Rancière, 2006, p. 19.

lesced around the term ‘avant-garde’. Peter Bürger recognises a possibility of the avant-garde to subvert the existing institutional network. He notes that the art institution “only became recognisable after the avant-garde movements had criticised the autonomy status of art in developed bourgeois society”.⁵⁷ Bürger understands the autonomous art institution and the reified art it contains as a product of bourgeois society.

Historically, one avenue for this professional anti-aesthetic has been the mobilisation of the domain of the amateur. Avant-garde communities operate to undermine this autonomy and vice-versa. Avant-garde practices historically have been instrumentalised because their criticisms of the institutions of art are co-opted by those very institutions as new economic possibilities.

Ultimately the debates between Kester and Bishop are exemplary of the instrumentalisation of autonomy in the social turn as they are bound to this artworld gaming because both positions continue to valorise the position of both art historian and critic. The critic continues to assume the position of assessing the perceived success of such practices and therefore remain embedded within the hierarchical structures of the artworld. Although Bishop explicitly promotes the necessity of symbolic content and authorial role of the artist, Kester never fully circumvents the essential catalysing role the artist maintains within such dialogic practices. Nor does he fully account for the pre-existing social divisions that are played out through the production and reception of such projects. Matarasso’s criterion of *magic* attempts to include the potential of the aesthetic for lasting transformation. “Great art triggers change is [*sic*] us [...] it becomes part of our selves, a ghostly presence, haunting and not always entirely friendly.”⁵⁸

Despite emancipatory claims about work that is participatory, interactive, relational and socially engaged etc., these works, when considered in terms of autonomy, remain subject to regulation, governance and control. Hierarchies are reproduced through the delegation of occupations and roles within institutional structures and the works themselves. The notion of autonomy in art, an example being the autonomous artist, is re-

⁵⁷ Bürger, 1999 [1984], p. *lii*.

⁵⁸ Matarasso, 2000, p. 5.

peatedly mobilised as productive of alleged social cohesion.⁵⁹ The social turn, by situating the domain of the amateur in relation to the legitimated field of the arts, undermines any potential autonomy or political potency of that domain.

When we approach anti-aesthetic discourse through the figure of the amateur we see that the amateur is instrumentalised as autonomous creative Other. The Arts Council's first principle, for example, is recognition of "the primacy of intellectual and artistic freedom."⁶⁰ The exclusion of the amateur from the categories of Arts funding is a form of negative instrumentalisation. It is a negative re-enforcement of the idea of the autonomous professional. The amateur is characterised by institutions of Art and Arts policy as not authenticated, awarded, remunerated, legitimated and lacking professional "excellence".

As a result the traditional binary between amateur and professional is blurred. For example, in the case of remuneration the professional artist, like the amateur, is often unpaid and required to subsidise production. The avant-garde thus represents an excess of excellence, whilst the amateur represents deficiency in terms of the funding criteria.⁶¹

We can now identify three categories of instrumentalised producer in relation to aesthetic autonomy – the avant-gardist, the legitimated artist and the amateur. All three are products of contemporary institutional categorisation that maintains them within a hierarchy of intelligences. The social turn instrumentalises consensual knowledge production, shock and revelation under the retention of authorial control.

⁵⁹ Foster, for example, problematizes the "shaky analogy between an open work and an inclusive society..." in relational practice which he feels does not take an adequate stand that would impact more profoundly on society. Foster, 2003, p. 7.

⁶⁰ The Arts Council of Ireland, 2013, Chairman's [*sic*] message, p. 5.

⁶¹ Rancière has recognised the political instrumentalisation of the amateur in relation to cinema: "The politics of the amateur opposes the idea that there would be a position – a discipline – that would belong to the literary or film theorist, the social historian or the cultural historian, etc.; and it opposes it because there is no univocal definition of these spheres, there is no reason to consider that the phenomena classified under these names constitute a set of objects that can be defined using rigorous criteria." Vila Bassas, 2013, p. 11.

5. The Depoliticisation of the Aesthetic in The Ethical Turn

Bishop, referencing Rancière, contends that, “The social turn in contemporary art has prompted an ethical turn in art criticism.”⁶² The outcome of this turn is an “authorial renunciation”⁶³ of critical and creative capacities. For Rancière art, within the aesthetic regime, is increasingly instrumentalised in terms of an “ethical turn.”⁶⁴ The ‘ethical turn’ is a regressive tendency towards the strict regulation of roles within the community. The ethical regime, for Rancière, defines a rigorous distribution of images that institute a rigorous partition of occupations that instruct a community ethos. Rancière traces this regime to the curriculum outlined in Plato’s *Republic*.

The social turn, thus, in practice, policy and theory tends towards a regression to the ethical regime. This is the ethical turn. This ethical approach employs a notion of a consensual community, as witnessed in the social turn, where the lack of critical distance between the state of the situation and the hoped for situation to come flattens the possibility of dissent. In the ethical community, art relinquishes its role in wider social change through policies, which hold the present order in place, disallowing the formation of new political subjects. Funding policies, for example, delineate a particular order, a given state of the situation and the distribution of roles and hierarchies within that situation. The heteronomy of the several peoples of traditional political conflict are reduced into a single autonomous people.

Furthermore, when we turn to a consideration of contemporary socially engaged art practice this ‘ethical turn’, marks a shift in how reception is instrumentalised in terms of autonomy. This is a shift from a receptive creativity to a productive creativity. No longer are terms like reflection, contemplation and interpretation prioritized. The merging of production and reception through engagement, interaction and participation is now seen as productive of autonomy.

The debates between Bishop and Kester demonstrate a tension between (or as Rancière would say “emplotment” of) autonomy and hetero-

⁶² Bishop, 2006, p. 3

⁶³ *Ibid.* p. 5

⁶⁴ Rancière, 2009b [2004], p. 109.

nomy at the core of “socially engaged art, community-based art, experimental communities, dialogic art, littoral art, participatory, interventionist, research-based, or collaborative art.”⁶⁵ Visible too in these debates is the co-option of aesthetic strategies at the service of existing hierarchies already described in the economic instrumentalisation of culture inherent in the creative turn. The capacities of aesthetics to enable Rancièrian conceptions of equality are overlooked.

Despite contemporary ethical claims of autonomy there is for Rancière nonetheless a tension in the performance of collective life: namely, ‘who is in control of the explicative order?’ Rancière is steadfast in his disavowal of a blueprint for autonomy. For it will eventually be little more than a shallow mobilisation. *Dissensus* is denied because a hierarchy of addressee’s is imposed, such as the professionals and the amateurs.⁶⁶

Inherent in the notion of criteria for judging art is the idea that the cultural value of the Arts is not to be measured in terms of subjective and individual pleasure. The criteria referenced by the Arts Council of Ireland embody this relegation. Matarasso recognises that these criteria inform notions of quality. In defence of the terms on which quality is to be weighed he relies on a notion of “the inescapability of judgement.”⁶⁷ Judgement, for him, remains inescapably bound to a hierarchy of judges.

Even in the category of ‘magic’, which allows for subjective experience of ‘excellence’, it is still deemed necessary that “great art triggers change.”⁶⁸ Therefore, the experience of art is not considered an end in itself; it is instrumentalised in the services of social and self-improvement, which is described as ‘change.’ Change, in this context, is a synonym for instrumentalisation. The positive and/or negative consequences of change are not considered independently of this instrumentalisation. The idea of change has itself been instrumentalised in the service of maintaining social order and control. Beyond the experience of art, the very notion of the

⁶⁵ Bishop, 2006, p. 2?

⁶⁶ Bishop, for example, uses Rancière to dispel the instrumentalisation of art in terms of a heteronomous and collective experience: “For Rancière the aesthetic doesn’t need to be sacrificed at the altar of social change, as it already inherently contains this ameliorative promise.” (Bishop, 2006, p. 4) However, as we have seen, for Rancière to find redemption in aesthetic autonomy, as Bishop suggests, is equally illusory.

⁶⁷ Matarasso, 2000, p. 5.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

Arts is not considered an end in itself. It is implicated in the same instrumentalised system of assessment that applies to “every other sphere.”⁶⁹

The foregoing of the hierarchy of value implicit in the criteria would break the chains of instrumentalism, and enable artists to express themselves, if they were ‘excellent’. However, as Hewison observes, by describing excellence in terms of its transformational effects, instrumentalism remains in play. “However much a performance or a work of art had a value in itself, that value was expressed in terms of how its ‘experience affects and changes an individual’. It went without saying that this change would be for the better.”⁷⁰

Having relegated the value of individual pleasure to “simple enjoyment”⁷¹ Matarasso retains an account of pleasure. This is a judgement of pleasure first located in the individual and then necessarily validated through persuasion of the collective. The enjoyment of that debate is privileged over any real change and predicated on a set of relative and contingent values that are the hallmark of Neo-liberal politics and economics.⁷² Matarasso considered his own criteria incomplete and later protested at the co-option of his paper: “I did not understand how much politicians and planners, [...] struggle to distinguish between what is important and what can be controlled. I did not understand that they see culture as a source of social instruction rather than of self-development.”⁷³

Ultimately, the ethical turn can be seen in Irish funding policy that does not enable real or structural change but serves to “bring funding decisions more closely in line with policy priorities.”⁷⁴ Once policy priorities are published and instituted, judgements on aesthetic quality tend to be determined in terms of the criteria instead of debate.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, p. 1.

⁷⁰ Hewison, 2014, p. 94.

⁷¹ Matarasso, 2000, p. 1.

⁷² “we have to understand that debating our values through the language and forms of the arts is actually a good thing, perhaps the vital place of the arts in a democracy. We should relax, accept that artistic values, like all human values, are relative and contingent, and enjoy the debate: at least we’ll have something to talk about” *Ibid*, p. 3.

⁷³ Hewison, 2014, p. 52.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, p. 3.

6. Conclusion: Judgement

There is a political potency to the autonomy of the excluded Other. This is something that can never be realised in the service of goals such as National Identity, National Branding or Social Cohesion. Given the narrative of Irish Arts funding and the parallel trends in contemporary Arts practice and theoretical debates in aesthetic theory, we can see that the claim of autonomy in the domain of the amateur is necessarily subject to instrumentalisation. Currently this domain is idealised in terms of economic instrumentalisation. In even delimiting this as a domain we too are guilty of a certain romantic idealisation.

In light of the social turn the task of the professional, in a position of mediation, is to transform community interest into disinterestedness. The ubiquity of participatory practice can be seen in Arts funding criteria, which prioritise “connections with the world beyond the artist.”⁷⁵ The domain of the amateur is to be led by professional practice at the service of economic outputs. This domain is not simply dissipated by requirements to fulfil national economic targets; its potential is currently instrumentalised as a cultural product. The social turn instituted by Arts funding criteria offers scant resistance to the demands of the creative turn inclusion is presented in the form of amelioration. Instead of producing socio-political change, the domain of the amateur in Ireland in 2015 is treated as a competitive advantage for economic growth and the servicing of debt.

The status of the professional artist is maintained through the validation of the institution rather than by monetary means; an award from the Arts Council confers status, which delineates professionalism and the associated realm of ‘excellence.’ Why do the criteria employ notions of community and connectedness and explicitly exclude the domain of the amateur? The model of socially engaged art practice utilises the amateur, particularly its ability to represent a community, a place or an idea offering the appearance of agency. This negative instrumentalisation enshrines exclusion by labelling a community or subject as removed from validated practice, while offering a semblance of agency. Professional didacticism, in Ireland in 2015, is conceived as productive of entrepreneurs and consumers, not social inclusion.

⁷⁵ Matarasso, 2000, p. 5.

In each of the three turns, the role of the judgement of the amateur is absent. The wholesale embrace of the creative turn to service short-term economic targets, internationally and so explicitly in Ireland, must count as a complete squandering of the opportunity to recreate aesthetic identity and construct social equality. In terms of Matarasso's criteria this is an abandonment of ambition. For him only works of ambition can "have a legitimate call on scarce public resources."⁷⁶

Austerity conceives of the role of the Arts, not in terms of an opportunity to engage with the civic, or an example of provocation, or ethical utility, instead the Arts are seen in Ireland in 2015, informed by these three turns, as primarily of economic value.

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Participatory Computer-Based Art and Distributed Creativity: the Case of Tactical Media^{*}

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ABSTRACT. In this paper I will argue that Computer-based artworks, specifically those that are participatory, are creative and valuable because not only encourage the maker's creativity, but also the audience's actual creativity, since the artwork is not just an artefact created for appreciation, but it is also created for inviting the participants to interact with it in order to make it completely function according to what it is designed for. I will use the concept of distributed creativity in order to support this argument and I will analyze Participatory Computer-based artworks, specifically the case of Tactical Media.

I.

For many people computer-based artworks seem to lack some properties any artwork should have in order to have any artistic value. Dominic McIver Lopes[‡] analyzed four arguments that have been used to deny that computer-based artworks have artistic value: the argument of creativity sink, the argument from the vanishing work, the argument from mind numbing and the argument from mind control. Here I will explore the first one, which goes as follows:

- (1) A work has value as art only to the extent that it expresses the creativity of its maker.
- (2) Computer-based artworks inhibit their maker's creativity.

^{*} This paper was made possible with the support of the Programa para el Desarrollo Profesional Docente (PRODEP), SEP, UAM-PTC-484.

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[‡] Dominic McIver Lopes, *A philosophy of Computer Art*.

- (3) So computer-based artworks lack artistic value².

I will argue against the idea that the artwork has certain necessary properties so it can “express the creativity of its maker” (2), and in favour to the idea that Computer-based artworks, specifically those that are participatory, not only encourage the maker’s creativity, but also the audience’s actual creativity, because the artwork is not just an artefact or an object created for appreciation, but also it is designed for inviting the participants to interact with it in order to make it completely function according to what it is designed for. These kinds of artworks, i.e. Tactical Media (that will be analyzed in this work), enable the interaction of the work with different audiences, which are also users, and they can only be fully completed if the artwork functions properly, like any other computer-based artwork. And also, these types of artworks only work if the users participate in the art-making process at some level or the users participate with the display in order to make it function in different contexts.

Participatory art is a category that can include other well known art categories, such as street art, urban art, site-specific art or public art; or even it is included on different content-specific art categories and art movements, i.e., political theatre, political cinema, Situationism, Happening or feminist art, to name a few. The same happens to the terms Computer Art, Digital Art or New Media, that intend to describe extremely different artworks, from those in which the computer is a mean to produce something that will be shown in different displays, i.e. an interactive installation, to artworks that are produced and run by a computer, i.e. a net-art work. They cover a very complex field of artistic practices, and they are in an ongoing process of constant redefinition of which are the proper properties that describe them the best. For that reason I prefer to call these kinds of artworks Computer-based art.

Computer-based art enables any user to interact with different interfaces. According to Florian Cramer and Matthew Fuller “in computing, interfaces link software and hardware to each other and to their human users or other sources of data³.” And they offer the following typology of

² Ibid., 29.

³ Florian Cramer and Matthew Fuller, “Interface,” 149.

interfaces⁴:

1. Hardware that connects users to hardware.
2. Hardware that connects hardware to hardware.
3. Software, or hardware-embedded logic, that connects hardware to software.
4. Specifications and protocols that determine relations between software and software.
5. Symbolic handles, which, in conjunction with (1), make software accessible to users; that is, “user interfaces”.

If Computer-based artworks are computer based, a computer mediates them, and if they are interactive in a computing broad sense, the output is accessible to another user than the one who designed the interface. For that reason most Computer-based artworks’ interfaces fall into 5, and for the present purposes I will divide them as:

1. Computer-based interactive artworks.
2. Computer-based interactive participatory artworks.

Computer-based interactive artworks are those in which it is designed an interface any user can interact with, changing in a constrained range the information shown in the display. In this kind of Computer-based artworks the artist designs interfaces that give the user a limited range of the inputs and the outputs that will be shown in the display. They are appreciated as long as the user is interacting with the interface, like most interactive installations, works of net-art and some of the software artworks. However, there are some paradoxical cases where the interface is also designed as 4, so it can produce by itself new information depending on the input given by the artist or any user, like David’s Cope “Emily Howell”, the Story generator algorithms (SGAs) or “AARON”, the software program developed by Harold Cohen that creates original artistic images.

Computer-based artworks function like those utterances that have a performing function. They are acts in which the performance makes sense

⁴ Ibid.

by actually using the interface by following certain instructions or inferring how to use it. However, in contrast to Computer-based interactive artworks, in Computer-based participatory artworks the user not only change the information shown in the display, but her inputs feed the information shown, that is, the user has more control on the information displayed.⁵ These artworks are not only appreciated when the user interacts with the interface, but also when the user acknowledges how her inputs generate the information shown in the display. That is the case of some works of Tactical Media. Finally, there are other participatory cases where users can also change the interface pre-designed given if they want to. This situation is possible when artists develop DIY (Do it yourself) hardware and use open source programs that are intended to be intervened by any user at any time, like the Graffiti Research Lab artworks, a Tactical Media arts collective that let anyone use and change the hardware and the open-source software they programmed for their projects, like the L.A.S.E.R Tag.

In addition, some Participatory Computer-Based artworks are participatory in a political sense, like most of the non-Computer-based Participatory Art, since people can take actively part in the actions prescribed in order to try to achieve different political goals like making people aware of their context or encourage them to transform or intervene in different social, political and cultural issues. Thanks to computing technology, these practices have changed not only with regard to the medium used but also in relation to the concepts we traditionally use to think about them.

In general, Computer-based artworks can be distinguished according to the two main principles that traditionally have been used to differentiate Computer-based art: the medium used and the conceptual grounds each practice assumes. In accordance to a medium-based definition, for example, locative media includes those practices that use mobile phones, GPS and web mapping and Net-art includes those artworks that are designed for the user's interaction on the web, using the computer screen as the display. The last kind of Participatory Computer-based art, the political, includes, i.e., different computer-based practices like locative

⁵ For an early distinction between interaction and participation see: Söke Dinkla, "The History of the Interface in Interactive Art." However, according to my distinction some artworks, like Jeffrey Shaw's, are not strictly participatory, but computer-based interactive objects where the range of inputs and outputs is wider.

media and Tactical Media. However, in contrast to locative media that it is basically defined by the medium used, Tactical Media includes many medium-defined practices, like locative media, so for the present purposes it is better to use the conceptual framework it is assumed to distinguish this practice from the rest.

2.

Tactical Media is a kind of digital activism (art + activism). A broad definition of activism consists in a practice that directs an action in order to support, critique or oppose a political, social or even an environmental issue. However, the relation between activism and art specifically using technologies is relatively recent. As Christiane Paul sustains, we can trace back the origins of activism to the 1960s when many artists used the potential the portable recording video technologies had in order to “address issues of documentation and representation in the context of control over media distribution.”⁶ During the 1990s the Internet made possible the advent of net-art⁷, a practice that initially assessed different political issues in and outside the art world, but also it opened a door to the use of

⁶ Christiane Paul, *Digital Art*, 203.

⁷ An early reference of the term net-art can be found in the work by Heath Bunting “Own, be Owned or Remain Invisible” in 1998, a hyper textual site in which every word functions as a hyperlink that brings the user to another website. In the hypertext we can read what follows:

“When I was on the street I was always looking for new tools, and I was always looking to do battle with the front-end though I hesitate to say the front end of what, exactly. For me the real excitement of the net was that it exposed many different types of people. Also, the new medium gave someone like Heath who had little or no resources - the chance to engage head on with large-scale organisations. I’ve always attacked big things. When I was a kid I always used to pick fights with people that were bigger than me. I suppose I’ve carried on doing it, though now I’m fighting multinationals, or large belief systems. I grew up in Stevenage, too, which although it seems very pleasant jobs, grass, good transport it is in fact an incredibly violent place. It s to do with the top-down plan of the whole place and all the areas are designated, for example. I think that s where I got my hatred of large forms. People think it’s a shame that there’s no central body in London. I think that’s great.

This year is the one in which Heath has really begun to get recognition by the burgeoning European digital arts scene that conference hops its way around the continent from one year’s end to the next. This is the year, he says, that net art is going to be absorbed

the web for developing new ways of activism. During the same decade the Tactical Media appeared in the context of “the sudden availability of cheap “do-it-yourself” media, public access to the Internet, and reports about tactics of underground information exchanges formerly employed in communist Eastern Europe” that “provoked intellectual and experiential exchanges between programmers, artists, activists, and theorists in the search for new approaches to media activism.”⁸ The term Tactical Media emerged in an event called Next 5 Minutes (N5M) in Amsterdam, which in 1996 was called Tactical Media. The term for the organizers of this event “refer(ed) to a critical usage and theorization of media practices that draw on all forms of old and new, both lucid and sophisticated media, for achieving a variety of specific non-commercial goals and pushing all kinds of potentially subversive political issues”⁹.

Following avant-garde art manifests, David Garcia and Geert Lovink defined the term in 1997 in their manifest “The ABC of Tactical Media” as follows:

“Tactical Media are what happens when the cheap ‘do it yourself’ media, made possible by the revolution in consumer electronics and expanded forms of distribution (from public access cable to the internet) are exploited by groups and individuals who feel aggrieved by or excluded from the wider culture. Tactical media do not just report events, as they are never impartial they always participate and it is this that more than anything separates them from mainstream media.

A distinctive tactical ethic and aesthetic that has emerged, which is culturally influential from MTV through to recent video work made by artists. It began as a quick and dirty aesthetic although it is just another style it (at least in its camcorder form) has come to symbolize a verite for the 90’s.

Tactical media are media of crisis, criticism and opposition. This is both the source their power, (“anger is an energy”: John Lydon), and

into electronic art in a big way”. http://www.irational.org/_readme.html Accessed October 1st, 2015.

⁸ Beatriz da Costa and Philip Kavita (eds.), *Tactical Biopolitics. Art, Activism, and Technoscience*, xviii.

⁹ Critical Art Ensemble, *Digital Resistance: Explorations in Tactical Media*, 5.

also their limitation. Their typical heroes are; the activist, Nomadic media warriors, the praxter, the hacker, the street rapper, the cam-corder kamikaze, they are the happy negatives, always in search of an enemy. But once the enemy has been named and vanquished it is the tactical practitioner whose turn it is to fall into crisis. Then (despite their achievements) its easy to mock them, with catch phrases of the right, "politically correct" "Victim culture" etc. More theoretically the identity politics, media critiques and theories of representation that became the foundation of much western tactical media are themselves in crisis. These ways of thinking are widely seen as, carping and repressive remnants of an outmoded humanism¹⁰."

Since Garcia and Lovnik's Manifesto, it was clear that the concept of tactics that characterizes Tactical Media was taken from Michel de Certeau's distinction between tactics and strategies. According to Certeau a strategy is an action that someone, who is in a power position, performs against other(s) based on a careful calculation of the relative power each other has¹¹. On the contrary, a tactic is an action done from a powerless position when those who hold the power leave an opportunity to act¹². For Tactical Media practitioners nowadays it is better to act tactically by the creative use of the representations given by the society in order to resist or revert those imposed or institutionalized by those who hold the political power,

¹⁰ David Garcia and Geert Lovink, *The ABC of Tactical Media*. In: <http://www.nettime.org/Lists-Archives/nettime-1-9705/msg00096.html> Accessed October 1st, 2015.

¹¹ According to de Certeau a strategy is "the calculation (or manipulation) of power relationships that becomes possible as soon as a subject with will and power (a business, an army, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated. It postulates a place that can be delimited as its own and serve as the base from which relations with an exteriority composed of targets or threats (customers or competitors, enemies, the country surrounding the city, objectives and objects of research, etc.) can be managed." Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 35-36.

¹² For de Certeau a tactic is "a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus. No delimitation of an exteriority, then, provides it with the condition necessary for autonomy. The space of a tactic is the space of the other. Thus it must play on and with a terrain imposed on it and organized by the law of a foreign power. It does not have the means to keep to itself, at a distance, in a position of withdrawal, foresight, and self-collection: it is a manoeuvre "within the enemy's field of vision," as von Billow put it, and within enemy territory." Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 37.

instead of developing strategies that try to produce new revolutionary representations in order to transform the actual political sphere, like those the socialist avant-garde artists intended to do. Regarding this distinction Garcia and Lovink wrote:

“Awareness of this tactical/strategic dichotomy helped us to name a class of producers of who seem inequity aware of the value of these temporary reversals in the flow of power. And rather than resisting these rebellions do everything in their power to amplify them. And indeed make the creation of spaces, channels and platforms for these reversals central to their practice. We dubbed their (our) work tactical media¹³.”

There is not one way to act tactically for Tactical Media practitioners. As Rita Raley¹⁴ argues, there are different forms of Tactical Media and there is not yet a consensus between practitioners on which are the “proper” tactical practices, although they agree to dissent to the contemporary economic and political systems. According to the Critical Art Ensemble, “a collective of five tactical media practitioners of various specializations including computer graphics and web design, film/video, photography, text art, book art, and performance¹⁵”, Tactical Media is a “form of digital interventionism¹⁶” with the following characteristics:

- (A) “The tactical media practitioner uses any media necessary to meet the demands of the situation¹⁷.”
- (B) “While practitioners may have expertise in a given medium, they do not limit their ventures to the exclusive use of one medium. Whatever media provide the best means for communication and participation in a given situation are the ones that they will use. Specialization does not predetermine action¹⁸.”

¹³ David Garcia and Geert Lovink, *The ABC of Tactical Media*.

¹⁴ Rita, Raley, *Tactical Media*.

¹⁵ In: <http://www.critical-art.net/>. Accessed October 1st, 2015.

¹⁶ Critical Art Ensemble. *Digital Resistance: Explorations in Tactical Media*, 7.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., 8.

- (C) “In conjunction, tactical media practitioners support and value amateur practice both their own and that of others¹⁹.”
- (D) Tactical media is ephemeral. It leaves few material traces. As the action comes to an end, what is left is primarily living memory²⁰.

According to (A), (B) and (C) Tactical Media artists adopt Culture and Art Appropriation for their tactical approach. Since “the already given and the unsaid are the material of a tactical media event²¹” Tactical Media practitioners appropriate technologies, other artworks and popular culture images. For example, in the artworks of Joseph DeLappe “In Drones We Trust” (2014), “Hands Up Don’t Shoot!” (2014-15) and “Sea Level Rising” (2015), are “Crowd Sourced, Participatory Rubber Stamp Currency Interventions,” the artist invites people to intervene bills with stamps with icons designs that represent public and private policies that have affected the population, specifically those related to war and environmental damage. Then people have to send him back “one image of a stamped bill, noting location and date where the bill was stamped and put back into circulation²²”, so every image can be viewed in a Tumblr website created for each project.

Tactical Media artists defend that their artistic practice is performative. However, following (D), their works are closer to the Happening²³, than to Performance Art, which is more determined by the performer’s actions. In fact, in Happenings, as Susan Sontag noticed, there are neither actors, nor stages, nor plots, but participants who perform actions in different settings. There is not distinction among a set, props and costumes. As Sontag said “the Happening takes place in what can best be called an «environment», and this environment typically is messy or disorderly and crowded in the extreme, constructed of some materials which are chosen for their abused, dirty and dangerous condition²⁴.” Happenings lack con-

¹⁹ Ibid., 9.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., 8.

²² In: <http://www.delappe.net/intervene/rubber-stamp-currency-interventions/> Accessed October 1st, 2015.

²³ For an complete review of the history of Happening see: Mariellen R. Sandford, *Happenings and other acts*.

²⁴ Susan Sontag, “Happenings: an Art of Radical Juxtaposition.”

trol of the duration of the performance, they are ephemeral, but most importantly there is not distance between the performers and audiences, so audiences become performers as well. Most Tactical Media artworks are ephemeral and despite in some cases, like in Joseph DeLappe's artworks, there is a distance between the artists behind the virtual space and the users in the physical space, the interfaces are designed in order to interact with audiences in such a way that the audiences, and the artists, programmers and engineers that produce each project participate in the creation of the artwork, and all together perform actions which consequences are unpredictable.

Tactical Media uses electronic and digital interfaces in order engage participants in specific political actions. Interfaces provide multiple possibilities of different kind of interactions, but in many cases they are designed and programmed by Tactical Media artists in order to develop projects where they loose control of the artwork, because, if the user is not intended to have any restrictions, the results of every project are unpredictable. As a Computer-based Participatory art, the preference for tactics has contributed the Tactical Media practitioners to privilege the ephemeral over the static and to act in a performative space where there is not a detached audience, but users that participate in the construction of the whole work.

However, Tactical Media is not only an appropriationist practice. It is also a form of digital resistance²⁵ where actions can be performed as acts of electronic civil disobedience (ECD). Following the principles of traditional civil disobedience²⁶ (CD), the Critical Art Ensemble defines

²⁵ See: Critical Art Ensemble, *Digital Resistance: Explorations in Tactical Media*; Critical Art Ensemble, *Electronic Civil Disobedience & Other Unpopular Ideas*; and Critical Art Ensemble, *The Electronic Disturbance*.

²⁶ According to Bedau civil disobedience are "acts which are illegal (or presumed to be so by those committing them, or by those coping with them, at the time), committed openly (not evasively or covertly), nonviolently (not intentionally or negligently destructive of property or harmful of persons), and conscientiously (not impulsively, unwillingly, thoughtlessly, etc.) within the framework of the rule of law (and thus with a willingness on the part of the disobedient to accept the legal consequences of his act, save in the special case where his act is intended to overthrow the government) and with the intention of frustrating or protesting some law, policy, or decision (or the absence thereof) of the government (or of some of its officers). Hugo Adam Bedau, "Civil disobedience and

this non-violent form of resistance as:

“a nonviolent activity by its very nature, since the oppositional forces never physically confront one another. As in CD, the primary tactics in ECD are trespass and blockage. Exits, entrances, conduits, and other key spaces must be occupied by the contestational force in order to bring pressure on legitimized institutions engaged in unethical or criminal actions. Blocking information conduits is analogous to blocking physical locations; however, electronic blockage can cause financial stress that physical blockage cannot, and it can be used beyond the local level. ECD is CD reinvigorated. What CD once was, ECD is now.²⁷”

Many actions of ECD are acts of hacking and blockage of information systems. For example, the Electronic Disturbance Theatre (EDT) performed the following action, commissioned by the Ars Electronica Festival in 1998:

On April 10, 1998 the NYZapatistas in conjunction with the The Electronic Disturbance Theater sent out this call for action:

Flood Net: Tactical Version 1.0²⁸

<http://www.thing.net/~{}rdom/zapsTactical/zaps.html>

personal responsibility for injustice,” 51.

²⁷ Critical Art Ensemble, *Electronic Civil Disobedience & Other Unpopular Ideas*

²⁸ “Designed as a collectively actuated electronic civil disobedience tool, FloodNet inverts the logic of wide open propaganda pipes by flooding network connections with millions of hits from widely distributed, fully participatory nodes. FloodNet enables a performance of presence, which says to Mexico (and its close ally the United States): we are numerous, alert, and watching carefully. On April 10, 1998 FloodNet Tactical Version 1.0 was showcased during an Electronic Civil Disobedience action against Mexican President Zedillo’s web site. A Java applet reload function sent an automated reload request several times per minute to Zedillo’s page. Reports from participants and our observations confirmed that the more than 8,000 international participants in this first FloodNet action intermittently blocked access to the Zedillo site on that day. Tactical FloodNet’s automated features are simply used to:

1. Reload a targeted webpage several times per minute.
2. Spam targeted server error logs.”

In: <http://www.thing.net/~{}rdom/zapsTactical/foyer3.htm>. Accessed October 1st, 2015.

In solidarity with the Zapatistas we call on all netsurfers to use the automated features of Flood Net (Tactical Version 1.0) on 10th of April for 24hrs.

We will be Flooding President Zedillo's site <http://www.presidencia.gob.mx>

You could connect with your browser to a targeted web site and push the "reload" button several times for an hour (with an interval of a few seconds in between)

OR

Just keep your browser tuned to the Flood Net: Tactical Version 1.0 URL, where a Java Applet will hit reload for you.

You can also send them email using the automail system at: <http://www.newhumans.com/chiapas/automail.html>

For more information on the action: <http://www.nyu.edu/projects/wray/ecd.html>

The Flood Net URL hit Zedillo's site a total of 8141 times. Many reported that Zedillo's site was no longer responding. A second mirror site was put into action on the afternoon of the 10th at: <http://cadre.sjsu.edu/beestal/zapsTactical/zaps.html>

At this time we do not have the stats on this URL. It is also difficult to say how many hits it took for Zedillo's site no longer to respond. More research is needed in defining the specific numbers needed to move the gesture from a symbolic position to a direct action-effect²⁹.

It is easy to take these kinds of actions for cyber crime activities. However, although in this paper I will not discuss which are the consequences they have for the fields of political philosophy and law, for the sake of the argument, the difference between electronic civil disobedients and cyber criminals is that the first ones do not intend to destroy or take advantage of an individual, a corporation or an institution, but simply to use concrete tactics in order to show their discomfort and rejection of the activities of political and economic institutions and corporations by blocking their channels of information or by exposing them in different media.

²⁹ http://90.146.8.18/en/archives/festival_archive/festival_catalogs/festival_artikel.asp?iProjectID=8386. Accessed August 20, 2015.

Notwithstanding the fact that the boundaries between mere activism and Tactical Media actions seems to be very thin, Tactical Media artworks are influenced by the Situationism, the Happening and other types of performative proposals, like the Theatre of the Oppressed, the Guerrilla Art Action Group or the Rebel Chicano Art Front. Following (D) the Critical Art Ensemble, one of the main Tactical Media groups, sustains that these practices are a form of “recombinant theatre” that “consists of interwoven performative environments through which participants may flow³⁰.” This theatre is what they call a theatre of everyday life,³¹ but also a “street theater” that consists “in performances that invent ephemeral, autonomous situations from which temporary public relationships emerge that can make possible critical dialogue on a given issue³².”

Tactical Media artworks are performative acts in which the audience actual participation through the interaction with the interface is necessary for the succeeding of the work. For that reason, it makes it difficult to analyze them from a perspective of individual creativity. Most of them are the product of collaborations between artists, scientists and engineers, and even if individuals design them (like Joseph DeLappe), these works are produced in order to let the user co-create the content of the work.

3.

Most of the literature on creativity agrees that creativity is the individual’s intentional production of novel, original and valuable products that differ with the prior tradition³³. However, commonly a creative product is

³⁰ Critical Art Ensemble. *Digital Resistance: Explorations in Tactical Media*, 96.

³¹ “The aim of The Living Theater to break the boundaries of its traditional architecture was successful. It collapsed the art and life distinction, which has been of tremendous help by establishing one of the first recombinant stages. After all, only by examining everyday life through the frame of a dramaturgical model can one witness the poverty of this performative matrix. The problem is that effective resistance will not come from the theater of everyday life alone. Like the stage, the subelectronic—in this case the street, in its traditional architectural and sociological form—will have no effect on the privileged virtual stage.” Critical Art Ensemble, *The Electronic Disturbance*, 165.

³² Critical Art Ensemble. *Digital Resistance: Explorations in Tactical Media*, 96.

³³ For a Discussion of different approaches to Creativity see: Berys Gaut and Paisley Livingston (eds), *The Creation of Art: New Essays in Philosophical Aesthetics*; James C. Kauf-

considered valuable if it is useful (functional) in a certain degree or if it is novel in contrast to the products that precede it. However, as Vlas Petre Glăveanu suggests, “we don’t know exactly how or to whom the creative artefact is useful, and we don’t know how it is novel or what comparison is the basis of its novelty³⁴.” Instead, some have argued that something is creative if it is valuable because it has some kind of artistic or scientific merit. However, merit is matter of degree so it is still difficult to know which is the proper standard for sustaining that something has more merit than something else that was created previously or at the same time. Even though it is difficult to find out for whom some product is useful, many Participatory Computer-based artworks, like Tactical Media, are intended to perform two functions: one in relation to the actual functioning of the interface with a potential user, and another one in relation to the work’s political effectiveness.

In the discussion about Functional Beauty, Glenn Parsons and Allen Carlson³⁵ established what they call the “Problem of Translation”, in which the aesthetic qualities we perceive in an object that performs a function are altered:

- 1) By the awareness of the object’s function.
- 2) If the object’s form fits that function.

The problem with 1) is that “it is unclear how awareness of, and attention to, a non-aesthetic function can alter or influence aesthetic judgments³⁶.” Then if creativity is a valuable property we use to make aesthetic judgments, the mysterious awareness of the object’s function seems problematic for any judgment based on the creativity of the object, as Glăveanu suggested. Furthermore, there is another problem, what Parsons and Carlson called the “Problem of Indeterminacy,” in which, following Roger Scruton on his work on Architecture, they argue that the function of an artefact

man and Robert Sternberg (eds.). *The Cambridge Handbook of Creativity*; Michael Krausz, et.al. (eds.), *The idea of creativity*; Mark Runco and Steven Pritzker (eds.). *Encyclopedia of Creativity*; Robert J. Sternberg (ed.). *Handbook of Creativity*.

³⁴ Vlad Petre Glăveanu, *Thinking through Creativity and Culture. Toward an Integrated Model*, 12.

³⁵ Glenn Parsons and Allen Carlson. *Functional Beauty*.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 46.

is indeterminate, and in consequence “whatever aesthetic character it possesses in light of its function is also indeterminate³⁷.” Therefore, if the aesthetic character an object possesses in light of its function is indeterminate, and the function is non-aesthetic, then it is also unclear how that function can influence our judgments. I will go back to these problems, but first I want to show that recent approaches to creativity not only can offer an alternative solution to these problems, but specifically for the case of Participatory Computer-Based art.

Creative processes and products are not isolated from their context. As the systemic approaches to creativity³⁸ have shown they are not excluded from the conditions given by the context of their production. Moreover, creativity also involves the interaction between individuals, objects and different contexts. The concept of distributed creativity takes notice of these relations. Distributed creativity is “a theoretical perspective” that “points not only to the role of social relations but also to interaction with artefacts and development over time for creative expression³⁹.” For Glaveanu, one of the advocates of distributed creativity:

“Creativity can no longer be said to reside ‘within’ the person, the product, etc. It emerges as a form of action engaged in by various actors (individual or groups), in relation to multiple audiences (again individuals or groups), exploiting the affordances of the cultural (symbolic and material) world and leading to the generation of artefacts (appreciated as new and useful by self and/or others). All the five terms mentioned above are relational in nature: actors are defined by their interaction with audiences, action engages existing affordances and generates new ones, artefacts can become agents within creative work, etc⁴⁰.”

The distributed approach to creativity includes the relation between actors, audiences, artefacts, actions and affordances. So, creativity can be un-

³⁷ Ibid., 50.

³⁸ Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, “Implications of a Systems Perspective for the Study of Creativity.”

³⁹ Vlad Petre Glaveanu, *Distributed Creativity. Thinking Outside the Box of the Creative Individual*, 8.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 27.

derstood “as a process of perceiving, exploiting, and “generating” novel affordances during socially and materially situated activities⁴¹.” The concept of affordance comes from James J. Gibson who, from the field of ecological psychology, defined it as what the environment offers to the animal, “what it produces or furnishes, either for good or ill⁴².” An affordance is “a fact of the environment and a fact of behaviour⁴³.” And perceiving an affordance “is not a process of perceiving a value-grew physical object to which meaning is somehow added in a way that no one has been able to agree upon; it is a process of perceiving a value-rich ecological object⁴⁴.”

There are multiple discussions about the concept of affordance that have different implications in the philosophy of mind and perception that go beyond the scope of this paper. Here I will follow on one hand, Claire Michaels suggestion that “affordances do not arise as a consequence of mental operations,” and “they are action-referential properties of the environment that may or may not be perceived⁴⁵.” On the other hand, I will follow Hutchby suggestion that affordances are functional “in the sense that they are enabling, as well as constraining, factors in given organism’s to attempt to engage in some activity” and they “can shape the conditions of possibility associated with an action: it may be possible to do it one way but not another⁴⁶.” In the case of technological artefacts, Hutchby argues that the interpretations (as well as the appreciation) and uses we give to them are constrained “by the ranges of affordances that particular artefacts possess⁴⁷” since, i.e., “good designers of objects, such as door handles, light switches, coffee machines and so on, are those who are most concerned to shape the artefact so that its possible uses, its affordances, may be readily perceivable by its proposed users⁴⁸.” Therefore, as Claire Michaels argues, if we are able to perceive an artefact or an object as an affordance, it “can set up action systems to act” (Michaels, 2003: 139). However, in order to

⁴¹ Vlas Petre, Glăveanu, “What Can be Done with an Egg? Creativity Material Objects, and the Theory of Affordances,” 192.

⁴² James J. Gibson, *Ecological approach to Visual Perception*, 127.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 129.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 140.

⁴⁵ Claire F. Michaels, “Affordances: Four Points of Debate,” 137.

⁴⁶ Ian Hutchby, “Technologies, Texts and Affordances,” 448.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 453.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 449.

perceive an artefact as an affordance the user must interact with it. Interaction does not exclude, as Glăveanu suggests, the context that surrounds the artefact (it's own history) and the context of its potential users. In consequence it is possible that the user can be aware of any non-aesthetic function the artefact has when she interacts with it if she is able to perceive the potential uses it has, i.e., if someone turns on a computer with a software X and perceives it as an affordance for designing or programming something or if someone sees a button, it is possible that she pushes it in order to turn on and off what is in front of her. Nevertheless, there is a remaining problem, does the artefact have a proper function since its function seems indeterminate?

First, coming back to the “Problem of Translation” in 2) there is a problem in determining “if the object’s form fits a function.” The way this problem affects the aesthetic qualities we perceive has been analyzed in the way the work “looks fit”. However, for Computer-based Artworks the “artefact’s form fits a function” if the form lets the object function successfully, therefore the proper function of these kinds of works is fulfilled when they are operative. In contrast, for Participatory interactive Computer-Based artworks the artefact does not only need to function properly, but also its identity is determined by its function and how it is successfully fulfilled when a user interacts with it, since she is capable of perceive it as an affordance that let her to perform an action. Just as the examples of Tactical Media given, the users must interact with an interface designed as an affordance they can perceive in order to perform different actions. For example, the Institute for Applied Autonomy, an artist collective founded in 1998, dedicated to “study the forces and structures which affect self-determination and to provide technologies which extend the autonomy of human activists⁴⁹” designed the “Little Brother” a propaganda “low tech” pamphleteer robot that disseminates propaganda in urban environments. In their text “Pamphleteer: A propaganda Robot for Cultural Resistance” the Institute of Applied Autonomy describes the motivation behind the creation of the robot and its effectiveness in comparison to the traditional hand to hand distribution of pamphlets by humans:

⁴⁹ In: <http://www.appliedautonomy.com/mission.html> Accessed October 1st, 2015.

Although the internet has become an effective tool of information dissemination, handing out literature in real world public environments remains the most effective means of reaching large numbers of people in a given locality. However, activist groups attempting to utilize this technique face three obstacles which often impede their effectiveness...

In response to this need, the Institute for Applied Autonomy undertook the development of a robotic solution which automated the often dangerous practice of disseminating subversive literature to the public. The proposed benefits of such a robot parallel those long touted by the military/commercial robotics industry: 1) An ability to operate in conditions deemed unprofitably dangerous for humans. 2) An ability to work long hours without need for 'break' periods. In addition, the project was guided by the principles of Contestational Robotics [1]: namely that robotic systems designed for activist use must be inexpensive, easy to construct, and highly portable...

Field studies have conclusively demonstrated Pamphleteer's effectiveness in engaging the public, with particularly notable success in reaching notoriously difficult populations such as the elderly and supervised children. Generally speaking, the robot is capable of distributing 23% more literature to 18% more people than his human counterpart, and is capable of performing for up to 6 hours without interruption, as opposed to an observed limit of 78 minutes for an unpaid human volunteer. We expect that the next generation prototype, which utilizes more powerful batteries, will further widen this gap.

While people were much more willing to interact with the robot than with human activists, the duration of these interactions was much shorter, which further contributed to Pamphleteer's ability to outperform the human. In aggregate, humans tended to interact with the robot for no more than 10.2 seconds, as opposed to an average interaction time of 3.45 minutes with human activists. Our hypothesis is that Pamphleteer is perceived as less intelligent than a human activist, and as a result, people are much less likely to engage it in conversation. This may also explain the observed difference in risk, calculated at 2 threats of physical violence against the human and 0 threats towards the robot. This is notable because it is

possible to program Pamphleteer to be more verbally aggressive towards passers-by than human activists, even to the point of making derisive or lewd comments. We suspect the reason for this is that the behavior was mitigated by the robots overall cuteness, and may have actually enhanced public perception of Pamphleteer as a "fun" device. When passers-by were asked to rate the human and the robot on the cuteness-obnoxious scale (COS). Using a rating system in which 10 = "cute"; 1 = "obnoxious", human activists received an average COS score of 3.23, while Pamphleteer averaged an astonishing 8.56⁵⁰.

Their report shows that this Tactical Media group found that a robot is an affordance that can perform a different function from those that people commonly associate with these computer-guided machines. The same can be said of the Electronic Disturbance Theater that found in programming the possibility to develop a program to saturate websites. Moreover people were able to perceive that the function of the robot was not only perform a task, but also to bring them information, even though they found it "less intelligent than a human," "funny" and "cute."

Obviously it remains the problem of how these non-aesthetic (political) functions can influence our judgments. Participatory Computer-based artworks identity is established by the way its form makes it operative and by their manifest capacity for being used, if the user is capable of perceive it in order to interact with it. However, they are also intended to be used to perform a political function that depends on the way the users are convinced with their political statements in order to perceive its potential for further purposes, otherwise, the artwork might not be used for intervene, transform or challenge any social and political context. If the user shares the political point of view of the artists and wants to engage in acts of Electronic Civil Disobedience, then she is capable of perceiving how the device or interface was prescribed to be used accordingly to certain political values.

Tactical Media artists, as well other kinds of Computer-based Participatory artists, design artefacts and interfaces that function as "afford-

⁵⁰ In: <http://www.appliedautonomy.com/pamphleteer.html> Accessed October 1st, 2015.

ances” that allow the interaction with multiple users. Tactical media practitioners co-design those interfaces and artefacts and they prescribe them a performative function in order to let the users intentionally participate distributively in the creation the entire piece by performing particular actions. Then, the performative political aims of Tactical Media works are successful when the users are able to perceive and exploit the novel interfaces and devices designed by the artist as affordances that let them act and participate in the production of the work. And in some cases, like the Graffiti Research Lab, it is also possible that the users can produce novel affordances if the artists let them access to the code behind the programs, or the plans of the interfaces or devices they design.

Finally, coming back to the creativity sink argument, as Lopes argues, (2) is supported by the premise of the standardization of the art making process by using a computer. Against (2) he argues that “all media, including traditional media, standardize art making”, so “standardization is no bar to creativity⁵¹.” However, if creativity is a property we find valuable for making aesthetic judgments, this kind of artworks are creative and do not lack artistic value, since, from the point of view of distributed creativity, artists use computers as affordances that enable them to create artefacts that can be used as novel affordances. Finally, Participatory Computer-based artworks, like Tactical Media, are creative if creativity is based on the fact that they are artefacts produced as affordances (that previously were used and perceived affordances and it is possible to be perceived as novel affordances) that are in relation with different actors (artists and users), and perform different actions (creating the artefacts and participating giving different the necessary inputs to make the artwork successful). User-interfaces need the user’s awareness of the function of the artwork when she uses it, so she could be able to appreciate it and, in consequence, to make a judgment about it (like being cute or funny). Finally, Participatory Computer-based art, specially Tactical Media, needs the intervention of the medium used for creating the artwork and its identity depends on the way it fulfils its function, that can only be fulfilled if the artwork’s form fits its function (it works) and if the user is able to fully engage and participate with the artwork’s interface and the context that surrounds the

⁵¹ Dominic McIver Lopes, *A philosophy of Computer Art*, 87.

author(s) and the participant(s).

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Photographic Deception

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ABSTRACT. The philosophy of pictorial communication has advanced through ideas and theories of various philosophical traditions, relying on diverse research methodologies. A long forgotten advancement in the philosophy of visual communication has been recently revived,¹ suggesting that the theory of speech acts may be successfully extended and developed for explaining the communicative processes involved in understanding and interpreting pictures and other visual phenomena. In my paper I consider how we may account for photographic deception with the help of the theory of pictorial illocutionary acts. Using photographic deception as an example I explain how the more general theory of pictorial illocutionary acts may be extended specifically to photographic illocutionary acts, and I also show how this theory accounts for certain types of photographic deception.

1. Introduction

It is of historical interest that the first seminal publications on the theory of speech acts² were soon followed by proposals for extending the theory to account for pictorial communication. Kjørup³ and Novitz⁴ discussed the theoretical background of pictorial illocutionary acts by exploring some of the most important and relevant similarities and differences between the ways we use verbal and pictorial locutionary acts. They argued that while written and spoken verbal utterances serve as locutionary acts for verbal illocutionary acts, producing and presenting pictures also constitute performing pictorial locutionary acts for pictorial illocutionary

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¹ Bátor¹ 2012, 2014.

² Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969.

³ Kjørup, 1974, 1978.

⁴ Novitz, 1975, 1977.

acts. In what follows I will first briefly introduce the theory of pictorial illocutionary acts (we might also call them picture acts), and then I will turn to the specific case of what I consider photographic illocutionary acts. Although the theory of picture acts might be applied to still and moving, photographic and non-photographic images as well, I restrict my discussion to still photographic images here. I do not attempt to resolve questions that may arise from the combination of picture acts and speech acts, either. I only discuss still photographic and non-photographic images. For the purposes of this paper I treat possible titles as part of the contextual information on which we may rely when interpreting images.⁵

2. Verbal and Pictorial Illocutionary Acts

According to the theory of pictorial illocutionary acts, the acts of producing and presenting paintings, drawings, photographs, etc. may serve as visual locutionary acts, and as such they may have illocutionary force in the context of the use of the pictures. Furthermore, visual locutionary and illocutionary acts may also result in perlocutionary acts, just as it may happen in case of speech acts. Instead of the verbal utterances of speech acts, in case of picture acts (meaningful) pictures are presented for us as locutionary acts.⁶ Of course, the literal interpretation processes of verbal and pictorial locutionary acts are very different, given the fact that there are significant differences between the structure of linguistic and visual communication.

Speech acts are performed with words and sentences. We understand the literal meaning of (written or spoken) verbal locutionary acts by relying on our knowledge of the literal semantic meaning of the words and the syntax of the given language. We interpret the literal meaning of locutionary acts in the contexts of their use in order to understand the illocution-

⁵ The status of the titles of pictures (if they have one) might be controversial. If the picture is a work of art, for instance, one might consider the title part of the artwork itself. It is also possible, however, to argue that we should understand titles not as part of the work, but as a piece of contextual information about the picture. In this paper I assume the latter strictly for the sake of simplicity but none of my arguments depend on that assumption.

⁶ Kjörup, 1974, 1978; Novitz, 1975, 1977.

ary acts performed by the utterer of the locutionary act.⁷ For instance, when Peter utters the sentence “I will cook dinner tonight.”, Kate does not merely take this as a piece of information about Peter’s evening plans, but also as an act of promise (illocutionary act), even though Peter did not use the explicit performative “I promise you that” expression in the sentence. Among the possible perlocutionary effects might be that Kate is happy about the prospects of having a nice dinner with Peter, or her feelings might be hurt because she concludes that Peter does not like *her* cooking.

In case of picture acts the interpretation process is based on our visual recognition capacities, such as object recognition, face recognition, etc. As opposed to the symbolic semantic meaning of words, our ability of recognising specific objects is established by having seen just a few tokens (or even just some visual representations) of them. Although I have never actually seen a whale, I can recognize whales because I have seen pictures of them. The meaning of pictures that is based on our recognition capacities is what Currie calls “natural” meaning. This is precisely the “literal” meaning of a pictorial locutionary act that gets interpreted in pictorial illocutionary acts. The natural meaning of pictures is the visual information we gain on the basis of our natural visual recognition capacities.⁸ In both verbal and pictorial cases we interpret the locutionary acts in the contexts of their use to understand the verbal or pictorial illocutionary act performed by producing and presenting the verbal utterance or the picture. For instance, the written words “High voltage!” and the picture (usually a sketchy, but easily recognisable drawing) of an electricity bolt both serve as (verbal or pictorial) locutionary acts for an illocutionary act of warning.

3. Photographic Illocutionary Acts

I think that using photographic images constitutes a highly specific subcategory of pictorial illocutionary acts⁹. The natural (“literal”) meaning of

⁷ Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969.

⁸ See Currie, 1995, Chapter 4 (“Languages of Art and Languages of Film”) for an account of natural („literal”) pictorial meaning that is based on our natural visual recognition capacities.

⁹ See also Bátori, 2014.

photographic locutionary acts is (just like in case of other pictorial locutionary acts) the visual information we gain via our natural visual recognition capacities. The further interpretation of photographs, however, diverges from the interpretation of non-photographic images. I suggest that it is a necessary component of photographic illocutionary acts that the image presented is to be interpreted *as a photograph*, as opposed to – even photorealist – paintings, drawings, montages, etc. The intended recognition of photographic images *qua* photographic images results in illocutionary acts that are specific to interpreting photographs. In case of a photographic illocutionary act we interpret the image as the result of (analogue or digital) photographic processes, even if our knowledge of the technical details of those processes is vague, and even with the understanding of possible analogue or digital manipulation of the photographic image.¹⁰

Our interpretation of photographs is also based on our more or less precise knowledge about the difference between the ontological and epistemic status of photographic images on the one hand, and drawings, paintings, and other non-photographic images on the other. That is, if one is not very familiar with the details of (analogue or digital) photographic processes, the indexical nature of the photographic image is well understood even pre-theoretically. People interpreting photographs know that the mechanical processes of recording light values means that there is a causal physical connection between the visual properties of the photograph and the visual properties of the scene recorded by the camera. Specifically, as Kendall Walton put it, the visual properties of a photographic image are counterfactually dependent on the visual properties of the scene photographed.¹¹

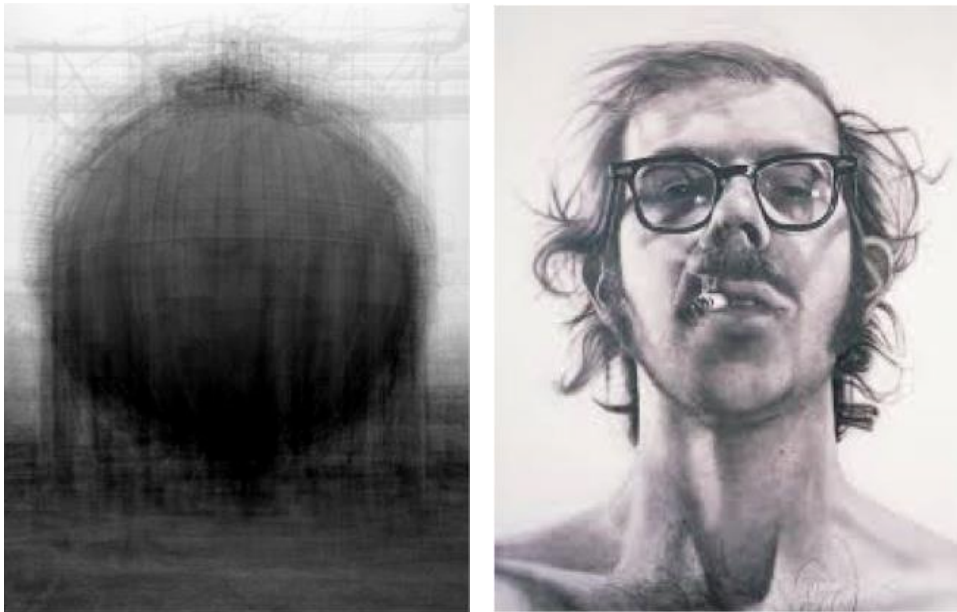
The nature of the production of photographic images also constitutes the basis of their epistemic status. We understand that if the camera is properly set and the image is not manipulated, then we can get *at least some* reliable information about the visual properties of the scene. Of course, preserving counterfactual dependence is also possible in case of drawings and other non-photographic images, but that is always an artistic choice,

¹⁰ Questions arising from possible (digital or analogue) manipulations will be discussed later.

¹¹ See Walton, 1984, 1986, and 1997.

not the result of the mechanical processes of the camera. I suggest that our *default* interpretation of photographic images is based on our knowledge about their ontological and epistemic status. This is why it is a relevant piece of information about digital photographs that they were manipulated with the help of an image editing software; this (usually, but not necessarily¹²) contextual information changes our default interpretation. After learning that a photograph was manipulated, we no longer consider the visual properties of the image counterfactually dependent on the visual properties of the scene. Now we know that they might have been altered, and the status of the image with respect to the altered properties will converge with the status of non-photographic images, like drawings or paintings.

Consider the following two images, for instance [FIGURES 1 & 2]:



FIGURES 1 & 2. Idris Khan: *Every... Bernd & Hilla Becher Spherical Type Gasholder*, 2004. — Chuck Close, *Big Self-Portrait*, 1968.

Idris Khan's work initially seems to be a drawing (non-photographic), while Chuck Close's image seems to be a photograph. Then we learn that it is in

¹² It is also possible that we can detect the manipulation just by looking at the image.

fact the other way around; Khan's work is photographic while Close's work is a painting (a non-photographic image). This (contextual) information will be significant for the interpretation of the images. For instance, we usually do not spend much time thinking about why drawings look like drawings, but looking like a drawing (instead of looking like a photograph) is a significant property to be interpreted in case of photographic images. Also, once we learn that Close's image is a (photorealistic) painting, we do not consider its visual properties to be counterfactually dependent on the scene. Preserving counterfactual dependence (if it was preserved at all) was an artistic choice, not the result of mechanical photographic processes.

The specific details of the production and use of photographic images are also important contextual components of photographic illocutionary acts and their possible perlocutionary effects. Consider, for instance, the following image [FIGURE 3], first without any information (title or other details) about its production and use. That is, consider the image as a photographic locutionary act, without any contextual information:



FIGURE 3. (Details are given in the text.)

Without the information concerning its production and use we might easily assume, for instance, that this is a (poor quality) still from a movie. At least we would not be very surprised if this turned out to be true. The empty platform might suggest that the image is from a scene in which a character is looking after a departing train from the tracks. From the still we cannot really guess how and why he got to that specific location in the course of the storyline of the movie. Should this be the actual context of the production and the use of the photograph, the image will not affect us considerably. However, once we learn the truth about the image, our interpretation will change considerably, and so may our emotional reaction. The title of this image is *This Man Is About To Die*, and the photograph appeared on the front page of the New York Post, December 5, 2012. The photographer (R. Umar Abbasi) happened to capture the very moment before the incoming train hit (and killed) the man who had been pushed into the tracks a few second earlier. The use of this image by the photographer and the New York Post generated considerable outrage, as a perlocutionary effect of the photographic illocutionary act performed by producing and presenting the photograph in the context of sales oriented (photo)journalism. It is important to emphasize that the reaction was generated by the photograph *qua* photograph. Producing and using a photorealistic drawing (that even has precisely the same visual properties) could not serve as the locutionary act for this specifically (photographic) illocutionary act. Interpreting the photograph *qua* photograph is an integral component of this act.

4. Photographic Deception and Photographic Illocutionary Acts

Let us turn now to a specific description and understanding of some types of possibly or actually deceptive uses of photographic images. On the basis of the theory of photographic illocutionary acts discussed above, we can now have a precise characterization of how photographs may be used to mislead us, and how it is possible to deceive with photographs in terms of a misleading photographic illocutionary act. First we need understand why failing to represent realistically does not necessarily entail deception, and then we can see under what circumstances photographic illocutionary acts are indeed deceptive.

Let us first consider some visual properties of scenes that black and white photographs represent. Colours, for instance, are represented with the shades of grey in black and white photography. This is a clear case of non-realistic representation; black and white photographs in fact fail to represent colours realistically. Although there is *a correspondence* between the colours of the scene and the shades of greys in the photographs, there is no counterfactual dependence between them. For instance, many shades of red, green, blue and grey are represented by the same shades of grey in the photograph; therefore, it is not the case that a different colour in the scene necessarily results in a different colour in the photograph. In most cases it is not possible at all to tell the original colours of the objects in the photograph by looking at the specific shades of grey by which their colours are represented in the image.

Although on a scale of realism black and white photographs fail to represent colours realistically, unrealistic representation does not necessarily result in deception. Understanding the photographic practice of taking black and white images includes that we also understand that these photographs do not represent colours realistically. They do not deceive us because it is part of the photographic illocutionary act to interpret photographs in the context of their production and use. Knowing about the practice of black and white photography is already sufficient for the proper, modified interpretation; we know that the shades of greys in black and white photographs are not presented to us to convey information about the real colours of the scenes. This suitably modified interpretation process of black and white photographs does not result in deception.¹³

Let us consider another example now. A photograph taken at an important company event shows five people, including John. John, however, is fired from the company a few days after the event. The photo editor of the company newsletter decides that it would not be a good idea to include

¹³ The question of realistic representation is not necessarily raised at all in the interpretation process. In fact, we need to be prompted by contextual or pictorial (photographic) information in order to include in our interpretation some reflections on realistic or unrealistic representation with respect to some types of properties in the photograph. For instance, we simply take black and white photographs as images that do not represent colours realistically without much reflection about why this is so, or without considering these photographs unrealistic.

him in the upcoming newsletter, but this is the only photograph taken at that event. After some deliberation John's image is carefully erased from the picture, and the void is cleverly filled by some suitable background with the help of a photo editing software.¹⁴ Nobody detects the manipulation when looking at the photograph in the company newsletter, and it would take a careful and professional study of the image to uncover its secret.

Now we can formulate it very precisely why our default interpretation will result in deception in this case, and also why we are not in the position to change this default to some more suitable interpretation. While black and white photographs are transparent about not representing colours realistically (we can and do know that the colours of the image do not depend counterfactually on the colours of the scene), this type of manipulation (erasing John from the image) is deliberately concealed from the viewer. The editor of the newsletter and the person editing the photograph do not want us to be able to detect the manipulation; they do not want us to be able to realise that John is missing from the picture. Although some properties of this image (the filled in background where originally the image of John was to be seen) are not counterfactually dependent on the properties of the scene (at the time of taking the photograph), this information is not available to us from the photograph itself or from the context of publishing the company newsletter. In other words, our default interpretation does not (cannot) take this type of manipulation into account, even if we know about the possibility of such manipulations. In this case we have no choice but to proceed with the default interpretation, but that will result in deception. This is precisely what the editor of the newsletter and the person editing the photograph intended.

Some types of images in some contexts are certainly borderline cases or exceptions to the default interpretation. For instance, it is so well known that photographs of models in fashion magazines are heavily manipulated that few people approach them with the default interpretation. We know that the physical characteristics of the models might be considerably altered; therefore we do not assume automatically that the visual

¹⁴ For a long time during the history of photography, such manipulations were done by analogue techniques. My arguments are not specific to photographic technologies; they apply to both analogue and digital photographic processes.

properties of the images of the models are counterfactually dependent on the visual properties of the models themselves. The default interpretation of photographic locutionary acts may be overwritten, if we know from the context or from the image itself that we should replace the default by some other interpretation.¹⁵

5. Conclusion

In this paper I have introduced the notion of photographic illocutionary acts as a highly specific type of pictorial illocutionary acts. I have argued, that the default interpretation with which we approach photographic images incorporates our (more or less precise) knowledge about their ontological and epistemic status. That is, I have suggested that photographic illocutionary acts are based on interpreting photographs *qua* photographs. We need to have some reason to diverge from the default interpretation of considering the visual properties of the photograph to be counterfactually dependent on the visual properties of the scene. This is the case with the suitably modified interpretation of black and white photographs, and also in cases when we have contextual or pictorial (photographic) information about specific (digital or analogue) manipulations. We are deceived when we are not in the position of replacing the default interpretation with another, more suitable interpretation. The proposed theory of photographic illocutionary acts accounts for our default interpretation as well as for the possible deceptive uses of photographic images.

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¹⁵ Notice, however, that some photographic genres are specifically excluded from the possibility of approaching them with a modified interpretation. In wildlife photography or in photo reportage it is never permissible to alter the images in the ways fashion photographs are often altered. In these cases even staging (instead of capturing “the spontaneous moment”) constitutes deception.

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Gombrich, Danto, and the Question of Artistic Progress

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ABSTRACT. The question I am concerned with is the relevance of the notion of progress in the artistic field. Does the notion of artistic progress apply to art and, in the case it does, in what sense and how? In order to answer this question I will discuss Ernst Gombrich and Arthur Danto's view of artistic progress (§§ 2-3). Then, following the objections that the Spanish philosopher Gerard Vilar recently raised against Danto's ideas on the end of art (§ 4), I will suggest a modest view concerning the requirements a theory of artistic progress must satisfy (§ 5).

I. Introduction

In this paper I discuss the idea of “artistic progress”. The explicit question I will deal with is the relevance of the notion of progress in the artistic field. Does the notion of artistic progress apply to art and, in the case it does, in what sense and how?

In this respect at least another question may be raised as to the specific contribution of art to the articulation and the understanding of the concept of progress itself. Here, however, I will deal with this question only implicitly.

In order to reflect on the connection between art and progress I will benefit from Ernst Gombrich and Arthur Danto's view of artistic progress (§§ 2-3). Then, following the objections that the Spanish philosopher Gerard Vilar recently raised against Danto's ideas on the end of art (§ 4), I will briefly present my view on the matter (§ 5).

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2. Gombrich on Artistic Progress

The first part of my talk is a kind of close reading of Ernst Gombrich's book *Ideas of Progress and their Impact on Art* (1971). At the beginning of this book Gombrich claims on the one hand that the idea of progress does not properly apply to art. The reason for this is that art must be genuine and autonomous; so it must not care about past and future. Artworks cannot be placed along a rising line: for example Michelangelo is not better than Giotto; he is only different from Giotto. Let's call this thesis the "no-progress thesis" (NPT). However, on the other hand, Gombrich maintains that people living in "open societies" cannot avoid thinking in terms of progress and that, consequently, since the classical antiquity and up until our days progressive stories of art have been told in different ways (as we will see, also by Gombrich himself). Let's call this the "progress thesis" (PT). This apparent inconsistency between the two claims (NPT vs PT) depends on a semantic equivocation concerning the idea of artistic progress, which Gombrich himself wishes to clarify; yet, in my opinion, he sees the problem, but he does not provide a convincing solution.

2.1. *The Progress Thesis and the Classical Progress Thesis*

According to Gombrich, the first version of PT is about art as the ability to reproduce nature *mimetically* (= MPT). According to this ancient idea, art (= *techné*) progresses, as much as the *technical* ability of imitating nature improves from the good to the best and from the best to perfection. Hence, *artistic progress* is understood in terms of *technical progress*. A technique is the procedure or the set of procedures by which a (more or less) complex task is accomplished. Technical progress may be defined as a change which increases outputs for any given input. In other words, technical progress is an improvement in the means for achieving a certain result. Since art is the *techné* of reproducing nature mimetically, the progress of art depends upon the improvement of the means for imitating nature, which is understood as the goal of art.

This argumentative structure is still used as a kind of organizing conceptual frame in the famous book by Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the artists* (1550)¹. While considering that Vasari assigns an aesthetic primacy to Renais-

¹ However, properly speaking, Vasari does not identify artistic perfection with success

sance art on Medieval art, we may be right in claiming that the reason why Vasari is not able to understand the symbolism of Medieval art as its specific artistic value, which is incomparable with and equally good as other artistic values, is that Vasari rejects NPT and embraces PT. Still, Vasari's version of PT is through and through rational. It is an *instrumental and evolutionary notion of artistic progress* (IPT), according to which, once an aim is established, one can search for the best means required for achieving it (so MPT is a kind of IPT). Like scientific progress toward determined goals, art evolves progressively through a *learning process* by virtue of which some skills improve. So, the progress of art runs alongside the progress of science, i.e. by virtue of conjectures, falsifications and new conjectures.

This is precisely the version of PT endorsed by Gombrich himself. Representations, which are more and more adequate to reality (or, in general, more and more functional with reference to a given goal), are judged according to fixed standards of perception. Schemes of representations are applied and compared with visual reality, until they are true enough to it. So, artists are the first critics of themselves. They set a goal, and by a process of trial and error (and also thanks to negative feedbacks of critics) they see whether their means are adequate to the ends, while improving them through practice.

Gombrich observes that IPT may be combined with a notion of progress with which it is often confused, namely a notion accepted by Vasari, but not by Gombrich himself: the Aristotelian view of artistic progress as inevitable *organic growing toward the essence* or toward the internal finality of art, according to which *only one perfect model* exists (= OPT, a view analogous to *utopian* models of progress).

Both IPT and OPT are guided by the notion of a *perfect aesthetic creation* as the model for every artistic future, and can be both put under the common title of *classical PT* (= CPT). According to CPT, once a model of perfection is established (nature, beauty, etc.), only two possibilities remain: *imitation of perfection* and *decadence* (degeneration). Perfection, as such, can-

in the imitation of nature. The technical mastery of art consists rather in the fulfilment of another function: the expressive representation of the Holy History. Under the premise that representing the Holy History is the function of art, Vasari can reasonably claim that some artworks (for example some paintings by Raffaello) mark an improvement on other artworks, because of their prowess in illustrating events of the Holy History.

not be improved anymore: so every change turns out to be a worsening. Historical evolution ends once the goal of the evolution is achieved and perfection is reached. What follows is *decline* or, in the best case, *restoration* and *rebirth* (which, by the way, is the very etymological meaning of *Renaissance*). Therefore classicism (CPT) is a cyclic model of artistic progress conceived of in terms of three phases put along a circular line: 1. a primitive phase, 2. the phase of perfection, 3. the phase of decadence (like in Mannerism) and the return to 1. through a rebirth.

For example, according to Winckelmann and his neoclassical nostalgic plea for the classical ideal of uncorrupted beauty of the Greeks², degeneration is typified by Bernini and Borromini's Baroque art. In the frame of his (Vichian) CPT, he thinks that the historical trend of the arts begins with the state of necessity and the primitive style, continues with beauty and stylistic perfection ("noble simplicity and quite grandeur"), and ends with superfluity and decadence of style. In particular, for CPT virtuosity as an end in itself is an abuse of art, a corruption of perfection.

To be noticed is that in CPT beauty (i.e. the perfection of style) already nourishes the germs of decadence: since beauty is perfection, artistic beauty cannot be improved anymore; yet, since it cannot go forward, it must regress, before coming back to perfection, degenerating again, and so on³.

2.2. *Linear Progress without Comebacks and Pluralism*

However, Gombrich observes that already during Renaissance the new scientific discoveries elicited a *different notion of progress*. Progress can now be conceived of not only as the improvement of the means for an end, but also as the possibility of *setting new ends*. So in history no comebacks are possible anymore. Progress is a straight line that runs towards infinity,

² This scheme will be the background of Hegel's articulation of philosophy of art history in three artistic forms (symbolic, classic, and romantic).

³ According to Gombrich, Winckelmann was the first one who recognized the problem of *primitivism*, i.e. of intentionally produced archaic artistic representations: representations that intentionally imitate the primitive style instead of the classical style of artworks that embodied artistic perfection. Although archaic art is less perfect than classical art, it can nonetheless be also evaluated as less artificial and as incorrupt. Archaic art is thus seen as a kind of antidote to the degenerate taste of decadence. This means that a moral value, that replaces (or at least integrates) the aesthetic criterion of perfection, is understood as a criterion for the artistic success (and the progress) of art.

linear progress without comebacks (= LP).

The influence of this idea of art begins, according to Gombrich, with Romanticism⁴. Herder for example argues that CPT is wrong, because there is not a unique model of perfection. Each civilization has its own specific character and its own specific art. Hence, one should not evaluate, say, Egyptian sculpture with the standards of Greek art, because in the Egyptian civilization sculpture has a different meaning. From this *anticlassical and pluralistic notion of progress* (PPT) seems to ensue NPT (the radical, anti-Vasarian, idea that artistic progress is nonsense), because the lack of a unique aesthetic perfection seems to entail that great artists have no fore-runners. However, the plausible idea that great artists have no forerunners, because their specific artistic achievements are creative and cannot be anticipated by others, is not *per se* an argument in favour of NPT. Although one can reasonably claim that the criteria of artistic success are set by each artistic style or movement and even by each artwork, this (in my opinion proper) pluralistic stance does not imply or require the inexistence of cultural traditions (= normative orders) in which artists and artworks grow and that artists and artworks put forth and transform in a progressive, and understandable, way.

In the XIX Century, Gombrich observes, precisely the (firstly romantic and then positivistic) belief in LP (i.e. in the idea that the present can be understood only by looking at the future, as improvement on the past) offered the common cultural terrain for the multifaceted expressions of equally good artistic personalities.

In the XX Century, Modern Art (or Modernism) was characterized by the renunciation of every criticism raised on the basis of absolute (= unquestionable) criteria. Each artistic movement set its own criteria for artistic success (often published in a manifest), which were understood as new and as a progress on past art. For the Avant-Garde the spirit of progress was indeed the unique standard of evaluation. In other words, the unquestionable criterion of progress was... progress, *progress for its own sake*.

In this way, artistic LP was understood in terms of *scientific progress*.

⁴ However, the crisis of CPT in the artistic field began with the *querelle des anciens et de modernes* in the second half of the XVII Century.

Against the strong distinction between art and science, art began to be seen as an *experimental endeavour*, like science (and politics). The progress of Impressionism could be for example defined with reference to the fact that it taught a new way of seeing. However, Gombrich rightly observes that this answer cannot be accepted as universally valid. Artistic progress *may* be identified with scientific progress only in certain given contexts and artistic movements, but this is not generally true.

As I mentioned before, Gombrich himself has a theory about one particular way in which PT makes sense, IPT, a view anticipated by Vasari. However, differently from Vasari, Gombrich poses IPT in conditional terms, allowing for PPT:

If the goal of art is mimesis, the representation of reality, then the progress of art runs parallel with the progress of science.

However, this seems to be only one of the possible goals of art. So, generally speaking, in order to link PT to art one must return to the simple idea that progress can let us achieve very different goals (= pluralism) and that we (human beings) are the ones who set the goals, also in the artistic field (= internalism). This is the reason why Gombrich had elsewhere (*Norm and Form*, 1966) expressed some doubts about the idea that art progresses in the same way as science and offered hypothetically this other, rather metaphorical, explanation of artistic progress: you can say that art progresses the same way a piece of music lets each phrase or motif progress, while they acquire their meaning and expression from what has happened before and from the expectations that have been raised and are now met, ignored, bypassed or denied (see Lorda s.d.). This is indeed an interesting idea (and I am not sure whether it has been later further developed by Gombrich). In any case, I think that elaborating on this idea could help to find a plausible way to make PT and NPT consistent. I will do it by discussing and criticising A. Danto's view on the matter.

3. Danto and the End of (the History of) Art

Danto has interesting (but, in my opinion, wrong) ideas concerning artistic progress, ideas explained in particular in *After the End of Art* (1997). They

can be summed up shortly as follows: until our time, two main histories i.e. two main narrative models of art have been developed, but a progressive narrative of art is now impossible. Let's see how Danto's argument goes.

3.1. The Mimetic Narration of Art

The first narrative model partly coincides with Gombrich's MPT and IPT. It is the *mimetic model of artistic instrumental progress*, according to which each artist has a model of reality that he/she compares with reality. Hence, artistic progress means an improvement in the technical means for producing representations of reality. In this regard, Danto refers to Gombrich's explanation: painting progresses as it increases its ability to represent reality in a painted surface, by means of "making and matching". MPT offers a narrative structure to organize art history –that decides what is and what is not part of history ("primitive" African art, for instance)– and holds more or less until the last thirty years of the XIX Century.

3.2. The Modernist Narration

Then, this narrative model has been replaced by the *modernist model* (MoM), that according to Danto holds from 1880 (Manet) until about 1965. With modernism the attention moves from the way representation imitates reality to the conditions of representation. Art becomes, in a sense, the subject of itself. Danto understands the modernist narration as a new way of defining art in new progressive terms: thus, art does not progress in terms of representations of reality that are more and more adequate to reality, but rather in terms of philosophical representations that are more and more adequate to the nature of art.

The art critic Clement Greenberg has understood MoM as the one in which representation ceased to be seen as the aim of art. According to this model, the aims of each artistic form consist rather in becoming reflexively aware of the intrinsic qualitative properties as well as of the limits of its own specific medium. In this way each artistic practice distinguishes itself from the other artistic practices, reaching a state of "purity". Each art (painting, sculpture, music, etc.) defines itself by means of understanding the properties of its own specific medium and freeing itself from every unessential goal. Hence, painting must leave aside imitation, perspective,

etc. (that are goals of other arts too: sculpture for instance) and must pay attention to the flatness of the surface, the brushstroke, the rectangular form of the canvas, that is, to specific pictorial elements, in virtue of which art (in this case: painting) can be immediately recognized by the eye as art. This linear and progressive historical narration implies that, the same way some artists could not be included in the history told by MPT, every artistic movement that does not comply with the standard of progress set by MoM (for instance *surrealism*, according to Greenberg) is out of the pale of history.

The core of the issue, Danto claims, is that Greenberg defines MoM as a narrative structure that is the natural continuation of MPT, but the material substance of art now becomes the object and the goal of art.

3.3. Contemporary Art and the End of Art

According to Danto, the modernist narration is false, because it is too partial. In Picasso's *Guernika*, for example, the representational content is more important than the attention Picasso paid to the properties of the artistic medium. But, more importantly, contemporary art (beginning with *Pop Art*) does not meet the standards of Modernism. Now, artworks and "real" objects cannot be distinguished only by perception: so, while Greenberg –with a Vasarian gesture– could interpret contemporary art as a phase of decadence, according to Danto it is clear that the attention toward the material medium must be now abandoned. Contemporary art is not modern in Greenberg's sense anymore, because it does not fit the modernist narration; however, it does not even mark an age of decadence.

The main point is certainly this: Danto argues that MoM cannot be replaced by a new narration. Contemporary art is rather out of history, in that it is out of every kind of narration. It is pluralistic, in that it does not depend upon fixed aesthetic standards of success that are unquestionable in a given normative order (mimetic fidelity, medial purity, etc.). As a consequence, in contemporary art everything is possible: everything can be an artwork and artworks can be anything. But pluralism is, according to Danto, incompatible with PT. Hence Danto rejects PPT: he argues that due to its pluralism contemporary art cannot be captured in a progressive narrative.

Therefore, history of art has ended, because art has been freed from the burden of defining itself (offering a narrative story). Since the philosophical question about the distinction between art and reality has been raised by Duchamp and Warhol, with this question art history ended: the definition of art is now a philosophical, no more an artistic, task.

Consequently, contemporary art is post-historical and today there is room only for NPT.

4. Art Progresses (despite Danto and beyond Gombrich): G. Vilar's Pluralistic Anti-Postmodernist Model

According to Danto the idea of artistic progress entails that the narration is unique and exclusive, because it determines the meaning of history by means of presupposing a true aim (or an essence) of history, authentic art must comply with. In other words, the idea of progress implies a meta-historical essence of something (art, in this case), that manifests itself through history. According to Danto the problem with MPT and MoM is the identification of this essence with a specific and determined task: in virtue of this identification "artistic" phenomena which do not comply with this essence are out of history.

Danto's idea is that, once the end of art happens, the philosophical nature of art emerges to consciousness. Once art achieves philosophical self-consciousness, the history of art cannot take new directions. No criteria are possible anymore for distinguishing possible ways of artistic progress. Everything is equally possible.

In his book *Desartización. Paradojas del arte sin fin* (2011), Gerard Vilar discusses critically Danto's view of the end of art (= the end of artistic progress). Danto's argument, Vilar observes, is undermined by an *essentialist fallacy*, that is, the unjustified supposition that, once a concept is defined, one can grasp its essence. This view entails the dependence of art on philosophical theory. In other words, Danto believes that the essence of art is a necessary condition for explaining pluralism and is convinced that historicism and essentialism are mutually compatible. But the price to pay for gaining this compatibility is the idea that until the age of contemporary art there was history, but now, i.e. in the age of contemporary art, there

is no history anymore. There is no history, because no progress is now possible, and there is no progress, because, since art has found a definition (Danto's own theory of art) it has become philosophy; so it ended as art and, as art, cannot go beyond itself anymore.

Vilar criticizes exactly this point. Maintaining that there is no progress in today's art implies to deprive art of the possibility to be innovative, original, surprising and, at the same time, intelligible and valuable. Yet, this seems to be at odds with our idea of art. In other words, Vilar maintains that art is, as such, closely related to progress, even though every given goal of art can be valid only relatively to a specific normative aesthetic order and even though the modernist idea that the goal of progress is nothing but progress (i.e. a kind of never-ending progress for its own sake, as it were) is untenable. But Danto's "*postmodern*"⁵ move throws out the baby with the bath water. Rejecting the linear direction of progress towards perfection or towards infinity (the never-ending search of new progress) does not imply to reject artistic progress as such. Successful artworks work precisely like new statements that have not been expressed and heard before, but still open up new possibilities of signification: they set new goals and standards. Art progresses not only as "*Welterschliessung*", but rather as "*Er-schliessung von Welterschliessungen*". In other words, art does not contribute to improve directly our knowledge of the world, but to improve the self-awareness of the mankind as symbolic animal, i.e. as able to produce new meaning.

According to my view, in order to accept Vilar's theoretical suggestion, one should accept two related premises (that I gladly accept):

a) A *redefinition of the idea of progress*, that should not be understood in terms of *one* (circular or straight) line (like in Gombrich's and Danto's analysis), but in terms of pluralistic expansion, in different directions, like con-

⁵ This move is closely akin to postmodern views like Gianni Vattimo's criticism of artistic progress. In *La fine della modernità* (Vattimo 1985) Vattimo understands art in the postmodern age as marked by the end of the "paradigm of the new" as an unquestionable value that should be pursued *per se*, which has been the typical modernistic view of artistic progress and has now become a mere routine. Vattimo defends a different paradigm of artistic experience, the structure of artistic revolutions, modeled on Thomas Kuhn's theory of scientific revolutions (see Kuhn 1962): in the arts there is no unquestionable values in respect to which changes and transformations can be considered as kinds of progress or, conversely, of regress.

centric circles of water. Danto rejects PT for contemporary art, because he reductively identifies progress with LP toward a specific goal (mimesis, self-reflection of the medium, or self-definition), which is incompatible with pluralism. But LP toward a specific goal is not the unique available concept of progress. Contemporary art lets us understand that in the arts progress does not consist only in finding better means for pre-set goals, but in the continuous re-elaboration of the connections between means (techniques, materials, procedures, styles, etc.) and goals (meanings, contents, expressions, etc.), which cannot be entirely set independently from the single artwork, i.e. before art works, but are qualitatively set by each successful artwork in its working: and this working is, as it were, *always in progress*, because it engenders (potentially) transformations of the connection between means and goals (standards) through the evaluative interpretations of (present and future) beholders and listeners, critics and artists. So, as Gombrich has seen with his musical metaphor, which, however, remains unexplained, on the one hand progress in art is possible, because each artwork requires a certain normative order (otherwise it is not and cannot be intelligible); but at the same time, on the other hand, each artwork takes stance toward the normative order in force when it comes to life and contributes to make and to transform it (so each successful artwork adds something unexpected to the context, something that could not be expected before). As different artworks can respond differently to the same normative order (aesthetic style, tradition, movement, etc.), every normative order has different possibilities for further developments. This can be put in the language of problem (dis)solving. Different artworks can (dis-)solve the same problem in different ways; probably, because they see (and search for) different problems, that call for different solutions, that, again, engender new artistic problems and possibilities (= new meanings).

b) Hence, the second premise one needs to accept for endorsing Vilar's view of artistic progress as "*Erschliessung von Welterschliessungen*" is an *evaluative* understanding of artistic phenomena, according to which artworks are not only valuable items, but elicit a reflection (which is often unconscious) on value production, transformation and experience. This implies that every artwork takes place in a normative order, but takes stance toward it, and transforms it, because successful artworks are (to a certain degree) original: they set autonomously their specific standards of success.

Hence (pluralistic) progress, in this sense, seems to be not only possible, but even necessary to art. In other terms, our concept of art is indeed tied to an idea of progress and unbinding the concept of art from the notion of progress would be like making the concept of art unintelligible.

5. Art and Progress / Art as Progress

Hence, the questions asked at the beginning of my paper may be answered as follows. The notion of progress in art makes sense in different ways. Single art movements or styles may identify different exclusive aims of art and judge how art progresses toward these aims accordingly. This is IPT. Still, in this way 1. the aim of art remains extrinsic to art, which is understood as a kind of means to an unchangeable goal (even when the goal is simply to progress more and more, for the sake of progress); 2. each particular aim of art is incompatible with other aims, so that artworks with other qualities are not part of history or just marks of decadence; 3. moreover, IPT cannot explain why we can say that two aesthetically different artworks (a and b) can be both evaluated as successful, with the consequence that there is no *linear* progress from a to b (NPT).

In order to understand in which sense PT and NPT can be compatible, a different notion of progress is needed, that allows for IPT (and CPT) for single historical artistic movements, context and trends (= normative orders), but is at the same time qualitatively broader because it does not find progress only within *one* normative order. Hence, we need a *pluralistic notion of art*, that (contrary to Danto) *allows for progress as non-linear multiple open-edness of possibilities* (Vilar's view). This, in turn, makes clear that progress does not rule out what a linear notion of progress would understand only as regress; it rather entails the reflexive and transformative restatement of the connection between means and goals (also because it lets us see not only the future, but also the past, differently). Each artwork is not only an answer to a problem, but a restatement of the problem, that modifies it, and in this way, of course, modifies the standards according to which the artistic achievement has to be judged.

However, an objection may be raised as to the validity of the notion of progress I am using here. It may be thought that the pluralism I am

defending following Vilar is at odds with the very idea of progress, which is *per se* teleological and monological. A different notion, such as the one of “development”, may be more apt to express what I have in mind. If an artwork may be anything, provided that it opens a space of possible meaning(s) and value(s), then it is true that art may *develop* in more and different directions. For the ways human artefacts and performances may result to be a source of new possible meanings and values are multiple and various. However, so the objection may go, those developments do not necessarily entail a progress.

I am not sure. I suspect that this is a mere verbal dispute. The objection holds only if the notion of progress and its applications to art are limited to the idea (and the historic ideology) of monolinear progress toward an ideal of perfection. If I had to accept these semantic constraints, I would also accept to replace the word “progress” with the allegedly more neutral “development”. However, this would not change the core of the issue. Against Danto, and along with Vilar, I do not think that in contemporary art simply everything is possible and an artwork can be anything. I think that an artwork can be anything that is evaluated as a source of new possible meaning(s) in so far as it elicits reflections on value production, transformation and experience, (trans-)forming, in different degrees, our normative orders. This (trans-)formation is to be conceived of as development of past normative orders or, in my terminology, in terms of pluralistic progress, because it makes possible different (possibly diverging and even incompatible) narrative discourses concerning art. This is clearly manifest, for instance, in the practice of art criticism.

So, here are my short and modest conclusions. Art *can* progress (or, if you prefer, develop) even if progress (or the new) is not accepted as the main (or even exclusive) value and goal of art (as it was for the Avant-Garde). Art *must* (pluralistically) progress (or, again, develop, if you prefer), in order to be meaningful and successful as “open-edness of open-edness”, i.e. as source of new possibilities of meaning(s) and value(s)⁶.

⁶ Previous versions of this paper have been presented at the Evian Colloquium 2014 (*Progress? Progrès? Fortschritt?*, July, 13.-19. 2014), at the Conference *Fortschritt als Signatur der Neuzeit* (Berlin, Technische Universität, February, 20.-22. 2015) and in Dublin at the ESA Conference 2015. I am grateful to the participants (and in particular to Georg Bertram, Robin Celikates, Simon Gabriel Neuffer, Astrid Wagner, Paolo D’Angelo, Eva

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Schürmann, and Stephen Davies) for their precious comments and suggestions. I am also indebted to Alberto De Piccoli for the linguistic revision of the text. This paper had been possible thanks to the research project FFI2011-23362 of the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation.

Benjamin's Artwork Essay from a Kantian Perspective

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ABSTRACT. I read Benjamin's theory of aura and modern art through Kant's two types of judgment, reflective and determinative. This reading will allow us to understand Benjamin's reconceptualization of aura, generally understood to express a loss or original unity as politically productive hope. In the third *Critique* Kant argues that there are two types of judgment, reflective judgments. Determinative judgments, in their theoretical use, subsume particulars which are given by the faculty of sensibility under rules of the faculty of the understanding, generating knowledge. In their practical use, determinative moral judgments subsume particular maxims under the categories of freedom, generating action. Determinative judgments in this way divide all of nature between them.

My suggestion is that we read the distinction between determinative and reflective judgment as historical in the sense that reflective judgment lies at the core, as Kant himself says, of an original *sensus communis* in which the particular and the universal were in harmony with one another. This prehistory, however, lacked conceptual differentiation and thus contained rules neither for knowledge nor action. The afterlife of this original state of unity is expressed in the artwork's aura and the ritual significance of art.

Benjamin's artwork essay in an attempt to show that the process of mechanical production which underlies capitalism as well as communism, has a politically emancipatory core, namely the ability to reconstitute the dialectical unity between unreflective aura and autonomy as reflective political emancipation and community. The idea is to show that humanity's erstwhile unity with, and later domination over, nature can be productive of a unification of humanity and nature.

This paper is an effort to come to terms with at least some of the question posed to aesthetics by Benjamin's two claims in the final section of "The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility", namely

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that “the logical outcome of fascism is an aestheticization of political life” (SW 3:121) and that “communism replies to this [aestheticization] by politicizing art”. (SW 3:122)¹ I’d like to investigate these two claims against the background of the German aesthetic tradition, in particular as it is laid down in Kant’s *Critique of Judgment*. The main issue that arises in the context of Benjamin’s proposal is that, from the perspective of Kant’s aesthetics, neither an aestheticization of politics nor a politicization of art should be possible given the stark division between judgments of taste, which are reflective and therefore disinterested, and judgments of practical reason which are determinative and therefore constitute us as moral or political beings.

I propose to investigate Benjamin’s two claims by sketching the way in which Benjamin reconstitutes Kant’s conception of judgments of taste. I will suggest that because Benjamin historicizes the categories of the understanding it is now open to him that judgments of taste take place in a political context, a context, moreover, which can be acknowledged, as communism does, or disavowed, as fascism does. In order to develop this point I’d like first to sketch Kant’s conception of judgments of taste. I will then argue that Benjamin’s notion of aura constitutes a historicization of aesthetic pleasure and that pleasure thereby becomes tinged with the feeling of loss. Finally I will suggest that fascism denies the historical character of aesthetic pleasure while communism affirms pleasure as loss, seeking in the feeling of loss also an overcoming of the alienation which has produced loss. Put in Kantian terms, communism reflect the difference between judgments of practical reason and judgments of taste into itself in a way what looks forward to a reflected political community rather than one that is only justified through aestheticized politics, as fascism does.

1. Kant’s Theory of Judgments of Taste

Kant inaugurates modern aesthetics, by which I mean aesthetics conceived of as a separate field of inquiry from theoretical or practical reason, by offering us a transcendental account of aesthetic experience of pleasure

¹ Benjamin’s works will be cited in text using volume:page number according to Benjamin, 1999.

as unsubsumable under either theoretical nor practical reason. The key point for Kant is to show that the pleasure felt in experiences of beauty and the sublime is the result of a particular constellation of our faculties: in the case of beauty these are the faculties of imagination and the understanding and in the case of the sublime there are the faculties of the imagination and reason.

Of course, the first and the second *Critiques* have already detailed the ways in which these two sets of faculties interact in the vast majority of instances, namely to produce knowledge and to produce action. In the case of knowledge, the understanding subsumes the intuition presented to it by the imagination under a concept. In the case of action, reason amplifies a particular into a universal, giving itself the task of setting a particular situation into a harmonious whole.

What is new in the third *Critique* is the idea that there are instances in which this subsumption or amplification does not occur, not as a failure of judgment but rather as a quickening or play of the interaction between the two respective faculties. The result is, perhaps surprisingly, pleasure which result from the general cognition which is produced by this free play. Because the cognition is general and does not conform to the categories of the understanding, it cannot be communicated as knowledge. But because it is a cognition in general, it expresses a universal claim on others. Thus, the pleasure resulting from the play of imagination and the understanding, which we call beauty, is universal but without a determinate content. Or, in Kant's language: "*Beautiful* is what, without a concept, is liked universally." (§9; 5:219)²

A further feature of Kant's theory of taste is central to the considerations here, namely the, some would say fateful, decision by Kant to assimilate judgments of taste to theoretical judgments rather than to leave them unaligned, as the theory of reflective judgment might suggest, also given in the third *Critique*. Kant says that the judgment of taste has "a causality in it, namely, to *keep* us in the state of having the [re]presentation itself, and to keep the cognitive power engaged in their occupation without any further aim". (§12; 5:222) By this I understand Kant to be saying that ex-

² Kant's work will be cited in text, using academy volume:pagination and paragraph numbers, according to Kant, 1987.

periences of beauty entrance us in such a way that they can disrupt our practical concerns and projects.

The treat posed by this conception of the aesthetic to the moral is immediately obvious if we connect it to Benjamin's worry about fascism aestheticizing politics. The problem is simply that if the aesthetic experience is capable of pulling us out of our practical concerns, then the aesthetic will exist in tension to the moral and could, as in Benjamin's conception of fascism, actually become antithetical to it in the relatively simple sense that aesthetic experiences, if they could be engineered to be experienced widely enough, could disrupt our moral projects, just as they do in fascism.³

2. Historicizing Kant's Categories

Whether or not the problem just discussed became evident to Kant's early readers, the division Kant drew between the aesthetic and the practical as well as that between the theoretical and the practical was intolerable to many. The problem appeared to be Kant's strict conception of the categories of the understanding as existing *sui generis*. The response to Kant was to make the categories dynamic, as in Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*, and a few years later, to make them dynamic and historical as in Hegel.

The project of historicizing Kant's categories was an attempt to escape the formalism of the Kantian categories evident, for instance, in the tension between moral judgment and judgment of taste. Benjamin's thought, I'd like to suggest, follows just such a strategy in its attempt to turn the relation between the aesthetic and the practical productive.

The project of historicizing the categories, in Hegel for instance, consists in arguing that the categories develop out of the historical conditions which make them necessary. That is, each concept arises as an answer to a concrete historical problem in the way in which, the figure of the lord of the world (the Roman emperor) arises in response to the Greek world's inability to mediate the opposition between the authority of the family and the authority of the state.⁴ While Hegel, of course, saw the working out of the categories as the activity of spirit, which takes place behind our

³ I have worked out this issue in greater depth in Bird-Pollan, 2013.

⁴ As in Hegel, 1977 chapter VI, section A, b and c.

backs, Benjamin followed Marx's call not only to understand the world but to change it, that is, to construct the categories of modern social life. The possibilities that we might ourselves, as a society, construct the categories according to which we see the world has been the call to arms of politics, both left and right, ever since the Jacobins invented the .

3. Aura as Mourning and Promise

In taking up at least a certain sense of the concept of aura, I'd like to show that even while historicizing the Kantian categories, Benjamin still remains fundamentally committed to the Kantian conception of experiences of taste as the expressions of a fundamental harmony. Indeed, it is only in the dialectical relation to this harmony produced by the experience of modern art that the notion of politicizing art becomes possible, as to be sure, does it opposite.

Let me say what I mean by this in Kantian terms before constructing a parallel to Benjamin's notion of aura. Briefly this argument, which has been made in somewhat different ways both by Stanley Cavell and Jay Bernstein, goes as follows.⁵ If, as I have claimed, the categories of the understanding are read as historical and further, if, as I have also claimed, the experience of judgment is the experience of a primal harmony, then this harmony depends on a de-historicization of the categories of the understanding. That is, in judgments of taste, the harmony that is created depends on suspending the historical nature of the categories through which we understand our world. The second step in the argument is to say that such a suspension of the burden of history is experienced by us both as a liberation which brings us pleasure, and simultaneously as reminder that we do live in a historical world, one which is essentially excluded from the immediate unity which reveals itself in the judgment of taste. The experience of pleasure at the suspension of the categories of the understanding thus serves to highlight both our putatively harmonious origins and the fact that we are now expelled from that original unity. The work of art expresses our mourning or loss.⁶ What Kant seems to miss, and what has

⁵ Jay M. Bernstein, 1992Cavell, 2002.

⁶ Horowitz, 2001.

seemed an intolerable omission, is the constructive aspect which this idea of mourning opens up.

With this in mind, I'd like to turn to Benjamin's notion of aura which—I suggest—is the expression of just this dual aspect already found in Kant. Like the concept itself, Benjamin's relation to the aura is ambiguous. As is generally recognized, Benjamin's notion of aura in the writings on Proust and Baudelaire is mournful while in the Artwork essay he sees the liberatory possibility of the aura's decline.⁷ I'd like to suggest that these two sides derive from the historical nature of the concept of harmony which underlies the aura itself.

Let me propose that the aura's authenticity as it attaches to the work of art is a reflection of the Kantian play of the faculty which constitutes a cognition in general, something we find pleasurable but to which we cannot give a name other than beauty. This experience is understood by Kant to be ahistorical and transcendental, but in being so, it is also essentially out of the control of the human. Humans are gripped by aesthetic experience, they cannot produce it at will. This is what Benjamin means when he writes, in the "Some Motifs in Baudelaire":

The experience of the [denaturing of the [missing in English]] aura [...] arises from the fact that a response characteristic of human relationships is transposed to the relationship between humans and inanimate or natural objects. [...] To experience the aura of an object we look at means to invest it with the ability to look back at us. This ability corresponds to the data of *mémoire involontaire*. ("On Some Motifs in Baudelaire", SW 4:338)

[Die Entartung der Aura beruht also auf der Übertragung einer in der menschlichen Gesellschaft geläufigen Reaktionsform auf das Verhältnis des Unbelebten oder der Natur zum Menschen. [...] Die Aura einer Erscheinung erfahren, heißt, sie mit dem Vermögen belehnen, den Blick aufzuschlagen*. Die Funde der *memoire involontaire* entsprechen dem. ("Über einige Motive bei Baudelaire", GS I:646-46)]

This sense of aura is then the experience of being referred to the original unity which exists outside of the historical character of our understanding.

⁷ See, for instance, Hansen, 2012 See also J. M. Bernstein, 1997.

But in the Artwork essay Benjamin seems to countenance a more constructive notion of aura, one which opens up the possibility of responding to the loss of the original unity by working toward its recreation. Benjamin writes:

As soon as the criterion of authenticity ceases to be applied to artistic production, the whole social function of art is revolutionized. Instead of being founded on ritual, it is based on a different practice: politics. ("The Artwork in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility", SW 3:106)

[In dem Augenblick aber, da der Maßstab der Echtheit an der Kunstproduktion versagt, hat sich auch die gesamte soziale Funktion der Kunst umgewälzt. An die Stelle ihrer Fundierung aufs Ritual tritt ihre Fundierung auf eine andere Praxis: nämlich ihre Fundierung auf Politik. ("Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technologischen Reproduzierbarkeit", GS I:482)]

Here Benjamin countenances a decoupling or at least a reorientation of the aura from its origin in the mournful process of the ritual which serves to reassure the community that the unity which everywhere seems to be crumbling still exists, to the idea that the community must form its own polis if it is to have a chance at escaping its alienation.

The important point here for my purposes is that Benjamin understands the advent of mass production as carrying with it the liberatory potential which Marx too attributed to it. The point is for the masses to *become conscious* of this potential rather than being stifled by the emergence of capitalist forms of production. As I've suggested, the actual phenomenon of aesthetic experience is neutral on this count. It arrests us, but to what effect? The arrestation can, as I've just suggested, be understood as a plunging into mourning which is proper to the ritual sense of aura. But the arrestation can also be understood as a productive alienation, one which, as Kant already argued in the claim that beauty is the symbol of the morally good, and Adorno as most consistently argued, allows us to see our world in a different light, as able to be altered.⁸

⁸ Kant's says in the Anthropology that "Taste contains a tendency toward external advancement of morality." Kant, 2007 7:244. And, of course, Kant says that "beauty is the symbol of the morally good" in the important §59 of Kant, 1987.

This alternative between political action and enslavement is put by Benjamin in the stark opposition between the aestheticization of the political proposed by fascism and capitalism in general on the one hand, and the politicization of the aesthetic which permits for genuine change on the other. This alternative, I will now suggest, depends on the reflection of the alienation or mourning which is experienced in the judgment of taste. While the aestheticization of the political seeks to silence our alienation, assimilating the categories of the understanding to the aesthetic experience of unity, the politicization of art seeks to make us conscious of the lack of fit between our current conception of how things are and the unity which, according to the experience of taste, necessarily underlies it. The politicization of art thus reflects the conflict between the imagination and the understanding in a way which thematizes their unsteady relation.

4. Aesthetizing Politics

Benjamin tells us little about his understanding of fascism in the Artwork essay. The general structure, however, must be something quite similar to the problem Marx diagnosed in his analysis of commodity fetishism. The main point for Marx in that seminal chapter on commodity fetishism of *Capital*, is that capitalism has driven a wedge between an object's determinate value, that is, its use value by elevating the object to the level of mere exchange value. This exchange value, of course, has its value precisely in the fact that it is exchangeable and nothing else.

Perhaps we can think of the effect of the exchange value on consciousness as somehow akin to the play between the understanding and the imagination in the judgment of taste. What I mean is this: in both experiences, that of judgments of taste and commodity fetishism, the working of the understanding which constitutes determinate objects for us, is suspended and is seen to be harmoniously related to a certain notion of harmony or play.

I don't want to go too far with this analogy since I don't want to suggest that the experience of beauty is fascist. What I do want to suggest is that the judgment of taste can be coopted by fascism if the aesthetic experience becomes the chief medium through which meaning is conveyed in a society.

That is, if aesthetics replaces the critical workings of the understanding. Precisely this attempt is famously evident in Leni Riefestahl's *Triumph of the Will* (1935).

The key issue is that fascist propaganda works precisely by making the play between the imagination and the understanding a permanent feature of social life, substituting it for the critical discourse of the polis. Fascism thus works by eradicating consciousness of the fact that the experience of beauty is merely a momentary event rather than a social reality. The aesthetic pleasure experienced by the audience watching *Triumph of the Will* is substituted for reflection about political and moral responsibility.

5. Politicizing Art

If the aestheticization of the political is the numbing of consciousness into a permanent state of play, then the politicization of art is the reflection of consciousness about its experience of pleasure leading also to a mournful experience, but also, somehow, manages to produce art which produces action.

What exactly Benjamin had in mind here is a little unclear, but if we take up some of what he had to say about film in the Artwork essay or what he says about shock in the pieces on Baudelaire, we can see that his idea is that the alienation produced by modern life must be reflected back into the idea of harmony which is the essential component of the aesthetic experience. That is, to put it programmatically, the idea is to show us that the alienation produced by capitalist modes of production and reproduction are themselves capable to being used to constitute a post-capitalist society; it is only by being driven to radical alienation through shock and the montage technique (for instance) that we can become sufficiently distant from what we understand as our essential modes of viewing the world (the categories of the understanding forged by capitalism) that we can begin to reflect on whether even these modes of understanding don't require a reflection, that is, an alteration.⁹

The reason aesthetics is so important here is that it is only from the

⁹ For a working out of the problematic of mourning in modern life, see Jackson, 2014 Ch. 1-2.

vantage point of the harmony between the imagination and the understanding in the sublated experience of shock that shock can be thematized *as* politically transformative rather than just another burdensome aspect of modernity. Benjamin's consistent thought is that this sort of coming to consciousness is only possible if the aesthetic functions as a viable foil to politics in the sense that politics alone will never achieve sufficient distance to itself to be able to reflect on its complete project.

6. Conclusion

Let me conclude by suggesting that while Benjamin's thought, as always, remains elusive also in the respect in which I've been trying to elucidate it in this paper, the double nature of the concept of aura remains an important resource for our understanding of the ways in which art can engage with social life. The key point I think Benjamin saw is that, while it is indeed intolerable for Kant to have divided art from politics in the strict way he did, this line is nevertheless worth upholding if only in the breach. That is, it is only if art can claim for itself a position outside of commodity fetishism or fascism that it can stand any chance of furnishing a critical perspective on society. But to the extent that it must remain outside of society, it is condemned to marginality.

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Towards Gesture as Aesthetic Strategy

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ABSTRACT. *Towards Gesture as Aesthetic Strategy* examines the role of gesture, as an expression within; painting, installation art and architecture, respectively. This paper argues for an expanded notion of gesture, forming an intrinsic link between the incidental gesturing of the day-to-day and the considered gesturing of the artist in the creation of an artwork. By tracing the manifestation of gesture through a variety of media – the unexplored possibilities of gesture as an intuitively recognised element of aesthetic experience will be considered. Furthermore, by incorporating the interests of the authors, it is the goal of this piece to highlight gesture as a fundamental attribute of all aesthetic experience at a foundational level.

i. Introduction

Gesture, simply put, is a form of communication or expression. Within painting, we encounter gesture clearly arrested through the creative activity of the artist. Although these expressive movements are commonly acknowledged in the idiom of painting, they have a thoroughgoing influence on the aesthetic experience of all visual art forms, albeit manifested in distinctly different ways. In this paper, gesture in painting will form a point of departure to create a preliminary account of the ways gesture can also be recognised in installation art and architecture. An account of gesture in this case is more than simply a recounting of the physical movements executed by the artist in the production of a work of art. Such gestural movements are formed, and informed, by the artists' being-in-the-world. When intentionally recorded as brushstrokes or similar, such gestures are recognised by the viewer as the work of an embodied consciousness, for the edification of the same. Conventionally, gesture in the production of

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the artwork has been presented as distinct from the gesturing of the artist outside the studio, or their manner of comportment in and toward their world. We propose a reconsideration of these gestures - the movement of a brush on the canvas, the opposition of pencil and surface- as simply intentional gesturing that occurs amongst a whole range of social movements that individuals perform unintentionally, informing their manner of being-in-the-world. When rendered fixed in this way, gesturing becomes linked intrinsically to authenticity, what Crowther and Goodman have termed the 'autography' of the art work.¹ This paper is not engaged in an intentionalist analysis of gesture. Such a reading might propose gesture as an aesthetic strategy deployed by the artist as a means of manipulating the aesthetic experience afforded by the work. Rather, we intend positing the analysis of gesture as a strategic means of approaching and elucidating the experiences afforded to the spectator through various visual art forms.

The first section discusses painting as the paradigm of gesture at work, with recourse to the theories of Wollheim, Crowther and Merleau-Ponty. In particular, Crowther's argument that gesture achieves transient existence in the performance of everyday tasks, whereas in the act of drawing and painting such gesture is arrested and preserved in the finished work (Crowther, 2015, p. 50). In the second section, issues of direct autography will be explored in light of installation art, whose indeterminate form has excluded it from past discussions of gesture. Investigating the distinct position of installation works as the inalienable creations of the artist, yet often inflected by the arrangement of another, a fractional reciprocity of gesture in installation art will be posited. In the third and final section, an examination of architecture further explores the question of the autographic, arguing that where autography on the part of the creator is diminished, a communal gesturing is rendered possible. This restricted gesture on the part of the architect leads to an emancipation of gesture on the part of the viewer. We term this open reciprocity.

Before discussing each individual art form, further comment on the relationship between style and gesture is apt. In *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, Dufrenne argues that: 'the most authentic subjectivity is

¹ The concept of autography appears first in Goodman's *The Languages of Art* and then Crowther's *The Phenomenology of Visual Art (Even the Frame)*, where the recognition of the operations of an embodied subject speak to the authenticity of a given work of art.

that which rejoins the universal' (Dufrenne, 1973, p. 123). All aesthetic objects share in common the circumstance of lived experience. Dufrenne states that art derives its value from the fact that it is deeply rooted in the world of human experience – the common world of coexistence. This function allows for the recognition of gesture on the part of the viewer, and while everyday gesture may contain the stylistic nuances that speak to an individual, embodied being-in-the-world, these are lost as ephemera of the everyday. In the intentional gesturing of artistic creation, style becomes arrested and, as such, distinct.

2. Painting

Autography within painting is imbued with human expression as the work of a gestural process. Phenomenologically, such processes are emergent from a way of being-in-the-world. When gesture works through a physical medium onto a surface, such as paint onto a canvas, a certain finality is added to the gesture by virtue of this arrest. This system of gestures works to create the interpretive possibilities open to the viewer. They are not invited to inscribe their own gestures into the work itself and the system of gestures remains unchanged in each instantiation of the work. In essence, there is a closed reciprocity at work in painting. Merleau-Ponty clarified the close interrelation between gesture and embodiment with reference to Valery's claim that by lending his or her body to the world, the artist transforms their world into paintings (Johnson, 1993, p. 123). As a working body, the artist synthesises vision and movement. Merleau-Ponty concludes that what animates the painter is not the expression of opinions; what is of value is: 'that instant when his vision becomes gesture, when, in Cézanne's words, he: "thinks in painting" (Johnson, 1993, p. 123-4)

Crowther further develops this reading of style as emergent from the interaction between artist and world in relation to gesture. He argues that, in everyday life, the continuity of gesture is consumed in tasks carried out, whereas drawing and painting preserve it in the finished physical work (Crowther 2015, p. 110). In this reading, style is intrinsic to the processes of imagination:

'Style allows us to inhabit the things we imagine, and make them into

an expression of freedom. Through all these factors, imagination is fundamental to our existence as individuals. It is not some luxury 'add-on' cognitive capacity, but rather one through which we live.' (Crowther, 2015, p. 53)

By establishing the foundational role of the imagination in the process of perception Crowther points to the share-ability of gesture and its operation on an intuitive level. Imagination allows us not only to inhabit our world in a meaningful way, but also facilitates the recognition of the gestural schema at work in painting and indeed, across a range of art forms.

As physically made artefacts, paintings indicate embodied gesture through deliberation, choice, and hesitancy. Drawing and painting transform how reality appears, creating aesthetic space (Crowther, 2015, p. 120). Chardin's *The White Tablecloth* [FIGURE 1], for example, evokes a soft sensuality, a slowness, a gently abandoned scene which is nuanced with tenderness. Casper David Friedrich's *Monk by the Sea* [FIGURE 2] creates a space of tranquillity, isolation and reflection. In both of these examples, such feelings are evoked by a matrix of brushstrokes, physically performed yet arrested gestures, enshrined in the canvas.



FIGURE 1. Jean Baptiste Simeon Chardin,
The White Tablecloth, 1731/32.



FIGURE 2. Caspar David Freidrich, *The Monk by The Sea*, 1808.

With paintings, the selection of the content and the style in which it is rendered allow us to share in the artist's vision to some degree. He or she offers a way of seeing – of interpreting and evaluating the visible world (Crowther, 2015, p. 120). Similarly, Merleau-Ponty asserted that: 'when a painting is successful, it will have united these separate lives, it will no longer exist in only one of them' (Johnson, 1993, p. 67-70). The identification of gesture within painting is more readily interpreted than in the instance of installation art or architecture. Gestures are arrested and confined within the canvas, an unchanging and often preserved schema to which one might return again and again.

3. Installation Art

In terms of installation art, gesture and style form a complex relationship with the embodied experience of the artwork. While the underlying gestural act of the artist is evident in the arrangement of an installation artwork within a space, the transient nature of many installation works brings

the autographic element of the medium to light. Site specificity, ephemerality and re-assemblage must be taken into account in any discussion of the transient experience of installation art. The varied nature of installation art, and its means of realisation, require that an installation artwork may be arranged by the artist or assembled by an appointed other. Under these terms, the realisation of the gesture is most apparent in the concept around which the work is based. This points to the fundamental role of the imagination as a shared cognitive process in the artist and spectator's negotiation of the world. The original concept of the artwork comes from the artist's imaginative negotiation of their environment, and evolves from their experiences as an embodied agent. In encountering the work, the spectator's style of being is impacted in turn. As with painting, such gestural recognition is a product of a style of inhabiting the world, and the concept of an installation artwork is the product of the artist's gesturing. As Crowther states: 'The intrinsic significance of drawing and painting involves the relation between gesture and outcome, and not just a narrow address to formal relations' (Crowther, 2015, p. 8). This is no less significant in terms of Installation art. Concept and realisation in the form of the artwork stand in reciprocal relation to one another in creating the finished whole.

In order for the authentic embodied gesture to be realised through concept within the gallery space, the installation artist must take into account the role of the technician in re-creating the work in a new spatial context. This necessitates the evolution of an open-ended style within the work, extending and developing through space and time. For example, artist Cornelia Parker specifies that the installation of the work, *Cold Dark Matter: An Exploded View* [FIGURE 3], apart from basic instructions relating to the arrangement of objects, should be reliant on the sensibility and aesthetic sense of the person overseeing it. As long as the integrity of the work is maintained, Parker allows for an intuitive interpretation to develop. The concept that is realised in the physical encounter with the work is recognisable regardless of the mode of assemblage, despite the nuances of each instantiation. The aesthetic sensitivity of the technician in this process is paramount. In order to preserve the integrity of the artist's style, the technician functions as a translator, preserving and extending the meaning of the work into new spatial and historical contexts. In this

sense, installation art allows gesture a fractional reciprocity in comparison with the closed reciprocity of painting.



FIGURE 3. Cornelia Parker,
Cold Dark Matter: An Exploded View, 1991.

This emancipated gesture, evolving to include the spectator's style of being, permits the spectator's experiences and gestural reflections to change in light of the experience of the work. In the case of *Cold Dark Matter: An Exploded View*, the artist highlights the importance of lighting and shadow

in shaping the experience of the work. The spectator's shadows merge with the shadow of the piece, creating an immersive experience. This fluidity in relation to experience is not in any way a dilution of the original concept, however, rather it is the connection between the artist and spectator, and the fractional reciprocity that installation art allows. In light of this, Crowther's statement that, in painting, style allows us to inhabit the things we imagine, holds just as true for a range of art forms.

Although painted works may be encountered in new spatial contexts from one exhibition space to another, this process of contextual translation possesses a far less distinct impact on the experiences engendered by the work in comparison with installation art. Gestural elements within painting are static, and do not change from place to place. This is a fundamental point of departure between painting and installation art. The intuitive recognition of the hand of the artist in the spectator's embodied experience of installation artwork points to myriad possibilities of imaginatively negotiating alternate environments.

4. Architecture

Roger Scruton states that: 'through its impersonal and at the same time functional qualities architecture stands apart from the other arts' (Scruton, 2013, p. 4). In terms of a gestural analysis, when compared with the paradigm of painting, there are far weaker visual linkages between the physical activity of the individual maker and the finished work itself. Despite this, we would argue that the recognition of gesture at an intuitive level is intrinsic to the aesthetic experience afforded by architectural spaces, much like the concept at the heart of installation artworks. Where collaboration begins between spectator and canvas in the case of painting, and in the translation of the artwork from site to site in the case of installation art, collaboration is the very origin of works of architecture. Collaboration between the restrictive factors of: topography, community and vernacular results in a necessary open reciprocity of gesture in architecture. If we accept that gesture is indicative of a way or style of being-in-the-world, in the case of architecture the way or style of being-in-the-world becomes that of a given community rather than the subjectivity of the architect as

creator. While gesture is less distinctly manifest than in the previous two types of art, it is emancipated for the spectator or end user to a greater degree than in the closed reciprocity, and fractional reciprocity, of painting and installation art, respectively.

In the case of architecture, the plan is the level at which the ‘hand’ of the architect is most apparently manifest. Like the concept in the case of installation artworks, it is here that the architect possesses most gestural autonomy. However the plan, like the concept at the heart of Parker’s work, cannot completely dictate the resultant three-dimensional structure. Rasmussen states: ‘[The architect] sets the stage for a long, slow-moving performance which must be adaptable enough to accommodate unforeseen improvisations’ (Rasmussen, 1964, p. 12). In contrast to the closed reciprocity of painting, works of architecture must re-join the gestural schema of the everyday establishing a space for their enactment. An open reciprocity in the gesturing of the creative agent is necessary to allow the work to recede into the background, in order for a space to remain functional. Wittgenstein reminds us: ‘the impression one gets from good architecture is that it expresses thought and makes one want to respond with a gesture’ (Wittgenstein, 1984, p. 22). When adopting gesture as an aesthetic strategy, one should not overlook the gesturing of the community of users who inscribe themselves, both consciously and unconsciously, into a given space. Expressed for example, through the graceful decay of materials in the ergonomic grooves in the bell tower steps of a gothic cathedral, or through unsanctioned graffiti tags in urban spaces. These interventions into the skin of built edifices cause them to resound with the gestural echoes of the communities that inhabit them before us. When negotiating architectural space through gestural strategy, we are invited into a twofold analysis; approaching the discreet gesture of the architect at the planning level and the overt effects of accumulated gestures of a community of history to which we belong. In the case of architecture, the gestural freedom sacrificed by the architect is manifest in the emancipated gesturing of the end user. We have termed this, open reciprocity.

5. Conclusion

The brief account of gesture as aesthetic strategy provided here is by no

means exhaustive. However, it does begin to make the case for a wider conception of the role of gesture in the analysis of all art forms. Gesture begins not at the canvas, in the studio or at the drawing board, but rather it evolves from the artist's everyday negotiation of their environment as a culturally, socially and historically located subject. In broadening the definition of gesture in this way, we are able to appreciate its fundamental role in the recognition of artworks as the production of our embodied being-in-the-world. It is by virtue of this recognition of gesture that the question of the authenticity of the work with regards installation art and architecture does not become more pressing, despite the obvious levels of collaboration needed for their physical production. For example, few people would dispute *Cold Dark Matter: An Exploded View* as being the product of the creative work of Cornelia Parker, even if the technician carries out its assembly. Likewise, in architecture, the builder, despite their technical skill is not accredited in the same manner as the architect. Despite transience, or issues of consultation, authorship on the part of the installation artist or architect is not called into question. This suggests that gesture, although most apparent in painting through its physicality, is nonetheless intuitively recognised in the case of both installation art and architecture.

In terms of understanding a conventional account of gesture in art the following quotation is instructive:

'An artist must fill the role of agent...but he must also fill the role of spectator. Inside each artist is a spectator upon whom the artist as agent, is dependant. And this dependence is enshrined in what is one of the few consistencies in the history of pictorial art: that is, the artists posture, or that, in the act of painting, he positions himself in front of the support, on the side of it that he is about to mark, facing it, with his eyes open and fixed upon it.' (Wollheim, 1987, p. 43)

In the case of installation art and architecture, the postural reciprocity between creator and spectator is not a constant, as has been argued by Wollheim for painting. This is perhaps why the analysis of gesture has been often limited to drawing and painting. However, despite the postural dissonance between creator and spectator in these other two art forms, in developing a broader notion of imagination and gesture, as not just aesthetically engaged faculties, but ones which fully permeate and inform our

being-in-the-world; gesture is able to become a strategic tool for aesthetic analysis that sees art reunited with the social life of both artist and spectator.

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Thinking Toes...?

Proposing a Reflective Order of Embodied Self-Consciousness in the Aesthetic Subject

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ABSTRACT. Philosophers investigating the experiences of the dancing subject (Sheets-Johnstone 1980, 2009, 2011, 2012; Parviainen 1998; Legrand 2007, 2013; Legrand & Ravn 2009; Montero 2013; Foultier & Roos 2013) unearth vast variations of embodied consciousness and cognition in performing body experts. The traditional phenomenological literature provides us with descriptions and definitions of reflective self-consciousness as well as of pre-reflective bodily absorption, but when it comes to the states of self-consciousness dance philosophers refer to as *thinking in movement* and *a form of reflective consciousness at a bodily level* – as well as to dancers' reported experiences of being *in a trance* and yet *hyper-aware* – we are challenged in terms of terminology and precise descriptions. After empirical research on dancers' experiences and studies of the above-mentioned philosophies of dance, aligning this material with Husserl, Zahavi and other phenomenologists' descriptions of reflection and embodied self-consciousness, I find it plausible to acknowledge the existence of a third form of self-consciousness: *embodied reflection*, a reflective process experienced through and with the embodied and/or emotional self. In this article I aspire to capture the characteristics of this transcendence of the bodily self.

When a dancer enters the stage to perform, her intention will most often be to communicate with her audience. Using her movements, emotional and physical expressivity, postures and rhythms she will tell a story, express an atmosphere, explore an emotional or motional theme or an idea, or in other ways present - as well as constitute - the piece of art in question.

Doing what one has learned by heart during classes and in the studio, in other words automatically performing one's *second nature* is often not satisfactory to the professional. During her bodily work the dancer will

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most often aim at using her prepared and incorporated moves, steps and expressions to explicitly articulate what she wants to share with the world.

Through the work on stage further understandings of the dance piece's content, or understandings of the other, of their interactions, of life situations mirrored in the performance's sequences, might reveal itself to the dancer - as it might to her co-dancers, the musicians - and in the better cases to the audience as well.

Artists from different fields seem to share this experience: bodily and emotional work has the capacity to lead to insights and knowledge. As a philosophy student I was thus looking forward to learn about the structures behind this transcendence of the bodily and emotional self, and to define this particular path to cognition. By the end of our master programme it had still not been mentioned, and I asked a professor, a phenomenologist working on music. *Well, when it comes to terminology no one has really pinned that out*, he said apologetically. *What you will find is that it is not recognized as a path to higher cognition.*

Provoked and inspired I started the process of verbalizing and defining my own experiences of bodily consciousness in performing situations. I read up on the classical phenomenological descriptions of embodiment, and on emotional and embodied cognition. And I realized that even within the most body-embracing philosophical tradition, phenomenology, we still operate with a hierarchy where emotional and embodied experiences of the self are seen as basic foundations for higher order conceptual reflection (Gallagher & Zahavi 2008; et al.). I read up on the current philosophical debate on expertise (Shear, 2013; Dreyfus 2005, 2013; Montero 2013), and I learned that the discussion on self-consciousness in skilful activity is framed as a question about whether the expert performer of bodily action is reflecting upon her self and her activity, or whether she is bodily absorbed and thus pre-reflectively self-conscious - and I thought: To reflect or not to reflect - is that the question?

Further studies of the work of dance philosophers like Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, Jaana Parviainen, Dorothée Legrand, Susanne Ravn and Barbara Montero, as well as a closer reading of Merleau-Ponty's essays on the painting artist (Merleau-Ponty, 1993) made me realize that I was not completely off-track; they all discuss the state of self-consciousness that my former colleagues and I have experienced.

I empirically recognize and theoretically appreciate these philosophers' elaborations on dancers' states of self-consciousness, described by for instance Sheets-Johnstone as *thinking in movement* (1980; 2009; 2011; 2012), by Parviainen as *thinking through movements in order to poetise meaning* (1998), and by Legrand and Ravn as *a form of reflective consciousness at the bodily level* (Legrand & Ravn 2009, Legrand 2013). But these phenomenological descriptions seem to exceed the theoretical understanding of reflective and pre-reflective self-consciousness found in classical phenomenology. The descriptions of the dancer's state of self-consciousness have the common peculiarity of covering embodied absorption and reflective awareness experienced simultaneously.

Theoretically we know that the reflecting subject observing her movements and herself attentively cannot continuously stay in the immediacy of her pre-reflective experience. Pre-reflective self-consciousness is an integral part of phenomenal consciousness, and it constitutes the reflective experience, but it cannot in itself be an object to the subject. To be pre-reflectively self-conscious is a single experience with an immediate and non-observational nature, whereas reflective self-consciousness is a situation involving two experiences of the self; 1) the experience of reflecting, and 2) the experience of being the object reflected upon. The experience and consciousness of the self alters through reflection, and differs irreducibly from the experiences of the pre-reflective self (Gallagher & Zahavi, 2008: 50-57; Zahavi, 1999:198). In other words, the phenomenological framework is challenged when it comes to an understanding and a definition of dancers' experiences of being, as some dancers describe it: *in a trance* and yet *hyper-aware*.

Writing about this dilemma I made theoretical as well as qualitative research. I interviewed four dancers; a classical ballet dancer, a contemporary dancer, a classical Indian dancer, and a former ballet dancer now choreographer. As the general performing situation aggregates a wide range of experiences of the self, the interviewees report of various incidents of being reflectively self-conscious, as well as incidents of being pre-reflectively bodily immersed in their actions. But to three out of four research objects the abovementioned puzzling bodily transcendence is the pursued and preferred state of self-consciousness while working on stage. Aligning the empirical material with the phenomenological theory on reflection and pre-

reflection, I realized that the interviewed dancers describe this specific bodily self-consciousness on stage with terminology traditionally used on the order of reflection: they are *attentive* - bodily attentive, that is. They are *intensely self-aware, explicitly aware of the other and the world*, and they are *disclosing experiences through transformation* - by means of the body. They are emotionally and-or bodily *articulating what they experience pre-reflectively*, and they are - through their bodily selves - *thematically transforming or re-producing something received or grasped from their second-nature, from other pre-reflective experiences*, or even from conceptual ideas.

These are word-to-word descriptions of reflection (Husserl, 1960:38; Husserl, 2012:68; Gallagher & Zahavi, 2008:46; Zahavi, 1999:62). One might assume this as indications of conceptual reflectivity; yet, there is a simultaneous lack of thinking and conceptual control in this state. The dancers report of having *artistic blackouts*, feeling *something taking over*, feeling *someone else leading their arms and legs*, experiencing *being in a trance*. They notice how *movements and expressions are appearing through their body*, and they experience *artistic material asserting itself through them*.

Let's have a closer look at the descriptions a couple of the interviewed dancers gave. Performing, contemporary dancer Pedersen claims to have experiences consisting of attentive awareness and various degrees of absorption simultaneously. She is generally what she calls *mega conscious* on stage - as *one has responsibilities and has to be extremely aware*, as she puts it. Occasionally she experiences *getting into a trance*. The absorption that she describes as a trance does not intrude with her awareness, on the contrary: *One is still fully awake*, she says, *actually more awake than when walking down the street*. Pedersen describes her body as being extremely alert in this state, *as if even the hairs on my arms are aware of what is going on*.

In this state she does not register personal emotions or bodily feelings, such as whether the room is cold or warm, or if she feels low, or in good spirits, on a private level. Pedersen clearly feels her bodily presence in the space and is observant and attentive when it comes to the other dancers and their activities - *putting out my feelers*. Even though her awareness is upon the world around her, she is just as aware of her own dance work. Through her descriptions it seems evident, that she is experiencing a bod-

ily focus on the living body (*Leib*), rather than on the physical (*Körper*)¹. Barely recognizing her anatomical body, the work takes place in what she calls a *transformation of her emotional expression through the movements*.

Pedersen is not taking her physical body as an object and her state of awareness can not be defined as a reflection upon her own body as such. She is sensuously and kinaesthetically alert and focused on her task, which is attended to with great explicitness as she discloses the theme of the choreography through this transformative process. Through her kinaesthetical interpretation the choreography unfolds and reveals its inherent sense and meaning. Pedersen is thus both absorbed, attentive, and transforming her material, simultaneously.

Modern ballet dancer and choreographer Holm is a former solo ballet dancer. During the five decades he has created dance performances, Holm claims to have depended upon his body, his sensuousness and imagination, rather than upon conceptual decision-making and planning. He calls it an *anti-method*, and he feels convinced that his huge load of previous events and factual knowledge – cooperating with his personal intuitive ability to sort out – simply dictate him from the first line (Holm, 2013:31). These experiences seem to be of a pre-reflective character; Holm relies on his embodied skills that after a lifetime of professional bodywork have become *second nature* to him. But Holm additionally refers to the process of choreographing as *a reproduction of something received* - from where he is not sure: *I've never been introduced to the god of choreography, or whoever it is talking through me*, he says laughing.

When he adjusts the scenes with his dancers, this happens in what he calls an *attentive trance* (Holm, 2013:33). He explains that the trance part of it is *a one hundred per cent openness*, a submission to his bodily conditions. It is a deliberately chosen state in which he pursues his inner vision of the choreography. He cannot explain it further, he says, and claims that it is *merely a pocket that he slips into* in order to perform his craft. The attentive part of it lies in how his physical cooperation with the dancers enables him to see possibilities in their movements, and in the space where they are moving together.

¹ Husserl introduced a terminological distinction between implicit awareness of the lived body; *Leib*, and reflective consciousness of the objectified body; *Körper* (Husserl 1973: 57)

Holm is bodily attentive and creative as his kinaesthetic, emotional, and perceptual logos is producing the dance steps required to finish the choreography of the performance he has in mind - as well as in body.

Thus, there seems to be an experientially lived as well as theoretically seen experience in which the subject's bodily self "thinks", or reflects, or accesses herself as object, through, or in, or by means of her embodied activity - in which she is completely immersed. Even though it shares certain structures with the other states, this proposed third state of self-consciousness appears irreducible to reflective and pre-reflective self-consciousness respectively. In this state the subject's attention is springing from and is of her bodily self, more specifically the subject's movements and-or her emotions, that is *her living body* - what we know as *Leib* (Husserl, 1952).

In summing these observations up, we can see that the state of self-consciousness in question is *reflective, non-conceptual, and embodied*. As a reflective state it *takes objects*. Yet it stays in the *immediacy of the lived body*. This phenomenon has been described philosophically. Yet, it contradicts the phenomenological theoretical framework. It is in need of comprehensive academic elucidation.

I call this distinct state of self-consciousness *embodied reflection*. Embodied reflection shares the characteristic immediacy with pre-reflective self-consciousness, the, in Husserl's words *straightforward mode* with which one undergoes one's experience (Husserl, 1960:34). There is no switch from implicit embodiment (pre-reflection) to a focus of the mind (reflection), the change in the way the object appears to the subject happens and stays within the embodied realm. Another characteristic embodied reflection shares with pre-reflection is the lack of conceptual reflection. When artists report of having had *blackouts* or having been *in a trance* these are to be recognized as experiences where conceptual thinking was momentarily kept on hold. To reflect in bodily terms is the experience of having an extremely intense focus through the embodied-emotional self, in a situation where one is absorbed in an activity of a bodily or emotional nature. Even though the artist might not rationally remember her experience on stage after having been *in a trance*, and she might be unable to give a verbalized account of the experience, her bodily self remembers and is indeed aware of the transformation she has undergone: after such a performance one

often feels fulfilled, elated, euphoric, or *high*. It seems evident that artistic blackouts are neither experiences of losing one's consciousness, nor of losing one's self. On the contrary, it is an experience of a radical focus within the self – within the embodied self. The notion of self-forgetfulness in absorbed activity reveals a dualistic approach to the self; it speaks of the self exclusively as minded, ignoring the self-experience of the bodily self.

I have hereby presented the proposition of a reflective order of embodiment. To reflect through the bodily aspect of the self is neither mystical, nor is it exclusively experienced by artists or experts. I believe we all have the capacity to reflect emotionally and bodily – playing as children, during erotic convergence, and during sports, yoga or meditation, just to mention some situations. It is the universal human experience of being profoundly focused through non-conceptual parts of the self.

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On What Lies Beneath the Process of Creation*

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ABSTRACT. What the theoreticians fail to observe is that beneath the process of creation lies a conglomerate which is the source of all trouble in art theory, history and aesthetics. This conglomerate might be the result of a “collective mind”, or an “unconscious mind”, or the “unseen”, depending on whom one is asking. When creating an image, the full mental process of the artist is almost instinctive, being usually considered a monolith, and it would be fully instinctive if it weren’t for the technicalities that make the artwork understandable to its peers and contemporaries. That is where the social aspect really lies. But the whole process of “building” an image, similar to the process of interpreting it, is based on a series of principles - structures that lie deep. My presentation is an exercise of tracing elements that build up the creative act that results in the image, while analysing the works of G.W.F. Hegel, Whitney Davis, Clifford Geertz, Alfred Gell, Paul Feyerabend and others.

I. Introduction

This paper deals with the problem of creativity, analysing it from two main points of view, in order to propose answers the question, “What lies beneath the process of creation?” and to make room for discussions that might lead to a better understanding of the issue. The first point of view discussed is the theoretical approach, dealing with works from the fields of semiotics, sociology or art theory that relate to this quest. The second point of view represents a deeper analysis that focuses more on insights

* In this paper I present very briefly the result of years of study and observations, some personal, some made on rational or scientific basis. This is a small part of a bigger research project and of my future PhD thesis. This work was supported by the project “Excellence academic routes in the doctoral and postdoctoral research – READ” co-funded from the European Social Fund through the Development of Human Resources Operational Programme 2007-2013, contract no. POSDRU/159/1.5/S/137926.

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from the art world and whether they mirror the theories currently considered influential.

The question expressed above represents a very sensitive subject for both the artists and theorists, insofar as creation and creativity and this approach analyses this process from the outside (theorists who see the phenomenon as a whole) towards the inside (the artists who are dealing with the process of creation daily and professionals who analyse this from a psychological, educational or neurological basis).

I use the term *artwork* not in relation to what is considered valuable or socially recognised as art, but as a general term defining the result of creative practice. I have structured this paper into two main parts, one being the point of view of theorists, and the other the point of view from inside the art world. The methodological approach used for this paper follows the analysis of some influential works relating to the question stated above. The next step, after analysing the key points within the discussed theoretical field, is to find how these are mirrored inside the art world. For this part I draw upon my personal experience, others' experiences or observations, and also studies from the field of neurology, psychology or educational practice. I use works from the field of art theory and aesthetics, with a clear preference for the semiotic approach, but I also search for answers given by sociologists, anthropologists, education specialists and physicians.

The preference for semiotics and for structuralism or constructivism in building the theoretical foundation of this paper is explained by the use of analytic methodology and by theorists' preference towards empirical evidence when stating their theories. When dealing with an issue like creativity that expresses itself in the most empirical way possible, one must first of all take into consideration those who make use of these informational resources.

2. The Process of Creation

In order to comprehend a process, one must deal with the steps that constitute the said process. When dealing with creation, this can prove more difficult, for "creation" implies action seen as a monolith figure, difficult

to divide or organize into steps. The equation becomes even more difficult when one has to deal with artistic creation, for it implies the problem of “art”, a subject still in search for a commonly accepted definition and understanding. Most approaches within art theory and philosophy insist more on perception and reception towards visual arts and less on understanding how the artwork came to be. Still, there is literature that grasps at the act of artistic creation. In order to illustrate the problem discussed, I used works from various research domains: philosophy, anthropology, art history and theory.

The philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel provided philosophers at the beginning of 19th century with one of the most influential theoretical approaches towards artistic practice and the interpretation of works of art. His *Lectures on Aesthetics* were assembled from the notes from his Berlin lectures on the subject (which he gave within the 1820s, on an irregular basis) and published a few years after his death. In the introduction to this volume, he suggests three predicates to be considered when analysing a work or art:

- (1) We suppose the work of art to be no natural product, but brought to pass by means of human activity.
- (2) To be essentially made *for* man and, indeed, to be more or less borrowed from the sensuous and addressed to man’s sense.
- (3) To contain an *end*. (Harrison, 2013, 62)

We will discuss here the first predicate, which considers the artwork as being a product of man. It divides into four main ideas that analyse the act of artistic production. The first one (a) considers the artwork as a “conscious production of an external object”, a practice that can be known and learnt. If so, then an artwork can be re-made if one knows the procedures and means, a practice that makes the production of art a “formally regular and mechanical” activity. What makes the art production different from other human productions, and what makes the difference between art and “true art” is the immersion in the territory of mind, where it achieves meaning. This gives room for the second idea (b) where the artwork becomes a product of a state of inspiration and of talent and genius, the latter seen as natural elements and peculiar gifts provided to man by nature. For Hegel,

the genius is excited by an external object and “has the power of its freewill to place itself therein”. Thus, for the problem discussed at (a), the act of production and the needed mechanical skill come in second place, helping in bringing into existence in a conscious manner the work of art, as an external object. The third idea (c) starts from the idea of genius being excited by an object and thus, providing the artist with a state of inspiration. For this reason, the work of art is generally ranked below nature because of it being limited by the external appearance of nature, using it to express itself. Here Hegel makes an important observation: even though it *may* represent nature’s appearance, the artwork keeps being a product of mind, belonging to the realm of mind. And even though it is not a living object, the mind “borrows from its own inner life it is able, even on the side of external existence, to confer *permanence*”, giving the artwork an inner life. The last idea (d) takes as a starting point the artwork man-made as a creation of mind. If so, then the man must be considered “a *thinking* consciousness”, and be the main reason for the universal existence of works of art, which don’t satisfy basic needs, but higher ones and which come from man’s need of replicating their own characteristics into external objects, granting them with new meanings, belonging to the realm of mind. To conclude Hegel’s analysis of the first predicate, one can say that the work of art is created in a state of inspiration, being mainly a product of mind, using material forms and means of production to embody itself. It draws from the natural realm but it remains in the spiritual realm, the permanence given to it by its creator’s mind, making it superior to both nature - whose appearance it represents - and technical features that it encompasses.

Whitney Davis is a contemporary art historian known for his work on rock art, ancient art and also for his focus on theory and interference of art history with other humanist research areas. In 1986 he wrote, *The Origins of Image Making*, an academic paper where he takes an evolutionary view of cave paintings, which he analyses chronologically, in a semiotic manner influenced by Nelson Goodman. He observes how over time, lines became contour lines that define recognisable objects from the natural world and, after a while, colour is used to fill in the contour line (Davis, 1986, 200). This is seen spanning thousands of years. Filling the contour line with colour is important, because until this moment, the colour was used for

marking spaces with different usage and meaning. Davis considers that pictorial representation is used by man as a tool, as an extension of their vision. He considers images to have the status of objects themselves, that can and will relate to the models that led to their creation, but remain independent of those, gaining their own meaning. Image making is a highly sophisticated tool for the eye that requires artists having knowledge of what they intend to represent. He builds his analysis from artwork not towards the viewer but towards the artist's mind and intentions.

Both Hegel and Davis consider the artist's mind as the source of creation and meaning, the artwork produced as a result of developed technical skills achieved, and recognise the work of art as an external object resulted from a conscious decision. Hegel speaks of the conscious act of creation, which results in the artwork, but this is the last step in a series of actions that take place within the artist's mind, which would be the peculiarity of genius getting excited by an external object and using that appearance to create new meanings, and the reflection towards finding means of physical production. We must not forget the artist's dedication towards embodying his ideas, namely achieving the skills needed through study and having a natural gift for artistic production. Davis, even if building his argument on an empirical, scientific basis (the cave paintings) reaches conclusions similar in certain aspects with Hegel. One should note here that both of them speak of intentions of the mind as being the defining moment of artistic creation.

Is intentionality involved in the process of creation? According to Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy (plato.stanford.edu), "Intentionality is the power of minds to be about, to represent, or to stand for, things, properties and states of affairs" and the term comes from the Latin term *intendere*, which means "to be directed towards some goal or thing". It is used mainly for the realm of philosophy of mind and of language, but in the field of philosophy of art was approached by H.G. Gadamer who considers that the artist bears in mind a certain object (the idea of the artwork) and organizes their effort in order to give it a physical form (the actual artwork). When considering intentionality, the end - goal - is the existence of an object within the physical realm. It differs though from teleology, where the artwork's existence would have a goal, an end for the social realm, outside of its own creation. The whole process defined by

intentionality happens within the mind and is delivered in physical form within the process of creation.

Can we speak of a selection process involved in genius' excitement towards a certain external object? For this question one must take into consideration the problem of perception towards external objects and, thus, towards the differences between appearance and reality. Hegel suggests one of the limits of art is the representation of the external appearance of nature and so, art being inferior to nature at a first glance (Harrison, 2013, 63). Considering that art represents appearances, then it would be useful to know what and how these appearances come into genius's reach.

Paul Feyerabend, starts writing *The Conquest of Abundance. A Tale of Abstraction versus the Richness of Being* for his wife, but never finishes it. It was published posthumously in 1999, half of it being the edited manuscript and half of it containing unfinished works relating to the book. Feyerabend writes about perception and understanding of reality. He considers that the man can't perceive the whole abundance of it and makes use of abstraction, simplification to ignore what they cannot comprehend. If man would comprehend all the aspects of the world, man would be paralysed and unable to use all that understanding. Although seen as a blessing, this phenomenon brings a limitation of what one might call the world, in order to make sense of reality and one ends up institutionalising the said limitations, defining the world/nature/reality according to them. To illustrate this theory, Feyerabend uses multiple examples from the arts, may they be literature or painting, analysing how they depict and even help constructing a worldview.

In a similar quest (of identifying abstractions and patterns) the anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss brings into this equation structuralism, a theory based on the observation of similar structures in the conception of various cultural elements which couldn't have been a result of cultural diffusion due to their remote and isolated character, or if they would be a result of diffusion this would have to be "of organic wholes" meaning that entire cultural features or representations would have to borrow "aesthetic convention, social organization and religion" (Lévi-Straus, 1974, 265). His search for patterns was made analysing artistic practices, among others. Lévi-Strauss analyses in *Structural Anthropology* an impressive amount of elements of material culture belonging to the artistic practice, from all the

corners of the world and totally different historical periods, cases in which the hypothesis of borrowings and diffusion would not explain the resemblance or patterns, due to geographical and also chronological differences (Lévi-Strauss, 1974, 246). His theory, that influenced an entire school of thought, is that there are immutable deep structures that are reflected in the conception similar practices and world-makings all around the globe, in all chronological periods.

These being said, we may consider that the Hegelian genius functions according to a set of deep structures, in order to comprehend the world and thus, it ends up depicting only appearances of the world. If so, the supposed selection process would involve a still uncharted territory lying deep inside man's mind, which manifests itself in a conscious manner.

If we are to consider that all the artworks refer to the appearances of the same nature and they might be selected on structural basis, do all men understand in the same manner a certain artwork? Understanding an artwork proved to be an even more difficult job than theorising it. There are several theories that deal with the different ways in understanding an artwork but for this paper I chose to present a few ideas from different areas of research. These ideas relate also to the process of creation and how it would interfere with the given interpretation.

The already mentioned Whitney Davis, in *Beginning the History of Art* (1993) approaches the art historians for the responsibility of creating meanings for the art object outside of its cultural boundaries and of its natural environment. He thinks that the only way to achieve an understanding of the artwork would be through a forensic interpretation, by gathering all the data available in order to reconstruct, as a puzzle, external and material aspects that influenced and led to an artwork's creation.

On the other hand, the cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz considers artworks to be best understood by the world that led to their creation. One can and will understand a quattrocento painting but will not understand its aspects related to the social demands of quattrocento world and so, one will lose a certain level of understanding. He considers the artwork to be the product of a collective experience, hence the necessity of that experience for understanding. An aspect here asks for attention: he considers ideas as demanding to be made visible, to be represented.

Alfred Gell gives in *Art and Agency* (1998) an anthropological approach

of artworks and their interference with men, made on a semiotic basis. He considers art objects, artefacts, objects from the visual sphere created by man as indexes, as having no intrinsic value, just the value given by a relational context. He says art is made in order to change the world and it acts as a social agent, able to interfere with us and our perception. Also, he is one of the few believers in the innocent eye, able to be mesmerized and convinced by an artwork, no matter the cultural context

As a preliminary conclusion, we can say that the act of creation should be divided as follows: (A) deep structures of mind organize man's perception – still an uncharted territory (B) intentionality with (B1) genius being excited by an object and providing a state of inspiration, (B2) genius immersing in the object of interest and changing its meaning while preserving its external appearance, (B3) genius providing the conscious mind with a new meaning-laden object that requires physical representation (B4) artist choosing their materials and means of production accordingly, and (C) the artistic act in which the artist physically reproduces their mental representation of the object in a conscious and deliberate manner.

3. Inside Creatives' Mind

The conclusions from the first part aren't a perfect fit with the reality faced by professionals of the domain of creativity. Highly studied and analysed, we can define creativity from various points of view: from its location within the human nervous system and its relation to intelligence, to its relation to mental illnesses or cognitive functions. When talking about visual arts (but also literature and music) creativity is commonly associated with mental distress or (sometimes) physical distress or a combination of both.

In *The Creating Brain. The Neuroscience of Genius* (2005), neuroscientist Nancy Andreas investigates the link between insanity and creative force. Most importantly, she starts her study with the idea of finding mental disorders only to discover that indeed, mental disorders might be there but they are not necessary for creativity to flourish. I consider this detail of being of great importance for it contains a cultural bias: the madness of artists. In a similar manner, TED talks on creativity, coming from professionals in the domain, may joke on the idea of creativity and madness, but

more on the aspect that what they intended to do was considered mad, was uncommon, was strange. On the other hand, Ken Robinson, in the most viewed TED talk, speaks about schools killing creativity by giving very little time in the curricula for enhancing such ability. Basically, the practice of arts, may they be drama, painting, creative writing, music and so on, are left out of general abilities to be developed by children and those with such abilities and desires must go to specialised schools or practice outside curricula. This enhances the bias of the artist being different, mad and an outcast.

But what do the artists say? Turning back and focusing on myself as a young, creative artist-to-be I discovered that (a) I did some things unconsciously (e.g. making all the portraits and studies of a human face resemble my face) and (b) I infatuated my artistic practice with a high awareness of me being special, unique, creative, mad. I have built an identity tied to the idea of me being different because I'm an artist and tied it to my work. I have observed and analysed these two features in many others and in the practice of more accomplished artists as well.

I believe in a certain level of intentionality in the artist's work. Even before entering art school or even thinking about art school, I was searching for technical features of different materials and how can I use them in order to draw, paint etc. In art high school, as a student specializing in *easel painting*, in order to achieve pleasing results I discovered I had to master the techniques. Later, in university, while studying for my B.A. in *fine arts restoration*, I discovered the importance of materials and the process of making the artwork and how much attention is given to it. The successful artists are the ones mastering a technique well enough to afford to experiment with new approaches. When talking with artists or when observing their work, I noticed their need for doing something. They are mesmerized by seeing the others painting, they feel the need of them painting, they miss the work in the studio and so on. They always have ideas and need them sketched, the least.

These observations provide the need for further investigation at point (C) the artistic act in which the artist physically reproduces their mental representation of the object in a conscious and deliberate manner. When the object starts being physically created, the initial (mental) sketch begins being modified constantly. The numerous sketches and physical analyses

of pictorial works show the differences between initial representation of the idea and final result. They might be small, consisting maybe in lines, colours or brushstrokes but sometimes they might be big, consisting in modified compositions, dimensions, scales. These modifications might suggest that the artist is influenced by the social demands of their epoch or their patrons. But let's not hurry into finding the responsible here. The result (artwork) unfolds bearing also unintended elements. It happens that an artist is asked about the meaning of some depicted element and they end up being as curious as the person questioning. It also happens that the critique made by theorists doesn't get close to the artist's mind, even if both of them are contemporaries, living in the same cultural context.

When requested to make an artwork with a certain subject, requested by a patron, the artists make their understanding of the subject. If more artists are requested to follow a certain subject (even a landscape and even if they are from the same generation or school – criteria considered elementary for art historians when they decide style) they end up making as many versions of the subject as they are. Usually the patron requests the services of the artist that they think is more suitable in matters of technique and style, in order to make what they bear in mind (examples of this practice are available throughout art history). The patron keeps in mind the artist's style and preferred technique and chooses according to these characteristics, in relation to what he intends to have in the end. There is a profound relationship between patron and artist in term of style, depiction and influences, but let's not forget that the artist is not a hand designed to depict what the patron can't. Usually the patron and artist agree with the artist's view and understanding of the world as seen through his art. In cases of disagreement, the artist gets to leave the patron, but not change their worldview in a massive manner.

Artists depict their ideas in a dynamic manner, susceptible to change in every moment. The change might be externally induced but even then, the artist's decision of modifying an aspect of their work is still a mental process, a conscious and deliberate decision that has to be in accordance with their internal process. Which makes the whole phenomenon of change an internal one. These aspects will modify (C) in *the dynamic process of representing a mental image in a conscious manner with informed choice on techniques, while being subject to changes concerning the appearance.*

In the end, the viewers end up seeing different things, irrelevant to what the artist intended and also irrelevant to what the patron needed to be represented. This is why their eye and senses need to be trained accordingly in the contemporary era and also, commissioned artworks were not available to all kinds of viewers until the modern era (at least for the Western world).

4. Conclusions

This paper is far from being a theory or proposing a new framework for the analysis of artistic practice. Its goal is to try to clarify the layers involved in the process of artistic creation. Far from being a work guided by inspiration solely, the artistic creation involves just as well socio-cultural aspects, technical developments and depicts general recurrences and patterns in world-making. Artistic practice and depiction helps at decoding or encoding the world and the self, being a tool for knowledge. The shift from considering art as knowledge to considering it a work of impulse and inspiration is a recent phenomenon in history. The early modern scientist still approached artistic practices as being a form of understanding the world (see Descartes, for example).

This paper should be seen as an exercise in approaching, rather than as a thesis. While deciding the development and the name of this paper, I promised things I can never give a final answer to. I do not know and maybe I will never know what lies beneath the process of creation. This paper is structured more as an exercise in seeing and tracing elements that can help interested researchers in their quest, or for clarifying their methodological approach, and less as a thesis with a final conclusion.

Further research is requested in order to clarify many aspects discussed here. The studies evoked have been presented roughly and sketchy, but there are many more works which could be discussed. I also consider essential that the artists should be involved in this research. Few studies involve their experience and dilemmas and this, I consider, is a methodological error.

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Moralism about Propaganda

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ABSTRACT. What is propaganda? What makes it morally subversive? And does the fact that it is morally subversive affect its value as a work of art? This paper characterizes a central feature of propaganda: it is emotionally manipulative. On the basis of this I argue that ethicism more plausibly applies to propaganda than to other forms of art. Ethicism is the claim that relevant moral defects also make a work of art aesthetically defective, that is make the work less valuable as a work of art. I point out an important difference between propaganda and other works of art by showing that a problem raised against the merited response argument for ethicism does not to apply when we apply the argument to propaganda.

The film program at my university recently put on a screening of Felix Moeller's *Forbidden Films*. The documentary collects and discusses examples of films still restricted in Germany, that is films that cannot be screened publicly without a permit. Some of the propaganda clips are blatantly outrageous, others are subtly subversive. And all of them, in the context in which they are set, evoke moral disgust in the audience. They give the viewer a good glimpse of the workings of propaganda. For works of propaganda, maybe more than for any other works of art, it is clear that they are morally problematic. And, maybe more than for any other works of art, our moral discomfort with propaganda interferes with our engagement with them as works of art. Watching the clips in *Forbidden Films* I resist: I resist feelings of admiration and sympathy for the doctor who kills his wife suffering from multiple sclerosis (*Ich klage an*), I resist feeling appalled by Joseph Süß Oppenheimer (*Jud Süß*), and I resist being drawn in by the cinematography and by the catchiness of the music used to portray the life of Luftwaffe pilots (*Stukas*). And not only do I resist but I hold that mustering this kind of resistance is my moral obligation. The entire

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experience is an uncomfortable struggle: one that cannot be described as an aesthetic experience. This paper seeks to explain this kind of resistance.

More technically speaking the paper has two main objectives. 1) It gives an account of propaganda art and 2) it argues that ethicism more plausibly applies to propaganda than to other forms of art. Ethicism, as proposed by Berys Gaut (1998 and 2007), claims that relevant moral defects in a work of art also constitute aesthetic defects. Gaut argues for this claim by introducing what he labeled the “merited response argument.” A number of discussions have since criticized the argument. I am not trying to address all criticisms of the argument in this paper. But I want to show that the merited response argument is more plausible when applied to propaganda art in at least one respect. And I thereby want to shed light on the way in which propaganda is morally problematic and aesthetically defective.

I. The Context

Moralism, as I understand it here, is the claim that moral defects in a work of art are aesthetically relevant because they constitute or at least can constitute an aesthetic defect. One might also want to say that holding moralism means endorsing the complementary claim that a moral merit in a work constitutes or at least can constitute an aesthetic merit. But the latter claim has drawn much less attention in the discussion. This paper will focus on moral and aesthetic defects as well. Moralism traditionally opposes autonomism, the view that moral flaws are irrelevant to the aesthetic value of a work. It has more recently also been contrasted with immoralism, which argues that a moral defect in a work can constitute an aesthetic merit.

There are more and less strong claims that fall under moralism understood in the way just outlined. One might hold that aesthetic value is reducible to a specific kind of moral value. The theory Leo Tolstoy puts forth in *What is Art?*, for example, suggests this view. Taking up the distinctions put forth by Gaut, we could label this view ‘radical moralism.’ Gaut’s own view, in contrast, merely claims that a work is aesthetically flawed in so

far as it is relevantly morally flawed. On this view other properties can be and generally are relevant to the aesthetic value of a work as a whole. For example, the morally problematic view endorsed in a propaganda poster can diminish its value as a work of art while the perfect composition of elements in it set to evoke an emotion can at the same time boost its overall aesthetic merit. Gaut stresses that ethicism, as he defends it, does not seek to reduce aesthetic value to moral value. Noël Carroll has argued that we should endorse an even weaker form of moralism: a work or art can be aesthetically flawed insofar as it is morally flawed. Carroll focuses on narrative art and the cases where a moral defect does become morally relevant on his account are cases in which our moral resistance prevents us from becoming immersed in the narrative. As said above, this paper is concerned with with ethicism and whether it is true with regard to propaganda: do the ways in which propaganda is morally problematic constitute an aesthetic flaw?

2. Propaganda: Moral Defects

What makes propaganda morally flawed? In most cases propaganda advocates a morally problematic message. We also assume that it is characteristically manipulative: it is not transparent about conveying messages or evoking emotions, and/or it is not transparent about the existence of perspectives opposing the perspective the propaganda itself takes. This is surely not a complete analysis of the nature of propaganda art. But it should give us a good start on understanding typical cases.

Works of art often open a dialog with our own experiences. They draw on experiences we have had with their subject matter, either first hand or through others. Seeing a version of Munch's painting *The Sick Child* can make us reflect on when we ourselves have gone through grief and the loss of someone we love. Reading Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* can point us to how we ourselves have experienced or experience coming of age. And we might draw on our own experiences as or with women of color and women in general in reading Zora Hurston's *Mules and Men*. In many cases drawing on our own experience can enhance our understanding of and response to the a work of art (though there might also be some cases in which drawing on our own experience interferes with a proper understanding of the

work). And art can open new perspectives to change our experience of our own lives in the future. It is typical for works of propaganda that they prevent a dialog between the work and our own experiences instead of encouraging it. It is this kind of manipulativeness that the remainder of the paper is concerned with. I will first spend some more time explaining and illustrating this manipulativeness it through examples.

Propaganda seeks to evoke broad emotional patterns, for example, of admiration, pride, fear, and disgust. These emotions are not supposed to point us to our own past and future experiences. Instead propaganda aims at overpowering, concealing, and distorting the range of what we feel when we encounter what it portrays. It makes a genuine emotional response to whatever it portrays impossible.

The first two images show a poster and a magazine add for the 1941 propaganda film *Stukas* [FIGURES 1 & 2].



FIGURES 1 & 2. A poster and a magazine add for the movie *Stukas*, 1941.

The film portrays the lives of three squadrons of pilots in the Luftwaffe who fly dive-bombers (Stukas). Their combat experience as portrayed in the film is characterized by toughness, confidence, camaraderie, and joyfulness. It makes ample use of music. One scene shows a shell-shocked character reacquiring his motivation to fight during a performance of Wagner's *Götterdämmerung* at the opera festival in Bayreuth. And in another the camera zooms in on the faces of pilots singing the "Stuka song" while flying a dangerous mission against England. The film evokes emotions of pride, admiration, and joy that seem absurd to a contemporary audience. The emotions the films seeks to evoke are well illustrated in a review published after the film came out: "Sheer enthusiasm transfigures the danger. Faithful comradeship proves its power when one comrade after another, after an emergency landing has to be bailed out middle of the enemy. Out of this comradeship the life of each one continuously receives a stream of power. Faith takes away the fight of death. The emotion becomes more intense in the festive heights of Hölderlin's hymns and Wagnerian music."¹ The experience of being in combat in 1941 and in particular of being part of the failed air campaign against Britain was surely a different one: one characterized by chaos and heavy losses. The propaganda film seeks to define the image its audience has of the German fighter. Unlike other works on the topic of war it does not seek a dialog with the experience of someone in battle or talking to someone who has been in battle. Instead it seeks to replace the images evoked by these experiences with a fiction that can now be the target of pride and admiration.

The emotions *Jud Süß* (1940) seeks to evoke are a different set of emotions: fear, anger, and disgust. Turning the intentions of Lion Feuchtwanger's novel that served as a basis on its head, the film portrays Jews as ruthless, scheming, power hungry, rapist capitalists (or alternatively filthy immigrants). The propaganda images below from the Nazi tabloid *Der Stürmer* (the first from 1930 and the second from 1938) seek to appeal to the same set of emotions [FIGURES 3 & 4].

¹ Günther Sawatzki as quoted by Giesen 2003, p. 79.



FIGURES 3 & 4. From *Der Stürmer*, 1930 & 1938.

Jud Süß is a more well-known piece of propaganda than Stukas. This is probably because it is hard to beat the viciousness of the emotions *Jud Süß* evokes. But the two films are strategically similar. Both seek to conceal, override, and distort the audience's everyday experiences with what the films portray. *Jud Süß* on orders of Himmler was deliberately shown to prepare the SS and police for actions against the Jewish population and to prepare locals for their deportation.²

So far I have focused on Nazi propaganda discussed in *Forbidden Films*. But the pattern of emotional manipulateness applies more broadly. Looking at contemporary works of propaganda, for example, we can find the same strategy. The last two images show recent posters appealing to xenophobic sentiments [FIGURES 5 & 6].

Both posters evoke feelings of fear and insecurity. They conjure up an image of a foreigner as impossible to understand and as a threat to our autonomy and identity. Of course our own interaction with foreigners will give us a different picture. Most of us interact with foreigners on a regular basis and our relationships with them are not hard to understand. On the contrary: they are a deep part of who we are and open opportunities to do the things we want to do.

² For an analysis see Leiser, p. 84f.



FIGURES 5 & 6.

3. The Merited Response Argument

Let me return to the relationship between moral and aesthetic value. Gaut's argument for ethicism runs roughly as follows.

- (1) Prescribed responses to art works are subject to evaluation.
 - (2) Some of the evaluative criteria for prescribed responses are ethical ones.
 - (3) If a work prescribes a response that is unmerited, then the work has to that extent failed qua work of art.
- (C) Therefore, ethical defects are aesthetic defects.³

I will not give a full-fledged defense of the merited response argument in the space of this paper. Instead I will focus on one specific line of criticism

³ For this reconstruction see Anderson and Dean 1998.

that brings out what is distinctive about the way in which propaganda is morally (and aesthetically) flawed.

Anne Eaton in a recent paper stresses the distinction between moral attitudes that are internal to the work and moral attitudes that are external to the work. Eaton uses the following examples. Our moral disapproval of Uriah Heep in Dickens's novel *David Copperfield* is internal to the work. The novel gives us plenty of grounds for disapproval: "Heep's character is imbued with vivid prompts for disgust and repulsion: he is portrayed as clammy, slimy, and writhing [...]" (Eaton 2012, p. 282). Our moral disapproval of Tony Soprano from *The Sopranos* is external to the work. The work itself presents him as admirable and as deserving of sympathy (Eaton, *ibid*).

Given these two different kinds of attitudes, there is room for conflict between the two. We feel the admiration and sympathy for Tony Soprano. But at the same time his actions make us feel outrage and frustration that are not prescribed by the work itself. Eaton argues that bringing about this conflict is an artistic achievement. The work sets up a puzzle for itself, which it then goes on to solve: evoking sympathy in the face of imaginative resistance (Eaton, p. 285). Matthew Kieran defends immoralism on different grounds. But his argument also relies on the same conflict between different kinds of attitudes, which he argues gives us an opportunity for moral learning (Kieran 2002, p. 63-73). But the possible conflict has other implications, too. Feeling a prescribed response like admiration and sympathy for Tony Soprano, is morally problematic on its own. But what if we feel both sympathy as an attitude prescribed by *The Sopranos* and moral outrage as an attitude we bring to the work externally? This does not look morally problematic. We can say that we redeem ourselves through the outrage we bring to the work externally. This outrage can then be partially directed at the sympathy we are feeling. But this means that the work by itself does not prescribe a response that is unmerited. It leaves us room to have a complex, overall merited, response that consists of internal and external attitude. We could also say that it leaves us with a responsibility to morally distance ourselves from the work. But if the response prescribed by the work is not in itself unmerited, then of course the work is not aesthetically flawed on that ground.

4. Propaganda: Aesthetic Defects

As we have just seen, the distinction between attitudes internal to the work and attitudes we bring to the work externally creates problems for the merited response argument. Eaton and Kieran are right that the distinction also helps us explain what is especially rewarding (aesthetically and morally) about some works with immoral content. I now want to return to the case of propaganda.

As we have seen above, propaganda prevents a dialog between our responses to the work and our responses in everyday life. It thereby seeks to conceal, distort, and/or override our emotional responses to what it portrays. The absence of such a dialog prevents us from experiencing a conflict between the attitudes internal to the work and attitudes brought to it externally. While *The Sopranos* leaves room for us to feel moral outrage at what is portrayed as admirable this is not the case for *Stukas*. And *Jud Süß* does not leave room to feel sympathy and compassion for whom it portrays as threatening and despicable. Being able to experience a conflict between an attitude a work prescribes and external attitudes presupposes that we can compare responses evoked by the work to our everyday responses. Feeling moral outrage at the actions of Tony Soprano presupposes that we have experience with authority, honor, and terror that are not colored by how they are portrayed in *The Sopranos*. Propaganda deliberately blurs the line between attitudes internal to the work and external attitudes we could bring back to it. Successful propaganda causes all our experiences of what it portrays to become colored by the propaganda.

The heroic portrayal of the fighter pilots in *Stukas* invalidates the soldiers' experience in combat. The image created by *Jud Süß* distorts how the audience views the Jewish community. And the way anti-immigration propaganda paints foreigners veils interactions with our neighbors. The blurring of internal and external attitudes in some works of propaganda is taken on very deliberately. In *Stukas* this is done by dehumanizing the enemy but also by stressing that a true fighter does not experience the horrors of combat in the same way an ordinary person would. This is made clear in a scene when one character remarks to the other that one "doesn't really think about his comrades' death any more, only about what they died for." (See Leiser, p. 20). *Jud Süß* does so by presenting the stereo-

type of the jew in disguise: scheming while posing as an innocent member of the German society. It makes the picture it paints indefeasible by suggesting that the threat it portrays can still be true despite appearance to the contrary.

If propaganda blurs the distinction between external and internal attitudes to a work, it also prevents external attitudes from being redeeming. Or, to put it differently: it prevents us from being a responsible audience capable of distance from the work. Above I have shown that the possibility of this distance creates problems for the merited response argument. These problems then do not apply to propaganda. And if the merited response argument goes through for propaganda, this means that the attitudes it prescribes are in fact unmerited. We should not admire the bomber pilots and we should not shudder at Oppenheimer. We should resist and if necessary shut down the aesthetic response the work evokes. Propaganda art, if it is successful as propaganda, is aesthetically defective and hence unsuccessful as a work of art.

5. Conclusion

This paper has accomplished two goals. 1) It has pointed to a central characteristic that many works of propaganda share: they are emotionally manipulative in that they prevent dialog between emotions evoked by the work and our own everyday experiences. Propaganda seeks to control our everyday emotional responses by overpowering, concealing, and distorting them. On the basis of this analysis I then argued that 2) moral flaws are more likely to constitute an aesthetic flaw for a work of propaganda than for another work of art. I have shown that propaganda prevents us from distancing ourselves from the work. This means that we cannot take on attitudes that could redeem a morally problematic response prescribed by the work. Art typically leaves room for an autonomous response and often relies on this autonomy in the way it engages us. The fact that propaganda art undermines this autonomy is crucial to understanding the way in which propaganda is morally and aesthetically flawed.

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According to the Fiction: A Metaexpressivist Account

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ABSTRACT. I outline the standard picture of fiction. According to this picture, fiction is centred on making believe some truth-apt content. I take a closer look at everyday usage of the expressions ‘according to the fiction’ and ‘in the fiction’ to countervail the streamlining tendencies that come with the standard picture. Having outlined highly variegated use patterns, I argue for a metaexpressivist picture: ‘according to the fiction’ does not primarily report fictional truth but a complex pattern of reactions the fiction seems intended to elicit. In the corresponding expressivist picture of the act of fiction-making, the latter is not primarily modeled on stating and believing truth but on the variegated pattern of intended reactions.

Since its early days, analytic philosophy has paid much attention to the guidance use of everyday expressions may provide to philosophical inquiry. ‘According to the fiction’ is one such expression, which has been used to inquire into the philosophy of fiction. In particular, the expression has been used to articulate ‘what is fictional’ viz. ‘fictional truth’. Some philosophers define a corresponding operator on propositions which they paraphrase by ‘true according to the fiction’ or ‘true in the fiction’. The preoccupation with fictional truth without doubt has greatly advanced the philosophical understanding of fiction. And defining a fictional operator has given rise to great hopes for deflationary ways of dealing with ontologically problematic pieces of discourse like morals, modals, abstract objects, accounting for the epistemological significance of thought experiments and so on. Promising as these endeavours are, they come with a certain danger of unduly streamlining the philosophy of fiction. I shall try to outline a picture of what is true according to/in fiction which overcomes some of the undue streamlining tendencies. My method is to take a closer look at

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our use of expressions like ‘according to the fiction’ or ‘in the fiction’. Use of these expressions will turn out to be rather variegated. I shall take it as a starting point for roughly outlining a more comprehensive picture of fiction into which the current focus on fictional truth may be integrated.

My argument has three parts: In the first part, I shall start with outlining what I call ‘the standard picture’ of fictional truth: fictional truth and our attitude towards it is modeled on approximating what is actually true and what is believed to be true modulo what is explicitly asserted in a fictional speech-act. While I refrain from precisely attributing the standard picture to one author in particular, I think it percolates much current theory of fiction. One may feel that I am attacking a strawman. However, my aim is not to attack the picture I draw but to differentiate it in light of a shifted paradigm. As a method to motivate my shift in paradigm, in the second part I shall consider use of ‘according to the fiction’ and ‘in the fiction’, assembling some intuitive examples of this use (without aiming at a comprehensive survey). Drawing on these illustrative examples, I shall argue that what is embedded under ‘according to the fiction’ diverges from fictional truth as described in the standard picture. There are fictional truths which are not true according to the fiction, and there are things that are true according to the fiction but not fictionally true. Moreover, I shall argue that ‘in the fiction, it is true that’ comes closest to what is targeted by the standard picture. In the third part, I shall draw some conclusions for the role of fictional truth. I shall try to account for the use data, drawing a comparison to expressivism in ethics. Expressivism (or my toy variant) treats moral assertions not so much as statements of moral truths but as aiming at a certain reaction on the part of an addressee. In a similar vein, I shall argue that fictional assertions are not so much in the business of stating fictional truth than of bringing across a certain reaction pattern to a sympathetic audience. Pretense and more precisely pretense belief will play a key role in this pattern. Pretense being constituted by mimicking certain contextually salient features of some target, pretense belief is determined by contextually relevant similarities to actual belief. Approximating belief in actual truth is only one way of mimicking actual belief. There are others which only remotely have to do with truth-apt content. Summarising, I recommend shifting the paradigm of understanding fiction from simulating belief in actual truth to a broad pattern of atti-

tudes and behaviours, prominent among them simulating behaviours and attitudes like pretense belief.

1. The Standard Picture

The standard picture portrays fiction as something rather well-regimented. It is therefore attractive to philosophers who want to put fiction to all sorts of cognitive uses, for instance in fictionalism or a fictional analysis of thought experiments. The common thrust may be characterised as follows: an author performs an act of story-telling or fiction-making which is modeled on the act of sincerely asserting truths. One may talk of fictional assertions. The prime and uncontested candidates to be embedded under ‘according to the fiction’ are the propositional contents that are explicitly told in this way. The aim of sincere assertion usually is that the addressee believe something. In a similar vein, story-telling seems to aim at an attitude of the addressee that is modeled on belief. There are other things which are untold but which are essentially to be treated in the same way as the explicit fictional assertions. They bear on evaluating the fictional truths in the same way as actual truths bear on evaluating other actual truths. Thus they are true according to the fiction, too.

I shall mention some representational analyses along these lines. One may be called the conditional analysis. For instance, in a somewhat simplified version of Lewis’s (1983) classical analysis, p being a proposition,

According to the fiction F , p is true iff p in the closest world where F is sincerely told as known fact.

This analysis renders fiction a special case of counterfactual reasoning. In a variant, Lewis adds that certain beliefs of some relevant community have to be true. In at least one variant of Nichols and Stich’s (2000) closely similar analysis, we get something like that:

According to the fiction F , p is true iff adding the fictional assertions to the belief system of some representative recipient leads her to believing p .¹

¹ There are major problems with Nichols and Stich’s analysis: firstly, they sometimes

Kendall Walton takes defining truth in a fictional world to be the most important task of a theory of fiction. In his highly influential analysis (1990, I am following Woodward 2014),

According to the fiction *F*, *p* is true iff *F* authorises a game of make believe where it is imagined that *p*.

Walton is a pluralist about the authorising principles of generation. And he explicitly rejects modeling the content of the fiction on actual truth:

"Truth in a fictional world" must be distinguished from "truth in the real world". But the temptation to regard both as species of a single genus is manifest. I resist. What we call truth in a fictional world is *not a kind of truth.*' (Walton 1990, 42, emphasis mine)

Still Walton maintains that truth in a fictional world is the key to understanding fiction. And his account in terms of a norm of make believe is modeled on actual truth as the norm of belief. Moreover, actual truth is the standard in Walton's reality principle, which is defined by a counterfactual roughly corresponding to Lewis's analysis (Walton 1990, 147), and the mutual belief principle which he offers as an amendment of the reality principle (Walton 1990, 152).

Fictional truth as the object of make believe looms large in accounts of fiction-making and fictional speech-acts. I mention two approaches, a Gricean one, which has been advocated by Gregory Currie (1990, 33; I am following Garcia-Carpintero's more tractable presentation):

(FMD) To fiction-make *p* is to utter *S* thereby R-intending audiences of a given kind to take the utterance as a reason to think that the speaker intends them to make-believe *p*. (Garcia-Carpintero 2013, 341)

An R-intention is a reflective intention which is fulfilled by the audience apprehending the intention.

An alternative is Garcia-Carpintero's normative account:

talk in terms of belief revision and sometimes in terms of counterfactual reasoning. But these things are different, as the classical Oswald-Kennedy examples show. Secondly, they do not make room for the phenomenon of adornment that is prominent in their empirical findings.

(FMN) For one to fiction-make p is correct if and only if p is worth imagining for one's audience, on the assumption that they have the relevant desires and dispositions. (Garcia-Carpintero 2013, 351)

While I find the proposal clearly needs amendment, I am confident something like it could be made to work.² What interests me here is that it is natural to read both proposals as focusing on a notion of the fictional speech act that is modeled on actually asserting propositional truth and a notion of the apt reaction modeled on believing propositional truth. I note that (FMD) and (FMN) seem even narrower than the accounts of fictional truth mentioned. In talking of fiction-making instead of, say, fictional assertions, they confine the role of fiction to conveying content for make believe, while accounts of fictional truth are neutral with respect to other roles of fictions that are not truth-centred. One may take (FMD) and (FMN) as an example of an undue streamlining tendency as far as other functions of fiction do not play a role in fiction-making. Yet, firstly, there may be other correctness conditions an act of fiction-making underlies, depending on what is intended by the author. Secondly, as we shall see, there may well be fiction-making without make believe (what I take to be meant here by imagining).

To give an initial assessment of the standard picture, it may provide a good approximation to fictional truth as the content of both fictional assertion and make believe. And there is plenty of room to make it more flexible. Thus, my point is not that the standard picture is misguided. I want to argue for a shift of paradigm, embedding the standard picture into a more comprehensive perspective on fiction. 'According to the fiction' provides guidance to this perspective.

To further characterise my approach, I shall distinguish it from a theory which shares the common objective of countering certain streamlining tendencies that come with the standard picture. Stacy Friend defines the standard picture as I did: 'The most popular position today defines

² One main problem of this approach is that it is either trivial, if the relevant beliefs and desires are determined in turn by what makes the act of fiction-making correct, or false, if we insert normal candidates like having an enriching aesthetic experience guided by the act of fiction-making. A bad piece of fiction may not be worth imagining. But that does not make the act of making it incorrect.

fiction as necessarily involving an invited response of imagining or make-believe...' (Friend 2012, 180). She is more critical of the standard picture than I am. To her, a theory of fiction should be able to tell apart fiction and non-fiction, and she denies that the standard picture lives up to this task. My aspirations are somewhat different. I do not aim at elucidating the difference between fiction and non-fiction but at providing a more comprehensive picture of the workings of fiction. Nevertheless I shall draw some conclusions what the specifics of fiction might be. And one may try a working characterisation of fiction as that whose content can be reported by 'according to the fiction'. A further difference between Friend's and my own approach is that she focuses on examples of fiction and non-fiction which seem to blur the boundary, while I focus on the linguistic evidence from use of 'according to the fiction'. I think that both approaches are interesting applications of analytic methodology in their own right.

I shall introduce some terminology: let 'standard fictional truth' stand for truth as defined by the standard picture. Since the idea of a unified standard picture is itself a fictional entity, the same may go for standard fictional truth. But I think there is some cliché to be spotted. Let 'fictional truth' simpliciter stand for what we upon sufficient reflection would intuitively accept as true 'in the world of the fiction', the content of make believe and so on. Fictional truth is what standard fictional truth is after, of course. Finally, let 'according to the fiction' stand for whatever felicitously embeds under 'according to the fiction' such as to form a true assertion. I shall try to show that the three terms, 'standard fictional truth', 'fictional truth', and 'truth according to the fiction' diverge.

I shall close this section with motivating my focus on 'according to the fiction'. As I said, one may feel that I am conjuring up a red herring. The standard picture does not depend on using 'according to the fiction'. So even if there is a certain lack of fit, this lack of fit is no problem for the standard picture. At best it just shows that one should weigh one's words in representing fictional truth. I am well aware that the standard picture in no way *depends* on an unidiomatic use of 'according to the fiction'. The unidiomatic use is just a symptom of the streamlining tendencies that come with the standard picture. I think my approach via use data has three advantages.

Firstly, it starts in the midst of the standard picture. The standard pic-

ture is focused on truth-apt content, and one main purpose of ‘according to the fiction’ is to represent precisely such truth-apt content. Although ‘according to the fiction’ is deeply entangled with fictional truth as the standard picture has it, it preserves some independence. As a natural and pretheoretical way of talking about fiction, upon closer inspection use data may provide some unbiased bedrock evidence from which the philosophy of fiction may start.

Secondly, as far as ‘according to the fiction’ is used to represent the fictionality operator and the like, it also becomes a tool of streamlining the picture of fiction by introducing certain theoretical precisifications of everyday talk. If one is worried about narrowing tendencies that come with the standard picture, it is at this point where one should expect symptoms of these tendencies to emerge. I have already indicated that one of these symptoms may be the unidiomatic use of ‘according to the fiction’ that comes with certain precisifications.

Thirdly, since the function to communicate something surely is a key feature of fiction, and ‘according to’ has the function of reporting content and intentions that are related to a piece of communication, there are good reasons that ‘according to the fiction’ captures a large portion of the overall role of fiction. Hence it can be expected to provide a good heuristic approach to inquiring into this role more broadly.

One curious point about ‘according to the fiction’ has to be mentioned. The expression mostly appears in the work of philosophers discussing fictionalism about numbers, composition, morals or whatever. And although it is not an especially theoretical notion, it has acquired a semi-technical status. I think that while we have clear intuitions how to use ‘according to’ to talk about fiction, the expression is used quite rarely. This does not mean that we should not take seriously our intuitions how to use it, and indeed philosophers who use ‘according to the fiction’ themselves are committed to do so.

2. According to

I shall now take a closer look at how we use ‘according to the fiction’ and neighbouring expressions. I shall rely on my own linguistic intuitions, occasionally checked with those of fellow philosophers. I shall refrain from

attempting a thorough linguistic classification of the feelings of oddity or infelicity triggered by some examples, my aim just being to use them as a guideline to understanding fiction and not a linguistic analysis of ‘according to’. But my results may be checked against more precise linguistic accounts. The selection of examples is in no way intended to be exhaustive. I shall start with some observations on the use of ‘according to...’ in non-fictional contexts. I think the most prototypical use is to report the content of a message, broadly conceived:

- (1) According to the weather report, it will rain today.

It may also be used to report the content of a speech act or a belief attitude:

- (2) According to the weatherman, it will rain today.

In the most typical use, the ascription will be based on an assertion. But it may also be based on, say, seeing the weatherman wearing a raincoat. ‘According to...’ is also used to report and ascribe attitudes and speech acts more generally, including pro-attitudes, wishes, commands:

- (3) According to Stéphane Hessel, one ought to be outraged.
- (4) According to my Mother, I must not eat candy.

‘According to...’ can also be used to report the intention that one takes to come with some communicative act, broadly conceived, taking into account the content of the act or the resulting message, for instance a letter or a sign:

- (5) According to the letter, we ought to meet in Paris.

The message may be in a non-propositional format, for instance pictorial:

- (6) According to the sign, one should turn left to reach the airport.

The intention reported may be very indirectly connected with the explicit message. Take a detective who examines a piece of manufactured evidence, a letter with a forged Paris address, luring the police into believing that Paris is the conspirators’ meeting place. The detective:

- (7) According to the letter, (we are to believe) the conspirators meet in Paris.

Normally ‘according to...’ is used to report content in indirect speech. Thus, there is a certain freedom of paraphrase. However, one may also add a direct quote:

- (8) According to Hobbes, ‘Man to Man is an errant Wolfe’.

The quotation marks may be left out, but then it is not clear whether the quote is literal. I note in passing that there are limits of quotation. One cannot say,

- (9) #According to ML King, ‘I have a dream’.

The possibility of embedding direct quotation under ‘according to’ may be used to explain further data which will be relevant to the fictional case: one may use ‘according to’ even where there is no content but only something that is relevantly reminiscent of a content. Assume Smith, poking fun at some colleague who is sleeping during a meeting, has produced the string of sounds ‘chrrrrrrrr’ in a situation where one would have expected a contentful speech-act. Then one may say

- (10) According to Smith, chrrrrrrrr.

If Smith is snorting while sleeping at night, the above report would be infelicitous, except in highly ironic speech.

As my weatherman example (2) shows, one may use ‘according to’ to ascribe beliefs which have not been expressed. I now shall add some qualification, which will be relevant to fiction. Not anything one takes someone to believe is suitable for being expressed by ‘according to’. In particular, beliefs which are common ground seem ineligible:

- (11) #According to Hobbes, some humans have two legs.

However, while it is an intricate question how to confine common ground, the observation arguably does not only concern claims which are common ground. The observed infelicity is triggered even when the author of the

communicative act reported knows something to be true but the addressee does not. Assume Edward Gibbon does not say anything from which one can conclude that Egypt was part of the Roman empire, that this fact is highly relevant to evaluating some of his judgements in *The History of the Decline and the Fall of the Roman Empire*, and you know that your interlocutor does not know anything about ancient history. Still it seems inappropriate for you to say:

(12) #According to Gibbon, Egypt was part of the Roman empire.

You ought rather to say:

(13) Egypt was part of the Roman empire.

While a full explanation of these findings is beyond the purview of this paper, I surmise that ‘according to...’ normally is used to convey something distinctive of a person’s attitude or the communicative act under consideration. A truth which one takes to be independently established and universally acknowledged is not distinctive in this way, even if it is highly relevant to evaluating some attitude or communicative act. Things would be different if, for instance, Egypt having formed part of the Roman empire had been a contentious matter at the time of Gibbon writing.

3. According to the Fiction

3.1 Paradigm Uses

I now shall consider a subcase of using ‘according to’, use of ‘according to the fiction’. I shall start with the standard cases. One may use ‘according to the fiction’ to state many uncontentious fictional truths as usually conceived, including what is explicitly said and what – in a sense yet to be qualified – more or less directly follows from what is said. I assume that it is not stated and does not logically follow from the Sherlock Holmes stories that a genius detective lives in Baker Street. Still:

(14) According to the Sherlock Holmes stories, (it is true that) a genius detective lives in Baker Street.

'According to the fiction' may even be used to embed highly contentious interpretive hypotheses. Cleanth Brooks says about *The Sound and the Fury*:

"It is tempting to read it as a parable of the disintegration of modern man. Individuals no longer sustained by familial and cultural unity are alienated and lost in private worlds." (Cited from Gibson 2006, 444)

I take this to be a strong interpretation which is at best indirectly supported but is in no way implied by what is explicitly said in the novel. Brooks may have said:

(15) According to *The Sound and the Fury*, (it is true that) individuals no longer sustained by familial and cultural unity are alienated and lost in private worlds.

I think (15) is idiomatic even if one adds something like: 'though this is not intended by Faulkner...'³ The resulting claim is that the fiction is written in a way that, taken in isolation, makes the diligent recipient believe that the interpretation conforms to Faulkner's intentions.

(15) can be read in two ways: firstly, it can be read as a fictional truth. One is authorised (to use Walton's term) to make believe or imagine that individuals... But Brooks seems to endorse a stronger claim. *The Sound and the Fury* tells us something about the actual world: the actual alienation of modern man. (15) can be read as stating this. One may make this reading explicit by adding 'actually':

(16) According to *The Sound and the Fury*, (it is true that) individuals no longer sustained by familial and cultural unity actually are alienated and lost in private worlds.

If (16) is acceptable, 'according to the fiction' may be used to report claims about the actual world the fiction is intended to make actually plausible to the audience.

³ I do not intend to take stance in the intentionalism-textualism debate on whether it is the author's intention or the text that determines the content of the fiction. As we have seen, what is true according to the fiction may deviate from the content of the fiction as addressed in the debate.

In sum, ‘according to the fiction’ may be used to report fictional truths the audience is intended to make believe when engaging with the story, judging from the story (and – within limits – other evidence). And it may be used to report content the audience is intended to actually believe upon engaging with the story, judging from the story. As a consequence, at least one use of ‘according to the fiction (it is true that)’ reports truths that belong to a different category than fictional truth. This is perfectly compatible with the standard picture, albeit not yet covered by it.

We have already seen that ‘fictional truth’ at most covers part of what is true according to the fiction. There are many kinds of truth according to the fiction which belong to a completely different category. I now come to examples which do not report the content of a belief-like attitude at all. Often a fiction invites an emotion-like attitude towards the fictional content, e.g. the fictive character uncle Tom.

- (17) According to *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, (it is true that) one ought to feel compassion for uncle Tom.

One may use (17) to state a fictional truth: it is indeed to be *made believe* that one (for instance the protagonists of the novel) ought to feel compassion. But one may as well use it to state how the audience should actually react. This can be made explicit by replacing ‘one’ by ‘the audience’:

- (18) According to *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, (it is true that) the audience ought to feel compassion for uncle Tom.

The intended reaction reported by (18) is not make believe. It is a matter of further debate whether, in the latter case, the attitude in question is a real emotion or rather some sort of pretense emotion (as perhaps more clearly in Dreyer’s *Joan of Arc* or *Ordet*).

Whatever the status of emotions towards fictional characters, sometimes real emotions are in play. In one plausible interpretation, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* aims at real compassion with the slaves’ lot. I think it is perfectly apt to say

- (19) According to *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, (it is true that) one ought to feel compassion for actual slaves.

From (19) we learn that the fiction is intended to bring across a moral request to take a certain emotional attitude towards reality.

Summing up, it has to be noted that ‘according to the fiction’ is not only used to state standard fictional truth. It more generally tells us something about what the fiction is intended to bring across, judging from the fiction.

In light of these findings, one may wonder how to distinguish fictional truth. At least in some variants of the standard picture, it is characterised by some belief-like attitude, be it conditional belief or Walton’s imagination/make believe. However, there are things one is to make believe though they are false according to the fiction. Arguably the audience of *Planet of the Apes* at the beginning is intended to imagine the protagonist on a distant planet:

- (20) According to *Planet of the Apes*, (it is true that) one ought to imagine/make believe that the protagonist is on a distant planet.

However,

- (21) According to *Planet of the Apes*, it is false that the protagonist is on a distant planet.
- (22) According to *Planet of the Apes*, the protagonist is not on a distant planet.

(20) may be contested. The details of the film do not matter much; we may vary the example such as to provide the protagonist and the audience with arbitrarily strong evidence as long as the latter is misleading. Yet there is a fundamental objection: in line with the standard picture, one may insist that fictional truth remains the only norm of make believe. And fictional truth must be determined by considering the full story. For instance, in the conditional account, the conditional premiss is the full story. One may be excusable or even justified in forming a hypothesis about the fictional truth at some earlier point: the protagonist is on a distant planet. Still there is something wrong in this exercise of make believe, just as when one’s belief is justified but fails to be true. I am not moved by this argument. Someone in the situation of the protagonist would have full belief that she is on a distant planet. And it is important to appreciating the

story that the audience takes a corresponding viewpoint. This is not to say that the audience has to take the viewpoint of someone in the scenario or to become immersed such as to ignore the pretense status of the game. Nor is it to say that the epistemic standing of clues in a piece of fiction is the same as the standing of relevantly similar actual clues. Still it is not always appropriate for the audience to cautiously form a hypothesis what the fictional truth may be like and then wait to the end to see what is to be made believe. There will be situations where the audience is to take an attitude that resembles full-fledged belief in something that is not a fictional truth.

There is a connection to the much-discussed phenomenon of unreliable narrators. Yet the case is special. Often you are not supposed to trust the unreliable narrator and to make believe what she tells you. In *Planet of the Apes*, you are to make believe what is false in the fiction, though you are not told in any way that the protagonist is on a distant planet (or so I assume). You just get certain clues, among them the rational beliefs of the protagonist, which justify your interpreting the scenario as taking place on a distant planet.

What one is to make believe and what is true according to a fiction may come apart. While I think that this result indeed spells trouble for some versions of the standard picture, they may be easily mended, for instance by explicating fictional truth as what one is *ultimately* to make believe once all evidence is in. A further challenge to the standard picture arising from the example is how to informally characterise fictional truth. Is there some idiomatic expression which tracks fictional truth? Looking for other ways of characterising the content captured by the standard picture, one may use 'in the fiction'. For this move to work, it should not be the case that, in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the audience is to pity actual slaves. And it should not be the case that, in *Planet of the Apes*, one ought to make believe that the protagonist is on a distant planet. I feel that 'in the fiction' indeed is more restricted than 'according to the fiction', and it may be read as restricted in the right way to express content according to the standard picture. But I am not sure how robust that reading is. In contrast to 'according to the fiction' and 'according to the fiction, it is true that', 'in the fiction' and 'in the fiction, it is true that' differ in use. For instance, one may say 'in the Sherlock Holmes stories, Conan Doyle depicts a genius detective at work'.

For this reason, ‘in the fiction’ as such is not confined to fictional truth. However, one may not say ‘in the Sherlock Holmes stories, it is true that Conan Doyle depicts a genius detective at work’. So if ‘in the fiction’ is to track precisely fictional truth, we have to add ‘it is true’.

While ‘in the fiction, it is true’ may be suitably confined to carve out those uses of ‘according to the fiction’ which report fictional truth, use of both expressions is too narrow to express standard fictional truth. Many philosophers admit that fictional truth is incomplete (it is neither the case that the number of hairs on Sherlock Holmes head is even, nor is it the case that it is uneven). But they tend to include into the content of the fiction those actual truths which bear on evaluating the scenario in the same way actual truths bear on evaluating certain other actual truths. This is obvious in the conditional analyses, which are very generous in admitting additional content, and it is part and parcel to Walton’s reality principle, which is defined by a counterfactual roughly corresponding to Lewis’s analysis (Walton 1990, 147), and the mutual belief principle which he offers as an amendment of the reality principle (Walton 1990, 152).

Let us see how ‘according to the fiction’ and ‘in the fiction’ behave with respect to such purported fictional truths. As far as I remember, it is not stated in *Portrait of a Lady* or can be deduced from it that Rome is in Italy (if the assumption is false, replace the example). But it is important to evaluating the fiction that Rome is in Italy. It tells us something about Isabel Archer and Gilbert Osmond that they live in Rome, and that Rome is part of Italian culture, Italy being the preferred country for ‘sterile dilettantes’ like Osmond and so on. However, it would be inappropriate to embed the fact that Rome is in Italy under ‘according to/in the fiction’:

(23) #According to *Portrait of a Lady*, (it is true that) Rome is in Italy.

(24) #It is true in *Portrait of a Lady* that Rome is in Italy.

One may react to these findings by distinguishing between the truth and the assertibility of ‘according to the fiction’ claims. It would after all be true that, according to *Portrait of a Lady*, Rome is in Italy. But pragmatic principles of informativity prevent asserting it. Thus, instead of (23)/(24), one had better assert

(25) Rome is in Italy.

Yet the pragmatic principles do not seem to play a role in

(26) It is neither the case that, according to/in *Portrait of a Lady*, Rome is in Italy, nor is it the case that, according to/in *Portrait of a Lady*, Rome is not in Italy/it is not the case that Rome is in Italy.

For this reason, I do not think that (23)/(24) are true but unassertable. It rather seems that ‘according to the fiction’ and ‘in the fiction’ are not in the business of reporting which background assumptions bear on evaluating fictional content. There is a parallel to the Gibbon example (12). I have conjectured that ‘according to’ normally is used to convey something distinctive of a person’s attitude or the communicative act under consideration. A truth which one takes to be independently established and universally acknowledged is not distinctive in this way, even if it is highly relevant to evaluating some attitude or communicative act.

I close this section with a last challenge to the standard picture: fictions which test the boundary of truth-apt content, for instance ungrammatical and nonsensical poems. Take Gertrude Stein’s famous verse *Rose is a rose is a rose*. The verse is ungrammatical and hence does not seem to have truth-apt content. Still one may report:

(27) According to *Sacred Emily*, (it is true that) Rose is a rose is a rose.

Alternatively, take a poem by Christian Morgenstern in Max Knight’s translation (1964):

The Winglewangle phlutters through widowadowood,
the crimson Fingoor splutters and scary screams the Scrood.

The content of the poem may be reported by

(28) According to the poem, it is true that the winglewangle...

These cases correspond to the snorting example

(10) According to Smith, chrrrrrrrrr.

There is a fictional assertion, but no decipherable content is asserted. (27) and (28) lead to the question what attitude one is to take towards the non-truth-apt content reported. My conjecture is that, just as one can fictionally assert such content, it can also become the content of make believe. I shall come back to the issue in the last section.

3.2 *An Attempt at a Paraphrase*

I now shall try to characterise ‘according to the fiction...’. I shall try to give an informative albeit rough paraphrase what is said in different usages of the expression. Following my method of considering paradigm uses of ‘according to the fiction’, my paraphrase shall be guided by a reflective equilibrium between certain general ideas and the example cases. My paraphrase is not intended to say what one has in mind or expresses by ‘according to the fiction’. Its purpose is to approximate circumstances that normally obtain when one successfully uses the expression. ‘According to the fiction’ clearly comes with the presupposition that there is a piece of fiction and there is some content in a very broad sense. Content might be a mere string of letters without any conventional meaning. Moreover, what is reported is not restricted to what is fictionally asserted or thereby implied. All that is required is a suitable connection to the fiction. One especially eligible candidate for such a connection is the author’s intention. However, it seems that not any intention of the author counts, and some things may be true according to the fiction even contrary to the author’s intentions. What counts is what the fiction brings across as intended. Moreover, I assume that the intentions at stake are *reflective* communicative intentions – intentions fulfilled in their own recognition’. (Garcia-Carpintero 2013, 341). ‘According to the fiction’ reports what intentions are conveyed by the fiction as standing in a suitable connection with the fiction. One may harbour doubts about such free-floating intentions which do not have to be attributed to someone. In reply, in talking of intentions coming with the fiction, I relativise these intentions to a suitably idealised audience. ‘According to the fiction...’ reports what the audience, being given the fiction and relevant background information, concludes that the fiction is best suited to communicate.

Let me consider my first example case:

- (14) According to the Sherlock Holmes stories, (it is true that) a genius detective lives in Baker Street.

One challenge is to distinguish things which are true from things which are false but believable according to the fiction as in the *Planet of the Apes*-example (18). One may talk of ultimately making believe, i.e. making believe once the whole story has been told:

- (14*) The content of the Sherlock Holmes stories is suitable for the audience to conclude that the stories come with an intention to invite a certain game of make believe: one is to ultimately make believe that a genius detective lives in Baker street.

One may feel concerned that this is over-reflective. Shouldn't it be sufficient for something to be true according to the fiction that the audience in a normal context is disposed to *immediately* react to listening to the story by making believe that a genius detective lives in Baker street? Couldn't the audience be so disposed without the stories being suitable for making the audience conclude that there is an intention of...? In reply, the audience in (14*) is idealised what concerns general linguistic competence and reflectivity. Moreover, I do not take it to be a prerequisite of truly and justifiably asserting (14) that one actually checks whether (14*) is true. I add that, since 'according to the fiction' is somewhat detached from an author's actual intentions and an audience's actual reactions, it is perfectly compatible with my paraphrase that there is no one to intend to convey or to recognise what is true according to the fiction, although the actual author and the actual audience are perfectly successful in their artistic communication.

I shall not go through all modifications of (14*) for the different examples. The common pattern is that the content of the fiction is suitable for making the audience conclude what intention the fiction comes with. The intention thus reported varies greatly: In one variant of (15), one is to make believe that individuals no longer sustained by familial and cultural unity are alienated and lost in private worlds. In another, one is to *actually* believe this. In (17), one ought to feel compassion/pretend compassion for uncle Tom, in (19) one ought to feel compassion for actual slaves. 'Ought'

can be interpreted along several lines, as a moral requirement, as an imperative and so on. In (20) the intention is that one imagine/make believe that the protagonist is on a distant planet. In (21), one is to make disbelieve that the astronaut is on a distant planet. In (26), it is denied that the fiction is suitable to make the audience conclude it comes with certain intentions. The intentions in question would be to make believe that Rome is in Italy, and to make disbelieve that Rome is in Italy. Coming to non-truth-apt content of make believe, the intention reported in (27) is to make believe that Rose is a rose is a rose.

4. A Metaexpressivist View of ‘According to the Fiction’

A closer inspection of data about using ‘according to the fiction’ shows, on the one hand, that the contents embedded under ‘according to the fiction’ are much more variegated than fictional truth/standard fictional truth. They may comprise many intentions which are revealed to the audience by use of fiction. Perhaps almost any intention can be vested in a fiction and be reported by ‘according to the fiction’. On the other hand, the scope of ‘according to the fiction, (it is true that)’ excludes some standard fictional truths. While ‘according to the fiction’ covers what is explicitly said and many implicit interpretive claims, it does not cover inexplicit background truths which bear on evaluating the fiction but are common ground.

This is not to say that the standard picture is false. It just does not capture fictional truth and truth according to the fiction. I can imagine that someone who focuses on the standard picture may go further. She may dismiss my findings. She may say that while truth according to the fiction underlies all sorts of linguistic irregularities, the standard picture is the most eligible systematic account. The view may be supported by a metasemantic theory according to which, in order to find out what our terms mean, use data have to be balanced against theoretical virtues of a systematic account (Weatherson 2003). Perhaps truth according to the fiction is amenable to such a treatment, too. Or we may dismiss ‘according to the fiction’ as revealing the overall role of fiction.

However, I shall pursue a reaction which is more sympathetic to the use data assembled. It promises to correct the streamlining tendencies

that may come with the standard picture. I shall start from the use data and try to define the corresponding role of fiction. 'According to the fiction' makes explicit that an act of story-telling reveals certain intentions to the audience. It takes a meta-perspective; it is about some other communicative act. My examples of intentions reported have been make believe, but also other pretense and real attitudes. I add pretense behaviour and real actions:

(29) According to Uncle *Tom's Cabin*, one ought to free actual slaves.

Yet there are some intended reactions which fiction seems especially or even uniquely suited to incite. They presumably define some core role of fiction. Pretense stands out, and prominent among exercises of pretense is pretense belief. But the prominence of pretense belief in itself does not yet force us to model fiction on actual belief, as it is done in the standard picture.

Therefore, instead of starting with a model focusing on the relationship to actual belief, I shall start from the variety of uses of 'according to the fiction'. My pluralistic perspective shall be inspired by a theory paradigm which involves a similar shift from believing truth to a somewhat different pattern of intended reactions: expressivism in metaethics.

Take

(30) Kicking dogs is wrong.

Just as asserting 'the sun is shining' serves to state the truth that the sun is shining, (30) seems to serve to state the truth that kicking dogs is wrong. However, philosophers have pointed out several problems with this view. Among other things, it seems difficult to reconcile the role of stating an independent fact with the role of directly motivating a certain set of feelings and/or actions. As a consequence, some have been attracted by expressivism. I do not commit myself to any version of expressivism in metaethics. I just use the theory pattern to motivate a similar albeit (somewhat) independent move in aesthetics. Expressivism comes in many variants. According to my toy version, in spite of its surface form, (30) does not really serve to state a truth. Rather, by uttering it, one normally conveys that one

intends the addressee to respond in a certain way, emotionally, behaviourally (not kicking dogs) or whatever. The meaning of (30) is conventionally bound to this role. An addressee who understands the utterance realises that there are certain ways of complying with it, and that the utterance is intended to make her comply in these ways. Truth comes only in as a way of regimenting these ways: for instance, they are connected by inferential relations comparable to those connecting truth-apt statements. If kicking dogs is wrong, so is kicking cats; kicking dogs is wrong; thus...

Just as in ethical discourse, there are statements about, say, fictional characters which look perfectly true.

(31) Sherlock Holmes lives in Baker street.

(31) is a fictional truth, a standard fictional truth, and a truth according to the (Sherlock Holmes) fiction. However, we have seen that there are cases where the three categories do not perfectly overlap. ‘According to the fiction’ felicitously embeds contents which are clearly neither fictional truths nor standard fictional truths, e.g. intended emotional reactions. Even if we confine attention to candidates for fictional truth, we easily find queer ones. Some candidates are incomplete, some are inconsistent. For instance, one may write a story where someone has refuted Gödel’s Theorem (Currie 1992, 87). One may even write a story where this is not explicitly said but an implicit fictional truth. Moreover there are ‘non-sense’ contents which nevertheless seem candidates for fictional truth like ‘Rose is a rose is a rose’.

While statements like (31) invite modeling truth according to a fiction on the basis of truth-apt content, starting from the nonsense poems, one may feel tempted by a different approach. Instead of asking first how their content relates to truth-apt content, one may start from considering how one is intended to react to them.

We have seen that firstly, ‘according to the fiction’ may report a whole range of intentions. The intentions mostly concern how the audience is supposed to react to the fiction. The intended reactions reported by ‘according to the fiction’ can be many and varied. Pretense will loom large among them. But pretense, too, can take many and varied forms. Sometimes it concerns attitudes, sometimes it concerns behaviours. One platitude to start with: the core of pretense is some sort of simulation or

mimicking of actual non-pretense attitudes and behaviours. One adopts an attitude or behaviour that is relevantly similar to the attitude or behaviour to be simulated. What counts as relevantly similar is highly context-dependent. I doubt that there is always some threshold of *essential* common features that must be shared by the original and the simulation. So simulation of X is compatible with failure to instantiate all essential properties of X (think of some completely different stuff simulating the surface qualities of water).

I think that the best way of accounting for our attitude towards the queer examples is that, even when it comes to make believe, ways of simulating belief are many and varied. Sometimes they only remotely resemble the attitude towards truth-apt content. This leads to a certain shift of paradigm: in the standard picture, the attitude towards fiction is modeled on pretense belief, and pretense belief is modeled on belief in actual truth. I propose to break with both features. The standard of our reaction to fiction is not pretense belief. Surely pretense looms large in the pattern of reactions to fiction. But pretense belief is just one in a great many attitudes and behaviours to be simulated. And the standard of pretense belief is not similarity of the content to be made believe to what is actually true or mutually believed but similarity of *the attitude* taken to actual belief. Actual belief has many more features than just what is believed. We have seen in the *Planet of the Apes*-example that standard fictional truth only within limits can serve as a guide to make believe. What is simulated is not belief in what is true but belief in what one takes to be true. The difference is not manifest at the beginning, but it becomes manifest at the end of the story. Then it becomes clear that, though one did believe in a fictional falsehood, one did not miss any standard (as in actual false belief) but rather successfully complied to what the fiction was intended for. Moreover, there is the indirect role of background beliefs like *Rome is in Italy*, which seems rather different from the role of such common beliefs in our actual belief system. They play a belief-like role in fixing the content of the fiction but are not to be made believe. One may wonder how they can fall short of being made believe if they stand in the very same relations to the content of make believe than other things made believe. But it may be just a peculiarity of pretense belief compared to actual belief that something plays a belief-like role in fixing the content to be made believe and is nevertheless excluded

from that content. In the case of the nonsense poems, the resemblance may be based less on sharing truth-apt content than on dispositions on the part of the subject to react as one would react to contentful assertions. What could these dispositions consist in? Think of a sincere statement in a radically foreign language. Without a translation manual, you are at a loss what the statement invites you to believe. But you may still recognise it as a sincere assertion and be prepared to revise your belief system upon getting the translation. Mimicking these features may be sufficient in a certain context to mimick a belief-like attitude.

I have focused on belief-like attitudes because here the departure from the standard picture has to be developed in detail. Yet other parts of the intended reaction pattern reported by 'according to the fiction' also matter to determining the overall role of fiction. It may well be that some sort of pretense game is essential to fiction (but see Friend 2012, 13). No pretense game, no fiction. But this is not to say that the pretense game has to involve belief-like attitudes, nor is it to demote other roles of fiction to second importance. In fact, those other roles may prove more important than the essential function of pretense, and it may be one key function of 'according to the fiction' to report these roles. For instance, it may have been the key role of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to make people feel compassion for actual slaves and engage in the abolitionist movement. This is what the novel arguably was intended to do, and this is what it is appreciated for rather than for its value in a game of make believe.

In sum, reporting fictional truth is just one aspect of the broader meta-expressive role of 'according to the fiction'. 'According to the fiction' is used to report an expressive artistic act (broadly confined). One may call the latter fiction-making or story-telling. The function of the artistic act normally is to mark a certain reaction pattern as intended, just as, according to some expressivist theories of moral discourse, *kicking dogs is wrong* does not convey a truth but is intended to provoke a certain reaction (not kicking dogs, feeling repelled by kicking dogs). The pattern of apt reactions may comprise a great manifold of attitudes and behaviour, which display both significant similarities to and differences from attitudes and behaviour in non-artistic contexts.

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Saving ‘Disinterestedness’ in Environmental Aesthetics: A Defense against Berleant and Saito

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Environmental aesthetics has been a relatively recent topic in the history of philosophy. However, the justification of aesthetic judgments in nature has created problems. The old, historical concept of “disinterestedness” dominates the tradition of aesthetics almost for two centuries. However, some modern scholars such as Berleant criticizes disinterestedness with the claim that it is not a satisfactory criterion since it regards the environment as if an artwork. On the other hand, although Saito does not present direct oppositions, she does not take disinterestedness into consideration and mention it even once in her works. As an alternative, whereas Berleant proposes a theory of “aesthetics of engagement”, Saito goes for a “Zen-Buddhist type of non-anthropocentric appreciation”, both intending to adopt a holistic perspective for the human-nature relationship and overcome the created boundaries. However, I claim that although the main intention of both seems to be a comprehensive perception of nature, “appreciating nature *as nature*” (not as an artwork), they misinterpret “disinterestedness” and overlook the fact that we can still maintain it within environmental aesthetics. Disinterestedness can guide our judgments with the notions of (1) non-instrumentality, (2) transparent self and (3) impartiality. In this sense, I argue that (1) the proper antagonistic pole of engagement is not disinterestedness but a dominant theory of aesthetics left from 18th century called “picturesque”, (2) in contrast to holistic accounts of these philosophers who look for an *immersion-of-self-in-a-bigger-Self*, disinterestedness provides being *devoid-of-any-empirical-self* and (3) disinterestedness is not *anthropocentric*, human-centered, but *anthropogeneric*, human-generated, which accepts the “otherness” of nature and opens the way for respect and care in environmental ethics.

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1. What is Environmental Aesthetics?

Environmental aesthetics is one of the new areas of aesthetics that emerged in the second half of the 20th century. Two main questions dominate the discussions in environmental aesthetics: (1) in what ways appreciation of nature is different from appreciation of art and (2) how can we be justified in our aesthetic judgments of nature, that some appreciation is better than the other? Although environmental aesthetics does seem to develop in recent years, experience and appreciation of nature was a huge concern in the philosophers of 18th century in Anthony Ashley Cooper (Lord Shaftesbury) (1801-1885), Joseph Addison (1672-1719), Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (1714-1762) and Immanuel Kant. However, in the 19th century, especially with Hegel, nature as an object of aesthetics lost its significance and went through a stagnation period. After Hegel, the proper object of aesthetics became only art which is the sensible expression of the absolute spirit and by the twentieth century aesthetics of nature was almost totally eclipsed by the philosophy of art. It was in 1966 that with Ronald Hepburn's seminal article *Contemporary Aesthetics and the Neglect of the Natural Beauty*, the focus of aesthetics diverted back to the environment as an object of appreciation equally as art.

My paper deals directly with the question of how aesthetic judgments in environmental appreciation can be justified. How can we ascertain that this judgment is better than the other one, or much "serious" rather than being "trivial" (Hepburn, 1993, p. 65)? In short, how can we find a normative criterion which would help to guide our actions and principles? This question is related with the first question above; in what ways appreciation of nature differ from art. I will start with answering the first and then move the latter one. In the literature of environmental aesthetics, the justification of aesthetic judgments gave way to two camps. First camp is the cognitivists who claim science or information functions as a standard. Carlson (1995) declared that the act of appreciation "has an essential cognitive component" (p. 396), Eaton (1998) asserted knowledge increases aesthetic pleasure (p. 154) and Lintott (2007) claimed that "the bias of science is a useful tool in the aesthetic appreciation of nature" (p. 392). In contrast, non-cognitivists argued against the necessity of knowledge. For instance, Brady (1998) asserted that although we can lack info about the

object, “imagination” can still encourage us to have various perceptual experiences (p. 142), Carroll (2007) claimed that we appreciate nature sometimes “less intellectually” but only by being “emotionally moved” (p. 170). However, since the second camp did not present any “objective” criterion, cognitivists accused them for having no criteria for proper appreciation. In this respect, some philosophers such as Brady (2003) referred back to the old, historical concept of “disinterestedness” (p. 10) which marks if we are “imagining well” or not with the motivation of having an impartial and unbiased approach.

However, Berleant criticized disinterestedness with the claim that it does not satisfy the criterion for aesthetic judgments of nature since it takes them as if an artwork. In this respect, he not only theorized an argument for the first question of environmental aesthetics, how appreciation of nature is different from appreciation of art, but also responded to the latter question that disinterestedness cannot function properly in justifying aesthetic judgments. His ideas can be gathered under three main problems: (1) the state of mind disinterestedness supports is pure “contemplation”, isolating the subject within his own psychological set (1994, p. 250), (2) disinterestedness “objectifies” and encloses the focus of appreciation “within borders”, frames and isolates it (1993, p. 236) and (3) it fosters a “detached” attitude by creating “distance” between the perceiver and the perceived, reducing it to the parochial dominancy of one sense, vision (1994, p. 244). In contrast to these, he argued for an aesthetic theory that (1) integrates the “perception of a conscious body and world” which is a dynamic perceptual system that “assimilates person and place” (1991, p. 102), (2) a “holistic” conception of environment which counts for a real “lived experience”, as the term itself signifies that *environs* the people (1991, p. 91) and (3) an “aesthetics” with an attitude of “engagement” where perceivers act as “participants” not “observers” (1993, p. 236) in which multi-sensuous appreciation takes place including smell, sounds, touch and taste (1993, p. 237).

Unlike Berleant, Saito did not criticize disinterestedness explicitly and did not propose a direct alternative to it. However, she dealt with the justification problem of environmental aesthetics and appreciation of nature as “nature” in her work *Appreciating Nature on its own Terms* (2007) without mentioning disinterestedness even once and utterly ignoring it. Likewise

any non-cognitivist, she rejected the role of science and information as too reductionist, as if it is the “only relationship” humans interact with nature (p. 157) and proposed an alternative model called “Zen-Buddhist type of non-anthropocentric appreciation” aiming to preserve the unity and continuity between man and nature and overcome the created boundaries. In this sense, although she does not clearly depict, she criticizes imposing our own stories on nature and creating boundaries between nature and human mind. Although the “picturesque” and “associationist” appreciation of nature is her main target, the way she defends Zen Buddhism as the proper mode of appreciation, she discards disinterestedness as well. The reasons opting for a Zen Buddhist non-anthropocentric appreciation is (1) instead of attempting to understand nature exclusively through mental activities with various conceptual schemes, it suggests a possibility of knowing nature “directly and immediately with our whole body and mind” and (2) Zen Buddhism does not detach the mind from the self, but perceive its delicate life, feel its feeling. Therefore, we “enter into” or “become one with the object with our entire being” (p. 158). These points indicate that for Saito, disinterestedness is not a theory that creates a “holistic” union of object and the subject but presents a dualistic approach. Moreover, the inherent contemplative “mental activity” in disinterestedness does not enable one to “know nature” “immediately” and “directly” but rather presupposes an anthropocentric essence in which humans have a central role with a distinct position of appreciating nature from their godlike and “impersonal” position.

So, the questions for both Berleant and Saito are: (1) is disinterestedness indeed incompatible with “engagement” and “active participation”? In other words, does it indeed frame and isolate the object by creating distance and leaving it to the dominancy of eye? (2) Is a “holistic” theory of aesthetics the most proper form of appreciation of nature distinguishing it from art? Lastly, (3) does disinterestedness indeed impose or imply any anthropocentrism since it does accept the role of human perception as a main principle of guidance? My answer is negative for all these questions. I reject both Berleant’s and Saito’s criticisms. I claim that although the main intention of both seems to be a comprehensive perception of nature, “appreciating nature *as* nature” (not as an artwork), they misinterpret “disinterestedness” and overlook the fact that it still can be

maintained within environmental aesthetics and guide our epistemological distinctions, i.e. determining if *that* judgments is better than *this* one or not. In this sense, I argue that (1) the proper antagonistic pole of engagement is not disinterestedness but a dominant theory of aesthetics left from 18th century: the picturesque, (2) in contrast to holistic account of these philosophers who look for an *immersion-of-self-in-a-bigger-Self*, I argue disinterestedness provides being *devoid-of-any-empirical-self* and (3) disinterestedness does not posit aesthetic judgments to be *anthropocentric*, human-centered but accept they are *anthropogenic*, human-generated. Before moving to build these arguments, investigating the origins of the concept primarily would clear away the ongoing misinterpretation. Disinterestedness does not separate the subject and object in an elitist, disengaged attitude but as its originator, Shaftesbury defines; disinterestedness means to be motivated without self-concerns.

2. The Origins of Disinterestedness

The origin of the concept dates back to the 18th century, to the writings of Lord Shaftesbury. He was the first one who called attention to “disinterested perception” (Stolnitz, 1961, p. 132). The primary context of the concept was ethics and religion but afterwards it came to be affiliated with aesthetic judgment and attitude. “Interest” for Shaftesbury is related with the “well-being” or the “long-range good” of the individual or the society. Its main realm is ethics, related with actions and the concept of good and bad. The good actions are the ones which are concerned with the “interest” of all, not only the individual. In this sense, Shaftesbury utilizes the concept for the kinds of actions that are not motivated with “self-interest”. He associates these with the terms of “interestedness or self-love” (ibid.). Following ethics, the next subject disinterestedness shows up is religion. Shaftesbury opposes “the disinterested love of God” to “serving God...for interest merely” (quoted in Stolnitz, 1961, p. 55). The love of God shall be for its own sake alone, not for the sake of any “interest” such as fear, wishes, desires etc. In this sense, as Stolnitz (1961) puts it neatly, for Shaftesbury, the antagonism of interestedness is “egoism in ethics and instrumentalism in religion” (p. 132). Disinterestedness is only a negation of having interest or being “motivated by self-concern” (ibid.)

Around the same years¹, Baumgarten introduced the term “aesthetics” in 1735 which was rooted in Greek term “aisthethike” that literally meant “sense perception” or “sensory cognition”. He used the term “*episteme aisthetike*” for the first time in his Halle master’s thesis which meant “the science of perception” or “science of sensitive knowing” (Brady, 2003, p. 8). In this respect Shaftesbury began to describe the virtuous man as the one who is devoid of being motivated by self-concerns in perceptual and sensory experiences. The term began to refer to the state of “barely seeing and admiring” (Stolnitz, 1961, p. 133). His attempt was still for an ethical and practical perspective and attitude. However, following Shaftesbury, his successors such as Addison, Hutcheson, Burke and Kant caused the concept to evolve in aesthetics. I will not go into detail but touch one of the most important figures, Kant, with whose philosophy disinterestedness in aesthetics reached its climax.

Kant asserts that disinterestedness indicates impartiality, being not biased in the existence of the thing, but rather to be indifferent to its representation in relation to our personal desires, wishes or “interests”. Interest for Kant is “the satisfaction that we combine with the representation of the existence of an object” (CJ, 5:204) which by extension is a work of the faculty of desire. However, in an aesthetic judgment the pleasure does not arise due to the object’s existence but from a mere contemplation of that object. I have taste not because of the dependent relations I have with the object but because of “what I make of this representation in myself”. Disinterestedness is the quality of the beautiful which marks it different from agreeable and good. Agreeable is the state which is “merely the sensory gratification of the senses” (CJ, 5:206) and good is the one which we have a “concept of the object” (CJ, 5:208) and appreciate it with respect to the purpose or ends that it serves us. On the other hand disinterestedness indicates to an appreciation of an object not for the sake of something or for the mere sensory gratification but for the sake of that object alone. It does not refer only to not being motivated with self-concerns but also evokes the concepts of *non-instrumentality* and *impartiality*, being not biased in the existence of the thing, but rather to be entirely indif-

¹ Shaftesbury wrote his work *Sensus Communis: An Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humor* in 1709.

ferent to its representation in relation to our personal desires, wishes or interests. In this sense, unlike Berleant criticizes, disinterestedness has never been defined or explained in history as an attitude that is “distanced”, “detached” or “isolating and framing” the “object”. Berleant’s criticism might be due to the results of the *art for art’s sake* trend that gained eminence in the 19th and 20th century but I argue that this was a phenomenon highly influenced and affected by the political agenda of those periods. In contrast, disinterestedness in its original version never had such intentions or implications. Hence, we can summarize the main intention of the concept with the following three key terms: 1) non-instrumentality, (2) selflessness and (3) impartiality.

In the modern literature, Brady defends “interest” as a helpful concept for designating the features of aesthetic attitude. As Shaftesbury primarily proposed, non-instrumentalism is one of her motivations to save the concept in the contemporary debates. Aesthetic responses differ from intellectual ones in the way they are not mediated but rather perceived immediately without factual consideration or with utilitarian concerns (Brady, 2003, p. 9). The main importance of the concept for Brady (2003) is that it invites us to an attitude that is devoid of purpose where no object is used as a means to an end, nor searched for its “function or use”. In this sense, it should be marked that disinterestedness does not mean “indifference”, but rather just being free from concerns” (p. 10) resembling Shaftesbury’s definition of “not being motivated with self-concerns”. Indifference connotes negative attitudes, such as not caring or disregarding. However, disinterestedness indicates to a purely neutral state, neither to be touched with an “interest” nor “lack of interest” (p. 34) that is being devoid of any enthusiasm or spirit.

The second affiliated concept is “selflessness”. Egoism, selfishness and selflessness are closely connected terms but are highly different in their content. In this respect, it is easy to confuse disinterestedness with any one of them and misinterpret the meaning and purpose it suggests in aesthetic judgments. Although Shaftesbury’s usage of disinterestedness in 1700s had been contrasted with egoism in ethics, such as being “unselfish”, with Addison it changed meaning to “impersonality” or “selflessness” (Stolnitz, 1961, p. 138). Selflessness or impersonality is also a proper term to describe what Kant means with the concept. In this sense, whereas

selfishness and unselfishness would mean “being other-directed” that is “Willing to put the needs or wishes of others before one’s own” as the Oxford Dictionary states (Url); “selflessness” denotes a transparency in the identity, “making oneself a pure, unflawed mirror” that can reflect “all the impressions, which the objects that are before us can produce” with no “distortion” (Brady, 2003, p. 138).

Lastly, “impartiality” is a potent term to delineate the attitude which disinterestedness advocates in aesthetic judgments. Disinterestedness functions in aesthetic judgments’ justifications to differentiate what is “arbitrary” and “subjective or personal desire” and what is an irrelevant “practical aim” (Brady, 2003, p. 34). Especially in aesthetic appreciation of nature there are less strong boundaries than the works of art. For example, there are no nature (natural sound) critics of cicadas that instructs us what we should listen, judge if the notes are appropriately designed, how long we shall pay attention and in what way we should interact as is the case in listening a Beethoven or Bach. “Consider the self-indulgent response that appreciates a rainbow as “placed here just for me!” (Hettinger, 2007, p. 418). Against such consequences, disinterestedness proposes a “standard” with respect to the last criteria, if the response is “unbiased or biased”. It guarantees a degree of impartiality so that I can assume everyone has a same similar appreciation with respect to that particular experience. This was one of Kant’s concerns as well; he prioritized disinterestedness as the first moment of aesthetic judgments in the sense that it grounded the “universality” of them. Only with a normative criterion as such we can demand from others a similar response for a rainbow or a sunset.

Therefore, I claim first, disinterestedness does not claim any disengagement and passivity or framing and isolation of the object in an elitist way which is dominated with just a subjective contemplative state of mind but rather the picturesque tradition does it. Second, although it doesn’t call for a holistic integration of person and environment as Berleant and Saito looks for, it suggests a transparency of the self that is non-instrumental and unbiased and finally, it does not defend anthropocentrism but accepts the fact that aesthetic judgments are *anthropogeneric*, they are human-generated. We have to accept the duality of nature and humanity, i.e. nature is an “other” to us. This will create a space for “respect” in environmental ethics.

3. Objections and Counter-arguments

3.1. *The proper antagonistic pole of engagement: picturesque*

First, I claim that “disinterestedness” and “engagement” are pseudo-juxtapositions in Berleant, and the proper antagonistic pole is “picturesque”. Since Berleant is more severe in this criticism, this counterargument would be mainly against his thesis. Although, Saito (2007) criticizes the domination of aesthetic appreciation *only* by the sense of sight, she explicitly admits that the proper target of this criticism is picturesque, an aesthetic tradition left from the 18th century (pp. 152-4). Picturesque is ruled with a distant and detached relation from the subject and the object of aesthetic appreciation is framed in a bordered, two-dimensional picture. *Picturesque* literally means “like a painting”, coined after the term *pittoresco*, “the painter’s view”. Nature is viewed as a landscape painting where the visual qualities are emphasized. In picturesque, nature is experienced as if an ‘ideal landscape painting’. Therefore, the approach to it is necessarily dominated by the sense of sight. Vision, colors and the play of light are the main parameters for determining aesthetic response (Callicott, 2007, p. 108).

Berleant wants to object this claim and integrate an approach of experiencing nature that is three-dimensional and multi-sensuous, not reduced to sight alone but includes hearing, smelling, and the sense of touch. However, unlike Berleant proposes, disinterestedness does not reject this attitude. What it means is to be devoid of personal, self-interested concern in its original version; to be unbiased and impartial as seen above. Carlson (1993) also attacks Berleant with the argument that “active participation and disinterestedness are not necessarily incompatible” (p. 222). The latter asks for a “special unique way or a special attitude” in approaching aesthetic phenomena and the former demands taking part lively in the appreciation process. However, assertion of a special attitude in aesthetic judgments does not exclude the process of taking part logically. Analytically, they are not antagonisms to each other. Similarly, Brady (2003) argues that his juxtaposition of disinterestedness and engagement “rests on a mistaken assumption” (p. 133).

On the other hand, Berleant can assume a hidden premise that disinterestedness *deliberately* and directly overlooks and rejects engagement. How-

ever, that is another issue which is tied up with the history of what kind of aesthetic genre dominates. In the 18th century picturesque commenced to guide all aesthetic phenomena as if it is the only one and Berleant seems to confuse this historical, dominant type of art as if it *is* the whole artistic tradition and reduced the rich context of aesthetics to picturesque alone. Moreover, Berleant (1991) accuses Stolnitz to be the pioneer figure who isolated aesthetics “from the rest of life” (p. 13). However, Stolnitz does not argue for passivity and distance but as can be seen in his idea of “sympathetic attention”, he claims that we need to open ourselves to the object and let that perceptual experience to carry us to its own nature. This is the state of mind that we should have, not a purely subjective contemplative mental process but a direct openness to the aesthetic features of the object or phenomena. In this way, we can be “thoroughly engaged by it” (Brady, 2003, p. 9).

Not only this but also, many scholars who defend disinterestedness such as Brady and Carlson also accept the fact that environment shall be appreciated multi-sensuously. This shows that disinterestedness and the peculiar dominancy of one sense, vision, are not necessarily dependent on each other and parasitic. Brady (2003) emphasizes the need to acknowledge the “particularity of natural environments as environments rather than merely as scenes or objects” (p. 3). Similarly, Carlson (2007) advocates a “natural environmental model” in nature appreciation which differentiates from “object” and “landscape model” (p. 125). The natural environmental model accepts the fact that we are surrounded by nature in a multi-sensuous way such as the sounds of rain, humidity of mud, smell of a rose or an odor of decay. But, they both accept that disinterestedness is a crucial aesthetic attitude that discriminates what kind of aesthetic judgments are appropriate or not, rich or shallow. Therefore, we can be in nature, acknowledge its sounds, smells and touch in a multi-sensuous and three-dimensional way but be devoid of self-interested expectations. For instance, we can acknowledge all the perceptive qualities of a chamomile but not have an appetitive desire. On the other hand, we can approach a flower *singularly* but can acknowledge its continuity with the rest of the atmosphere disinterestedly. For example, we can appreciate a snowdrop in its particularity on the top of a high mountain. This appreciation itself is already bounded by the context that the appreciation demands: the aware-

ness of snow, mountain, height, less oxygen, etc. It does not mean that we have separated and isolated the object from its environment. Therefore, disinterestedness does not discard the features of continuity and engagement with the environment.

3.2. *The discussion of selflessness: immersion-in-a-bigger-Self vs. devoid-of-any-empirical-self*

Second, although it might be much limited than they seek; their call for a holistic account of appreciative attitude is still embraced in disinterestedness. The self does not vanish and dissolve in a bigger Self as both Saito and Berleant assume but, disinterestedness, although different in dimension, still implies an account of selflessness. Whereas their theories can be interpreted as implication of *immersion-of-self-in-a-bigger-Self*, disinterestedness defends *being-devoid-of-any-empirical-self*. Disinterestedness is more than being “unselfish” but it is to be “impersonal” or “selfless” where one becomes “a pure, unflawed mirror, prepared to receive without distortion all the impressions” (Stolnitz 1961, p. 138). Disinterestedness implies selflessness where the self does not dissolve in the whole as they prefer, but becomes *transparent*. Disinterestedness is at a parallel line in their purpose, but differs to the extent and degree being ambitious in this.

In disinterestedness, the self does not dissolve in nature, rather keeps his/her identity separate but becomes much neutral and transparent. In this sense, the self becomes devoid of any empirical dependencies and determinations, it does not set aside who s/he is but “what s/he wants” (Brady, 2003, p. 132). Therefore, it is not a passive or detached relationship but a sort of relationship that demands from the one to stand at a concrete standpoint and relate to the phenomena without “wants or desires” (ibid.). The dichotomy of subject and object is maintained in disinterestedness with the assumption that natural environment is distinct from us (Brady, 2003, p. 70). The holistic arguments of Saito and Berleant do not consist of such a premise. However, I do not mean to claim that the holistic ideas shall be abandoned and instead the idea of nature’s otherness hand in hand with disinterestedness shall only be embraced. Rather, I argue that the idea of accepting nature’s otherness and distinctness to generate an elitist and detached appreciation of environment is misleading. Disinter-

estedness accepts this otherness and still has a lot to say about the relation of humans and nature. This is not a trivial argument that shall be ruled out easily.

Culture is the reason for the difference between nature and humans. As the term itself means, nature, in the “most commonest and fundamental sense”, refers to all the existent things which are not human and “distinguished from the work of humanity”. It is in contrast to culture, history and everything that is “artificially” produced (Soper, 1995, p. 15). In short, as Soper (1995) puts it neatly, it is the “idea through which we conceptualize what is *other* to ourselves” (p. 16). This acceptance of nature’s otherness for Brady is a realistic attitude. We affect nature with our deeds and it affects us, but it is true that there is a gap in between. However, this fact does not lead us to “objectify” or “detach” from nature. In contrast, accepting nature’s otherness with disinterested attitude can engender a respectful relation with it that is devoid of utilitarian purposes and biased, self-motivated concerns. The aesthetic disinterested attitude helps one “to love something (e.g. beautiful crystal formations the indescribable beauty of plants) even apart from any intention to use it” (Kant, CJ, 5:267). Disinterestedness calls for a transparent self that is devoid of any empirical needs so that in the end, it “habituates us to selfless reflection and conduct” (Lucht, 2007, p. 138). It enables us to value nature in a way that “backgrounds personal preferences and utilitarian concerns” and “foreground an appreciation of its qualities” (Brady, 2003, p. 129). In short, although holistic accounts that advocate the *immersion-of-self-in-a-bigger-Self* might aim to erase the boundaries between humans and nature and create a unified relation, their ideas are not realistic and well-grounded to abandon the theory of disinterestedness.

3.3. *Anthropogeneric vs. anthropocentric*

Third, against Saito’s “Zen-Buddhist type of non-anthropocentric appreciation” theory, I argue that aesthetic judgments are response-dependent which means that they are *anthropogeneric*, human-generated, and shall not be confused with *anthropocentric*, human-centered. I argue that Saito misinterprets the term “*anthropocentric*” with worries of domination of nature. However, disinterestedness does not lead to *anthropocentrism*. It is true

that aesthetic appreciation by definition demands a creative dialectic between humans and nature that is dependent on the above-mentioned argument of “otherness” of nature but this shall not lead us to discard altogether the existence of a human appreciator. This is like throwing the baby with the bath water. The claim that aesthetic judgments are *anthropogeneric* underlines the fact that it occurs within a human perspective. In that case, disinterestedness involves *anthropogenericism* as a necessary feature of aesthetic judgment which necessitates the human-valuer.

Anthropogeneric indicates the necessity of “subject generator” in an aesthetic appreciation. Aesthetic appreciation in nature is always relational; there is a creative dialectic between humans and nature. Since any philosophical view or ethics without humans does not make sense, it is the same case in aesthetics. Humans *ignite* aesthetic appreciation. Appreciation itself even assumes it by definition, in order for that act to take place, an appreciator has to exist. This is the same case for ethics, we try to find a proper ethical theory or an answer to the question “how *we* shall live” or “how *I* shall act”. These questions are directed to particular *subjects*.

To say of any natural thing *n* that *n* is valuable means that *n* is able to be valued, if and when human valuers, *Hs* come along. There is no actual beauty autonomous to the valued and valuable forests cirque lakes, mountains, sequoia tress, sand hill cranes there is aesthetic ignition when humans arrive, the aesthetics emerges relationally with the appearance of the subject generator. (Rolston, 2007, p. 328)

Reminiscent of Thomas Nagel's book (1986), there is not a “view from nowhere”, the view is always from somewhere (p. 2). Therefore, we can adopt a kind of aesthetics that can help us appreciate nature without imposing our practical needs, desires and wishes. In other words, I suggest that with disinterestedness, we can both accept the *anthropogeneric* nature of each proposition and appreciate nature's beauty without falling into a relativist discourse. Then, our aesthetic judgments would include a standard for a “universal voice” (Kant, CJ, 5:216) without assimilating or imposing our self-concerned interests. Moreover, even the call for “impartiality” and being devoid of self-motivated concerns indicate that disinterestedness is not *anthropocentric*. In contrast, it urges us to detain from imposing our own practical desires and needs. In other words, the otherness of nature and *anthropogenericism* are not one and same even though they might

look like. The latter is the ontology of how we *make* judgments. Adopting nature's otherness does not necessarily lead us to have a hierarchical, *anthropocentric* relation with nature.

4. Why a Defense of Disinterestedness?

All in all, saving disinterestedness in aesthetics as a criterion of justification brings forth crucial consequences in environmental ethics. Although the judgments of aesthetics and ethics are separate realms of values, they can help us to constitute a comprehensive attitude towards our environment. The disinterested attitude, by means of accepting nature's otherness and appreciating it with a non-utilitarian, transparent self and impartiality leads us to respect and care for nature for its own sake.

Disinterestedness encourages us to pay "attention" to the aesthetic object or phenomena (Brady, 2003, p. 136). It demands us to recognize and be aware of it. Every awareness or consciousness of an object with no dependent relation consequently leads one to value it for its own sake. The "open receptivity" to the aesthetic qualities of that natural surrounding "frees up the mind from personal preoccupations" (Brady, 2003, p. 140) and a mind that is concerned with the qualities of the "other" acknowledges the independent existence of that being. It exists there as it *is* and that is the way it has been so far and will be in the future. This kind of attitude is nothing but respect which involves "allowing the other to be who they are" or what it is "without using them as a means to one's ends" (Brady, 2003, p. 142). Successively, care is the effort to sustain "other" beings existence. It is parasitic on respect, because trying to nurture and look for the continuance of any existent being cannot take place without acknowledging its otherness and value.

In short, nature is distinct from us. However, we shall not misunderstand this distinction as a detachment or an isolation. Accepting "a degree of distance" does not necessarily lead to an elitist, alien relationship. As Brady puts it, via adopting a disinterested attitude in environmental appreciation, humans could set a "close relationship" with nature but at the same time enable others to be themselves. This is the way how "enough distance" is preserved in any friendship (Brady, 2003, p. 142). Friends have

to let the other to be who they are without assimilating them, otherwise that would not be a friendship but slavery.

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Net.Art as Language Games

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ABSTRACT. This paper is primarily concerned with the difficulties posed by aesthetically assessing contemporary art. There is a general sense of unease towards current art practices. The possibilities of rationality weaken when faced with an art which lacks definition, and which moreover is diluted by information, fashion and overall cultural consuming practices. Yves Michaud in his book *Critères esthétiques et jugement de gout* offers the possibility to solve the problems of rationality and comprehension of contemporary art practices through a line of thought, analytic philosophy, that connects Hume's Philosophy in *Of the Standard of Taste* and Wittgenstein's language-games.

In this paper, I intend to focus on the experience of net.art, specifically in the work of Jodi, as, on one hand, the experience of these net artists represents a new formalist current, especially the metalanguage pertaining to the so called "heroic period" of netart. In a specific way, I am relating the work of Jodi to some of the conditions of the functioning of language-games as seen in Wittgenstein, such as: aesthetic perplexities, supplementary descriptions and family resemblance.

The Aesthetic Judgement, between Michaud and Wittgenstein

We will start by saying that, in relation to aesthetic judgment, Michaud believes any commitment to a general theory of artistic qualities or aesthetic answers is unnecessary. He considers that a grand theory on this matter would inevitably go towards the recognition of language games and local adjustments between art and the aesthetic experience, which, although they account for a general mechanism, could not be defined in an abstract way, but rather, by the agreements between spectators and artists in their communicative local practices.

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For Michaud, the notion of aesthetic criterion is the most important within the *aesthetic judgment*¹, as his interest goes beyond the criteria or knowing what they are, and he can focus on them, on their functioning within Wittgenstein's theory of language games². That is why Michaud bases his refusal of an ontology of art on Wittgenstein, while at the same time he highlights the necessary existence of shared identification mechanisms, as it occurs in the manners of inhabiting the world through languages games, which are not entirely personal, but neither are they totally universal, which is to say that they are not wholly objective but neither are they completely related to subjectivity.

Thus, we find a coincidence in the recognition of similitudes, by way of family resemblance, something that comes to reinforce Michaud's position, which he himself calls an *objective relativism*. This is because, much as those similar ways of living the language work as criteria that performs as the objective part, while its relativism resides in that they properly differ in the number of local games and contexts in which they are given and lived, in the same manner as Wittgenstein recognizes that language games are lived.

The aesthetic judgment as a language game of evaluation and communication would be one among many and there would be as many aesthetic language games as objects to be evaluated and groups which would carry them out, with the possibility of recycling and reinventing among them. So it would be in practices where certain inventions are accepted or rejected as rules. Thus such diversity of games coexists, where their expressions construct themselves in the possibilities of their exchanges.

In this sense, the criteria do not work as principles that give either validity or ontological reason to art, but they rather work as ways of understanding that allow to make distinctions in communication and to have tools for justification. It is equally understood that the aesthetic value, just as any other value is an element of discernment and communication within a language game, where there are agreements to appreciate, evaluate and above all, to live certain qualities of certain objects and experiences.

For Wittgenstein, as well as for Michaud, aesthetics obey an analytical

¹ Michaud, Yves (200). *El juicio estético*. Barcelona. Idea books.

² Wittgenstein Ludwig (1982). *Investigaciones filosóficas*. Barcelona, editorial crítica.

philosophical exercise which focuses on the expression of ideas and feelings, which is where lies the importance of an analysis of language from art, about art and its ways, or the creation processes and perception, but overall the ways of living it. So, for Wittgenstein, aesthetics is speech about art, understanding this philosophical exercise as a language about language or a metalanguage through descriptions which concern philosophy, in as much as it allows analysis and criticizing this language in relation to sense.

Both Michaud and Wittgenstein consider it is important to cleanse all metaphysic darkness with signs of absolutes (fundamentalisms) in aesthetic judgements, such as beauty or some sort of meta aesthetic that separate itself from the practical sense of language and its usages. So, more than an explanation, it is convenient to describe and compare many cases or experiences that would allow to reach an agreement through their differences, as, in relation to aesthetic notions, it is not possible to establish anything exactly.

Even though expressions as net art are useful to trace some uses of language games as criteria for aesthetic judgement, that does not mean that in this manner it is possible to find rules. On the contrary, for Wittgenstein, rules obey certain expectations among certain groups of people, as a way to convert the desires in rules, without this excluding the existence of the grammar in these artistic expressions.

Net.Art

The net.art or network art, is not only about an expression that depends on the technical conditions of the Internet. It also concerns the same language of the medium itself and experiments with the rationality of its communicative features³.

Although net art is commonly associated, or thought of, in two fundamental ways: as activism or meta-language, it is the latter which will take our focus of attention, that is, the so called heroic period of net art (1995-2000). In this way, Wittgenstein's methodology allow us to identify the main traits of internet art as metalanguage, and at the same time it

³ Baigorri, Laura. Cilleruelo Lourdes (2006). *Net.Art. prácticas estéticas y políticas de la red*. Barcelona, Editorial Brumania y universidad de Barcelona.

serves us to comprehend certain conditions of language in net art and its functioning as aesthetics criteria.

In this sense, we propose to confront the perplexities (misunderstanding or conceptual confusion which presents certain difficulties when explaining with ordinary language) in net art from the functioning with other Wittgensteinian categories, starting by assuming these perplexities as a way of "see as" avant-garde techniques that are possible to comprehend by resorting to descriptions that allow to place them either as language game contexts, or as comparative procedures in some of its characteristics and/or their most elementary conditions.

Maybe one among some of the most relevant perplexities or difficulties for the understanding of net art resides in that it keeps and almost consummates the avant-garde technique of art dematerialization, a condition that makes it difficult to preserve.

This immateriality of net art is also made evident in the fact that its objects (web pages) as well as its processes (net acts) are materially ungraspable, because they take place in one instant escaping its fixing in time, as in the last vanguards, where the act prevails on the object.

It is in this very same sense that the absence of an original character of the work constitutes another difficulty in comprehending net art, since not only the original does not exist, but neither do copies, there is only data, which is the only thing that there is on the net, so, it has often been said that in net art the data base in itself functions as art and that makes the artist of the so called new media a producer, where the data bases for instance are assumed in a symbolic way.

The self reference and appropriation are also net art characteristics that are possible to understand as perplexity, in as far as they suppose a knowledge of the distributing tools that allow to establish and play from the spaces of legitimation of net art through its visibility. For this, the so-called hybrid spaces combine art and communication through forums, mailing lists, online artwork, and even broadcast commissions artworks and artists.

The collective creation is seen as a methodology with ethical, aesthetic and playful features, due to net art demanding the contribution or intervention of the spectators, now as users. The artist stops being a solitary author that decides when the art piece is completed, especially when any

user may permanently modify as in a fluxus sense, where we can all become artists.

Another perplexity that we can identify as an avant-garde characteristic, condition and heritage, is its character as a process, which is not exclusive to net art. There is a phenomenological record of the performance through two connected computers which is basically stressed.

In this manner the creative process has some of its antecedents in performances and happenings, as it is not about the contemplation of an object, but an activity and event that is accompanied within a time sequence. In this regard it remains conceptual, as it is not an attitude which the transmitter demands from the receiver, but an aesthetic act that circulates as Sol LeWitt interprets it "from the artist's mind to the spectator's", as it also happens in the net art works that not only seek to document an action but also to update it on-line. So, seeing net art as a flux of information that questions the art work itself as a merchandise-object, it retains the features of conceptual art, in as much as what matters as art experience is the communicative value of its constant creative character.

In net art, as a child of conceptual art, the idea is of the utmost importance, at the same time as the material form becomes secondary and dematerialized, without pretensions, reevaluated as a process, like unhierarchized instants, without any perfect beginning or ending, where the development of each stage contributes as a fleeting thought where the idea gets elaborated.

The Internet network conditions not only document processes, but they shape it, in the form of the ideas that are exposed there, and the lived processes that, as Wittgenstein conceives language triumph over the emotional and besides, an object is not seen or lived unless it is through it. This, as a result of some modes of experience which are the product of the expansion of new technologies in a postindustrial society, do not only need to merge entertainment and show, but also articulate their modes of experience with the forms of critical articulation of everyday life, as it is becoming more and more hyperpresent on the internet.

The net.art can be understood within the artistic creative processes of contemporary artistic creation with a metalanguage similar to object *trouvé*, almost in the manner that Duchamp carried it out, which, applied to net.art, could be a sort of aesthetics of a metalinguistic reflection on

internet, as it is eventually a conceptual art, where the medium strives between its possibilities to express a message or to be, itself, the message.

Despite the fact that the descriptions can get to be less exact, they are more flexible, varied and timely, and, at the same time, they account for the manner of the sense in the aesthetic experiences and conditions of the aesthetic judgement in relation to art, for which neither the adjectives nor the intellectuallizing of such experiences constitute a warrant. On the contrary, the model of Wittgenstein allows us to account for the way to face some comprehension challenges, they are viewed as perplexities, we can come to understand them using elements of language games as additional descriptions and comparative reasons the order of family resemblances as we tried to do with some cutting-edge trends to explain some features of net.art I.O.

JODI (www.jodi.org/)⁴

JODI's work features a questioning of the capacity and conditions of the net through the display of Internet's own dysfunctions. One can say that, in a sense, JODI invite us to an experience that is reactive rather than interactive, that is to say frustrating, regarding the accustomed possibilities and use of the net.

Making use of deconstruction of language and net configuration, the work of Jodi appears as jokes or simple formalist abstractions, although actually, what it is all about is an aesthetic proposal to a meta-linguistic reflection on Internet, a questioning of the possibilities and limitations of the medium through the medium itself in relation to the confusions that it can provoke. Hence we can say that JODI makes us face a philosophical exercise of the order of Wittgensteinian aesthetic perplexities.

In this way, from a language about an artistic language, that is a meta-language, we can face the work of JODI following the interpretive frame, since Wittgenstein, with the understanding that it allows us, indeed, it forces us to resort to descriptions and/or comparisons in the way of Wittgenstein (supplementary descriptions) to explain an art that challenges

⁴ Collective of artists Joan Peskers and Dirk Paensmans, whose work is centered on meta-linguistic netart. Their work, since the beginnings of netart, or heroic period, can be seen in their website <http://www.Jodi.org/>.

the language of its artistic expression to the limit, net.art, and therefore, Internet, as we can see in works like this:

<http://oss.jodi.org/ss.html>

When we enter works like this, we access a disconcerting space, a type of simulation of a computer that has gained conscience and that is capable of deciding in place of the user. So, through the imitation of the operating system that deconstructs on the screen, JODI reverses the relation between programming and interface and mainly transforms the code into an image and vice-versa. In this way, JODI rescues, re-utilizes and de-construct the technological inputs of communication and language in the net, such as HTML, transforming them in conceptual jokes, making a recreational use of computers.

This work that apparently presents itself as a virus or an error of ICT also warns us in an aesthetics of error, in the way of Glitch⁵, when the screen begins to fill with small wallpaper windows that change place and colour intermittently, multiplying as if deconstructing the system, it would throw out a criticism from non-conformity and the rigidity that high technology poses. This questioning is always thrown by JODI from the net's own logic, from the self-referencing that characterizes net art, mainly in what concerns its origins, what is known as the heroic period (1995-2000), of which JODI is one of the main representatives.

In this way, JODI leads us to think in the machine as an interface, in the process of perception. Through a supposed threat, we are confronted with the power and vulnerability of Internet web. This is one of the reasons for its conceptual character. Hence, in these works we are proposed to rediscover the medium through an unexpected experimentation with it, as a re-signifying of the use of this type of language which allows other poetics, as it weaves stories that can solve those incomprehensible surprises or perplexities.

JODI denounce the exhaustion of possibilities of the use of the net by de-naturalizing the use of ICT language and its apparent infallibility,

⁵ Glitch, as considered in ICTs as an error which does not affect negatively the working of a program, is used by JODI in a conscious way, intending to generate disorientation and simulating error.

using the language's own weapons in order to betray it. This concern with language- meta-language is frequent in contemporary art, and maybe even more evident in expressions as net.art.

This also supposes an approaching the visual language of the net, which uses techniques inherited from avant-gardes such as montage and collage, often used in movements such as surrealism, which are now formalized in algorithms and coded in programs which represent an important advancement of these techniques, as is the case with photo-collage or overlapping or superposing of fragments in layers of images. That is why, theoreticians like Lev Manovich maintain that the techniques in the so-called new media still remain what they were since the first avant-garde movements:

“Surrealists joined pieces of reality in illogical combinations; cubists cut reality in small pieces; abstract artists reduced reality to what they considered their geometric ‘essence’; photographers of the new vision showed reality from unusual points of view, but, in spite of their differences, all of them concerned themselves with the same project in reflecting the world. Therefore, modernity’s main concern is the invention of new forms, that is, different ways of ‘humanizing’ the ‘objective’ image, alien, in the last instance, of the world, that technology provides us with”⁶.

In this way, following Manovich, we can say that the so-called new media, as is the case of the Internet web, do not invent new formal languages, although they do introduce new techniques equally important and revolutionary at an epistemological level, which are not new forms of seeing reality, but rather of accessing information and of the capacity to intervene in it as in the processing of images, interactivity and the ways to analyze data.

That is why, seeing expressions as net.art through works as the ones offered by the JODI collective, one could state that the new media, because the base on the old media, are rather post-media or meta-media, as José Luis Brea argues in his *La era postmedia*⁷ (*The post-media era*). In this sense, the work of JODI turns into a return to its beginnings in order to

⁶ Manovich Lev (2002). *Avant as software*. <http://www.uoc.edu/artnodes/espai/eng/art/Manovich1002/Manovich1002.html>.

⁷ Brea, José Luis (2002). *La era postmedia*. Salamanca, Editorial consorcio Salamanca.

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Empathy, Anthropomorphism and Embodiment in Vischer's Contribution to Aesthetics

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ABSTRACT. Vischer's *Contribution to Aesthetics* attempts to explain the purpose of empathy and the significance of inherence in the world. In Vischer's analysis, the empathic impulse arises as the individual's psychological attempt to bridge the essential otherness of nature. This thereby exerts a pull against human subjectivity in that the human being wishes to merge with the universe and participate in its governing harmony. The following examines Vischer's theory of empathy in relation to aesthetics. I argue that Vischer's interpretation of this phenomenon is an anthropocentric one.

i. Introduction

Vischer's *Contribution to Aesthetics* attempts to explain the purpose of empathy and the significance of inherence in the world. In Vischer's analysis, the empathic impulse arises as the individual's psychological attempt to bridge the essential otherness of nature. This thereby exerts a pull against human subjectivity in that the human being who wishes to merge with the universe and participate in its governing harmony.

The following paper examines Vischer's theory of empathy in relation to aesthetics. First we will look at the significance of embodiment in his theory before examining what he means by 'empathic projection'. I argue that Vischer's interpretation of this phenomenon is an anthropocentric one. In order to clarify this theory in context, it is important to define the place of art and the artist in Vischer's thesis. Hence this will be discussed in the proceeding section. This includes elucidating the role of the imagination. Other concepts of note in this context are universal union

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and the concept of the 'other'. I will conclude by discussing some of the shortcomings of his argument whilst acknowledging its value.

2. Embodiment: The Physiology of Sensation

Vischer coined the term "einführung" to describe the problem of emotional projection in aesthetics, meaning 'in-feeling.' In English, 'empathy' is the closest translation. Vischer emphasized the body's physiology in conditioning sensory and emotive responses. His theoretical framework is a curious juxtaposition of science and spirituality.

Vischer begins by distinguishing between sensation and feeling. Sensation is simply the body's response to external stimuli but feeling involves mental and emotional activity. Sensation can also be divided into immediate sensation and responsive sensation. The former is a more superficial sensory response and the latter involves more extensive muscle and nerve activity, resulting in a more engaged response.

Sensation and sentient imagination have the same tendency in this context. Sensation is the most primitive impulse of life but out of it evolves acts of imagination, volition and cognition. With this general advance sensation turns into feeling, which is more objective than sensation and unlike sensation, vibrates in sympathy with another outside being.¹

Vischer differentiates between emphatic and unemphatic sensations. An example of the latter is a sensation that is vague and indifferent. Practical sensation is a case in point, whereby the stimulus serves as a means to another function. In this case, there is no deep engagement with the world. The artistic eye recognises no such sensation because to the artistic eye, nothing is indifferent - seeing is an end in itself.

The criterion of sensation, according to Vischer, lies in the concept of similarity.² This refers to harmony between subject and object - which arise because the object has a harmonious form corresponding to the subject.

His premise that empathy is a function of facilitating the person's oneness with the world is fundamental to his belief. His statement: "this sym-

¹ Ibid p 109

² Ibid p 95

bolizing activity can be based on nothing other than our pantheistic urge for union with the world,” is blatantly spiritual in nature.

According to Vischer, the reason we experience pleasure through the nervous system in conjunction with certain forms is due to a correspondence between our physiology and that form. For example a horizontal line may be pleasing because it reflects the horizontal positioning of our eyes. The vertical line, on the contrary, can be disturbing, when perceived in isolation because it contradicts the binocular structure of the perceiving eyes and the circle has an immediately pleasing effect due to the rounded shape of the eye.³

Vischer further suggests that certain aesthetic attributes may be pleasing because they are in sync with the regularity of our organs. An image can symbolically relate to ideas of our own bodies.

Synaesthesia is an important concept for Vischer. One sensation may elicit a chain reaction of bodily responses. In this way, we often observe in ourselves the fact that a visual stimulus is experienced not only with our eyes, but also with a different sense in another part of our body. The shrillness of loud colours induces an offensive sensation in the auditory nerves. Low ceilings perceived with the eyes produce a sensation of weight and pressure.⁴

Vischer’s underlying theme of belonging in the world seems to echo Merleau-Ponty’s notion of our pre-reflective engagement with the world. According to Merleau-Ponty, we are enmeshed with the world and the world enmeshed in us.⁵ However as we shall see, Vischer’s account is at variance with Merleau-Ponty’s in that the former is anthropocentric and the latter is one of interdependence.

³ Ibid p 97

⁴ Ibid p. 98

⁵ D. Seamon (2010) Merleau-Ponty, Perception & Environmental Embodiment: Implications for Architectural & Environmental Studies. Chapter prepared for R.McCann & P. M. Locke, Eds. *Carnal Echoes, Merleau-Ponty and the Flesh of Architecture*. Forthcoming 2014 online at http://www.academia.edu/948750/Merleau-Ponty_Perception_and_Environmental_Embodiment_Implications_for_Architectural_and_Environmental_Studies_2014_forthcoming_15/10/13.

3. An Anthropocentric Empathetic Projection

Vischer's theory of emotional and empathetic projection seems to rest on the human subject's need to find an ostensible harmony in objects and others when it ventures into the world. Vischer submits that we find regular forms pleasing because our organs and their forms are regular. Irregular forms bother us: "The eye is pained to find no trace of the laws that govern its organization and movement."⁶

The central feature of Vischer's theory is that we have the ability to project our own physical form into an objective form. The image symbolically relates to the idea of our own bodies and the imagination seeks to experience itself through the image, we project our own personalities into the form:

"Thus I project my own life into the lifeless form, just as I quite justifiably do with another living person. Only ostensibly do I keep my own identity although the object remains distinct. I seem merely to adapt and attach myself to it as one hand clasps another, and yet I am mysteriously transformed into this Other."⁷

This is an act of the imagination called inward sensation. When one views a stationary object one can place oneself at the inner structure, think oneself way into it. When the object of contemplation is small, like a pebble, our being is constricted and when the object is large like a body of water, our feeling is expanded. The former induces a weakening of the self and the latter a liberation of the self.

Vischer's concept of empathy in art, as in nature, encompasses a 'merging' of the person and the art. At first glance Vischer appears to be discussing something akin to Merleau-Ponty's notion of the flesh of the world i.e. that the body is a thing and things of the world are encrusted in it.⁸

However Vischer should not be misunderstood here, the 'belonging' in the world of which he speaks is an anthropocentric one. Where he

⁶ R. Vischer p 97

⁷ Ibid p 104

⁸ Merleau-Ponty, M. (1964) 'Eye & Mind' in Galen A. Johnson (1993) *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader*, Trans Ed. Michael B. Smith, Evanston, Northwestern University Press 121-150

stated that the eye is pained to not to find a trace of itself, he expands, that a complete union can only take place where the subjective and objective imagination involves another human being. In the case of viewing inanimate nature, such as a rainbow or other ‘bloodless’ objects, it is as if we pretend to ourselves that we are contained in these things because we cannot bear to believe otherwise:

“Where there is no life – precisely there do I miss it...we miss red-blooded life, and precisely because we miss it, we imagine the dead forms as living.”⁹

As such the human individual projects his/her own life into the lifeless form because “He can tolerate no obstacle, he wants to roam the universe and feel himself at one with it.”¹⁰ In Vischer’s words, “empathy functions symbolically to animate a plant and to anthropomorphize an animal”¹¹ The subject animates the object with the subject’s own conscious existence. What is important is how the psychological perspective of the *subject* is projected onto the *object*.¹²

Wollheim has highlighted that here are two types of expressive perception, one whereby we project our emotional state onto what we see and the second occurs when what we see induces an emotional state in us.¹³ Apparently, Vischer is only interested in the former. His theory of projection is anthropocentric in that we see ourselves in everything as opposed to Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy, which is a reciprocal process.

Fundamental to Vischer’s stance is that we desire a unified position with the universe. However unlike the notion of ontological reciprocity expounded by Crowther where we are not separate, gazing out on an external world, Vischer would have us at the centre of the universe projecting

⁹ R. Vischer p 104

¹⁰ Ibid p 26

¹¹ Ibid p 106

¹² This aspect of Vischer’s theory has also been discussed by Timothy C. Vincent in ‘From Sympathy to Empathy, Baudelaire, Vischer & Early Modernism, *Mosaic: a journal for the interdisciplinary study of literature*, Volume 45, Number 1, March 2012, pp. 1-15

¹³ This is called correspondence and originated with the mystical philosopher, Swedenborg and was developed by Baudelaire. See R. Wollheim, *Painting as an Art*, for further discussion on this.

ourselves on all other things. Crowther's 'ontological reciprocity' acknowledges that our body's hold upon the world involves an interwoven in and inseparable unity.¹⁴

4. Art & The Artist

The role of the imagination is an essential part of this discussion. According to Vischer, the notion of sensation is vitally enlarged and deepened by the imagination. He goes on to say that imagination may lack the clarity of reality but also its illusions and this independence from the constraints of reality may have benefits. However as the imagination has a talent for exaggeration, it is a power of visualization, which has the advantage of being able to construct a self-generated, new image. Nonetheless these remain nebulous internal creations until "the hand of art – outward imagination – conducts them back to a state of tangible reality."¹⁵

Vischer's stance is that the artist does not imitate nature but reflects the universal "vital process" which may be described as emotional life. He states further: "Art thus strives to objectify the human condition in a sensuous and harmoniously refined form, it seeks to translate the instability of emotional life and the chaotic disorder of nature into a free, beautiful objectivity."¹⁶

For Vischer, the artist emancipates the idea, which is trapped in real life. The imagination must be exercised; hence it is a vital part of entering into artistic consciousness.

Vischer made inference to the imagination when he defended the content of form in the face of the formalism, under the supervision of Karl Kostlin, who also believed that the mind is stimulated by what the form evokes:

"Our mind is not so narrow, so small, so dull, so lethargic, so stupid, or so dead that it sees only form and none of the other things evoked together with form."¹⁷

¹⁴ P. Crowther (1993) *Art & Embodiment, Aesthetics to Self-Consciousness* p. 2

¹⁵ *Ibid* p 102

¹⁶ R. Vischer p 20

¹⁷ K. Kostlin quoted in F. Mallgrave & E. Ikonomou (1994) in *Empathy, Form & Space, Problems in German Aesthetics*, Getty Centre Publication Programmes, p 20

With respect to visual sensation, Vischer distinguishes between 2 types of seeing. Simple seeing, firstly, is a relatively unconscious process. This type of seeing is a prerequisite to all artistic intuition, as the artist must have an eye. However this simple seeing is nothing more than nerve vibrations providing the first prescient flash of an inner conception.¹⁸ This is an example of an *immediate sensation*. A more advanced form of seeing involves muscular activity, moving the eye while looking at the object; this he terms scanning.¹⁹ Scanning is a more active and conscious process.

Vischer contends that the artist lives in a state of amazement and because he/she keeps his/her eyes open and is constantly surprised. Both inward and outward imagination require attention to the details of external phenomena. If the artist can remain conscious, he/she can reveal artistic consciousness to the viewer. In this respect, artist is facilitator:

“Only in artistic reaction is the private character – the subjectivity of the imagination truly overcome; for now the image has been changed into the shared universally valued human possession.”²⁰

He goes on to describe the artist thus:

“Contrary to the apathetic individual, who is always unable to detach himself from the elements of his environment, the artist lives in a state of amazement.” He describes the artist as a “silent, solitary stranger who has set out to espy the world.”²¹

5. Conclusion & Critical Evaluation

Vischer’s contribution to aesthetics has merits. His description of scanning as opposed to seeing offers valid insights into how art works. His emphasis on the ability to focus the eyes with the use of muscle action enlightens the discussion on the significance of art. I would say that it is this focused, attentive state which art induces, that is of primary importance in the evaluation of art. How art fosters empathy by heightening awareness is a direction Vischer could have taken his discussion.

¹⁸ Ibid p. 94

¹⁹ Ibid p. 94

²⁰ Ibid p. 115

²¹ Ibid p 116

Vischer justly highlights how formalism invalidates the imagination. He has pointed out that the mind cannot help but imagine the possibilities when presented with forms. This interpretation of the content of form presents a richer understanding of the human mind than formalism allows for.

The 'constant state of amazement', to which Vischer refers, is a reasonable description of the state of the artist. It can be justifiably argued that in order to paint artistically the artist must develop a visual awareness that is heightened along with an ability to focus. This is an intrinsic part of the artistic process, without which, in my opinion, there can be no art. Without this, the artist cannot approach the world with fresh eyes. If the world is mundane to the artist there is no inspiration to aide the creative process.

Although Vischer highlights important concepts in aesthetics, he does prevaricate on some of them. Consider his assertion that the artist is a solitary, detached stranger spying on the world. This appears to contradict his views on union, suddenly the artist is outside of everything rather than participant. He implied previously that aesthetic contemplation is a pervasive attitude, through which an openness is maintained with the world. On the one hand, the artist enjoys an openness with the world and on the other, the artist is spying on the world.

His use of the word 'espy' illustrates his anthropocentric attitude. This view of the artistic individual confirms that he sees the human being at the centre of the universe, watching and projecting from a detached place, rather than inhering in the phenomena of the world. Although I would agree that it is necessary for the artist to attend to his/her surroundings in a focused manner and this requires a type of solitary and meditative consciousness²², this is done in a spirit of communion, of penetrating the moment and the experience.

In contrast to Vischer, Klee expressed his position as an artist which encompassed reversibility, when he said: "In a forest ... I have felt that

²² See Dufrenne, M. (1973) *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston p. 51 on the communion between subject and object in the aesthetic experience, although in this case he is discussing the spectator but I contend that the same consciousness is entered into by the artist.

the trees were looking at me, speaking to me.”²³ Similarly, Cezanne stated: “The landscape thinks itself in me and I am its consciousness.”²⁴ These positions, in contrast to Vischer’s, reflect an *interactive engagement* between the artist and the world, which I believe facilitates the creation of art.

Vischer attempted to substantiate his argument for aesthetics with the use of biology, particularly how the nervous system works in relation to perception. His notion of empathy is explored in the context of physiological embodiment. This adds cogency to his argument at times but at other points he presents little evidence for his beliefs.

Consider Vischer’s notion of similarity. He contends that we are drawn to forms similar to our own. Although this is a compelling idea, Vischer presents no evidence as to why this should be the case.

One could equally argue that human beings are often drawn to asymmetrical, erratic forms that correspond to the organic, disorderly structures seen in a natural landscape. Indeed modern architecture has been criticized on the grounds that the clean lines and symmetrical shapes are incongruous with the human perspective, which has been conditioned to explore the random shapes of nature.

Merleau-Ponty also articulated the view that because the body is the fabric into which all objects are woven, the qualities of the world resonate with the lived body.²⁵ However, having appeal and resonating is not the same thing. Something can be familiar but not pleasant. Vischer seems to be suggesting that if we have a pre-reflective awareness of something, it will be pleasing.

This is not convincing because if we are one with the universe as Vischer postulates, and are one with all its aspects, everything in the universe should appeal and clearly this is not the case.

It may be true that the body and nature enjoy a certain regularity, which an individual may respond to. If, however, this is the case in relation to the body, one cannot say whether this can be extrapolated to the purely aesthetic. In this realm, it could equally be the case that one enjoys a release from the formula of the familiar, as in the case of some abstract

²³ Johnson, G.A. (1993) *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, p. 44

²⁴ *Ibid* p. 44

²⁵ M. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*

art, which has enjoyed considerable success.

In any case, his example of the horizontal line being more pleasing than the vertical could be refuted if we consider that we ourselves are vertical so the vertical line may be more appealing, according to his logic. Furthermore, on the point of circular shapes having appeal due to the shape of our eyes, this is again ill-thought out. The eyes are not circular, they have corners and the further east we go the less circular people's eyes are. In this way, Vischer's account is not only anthropocentric but also ethnocentric.

Vischer's concept of synaesthesia is more convincing. It would be unreasonable to discount this, given that we perceive through the body and the examples he provides (low ceilings etc) are experiences with which anyone with a functional body can identify.

Vischer refers to an inherent unity in the universe. He speaks of "a universal coherence."²⁶ His anthropocentric position for empathetic projection clearly argues, on the other hand, that we see what we want to see: not that there is already an inherent unity, not that there is tacit ecological understanding between human beings and all other aspects of the world, rather there is almost the sense, instead, that what we have are insecure individuals who would like to believe that they are reflected in all things.

Consider the statement: "The whole person and all his vital feelings are lured into compassion." The use of the word 'lured', indicates that the individual unconsciously 'seeks and finds' that which makes him/her feel most whole, not that this 'wholeness' is actually a fact but possibly a soothing figment of the imagination.²⁷

This type of projection ignores what the subject may receive from the external object. If the projection is successful, the object is infused with the expressive realities of the subject.²⁸ This is not exactly unity. Unity qua unity implies an interactive, *mutual* merging. I contend that the notion of equality is inherent in the concept of unity. It is surprising, given that Vischer is discussing aesthetics, that he fails to acknowledge that art may have its own expressive life which reaches out to us as subjects.

²⁶ Ibid p 109

²⁷ Vischer does in fact use the words "I seek and I find" and the word "wholeness" as well as referring to "unconscious" processes when he discusses this idea of being lured into compassion p 107.

²⁸ See T.C Vincent (2012) for further discussion on this

Yet he equivocates on this as he also states: “As I think abstractly and learn to see myself as a subordinate part of an indivisible whole, my feeling expands into emotion.”²⁹ Is the subject, then, at the centre projecting out or is the subject a subordinate part? It is not clear.

Vischer makes the interesting observation that the artist achieves union between the intellect and the senses, which were originally one until the intellect placed itself in opposition.³⁰ This is a provocative statement, which Vischer does not qualify. When the intellect placed itself in opposition is not clear. However it is fair to say that the first part of this statement effectively summarises the work of the artist.

Having critically evaluated Vischer, it is worth noting that he provides a springboard for pertinent questions, including that of self-consciousness, how we relate to aspects of our environment and the place of aesthetics in all of this. There is room to expand his account of empathy with more clarity into a more reciprocal arena within a phenomenological framework.

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²⁹ R. Vischer p 109

³⁰ R. Vischer p. 116

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Form and Function: The Dependent Beauty of Design

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ABSTRACT. Design, which has until recently been almost entirely neglected by philosophical aesthetics, is nevertheless an apt object of aesthetic appraisal that deserves consideration. This paper argues that we can and do make aesthetic judgements of designed objects, and that these judgements differ from our responses to art and natural beauty in significant ways. An aesthetics of design requires an integrative approach, where the purposive elements of an object have an ineluctable aesthetic component, and where our aesthetic judgements of the object are inseparable from our appraisal of how well it fulfills its function. Such an approach can best begin with Kant's distinction between free and dependent beauty in section 16 of *The Critique of Judgement*, and an interpretation of that section is developed here.

Design is, well, just about everywhere. As Gert Selle has put it, “we swim in a pool of design”.¹ From the bicycle to the office cubicle, from the toaster to the ipod, there is almost no part of our contemporary lives that has not been designed, manipulated and manufactured, and few of our daily activities that do not interact with design in some direct way. I would hazard that for those of us living in large urban centers, designed objects are far more prevalent in our lives than fine art, craft or even raw nature. Nevertheless, design has been almost entirely neglected by philosophical aesthetics. This strikes me as a grave omission, for if other aspects of our lives and experiences can be said to have an aesthetic dimension, surely this one does too. My sense of this neglect is what has led me to consider design, for I think that it is indeed an apt object of aesthetic appraisal. The question is what a theory of design as an aesthetic phenomenon would require.

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¹ Gert Selle, *Design im Alltag*. Cited in Mads Nygaard Folkmann, *The Aesthetics of Imagination in Design* (MIT Press, 2013), p.159.

The first requirement is to distinguish design from other aesthetic categories, like fine art and craft, if it is to merit separate treatment. This is a metaphysical task, that seeks to define design as a particular kind of activity or object. I will say little about this here, other than to note that my focus is on our aesthetic responses to designed objects rather than on the practice of designing itself. However we describe the activity of design—as involved in solving problems, or engaged in innovation, or satisfying perceived needs, and so on—and however expressive or creative the practice may be, it typically results in the production (and often mass-production) of functional objects with specific purposes they are meant to fulfill. In this regard, I am interested in commonplace things, like the sofas, teapots and razors that are part of our everyday lives, rather than the branded, the famous or the transgressive designs that are acclaimed in design competitions and displayed in design museums. I am interested in our aesthetic experiences of design as it intersects with our daily lives; it is these quotidian and functional objects that have been largely overlooked by the discipline.

Secondly, a theory of design must show how our interactions with designed objects can be specifically aesthetic, and differentiate these from, again, our experiences of other kinds of things. For I do think that they differ, in often significant ways. My response to a sunset is not the same as that to a great work of art, and is different again when I appraise a chair or car for its aesthetic or design excellence. It is this second requirement that I will focus on here. In my work, I presuppose that we do have aesthetic experiences of designed objects, and that we make aesthetic judgements about them.² The task is to construct a theory that captures what is specific to these responses, in a way that highlights their aesthetic character but that also faithfully reflects the nature of designed objects themselves. The question I would like to ask, is in what way, if any, can a bicycle or a chair be said to be beautiful? My term of choice here is beauty, although some more general notion of aesthetic value will do just as well. Wherein lies the beauty of a coffeepot or a razor? For these are primarily functional objects—the bicycle is meant to get us from A to B, the pot to make coffee—and as such are intended to be actively used rather than merely admired.

² See my *Aesthetics of Design* (Oxford University Press, 2013).

One possible suggestion is that the aesthetic value of these objects is separable from their purposes; that beauty is an ‘added value’ that some designs possess, and when they do, this value is the same as that found in sunsets, flowers and all other things. Such an approach, as we find with Robert Stecker’s defense of the autonomy of aesthetic value, has the benefit of claiming a purity and consistency to beauty as independent from other values and also from the types of objects we experience. As Stecker claims, aesthetic value can be “realized in different ways in different media but it cannot be a different value in different media”.³ This approach provides one reason for the neglect of design: if beauty is the same everywhere, designed objects would require no special consideration. But I assert that traditional aesthetics cannot account for the beauty of design in such a simple or straightforward way, for this limits the aesthetic value of design to the surface qualities an object has, such as its ornamentation or decoration—the way it looks—and ignores its functional properties altogether. And I think it unlikely that we thus appraise a bicycle with no consideration or knowledge of its purpose, or laud a toaster’s design if it always burns the toast.

Instead, I suggest that the aesthetics of design requires us to adopt a more integrative approach, where the purposive elements of an object have an ineluctable aesthetic component, and where our aesthetic judgments of the object are inseparable from our appraisal of how well it fulfills its function. And I think that this approach can be found with Kant’s brief discussion of dependent beauty. Kant claims that there are two *kinds* of beauty, free and dependent beauty. Let me quote him from section 16 of the *Critique of Judgement*.

The first [free beauty] presupposes no concept of what the object ought to be; the second does presuppose such a concept and the perfection of the object in accordance therewith. The first is called the (self-subsistent) beauty of this or that thing; the second, as dependent upon a concept...is ascribed to objects which come under the concept of a particular purpose.⁴

³ Robert Stecker, “Aesthetic Value Defended”, *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol.70 (2012): 355-362, p.361.

⁴ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, trans. J.H. Bernard, (Hafner Publishing, 1972), p.65

Dependent beauty involves three further interrelated factors: concepts, purpose, and perfection—that, once unpacked, I think can provide us with an integrated model for the beauty of design. I read Kant as claiming that dependent beauty is a species of the genus that is beauty or aesthetic judgement writ large. That is, Kant was primarily concerned with the logical structure of judgements of taste in general, and sought to delineate their transcendental requirements. He sought the solution to a theoretical problem and, once having solved it (at least to his satisfaction), could then turn to the much messier business of how our actual aesthetic judgements rarely achieve the purity and autonomy of the ideal, how the faculties of the mind rarely work in such complete isolation from each other, and how our responses to the world more often contain a mixture of knowledge, pleasure, and desire. While in theory we can make a pure judgement of free beauty about anything—a sunset, a bicycle, a tree—in reality we rarely do. As Marcia Eaton has noted, “‘pure’, conceptless...uses of ‘beauty’ are rare...[It] has been a mistake for aestheticians to take this sense of beauty as the paradigm aesthetic concept”.⁵ I wish to suggest that the greater part of our aesthetic judgements of design—indeed the most appropriate form they should take—is that of dependent rather than free beauty.

The problem of section 16 is how to reconcile the autonomy of free beauty with the addition of the concepts of purpose and perfection, for they seem to contradict the non-cognitive, disinterested pleasure of beauty in general. One way to address this problem is to understand the conceptual component of dependent beauty as backgrounded in our aesthetic judgements. As Philip Mallaband has noted, all experiences have conceptual aspects, even if these are sometimes quite thin—no experience takes place in a conceptual void. Thus according to Mallaband, when we experience a sunset, for example, we make no conscious determinations about the object in front of us—its appearance is sufficient for us to judge it (freely) beautiful. But with other things this is not enough: a judgement of dependent beauty is what Mallaband calls “thick” because it requires greater knowledge of the object in question. A conceptually thin experi-

⁵ Marcia Muelder Eaton, “Kantian and Contextual Beauty”, *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol.57 (1999): 11-15, p.13.

ence of a razor or tractor, for instance, may not yield a judgement of beauty because we are just “not disposed to respond with pleasure”⁶ to these kinds of objects. But with the addition of conceptual background we may indeed allow that they have aesthetic value.

This is a good beginning, but this conceptual knowledge cannot be just any garden-variety set of concepts, such as the height, weight, location and so on of a bicycle. Instead, the concepts presupposed in our aesthetic judgements must refer to the object’s purpose, and also its perfection, as Kant stated at the beginning of section 16. By purpose, Kant does not mean the use to which an object might be put, but rather refers to an object that was created or designed according to a plan—to make *this* thing and not another—and this plan is the realization of a given concept or function that precedes the object’s existence, i.e.: that it is meant to be a bicycle or a tractor, and operate as bikes and tractors generally do. Perfection refers to whether the object is any good—not morally good, or good for satisfying a particular need we may have at the time, but good *as* fulfilling its purpose, or being a good thing of its kind. The conceptual background of judgements of dependent beauty is thus circumscribed in these two ways: we must have knowledge of the function of the object, and of its success in achieving that function.⁷ Only then will we make an aesthetic judgement of the appropriate logical form, or call a given thing beautiful.

It will be quickly apparent why dependent beauty seems to be a useful model for an integrative approach to design because of its attention to the purpose of designed objects, and its required evaluation of their achievement in meeting this purpose. We need to know both what a toaster is, and whether it always, or never, burns the toast in order to appraise it aesthetically. But this model is incomplete. Aesthetic judgements for Kant are made about the way things appear to us, and whether that visual experience produces the right kind of (disinterested, intellectual) pleasure.

⁶ Philip Mallaband, “Understanding Kant’s Distinction Between Free and Dependent Beauty”, *Philosophical Quarterly*, vol.52 (2002):66-81, p.81.

⁷ Kant allows that we can make judgements of the dependent beauty of objects of nature, like horses, and in these cases we treat them as objectively purposive rather than as really having purposes. Designed objects, as functional, require knowledge of their actual purposes more specifically.

Dependent beauty, with its particular requirements, seems to mire us in a problem of the relation between appearance, or form, and function, and is inconclusive as to how the two work together in our appraisal of design. After all, if this conceptual knowledge is mere background, it seems that it is also aesthetically *irrelevant*—it enables us to make judgements of beauty but does not contribute directly to the substance of those judgements.

Paul Guyer, in one of his earlier works, developed a negative account of an object's purposive features, whereby these impose a "constraint on the freedom of the imagination" in our response to them.⁸ That is, if an object fails to fulfill its function, we will not find it beautiful. But, having met these adequacy conditions about its purpose, we can then respond to the object with the appropriate free play of the faculties Kant has described. The problem with this account, as Glenn Parsons and Allen Carlson have noted, is that function does not contribute positively to our aesthetic judgements as "one of its constitutive components"⁹ but merely restricts the kinds of things that we respond to aesthetically. Guyer is correct that we will not find failed designs beautiful—if the toaster does not fulfill its purpose of toasting bread, this will indeed constrain our aesthetic responses to it. But, as a number of toasters do perform adequately, or even well, it seems that for Guyer our aesthetic judgements of them are left to respond to their formal qualities alone.

What we need is to make room for a more positive contribution of purpose and perfection as sources of dependent beauty. In a later paper, Guyer concedes this point.¹⁰ We can find this fuller integration in our appreciation of designed objects if we include attention to what Robert Wicks has called their 'teleological' or 'functional' style—that is, the *way* in which they fulfill their purposes. Thus a bicycle, to be adequate, must have

⁸ Paul Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Taste* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.220. It is Robert Wicks who called Guyer's account "negative" but Guyer in a later exchange did not disagree with this appellation. See Robert Wicks, "Dependent Beauty as the Appreciation of Teleological Style" *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol.55 (1997): 387-400, p.389; and Paul Guyer, "Dependent Beauty Revisited: A Reply to Wicks" *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol.57 (1999): 357-361.

⁹ Glenn Parsons and Allen Carlson, *Functional Beauty* (Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 23.

¹⁰ Paul Guyer, "Free and Dependent Beauty: A Modest Proposal", *British Journal of Aesthetics*, vol.42 (2002): 357-366.

two wheels, a seat, and a steering mechanism. Without meeting these conditions, as Guyer noted, the object will fail as a bicycle (although it might succeed as a unicycle) and we will not judge it to be beautiful. But beyond these minimal requirements, bicycles fulfill their functions in a number of ways: some have gears, some have racks; fixed gear bikes have no brakes while coaster bikes have brakes in the hub of their rear wheels; recumbent bikes have a very different form from their upright cousins and so on. In our appraisals, Wicks claims that “we *compare* alternative means to a single purpose”—such as getting from A to B on two wheels—as we reflect upon the contingency of the object’s form as it realizes this purpose.¹¹

The free play of the faculties in Kant’s judgements of dependent beauty is thus a play between the various ways an object might be designed and produced, without reaching a determinative conclusion about it. We do not yet have a perfect bicycle, if we ever will, (although we have some good ones), hence our conceptual knowledge of the object is not yet fixed.¹² But we can compare extant bicycles, and appreciate their various forms as attempts to fulfill their purposes with perfection, or as emergent from their functional requirements. In this way, the conceptual knowledge required for dependent beauty is not merely backgrounded but plays an integral part in our aesthetic responses to design. Form and function are thus intimately linked: the purpose of an object sets constraints on the kinds of forms it can take—two wheels rather than one, for example—and the additional notion of perfection suggests that our approbations of a design will depend upon how successfully its form contributes to its achieving this acknowledged purpose.

With this in hand, we can return to my earlier objectives, and to the requirements for a theory of design. I had said at the outset that our responses to design differ from our responses to other kinds of things. With the model I propose here, we can see that the beauty of design is not an ‘added value’ that some objects possess, nor does it refer merely to the superficial look of things, such as their decorative features alone. Because designs are functional objects, their functions will be aesthetically relevant

¹¹ Robert Wicks, “Dependent Beauty”, p.393.

¹² Bicycles break down: their breaks fail, their tires go flat, their chains come off, they rust. We can imagine a perfect bicycle as one that never fails but we have not yet produced one and do not know what it would look like.

to our appraisals, even though they are not our only considerations. A further word still needs to be said, though, about the integration of function and form and their respective contributions to our aesthetic judgements.

For one thing, I am not advocating a kind of ‘functional beauty’ which suggests, as Andy Hamilton has noted, that an object which does its intended job well is aesthetically valuable *in virtue of* this fact.¹³ This stresses function to the exclusion of form. My vice grips, for example, do an excellent job of gripping and stabilizing objects, and I take a certain satisfaction in their performance. But I would not claim that they are beautiful. In fact, I would make no aesthetic appraisal of them at all. If pressed, I would probably call them ugly, albeit useful. Performing well can bring an object to our attention, but if and when we make an *aesthetic* judgement about it, as opposed to a practical, or moral or economic judgement, for instance, this will address its features as they emerge from, and respond to, its functional requirements. Form does not *follow* function as secondary or even as extraneous. But form arises from function as the contingent way in which a purposive object has been made. And when we address an object’s form, we do so within the framework of its particular intended function.

Here, the kind or amount of conceptual knowledge that informs our aesthetic judgements is important. For me, vice-grips are mostly a useful tool for unscrewing tight caps on bottles. I am not very handy around the house. For a professional craftsperson, with knowledge of and appreciation for her tools, vice-grips may indeed be judged beautiful.¹⁴ For someone who has never used or seen vice-grips before, they can be at best freely but not dependently beautiful. Familiarity, or the extent of our knowledge of an object, is going to affect the kinds of judgements we can make about it. But this is a question of who is competent to judge in a given case, and not a question of which designs are actually beautiful. The knowledge relevant to judgements of the beauty of design will be historically and culturally specific, and it will be the case that the more we know about a given object, the better placed we will be to assess it, when

¹³ Andy Hamilton, “The Aesthetics of Design: Problem-solving versus Fashion and Design”, accessed June 25, 2015 at <http://www.academia.edu/11976004/AestheticsofDesign>. I do not mean to suggest that Hamilton endorses this view.

¹⁴ I am grateful to Dr. Beth Savickey for making this point to me.

we make a judgement of its aesthetic value. So function informs our judgements but will do so in varying degrees, depending on the extent of our familiarity with, or use of, the object in question.

Finally, we can ask if function ever follows form in our judgements, as with the case of ornamentation, or designs that have purely decorative but clearly non-functional features. In some cases, ornamentation *is* functionally relevant, if we consider china cabinets or vases that are meant to decorate our homes as much as to hold dishes or flowers. How they look is as important for fulfilling *their* purposes as elegance or grace are irrelevant to my vice-grips fulfilling theirs. But there do remain some objects, the purely formal features of which seem to lie outside of their functions, and the role of their forms needs to be accounted for.

A recent trend in North America, for example, has been the marketing of tools that are pink, presumably to appeal to women consumers. And the painted-on colour of a hammer or pair of vice-grips is surely incidental to what they are, or what they are meant to do. But colour may well be incidental to a judgement of the dependent beauty of design as well. Some objects come in a range of colours in order to, as the ads suggest, ‘appeal to a range of tastes’. And desire, or personal preference, is explicitly excluded from a Kantian theory of aesthetic judgement. We can make a number of different kinds of judgements about the same object; one of these is a judgement of free beauty that responds to the pure look of a thing. One of these is what Eva Schaper has called a gustatory judgement, or a judgement of personal taste (and what Kant calls a judgement of the agreeable or pleasant).¹⁵ I might simply not *like* pink, and so reject the hammer on these (personal, subjective) grounds. Or I may be offended by the marketing strategy and reject the hammer on moral grounds. But when making these other kinds of judgements, I am not making a bona fide aesthetic judgement about the beauty of the hammer’s design.

How well form and function are integrated in a particular object is *itself* a consideration in our judgements of design beauty. Some objects we may deem overly decorative to their detriment, a criticism often levied against the Rococo, for instance, as much as against the pink hammer. Other ob-

¹⁵ Eva Schaper, “The Pleasures of Taste”, *Pleasure, Preference and Value* (Cambridge University Press, 1987): 39-56.

jects may be deemed too starkly functional, as some critics of modernism have suggested. An ideal blend of form and function is part of the striving for perfection that we assess in a judgement of the teleological style that comprises the dependent beauty of design. So-called “classic” designs, such as Henry Beck’s map of the London Underground, an Eames’ chair, or Earl Dean’s contour bottle for Coca-Cola, are classic precisely because they have achieved a clear harmony of form and function in their realization.

Let me conclude. I set out to show how our interactions with design can be specifically aesthetic, and how these differ from our responses to other kinds of things. Using the Kantian notion of dependent beauty, I have sought to build a model that integrates form and function, and that reflects the nature of design as purposive. But I have also said that I am interested in design as it intersects with our daily lives. One of the consequences of the integrative approach I am offering is that, in order to make a full assessment of a given design’s beauty, we have to know the object and we also have to *use* it to determine whether it achieves its intended purpose (It can’t just *look* as though it would work). Thus, displays in museums offer only partial, or even alienating, aesthetic experiences of designed objects. If we cannot touch and use the items in question, (just as when we do not know what they are meant to be) we can make judgements of their free beauty, or we can treat them as though they were akin to works of art, but we cannot make judgements of their beauty *as* designs. Design is at times mundane and unexceptional, and is often overlooked. We do not always approach our cars, toothbrushes or cubicles with admiration. We do not always make moral judgements about our environs and its objects either: an aesthetic response is but one form of response we can make to designed objects. But it is one that we do make, and insofar as we do, design has a role to play in aesthetic theory broadly understood.

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The Aesthetic Life of Power: Recognition and the Artwork as a Novel ‘Other’

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ABSTRACT. In her use of the term “subjectivation,” Judith Butler follows Michel Foucault in describing how melancholy defines the emergence of subjects as they are induced to perform rituals in order to gain recognition from broader social forces. Butler specifically breaks her account down in terms of five key paradigms—Hegel’s Unhappy Consciousness, Nietzsche’s Bad Conscience, Freud’s Ego, Althusser’s Interpellation, and Foucault’s Power-Resistance Dynamic. All of these sources form her narrative of the body being turned on itself and trapped in a skin-tight prison, sentenced to go through ritual motions in order to get through the day, with the repetition itself bringing a meager measure of freedom in the form of rage re-appropriating the terms of the ritual/symbolic field. However insightful and influential her work may be, Butler’s account of the subject does not go far enough in exploring the role of either aesthetic experience or artistic creativity in escaping the walls. The argument here is that in both aesthetic experience, that is beholding artworks as an observer, and in moments of felt artistic creativity, there lies access, however oblique, to new modes of meaning and order less determinately chained to social power. More precisely, the artwork can also serve as an “Other” and a novel source of the type of recognition that forms self-consciousness and the topos of psychic life. Art, like other people, can also set up a turn-on-self and initiate the encounter of consciousness with itself. However, art, with its intentionality and temporality exceeding determination in discourse, serves as a jumping off point for changing the basic stakes of permanence, necessity, and contingency in subject life, especially when one fashions one’s bodily life as a work of art. This points to the value of reconsidering the *Psychic Life of Power* by appreciating its aesthetic life.

i. Introduction

With a career spanning back to the 1980s and with renown for her 1990s books *Gender Trouble* and *Bodies that Matter*, Judith Butler also spends a

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great deal of her time addressing the subject more generally in a way that overlaps with her more specific work on gender, although by her own admission these broader efforts are “less known—and less popular—dimensions of [her] philosophical work.”¹ This part of Butler’s oeuvre examines in broad terms how external power forms and regulates its psychic life, with many forms of alterity animating and constraining the subject, not just sexual difference, which Butler specifically casts as “not the primary difference from which all other kinds of social differences are derivable.”² While gender and sex have profound implications for the subject, Butler does not make these the major focus in this less popular strand of her thinking. In this context the term “subject” refers rather broadly to that which characterizes being human in the world, namely a self-reflexive, self-examining, self-critical, socially impelled, embodied agency. Here, the figure of the subject more generally represents a turning-on-self initiated by pressure from without, from what is other (with sexual difference still being a major dimension of that alterity).

2. Butler and Hegel

Butler proceeds from the view that a subject’s identity arises from external normativity, which initiates and takes up residence within and thus initiates the inner sphere of self-consciousness.³ Butler starts with the leading figure of nineteenth-century German idealism, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, who sees what he terms “unhappy consciousness” as the internalization of two desires toward freedom and negation, which themselves follow from the split between what he takes to be the representative figures of what he identifies as the immediately prior mode of consciousness, that of the master and the slave.⁴ For Hegel, the struggle between master and slave is motivated by the fact that self-consciousness exists only in and for itself through recognition—recognition, which in Butler’s particular reading of Hegel’s *Phenomenology* serves as the *only* means for fulfilling

¹ Butler: *Senses of the Subject*, p. 10.

² *Ibid.*, p. 159.

³ Butler: *The Psychic Life of Power*, p. 3.

⁴ Hegel: *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, p. 163.

the desire to persist in one's being.⁵ Reflection requires a mirror for self-consciousness in the form of another self-consciousness to recognize it. Here, the notion of recognition drives self-consciousness and it appears in terms of the two extremes of the slave's self-negating recognition of the master on the one hand and the freedom that the master acquires by being so recognized on the other.⁶

These desires toward freedom and negation are internalized inside of a single unhappy consciousness in such a way that neither desire dominates, thus giving self-consciousness nothing but the most fleeting satisfaction.⁷ Here, the drives toward freedom in pure thought and negation become forms of stoicism and skepticism respectively, forms in between which the unhappy consciousness vacillates internally.⁸

For Butler this sets up a situation in self-consciousness where a skeptical character emerges as a "watching self, defined as a kind of witnessing and scorning, differentiates itself from the self witnessed as perpetually falling into contradiction."⁹ By despising the stoic part that gets drawn into contradiction, self-consciousness therefore "appears as negative narcissism, an engaged preoccupation with what is most debased and defiled about it."¹⁰ Self-consciousness, in such a state, exists as it does by virtue of what it hates and wishes did not exist.

Of course these examinations of the master-slave and unhappy consciousness dynamics contain some of Hegel's most compelling insights, and more to the point, these sections develop Hegel's approach to Butler's main concern—the development of self-consciousness as a turning of the self upon the self. With it being fairly clear that the final stages of Hegel's narrative of spirit (i.e. religion and the Prussian-style state) would sit uneasily with Butler's project and her interrogation of power structures, it is little wonder that she brackets off her own appropriation of Hegel.

However, by truncating her analysis of Hegel, Butler closes herself off to certain resources that could help with the unsatisfying implication of

⁵ Ibid., pp. 145-146; Butler: *Giving an Account of Oneself*, p. 43 [emphasis added].

⁶ Hegel: *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, p. 147.

⁷ Ibid., p. 164.

⁸ Ibid., pp. 163, 168.

⁹ Butler: *The Psychic Life of Power*. p. 46.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 50.

her work that the subject's psychic life must be one of either latent, low-grade melancholia or passionate, self-protective rage. One such resource exists in Hegel's description of art as another late stage of consciousness where he broaches the topic of freedom in a way relevant to Butler's project, namely in terms of how the artisan acquires self-knowledge through resolving a particular instance of the riddle of physical nature and intelligible character in the single, individual artwork in a manner not mediated not by another party (like the master), but by the artisan's own production.

Unlike the portions on the master-slave and unhappy consciousness dynamics from Hegel's account, in these later sections labor is neither alien, nor alienating. Whereas consciousness earlier becomes unhappy since neither the slave's labor nor the master's desire can offer either party the recognition and freedom from contingency that each desires, here the stakes for labor are rather different. Rather than work and desire being set off as each other's limits, as is the case during the master-slave stage, this conceptual dyad is brought into unity through an artisan fashioning the artwork.¹¹ The artisan's work ceases to be a foreign thing, ever in danger of acquisition and annihilation by uncontrollable outside forces, and instead becomes familiar and congenial, though it is still not speech or anything fully animate that might provide full reciprocal recognition. And so, in this iteration self-consciousness moves past the unhappiness earlier described by Hegel, by acquiring a new basis for positive self-recognition and understanding as the artisan crafts the artwork and the artwork builds the artisan's self-understanding.

Read through a certain lens, Hegel brings insight to the idea that, while artworks do not possess the full autonomy of thinking and acting human beings, they do still take on a life of their own. This can be seen as contributing to the view that art expands human self-consciousness by showing how something formed and created can still nonetheless exhibit spontaneity similar to what is sought amidst the perils of subject life.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 153.

3. Butler and Nietzsche

A similar point can be made with regard to Butler's limited appropriation of Nietzsche. What Hegel sees as the split between recognized and recognizer internalized in unhappy consciousness, Friedrich Nietzsche, working a few decades later in the German tradition, rearticulates in his notion of the bad conscience—a socially driven split of the self into tormenter and the tormented. Working from this convergence, Butler reasons that a profound unhappiness develops as social forces set up and “create” the psyche, with the social regulating the psychic sphere so that action in society takes place within norms.¹² In both cases, social forces form the layout of the mind, regulating it and negating socially unacceptable behavior.

Therefore, in Butler's reading of Hegel and Nietzsche, the social regulates the psychic, leading to an internalizing of society's value. This enables the will to be tame enough to get by in society. The self, being so constituted, does not really possess its own will, but is formed in relation to others. Hence, in explaining the relational self, Butler writes that “the ‘will’ is not...the will of a subject, nor is it an effect fully cultivated by and through social norms.”¹³ She suggests instead that the will is “the site at which the social implicates the psychic in its very formation—or, to be more precise, as its very formation and formativity.”¹⁴

This turning of the self back upon the self forms the inner/outer, psychic/social threshold. Hence, according to this view, there is absolutely nothing like any kind of movement of the pre-given self from inside of some psychic realm outward into the social world through presence and/or action.¹⁵ There is no core, no eternal soul that comes prior to the social implication of the psyche. Peeling back the onion only gets more onion and combing through the sediment of past social relationships only yields more sediment. And so, describing how an “I” is formed “is not a matter of discovering and exposing an origin or tracking a causal series, but of describing what acts when I act, without precisely taking responsibility for the whole show.”¹⁶

¹² Ibid., p. 171.

¹³ Ibid., p. 66.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 66.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 67.

¹⁶ Butler: *Senses of the Subject*, p. 16.

Hence, for Butler, this kind of self “does not stand apart from the prevailing matrix of ethical norms and con[FB02?]icting moral frameworks” but is instead “already implicated in a social temporality that exceeds its own capacities for narration.”¹⁷ Hence, rehabilitation and not redemption would seem to make sense here. Though Butler does not put it this way in her reading of Nietzsche and the imposition of *slave* morality, the implication is there—the challenge here is gaining, or perhaps regaining, a sense of *nobility*. However, beyond the moral connotation there is also an artistic component to nobility that must also be recognized.

As concerns the Nietzschean questions of regaining nobility, it bears mentioning here that the third yes, the holy yes, the child stage of Zarathustra’s metamorphoses is about saying “yes” to repetition in the eternal recurrence of the same. Though Nietzsche famously avoids directly stating what an affirmation of recurrence would be, casting it instead as a dance and a secret between male Zarathustra and female eternity, the stakes are sufficiently clear.¹⁸ One must be able to bear each moment repeating eternally, including all of those cutting and formative moments of felt loss in which slave morality takes hold bit by bit as one negotiates for recognition and survival. Butler does not take on this aspect of Nietzsche’s thought in her theory of self, nor does she deal with rehabilitation through ritual practice. This is unfortunate, because when it comes to answering Nietzsche’s challenge to affirm recurrence, what could be better than honing each gesture, each word, each action in order to raise each moment up to the level of practiced art? How could one better embrace repetition than by learning to regard the repetition of bodily action as an art, as ritual, as something to be honed and made graceful in each varied scene of appearance, address, and performance?

Butler’s sensible, sober approach is perhaps necessary since the Dionysian side of Nietzsche is sometimes too intoxicated and incoherent to be philosophically useful. She goes to great lengths to avoid importing any *deus ex machina* into her narrative of self-development, and so audacious statements on redeeming the past and turning “all ‘it was’” into “so I willed it!”¹⁹ probably go a bit too far for her. Nietzsche’s more heady

¹⁷ Butler: *Giving an Account of Oneself*, pp. 7–8.

¹⁸ Nietzsche: *Also sprach Zarathustra*, p. 284.

¹⁹ Nietzsche: *Also sprach Zarathustra*, p. 175.

writings, like *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, hold out the possibility of grandiose, cosmic spontaneity and new beginnings that would overly complicate, if not outright contradict, Butler's meticulously framed project.

However, in his brief, yet profound, essay "On Truth, Lies, and the Extramoral Sense" Nietzsche takes up the basic idea of a founding turn-on-self in a way quite similar to how Butler would describe it more than a century later. However, his account diverges where it advances, in rather lucid fashion, the possibility of artistic creativity pointing to a way out of the self-as-social-prison.

Beyond speaking directly to Butler's project and anticipating her appropriation of Foucault's notion of subjectivation as the mechanistic formation the imprisoned subject, Nietzsche writes here in a more deliberate, clear, and frankly, useful manner about "redemption" of the self through artistic creativity than elsewhere. And this gives a firmer basis for reassessing the role of artistic creativity and aesthetic experience in Butler's account of the subject.

For Nietzsche, this type of "redemption" consists in getting past the idea that language delineates the world in a necessary way and realizing that artistic creativity stands as the way out of these confines. For him, the rectification of language in the notion that it is based in some grand notion of truth is itself the basis for social regulation. He speaks of metaphor becoming hard and fixed, becoming ossified, and in so doing conditioning the belief that for each image, for each object, there is some necessary and hard-wired nerve impulse.²⁰ In this regard the will to truth becomes the basis of enslavement to a normative order and a further ossification of the self.

Therefore, on this score redemption is not some recovery of original and self-stable essence, for that would merely replicate the structure, so familiar in the philosophical tradition taking after Plato, of willful pursuit of permanent truth. Instead, Nietzschean redemption consists in *remembering*. This means remembering that the stony metaphor-world of common language was itself once artistically created and that a kind of extramoral artistry can dissolve it, rendering language and thought fluid.

And so, speaking in the language of Butler's project, Nietzsche sardon-

²⁰ Nietzsche: "Über Wahrheit und Lüge im außermoralischen Sinne", p. 883.

ically identifies the “security” of the everyday subject as being a prison of self-consciousness. Unlike Butler, Nietzsche points to artistic creativity as the means of escape. He writes:

Only by forgetting this primitive metaphor-world...only through the undefeatable belief that this sun, window, and table might have a truth in itself, in short, that one forgets oneself as a subject, and indeed an artistically creating subject, does one live with any calm, security, and consistency: if one could get out of prison walls of this belief for a moment, then “self-consciousness” would immediately be gone.²¹

Butler sets out more-or-less the same dilemma regarding the prison walls of self-consciousness, with the body becoming the normative subject’s skin-tight prison. However she does not go further and explore the role of either aesthetic experience or artistic creativity in escaping or even refiguring the walls. The argument here is that both in aesthetic experience, that is beholding artworks as a feeling observer, and in moments of artistic creativity, there is access, however oblique, to new modes of meaning and order less determinately chained to social power. Art thus points to powers beyond power and to creativity beyond normativity. How so?

4. Arendt on Art and Appearance on the Scene

What matters, and what shines forth independent of any particular view of history, is the superlative enduring quality of artworks. Speaking on what this means for *The Human Condition*, Hannah Arendt addresses the issue directly:

Whether this uselessness of art objects has always pertained or whether art formerly served the so-called religious needs of men as ordinary use objects serve more ordinary needs does not enter the argument. Even if the historical origin of art were of an exclusively religious or mythological character, the fact is that art has survived gloriously its severance from religion, magic, and myth.²²

²¹ Ibid., pp. 883-884.

²² Arendt: *The Human Condition*, p. 167.

Though she decries the link between art and mytho-religious magic in her own description, Arendt sees artworks as exemplary with regard to survival through the ages, thereby ascribing a kind of magic to them. Arendt speaks of the consummately and “intensely worldly” quality of artworks in comparison to things generally. Her words here sound very much like those of Kant on non-purposive purposiveness in artistic beauty, particularly with her own description of how separation from everyday use makes artworks durable over and above change and corrosion in nature.²³ Arendt goes on to conclude that when it comes to artworks “their durability is of a higher order than that which all things need in order to exist at all; it can attain permanence throughout the ages. In this permanence, the very stability of the human artifice, which, being inhabited and used by mortals can never be absolute, achieves a representation of its own.”²⁴

Arendt’s approach is rather helpful because the convergence that she draws between *Schein* and *Sein*, between appearance and being, points to a possible resource beyond discursive formation for addressing subjectivation (addressed elsewhere in my work).²⁵ Now recall that in Butler’s understanding, subjectivation is a comprehensive process—meaning that there is nothing that exists beyond it as a prior interior remainder. For her, there is no such thing as a bodily remainder that might aid the subject, since the body as such is “destroyed” in the constitutive loss that founds the subject body within the normative bounds of a skin-tight prison, setting up the interior and the exterior. Rather, the body only becomes a body that matters with a recognized, intelligible social existence by being called, by being hailed into existence. This is what Butler has in mind with her appropriation of Louis Althusser’s hypothetical scene of interpellation where a police officer yells “Hey, you there!”, leading “you” turn around and recognize “yourself” in this hail with a literal turning of the self back upon self, where the self, so recognized, guiltily submits before the law without reason.²⁶ Butler’s basic point is that this type of interpellation plays out thousands of times in the subject’s life, where outright pejoratives, lesser slights, and indirect cultural messages hail the subject into being, into act-

²³ Ibid., p. 167.

²⁴ Ibid., pp. 167-168.

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 197-198.

²⁶ Althusser: “*Idéologie et appareils idéologiques d’État*”, p. 31.

ing out a certain role as if on cue.

However, Arendt can still add to this discussion, since she points to something genuinely “beyond” interpellation, namely the very manner in which appearance on the scene occurs. She makes the strong case that appearance is coextensive with being, particularly in political realms, writing, “Everything that is, must appear, and nothing can appear without a shape of its own; hence there is in fact no thing that does not in some way transcend its functional use, and its transcendence, its beauty or ugliness, is identical with appearing publicly and being seen.”²⁷

And so, applying this to the logic of subjectivation, it becomes clear that one shows up on the scene prior to each and every hail into social existence, prior to each and every passionate attachment in ongoing subject life. Subjectivation seems to exploit the necessary publicity of human life, the seeming compulsion of *having* to appear on the scene and having to do so continuously in order to be and to persist in being. One cannot be constantly hailed into existence by perceived authorities, by Althusser’s hypothetical police officer, or even by petty slights, unless one is compelled to be there (as *Dasein*), thrown into the scene out on the street with a readiness and perhaps eagerness to be so hailed.

However, Arendt’s point, and one that is well taken when it comes to subjectivation, is that being-as-appearance can be refined. Everything may have to appear publicly in order to be, but some things are better at doing so. This is what artworks, as non-purposive and durable things do; they appear, and thus exist, in a fuller way. Arendt draws a both a distinction and a continuum between artworks and things, writing:

For although the durability of ordinary things is but a feeble reflection of the permanence of which the most worldly of all things, works of art, are capable, something of this quality—which to Plato was divine because it approaches immortality—is inherent in every thing as a thing, and it is precisely this quality or the lack of it that shines forth in its shape and makes it beautiful or ugly.²⁸

Now, the idea being presented in this project, following Arendt, is that basic appearance on the scene takes place before and beyond the processes of

²⁷ Arendt: *The Human Condition*, p. 173.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

interpellation and subjectivation driven by passionate attachment. Appropriating a tangent of Arendt's logic and adding a twist of Butler's notion of subjectivation, the idea here is that artworks have the almost magical potential to call into question core notions of presence and absence in a way that can disrupt the basic logic of preserving oneself through preserving what is absent and lost in the ideals of conventional slave morality within the locus of self-castigation called conscience.

And so the point explored in my broader work is that by paying attention to artworks *and* by moving to refine one's own bodily life and appearance on the scene in terms of art, a subject can then become something of an artwork with a life of its own and with a timeframe and sense of purpose (*Zweckmäßigkeit*) far surpassing that of mortal life. The particular suggestion here is that, if the body is always undergoing subjectivation and always having first to appear, then the body—with its basic appearance, presence, comportment, and countenance always being formed by the "objective" world—can be similarly refined in terms of how it appears on the scene, perhaps also taking on a life of its own and finding a different sense of mortality and purpose beyond what has been inculcated in the course of subject life. Put yet another way, if appearance is in some way beyond the dynamic of interpellation and subjectivation as a condition of the possibility of its occurrence, then why should art, as the apex of appearance vis-à-vis endurance, not become a model for the subject body in its struggle for survival amidst a host of normative demands? If either art or the artful body can in some manner surpass subjectivation, even if just momentarily and in fits and starts, then why should the senses of time, durability, and purpose at play in art not radically alter the nature of subject self-recognition?

This can be thought of as trading off of prevailing definitions of art—whatever art is, it arrests attention, standing out as art not nature, per Immanuel Kant, or with art securing poetic justice such that the artist *earns* the initial right to attention, per leading contemporary continental philosopher Stanley Cavell.²⁹ If art captures attention, it does so by being extra-ordinary, by rising above the din of mere signs. In capturing atten-

²⁹ Kant: *Kritik der Urtheilskraft*, p. 306; Cavell, Stanley: *Must We Mean What We Say?*, p. 237.

tion in this manner, art is not merely *subject to* recognition, rather it issues a *claim for* recognition. When applied to how the appearance and emergence of the subject body, this changes the stakes.

5. Conclusion

And so, if the bad conscience, the social psyche trapping the body, is a horrible artistry, then knowingly reclaiming the body through art makes sense. If the moral discourse forming the bad conscience and trapping the body is a fiendish artistry, then why not fight it with art? If what is sometimes the wretched art of conventional language has the power to bind, then what prevents art from having the power to loosen those strictures of recognition? However, if artistic power is to be brought to bear, there must be a medium—but what? It needs to be something present at hand and not a *deus ex machina*, and moreover it needs to change the stakes of bodily imprisonment through recognition.

And so the solution to this problem of acquiring recognition outside of the normal confines of subjectivation is clear—the body must *itself* become that artful medium and become meaningful on its own terms. If the body can become artful and acquire whatever limited “magic” it is that artworks bear that allows them to disrupt conventional structures of purposiveness, then the body can become a different kind of other. Rather than just beholding one’s body as a subject beholds any mere object, one’s body can, over time, become a source for a less pernicious and less imprisoning form of recognition, which can do at least something to counter the prevailing and entrenched form of recognition that drives subjectivation encounters. What is needed then is a theory of bodily appearance, of bodily presence, of bodily performance, of bodily practice, and one that does not ascribe any undue and inexplicable creativity or spontaneity to the body or to art, but which nevertheless develops a serious account of the possibility of a certain kind of subject freedom. This is explored elsewhere in my work.

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Kant on Form, Function and Decoration

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ABSTRACT. Kant says little explicitly about the beauty of functional objects. We argue though that his *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment* contains both the conceptual resources to illuminate the category as well as interesting examples of such artifacts. Succinctly, the beauty of functional objects is a type of dependent or adherent beauty. Pleasure in these objects is dependent on the concept of the end they are designed to serve. In a beautiful functional object the excellence of its design is visible or perceivable and it is through reflection upon what is perceived that we are led to recognize the excellence of the object.

Any interpretation of Kant's view of the beauty of functional objects should acknowledge at the very beginning that it is an interpretation of very little text indeed. More precisely, what little is implied about the subject is arguably a by-product of the attempt to explain the distinction between the beauty of natural objects and the beauty of works of fine art. Nevertheless, we believe that Kant's *Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment* contains both the conceptual resources to illuminate the category of beautiful functional objects as well as interesting examples of such artifacts.

§16 of the Analytic of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment opens with a highly important claim: There are two kinds of beauty, namely, free beauty and adherent or dependent beauty. In judging free beauty: 'No concept of any end [...] is presupposed' (CPJ 5:229-230).¹ But adherent beauty does

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¹ Quotations from the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* are taken from the Guyer and Matthews translation in the Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant (Kant 2000). They are followed by the abbreviation CPJ and the Academy volume number and pagination.

‘presuppose a concept of the end that determines what the thing should be, hence a concept of its perfection’ (CPJ 5:230). Kant’s primary reason for introducing the distinction is made perfectly clear much later in the text:

In order to judge a beauty of nature as such, I do not need first to have a concept of what sort of thing the object is supposed to be, i.e., it is not necessary for me to know the material purposiveness (the end), but the mere form without knowledge of the end pleases for itself in the judging. But if the object is given as a product of art, and is as such supposed to be declared to be beautiful, then, since art always presupposes an end in the cause (and its causality), a concept must first be the ground of what the thing is supposed to be, and, since the agreement of the manifold in a thing with its inner determination as an end is the perfection of the thing, in the judging of the beauty of art the perfection of the thing will also have to be taken into account, which is not even a question in the judging of natural beauty (as such). (CPJ 5:311)²

This important passage tells us that in judging the beauty of natural objects concepts play no role, that is, we set aside or hold in abeyance all knowledge of what the thing we are viewing is. The beauty of natural objects is free precisely in the sense that its appreciation is free of concepts and so ‘the mere form [...] pleases for itself in the judging’. Although this is a contested matter, our claim is that in judging the beauty of natural objects we respond merely to their spatial or, more rarely, spatio-temporal form.³ It is in this precise sense that judgments of natural beauty are aesthetic – indeed purely aesthetic or pure judgments of taste. For space and time, Kant holds, are the *a priori* forms of what is given to us sensibly. This emphasis on spatial or spatio-temporal form will prove of importance for what follows.

² Janaway explicitly rejects these apparently clear and emphatic formulations. See, Janaway 1997: 473.

³ For other interpreters who hold this view see: Biemel 1959: 52-58; Gotshalk 1967: 251; Uehling 1971: 18-34; Johnson 1979: 170-171; Lorand 1989: 35; Düsing 1990: 183; Wicks 1997: 387, 388; Hanna 2005: 285 note 49; Geiger 2010: 76. Allison and Fricke acknowledge that some passages clearly suggest this understanding but they think it should be rejected. See: Allison 2001: 133, 135-137; Fricke 1991: 630-631.

Works of fine art, however, always presuppose an end. They are products of intentional causality. Artists aim to express or convey a certain idea, thought or emotion; and they do so by giving them body or realizing them in a work of art. Though again this is a contested matter, we are claiming that when Kant says that adherent beauty does ‘presuppose a concept of the end that determines what the thing should be’ the concepts of which he is speaking are just these ideas, thoughts or emotions. This intentional content is incarnate in the work of art that realizes it and ‘will have to be taken into account’ in appreciating its beauty. These are the concepts to which aesthetic judgments of art adhere or upon which they are dependent.

So Kant’s principal aim in drawing the distinction between free and adherent beauty is explaining the difference between the beauty of nature and the beauty of fine art.⁴ But in speaking of beauty that depends upon concepts of human ends he has, as a matter of fact, circumscribed a wider category than works of fine art. Indeed, works of fine art, though paradigms of beauty, are not the only products of human labor we think of as beautiful. We also appreciate the beauty of functional objects.⁵

It might be thought that this last claim is anachronistic and that for Kant the fine arts exhaust the realm of beautiful human production. They are, after all, for Kant and his contemporaries, the beautiful arts, *les beaux arts*, or *die schönen Künste*. But among Kant’s examples of human-made dependent beauty are a few that very clearly are not works of fine art.

But the beauty of a human being (and in this species that of a man, a woman, or a child), the beauty of a horse, of a building (such as a church, a palace, an arsenal, or a garden-house) presuppose a concept of the end that determines what the thing should be, hence a concept of its perfection, and is thus merely adherent beauty. (CPJ 5:230)

Might there be among these examples beautiful functional objects, or, in terms of the distinction Kant draws in §43, examples of products of han-

⁴ Gotshalk denies and Stecker affirms that Kant’s primary concern in introducing the distinction is to explain the difference between natural and artistic beauty. See: Gotshalk 1967: 254-255; Stecker 1990: 73.

⁵ For the claim that we judge dependently beautiful products of intentional agency, either artifacts or artworks see, Gammon 1999: 160 note 16.

dicrafts or remunerative arts (*Handwerke, Lohnkünste*) rather than of the liberal arts (*freie Künste*)?

The answer to this question begins by suggesting that there are two kinds of concepts upon which judgments of adherent beauty may depend: 1) ideas of reason; 2) concepts of determinate human ends or functions. Kant never draws this distinction perfectly explicitly. But it is suggested by his contrast of ideal beauty that has ‘at its basis [...] some idea of reason in accordance with determinate concepts’, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, beauty ‘adhering to determinate ends’ (CPJ 5:233). As Kant makes abundantly clear, his view is that works of poetry, painting and sculpture present aesthetically ideas of reason (CPJ 5:314). In Kant’s terminology, ideas of reason are concepts of infinite yet interconnected, indeed comprehensive conceptual richness; they are all products of reason’s desire for absolute completeness under one concept. Aesthetic pleasure in these fine arts is thus dependent on a particular kind of concept, namely, the endlessly rich ideas of reason they aesthetically present. It is our suggestion that judgments of the beauty of functional objects are dependent on determinate concepts of well-defined human ends.⁶

The question then is what it is to be a beautiful functional object. As a judgment of adherent beauty it presupposes, according to Kant, ‘a concept of its perfection’ (CPJ 5:230). To give a first and very rough answer, a beautiful functional object is one whose immediately-given sensible properties reveal its excellence or perfection. This means that it will only be possible to speak of the beauty of objects that fulfill their end particularly well.⁷ So the concept of the end must be such that allows for gradation and indeed perfection or excellence, which is not to say that there is only one way of being excellent. In appreciating such beauty we do not ask ourselves what it is to be a perfect functional object of a certain kind and then determine that we have before us such an object. We do not mentally produce a check-list of properties that must be present in an object and then pro-

⁶ For the claim that conceptual content plays a decisive role in judgments of dependent beauty see, Mallaband 2002.

⁷ The end of a functional object must be indeterminate enough for us to think of objects fulfilling the function less perfectly or more perfectly. This responds to a point Stecker makes about very simple objects that apparently always fulfill their end such as tissue dispensers or pipe-cleaners. See, Stecker 2011: 440-441.

ceed to determine whether they are indeed present. In Kant's terminology, that would be to make a determinative conceptual (or logical) judgment. In simple terms, we would be applying a given concept to a particular object.

Judgments of adherent beauty presuppose such determinate judgments. After all, we must know what kind of an object we are looking at to appreciate its beauty as the sort of functional thing it is. But such determinate judgments, though necessary, are only a condition of appreciating the beauty of the object. Aesthetic judgments are reflective and it is precisely reflection on the sensible properties of a particular object that reveals the perfection of the object. Such judgments are then reflective and indeed, in this sense, aesthetic. But they are not pure aesthetic judgments of beauty. We do not respond to sensible properties alone. Unlike judgments of free natural beauty, in which we take pleasure in the mere spatial or spatio-temporal form of an object, they are dependent on concepts. For the reflection upon the sensible properties of the object is an appreciation of them as properties of this kind of an object. Simply put, in a beautiful functional object excellence is visible or perceivable and it is through reflection upon what is perceived that we are led to recognize the excellence of the object.⁸

To understand better the notion of adherence and so the pleasure we take in adherent beauty it is important to recall Kant's sharp distinction between the understanding as the faculty of concepts and intuition as the faculty of sensibility. Our concepts contain (among others) names of sensible properties. But in a judgment of adherent beauty we set out from the sensible qualities to which our concept refers. The directionality of reflective judgments is the converse of determinative judgments. They move from the sensible given to the concept. Specifically, in judgments of the beauty of a functional object, the move is from sensible qualities to properties definitive of the excellence of such an object. The aesthetic pleasure in these properties thus sensibly enlivens our concept. Judgments

⁸ We thus disagree with the claim that judgments of dependent beauty are mere combinations of the judgment that a thing is a perfect specimen of its kind and a judgment of free beauty occasioned by it. See: Budd 2002: 37; Rueger 2008: 540-544. For a similar view see, Janaway 1997: 473-474. On our view, furthermore, the relation of adherence is more intimate than relations, in which function serves either as constraint or as a necessary condition of beauty. See: Guyer 1999: 357-361; Guyer 2002: 358-361.

of adherent beauty are expressions of such pleasure.

This may be a quality we know is referred to by the concept. But we may also experience the quality for the very first time, in cases where it is merely implicit in our concept of the object. And yet it is important to emphasize that in neither case are we learning or conceptually gaining anything really new in the aesthetic experience. Positively put, our gain is sensible – an experience. Subsequently though, we might gain conceptually through the experience by making explicit what previously was only implicit in our concept. Indeed, the distinction between aesthetic experiences that only enliven the concept of a thing and those that also make its content explicit can serve to illuminate the different aesthetic pleasures of the expert or connoisseur and the layperson.

It is very tempting to speak here of a gain in knowledge as well. Expressions of aesthetic pleasure might indeed draw from us exclamations such as: ‘Now I really know what an X is!’ But although Kant helps us understand the deep and intimate relationship between knowledge and adherent beauty, he also allows us to define more precisely such experiences as those in which our concepts are enlivened rather than further determined.

We have so far been speaking of sensible qualities or properties without saying more clearly what precisely this means. Here two possibilities suggest themselves. We claimed above that in judgments of the free beauty of natural objects the spatial form or three-dimensional shape, or, in some cases, the spatio-temporal form alone evoke our feeling of pleasure. In works of fine art too form is of importance. Kant says very clearly that drawing is essential in all the pictorial arts (see: CPJ 5:225, 330). But clearly we do not find a sculpture beautiful merely by attending to its spatial form, nor merely to the preparatory drawing for a painting. Composition, perspective, symbols, gestures, colors and materials used all have a sensible side that is constitutive of artistic expression in the pictorial arts. So is Kant’s view that in judgments of the beauty of functional objects we respond to spatial or spatio-temporal form alone? Keeping in mind that as we are talking about adherent beauty we would be thinking of properties such as aero-dynamical form in an object designed for speed. Or does he think we respond to a wider range of sensible qualities? Put slightly differently, there are two possible theories of the beauty of functional objects here. One is austere and focused on spatial or spatio-temporal form alone.

The other employs a far more diverse palette of sensible qualities, which in the case of functional beauty would include spatial or spatio-temporal form but also such properties as feeling-to-hand (for example, stability, weightiness, balance, texture), rigidity and flexibility, etc. Which theory does Kant endorse?⁹

As far as we can see, the text gives no answer to this question. Some might point to the fact (mentioned above) that in §14 Kant emphasizes the importance of form, in the guise of drawing, for the pictorial arts – thus suggesting that spatial or spatio-temporal form alone are the object of judgments of the beauty of functional objects as well (see, CPJ 5:225). But the task of this discussion is to elucidate the proper object of *pure* judgments of taste. Kant is using drawing as presenting in black-and-white on paper the mental representation that evokes pure aesthetic pleasure. He says explicitly that drawing constitutes the ‘proper object of the pure judgment of taste’ (CPJ 5:225). It is furthermore true that Kant does talk more about form as a means of artistic expression than about other sensible properties. But it is not because form alone is important as a means of expression, but because his primary interest is in the most general and unchanging, in fact in the *a priori* aspect of aesthetic means, namely, space and time.¹⁰

So the text does not answer the question of the range of sensible properties relevant to the appreciation of functional beauty. But Kant does clarify what kind of sensible properties indeed detract from our appreciation of beauty. In §14, Kant distinguishes between ornaments (*Zieraten, Parerga*) and decoration (*Schmuck*) (CPJ 5:226). An ornament is external to the representation of an object and ‘augments the satisfaction of taste [...] through its form’ (CPJ 5:226); borders around a painting or colonnades around magnificent buildings are examples. Kant critically calls decoration anything that merely adds charm and emotion (*Reiz und Rubrung*) and is only subjectively agreeable (*angenehm*) (see: CPJ 5:223, 225, 226). What remains implicit in this discussion is that it is of the most direct importance to the understanding of Kant’s conception of functional beauty. For clearly, neither ornamentation nor decoration are of relevance in judgments of natural beauty. Furthermore, ornamentation in art is both lit-

⁹ Significantly, the latter list includes properties not accessible by sight or hearing. For this point see, Stecker 2011: 441–442.

¹⁰ For more on Kant’s view of artistic means see, Reiter (Forthcoming).

erally and in relation to content external to the work, as a picture-frame is to a picture and as colonnades might be to a building they surround. In functional objects, however, precisely because they are objects to be used, the ornamentation would be found in or upon the object itself. The important point is that ornamentation must augment our pleasure in the appearance of functionality and indeed do so through its form.

We are now in a position finally to return to Kant's examples in §16. Relevant, first, are the works of architecture. Earlier in the text, Kant speaks of works of horticulture and architecture 'insofar as they are fine arts [*sofern sie schöne Künste sind*]' (CPJ 5:225), thus apparently implying that some of their works belong to the mechanical arts.¹¹ Looking again at the list of examples of dependent beauty Kant gives in §16, it makes sense to think of the church, palace and arsenal as the kind of functional works that might belong to the fine arts and present ideas of reason, but very probably not in all cases. As functional works of fine art, they might express such ideas as God, religious community, or, monarchy, legislation, or, self-sufficiency and freedom. It also appears that such works, precisely because of their essential use, might in some cases be appreciated either as merely functional buildings or as works of fine art. In another passage, Kant might be giving first examples of works of architecture that are more typically beautiful art and then examples of works of architecture that might perhaps in some cases be works of fine art but might also be works of mechanical art. The first include 'temples, magnificent buildings for public gatherings' (CPJ 5:322); the latter include 'dwellings, triumphal arches, columns, cenotaphs, and the like, erected as memorials' (CPJ 5:322).

On the other hand, the garden-house is perhaps more commonly an example of functional beauty. This seems to us probable, because garden-houses are often built for private use and indeed to enjoy what Kant thinks of as the charms of nature. Negatively, it is hard to think of a garden-house or even a private country residence as presenting aesthetically an idea of reason.

We suggested above that Kant might hold either an austere conception of functional beauty that focuses on spatial or spatio-temporal form alone.

¹¹ That horticulture is sometimes an example of a mechanical art – say in French gardens – might be implied by speaking of the English taste in gardens as an example of free beauty (see, CPJ 5:242).

But he might also think that the appreciation of functional beauty involves more sensible properties. On the latter view, the colors and materials used in a small sanctuary designed to facilitate and enhance the comfortable and immediate joy in a garden would be relevant sensible properties. Woods and stone typical of a region might enhance the pleasures of the garden by bringing together the protected inner shelter and the views towards which they open. The formal spatial properties are even more obvious. Well-located structures with rotational symmetry and affording maximal vistas, for example, are in many gardens well-suited to their end and for this reason are often found aesthetically pleasing.¹²

The second example of functional beauty is, surprisingly enough, the horse, which we understand as an example of an animal bred to serve a function and in this sense an artifact and not a natural kind. A Thoroughbred is a living-being but also a very carefully designed racing machine and our appreciation of its beauty is dependent on the concept of the end it is made to serve.¹³ Its beauty obviously differs dramatically from the beauty of a Belgian draft-horse. On the broader conception of relevant aesthetic properties, appreciation of the healthy sheen of a horse's coat might take part in the appreciation of its beauty. But in the case of the horse, clearly the emphasis on spatial and spatio-temporal form gets us very far indeed. In examining a Thoroughbred, for example, close attention is paid to the shape and proportions of the head, chest, back, croup and legs and to their relation to each other. In walking a horse attention is obviously paid to a spatio-temporal pattern. Indications of speed and stamina are sought and again entirely different features and proportions would be sought in a draft-horse. Conformation or the conformity of form to function is both a most important set of concepts used in articulating the excellence say of a Thoroughbred and essentially an aesthetic notion. As the great Vincent O'Brien once said, he always looked for a horse that 'fills the eye'.

Let us conclude by saying this: Probably no principles are more import-

¹² We thus disagree with Gammon's claim that in judgments of dependent beauty the aesthetic assessment of the form of an object is an independent ground of estimation accompanying the primary conceptual assessment of its finality. See, Gammon 1999: 164.

¹³ This answers the question of why horses are not classified as natural beauties. See, Scarre 1981: 351, 362.

ant for modernist design generally and architecture specifically than the idea that form and sensible properties generally must express function and a complementary critical or at least cautious view towards what exceeds function. The first idea finds its classic formulation in Louis Sullivan's very-often quoted adage 'form ever follows function'.¹⁴ The second idea finds sweeping and militant expression in Adolf Loos's proclamation that the '*evolution of culture is synonymous with the removal of ornament from the object of use*'.¹⁵ It was the central claim of this paper that both the first idea as well as the second (in more moderate form) are to be found and indeed are conceptually closely related in Kant's analysis of aesthetic judgments.

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¹⁴ Sullivan 1896: 408. For Sullivan though the claim holds true of natural objects as well as objects designed by human beings.

¹⁵ '*evolution der kultur ist gleichbedeutend mit dem entfernen des ornamentes aus dem gebrauchsgegenstande*'. Loos 1931: 277. The lack of capital letters is in the original.

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Facing the Real: Timeless Art and Performative Time^{*}

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ABSTRACT. This contribution analyzes the uses of time linked to materials in contemporary art practices. In the first part of the argument I consider the significance of the contemporary turning away from the normative idea that time should be external or non-intrinsic to fine or visual artworks. The change in mentality concerning the value of time in these works of art has been especially transforming among artists and opened up new opportunities for their creative work. I am particularly interested in the possibilities of an aesthetic translation of the human experience of time into the so-called spatial artworks through the intervention of changeable, non-permanent or non-lasting materials. When time ceases to be seen as a destructive element whose intervention should be avoided, or as a simple subject that the picture tries to depict, it can then be regarded as any other artistic material or as working inside the artistic materials as an active element that can attain a high impact on the final solution of the artistic process. Consequently, artists, viewers, art conservation institutions and so on ought to acknowledge that the temporal nodes should always count as a significant aesthetic component and that the performative temporal dimension is intimately linked to the amplification of the material possibilities in the creative process. In connection with this, I discuss the blurring of the difference between the real and the representational in art practices and how that affects the very presence of temporal dimensions. The paper concludes with the proposal of a new temporal level in works of art that modifies (our temporal understanding of) the identity of the work.

i. Introduction

The French painter François Perrier traveled to Rome in 1635, as was customary for artists in his day, to study the works of classical antiquity. In an engraving entitled “Time devouring works of art” which he made for

^{*} I would like to thank Javier Gil, who read the first draft of the text and Diane Garvey who helped me greatly with the final English version.

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the cover of *Segmenta Nobil. Signorum et Statuarum quae Roma* of 1638, time appears personified as an old man with wings, with the particularity that he is nibbling on the Belvedere Torso. This torso is actually the remains of a sculpture (a ruin). Its extremities and head are missing, yet it preserves the intense expressiveness and twisting typical of the Hellenistic period.

Even when artists fervently desired to live up to the Hippocratic maxim *ars longa, vita brevis*, the reality is that the ruins and remains of grandiose civilizations such as Greece and Rome revealed to them a force destructive of the treasures of the past. Ovid's motto of time as a devourer of all things *tempus edax rerum* was popular among Perrier's fellow artists. In many cases, a concern with the destructive effects of time can be observed in their choice of themes, but an interpretation as literal as that of "Time devouring works of art" was unusual.

Addressing this same degradation of classical sculptures caused by the passing of time, Marguerite Yourcenar has described, from a contemporary sensibility that makes a lively contrast to Perrier's defeatism, the unique journey that certain works of art have taken that has led them to undergo this process of deterioration. In her text, *That Mighty Sculptor, Time*, Yourcenar affirms that the day the sculptor finishes his or her work is when the life of the statue begins, that the work of art is autonomous and that, by analogy with the organic growth of human beings, it continues to evolve over time.¹ Instead of viewing the passage of time as a devourer of the uniqueness of the work, which at most can expect to survive only if it maintains its artistic qualities based on certain fine materials, Yourcenar considers that the passing of centuries adds significance to the work, that the work of time and its contingencies confer "personality" on the work of art, in other words, they give it a "biography".

¹ "On the day when a statue is finished, its life, in a certain sense, begins. The first phase, in which it has been brought, by means of the sculptor's efforts, out of the block of stone into human shape, is over; a second phase, stretching along the course of centuries, through alternations of adoration, admiration, love, hatred, and indifference, and successive degrees of erosion and attrition, will bit by bit return it to the state of unformed mineral mass out of which its sculptor had taken it. [...] Those hard objects fashioned in imitation of the forms of organic life, have, in their own way, undergone the equivalent of fatigue, age, and unhappiness. They have changed in the way time changes us". Yourcenar, Marguerite (1992), *That Mighty Sculptor, Time*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Despite her idealization, the organic references and the anthropocentric metaphor, Yourcenar hits the mark with a trait that seems more typical of certain contemporary works of art which use much less extensive time lapses. I refer to the possibility of understanding time in a creative and self-generating way, and of considering that a work of art can be action, or be carried out actively, deploying its meanings thanks to a process that is essential to it. To do so it is necessary to articulate the idea that time can be just another one of the materials that go into a work of art. This in turn means that we have to see different ways of perceiving the relation between the material and the work of art. The introduction of new materials in the processes of creating works of art has sharpened our awareness of the responsibility the materials themselves have in the final result. We will thus discuss the works of certain artists taking into account their conscious, committed and even metaphorical use of some materials.

2. New Materials and their Meaning

Artists choose materials for their plastic qualities and for how they can be efficiently adapted to the intentionality of the work in question. This choice entails many risks, since materials are neither technically nor ideologically innocuous. The decision to use certain *things* leads to the work being wrapped up in a “balloon of meaning”², since these *things* in themselves contain semantic layers that can call up an additional set of possible meanings. But neither the complicity of the artist with the material chosen nor the qualities or symbolic charge of that material can alone guarantee the efficacy or quality of the work. What is decisive is the way in which these materials are used and how they act in the work in an integrated way.

This idea –the priority of the artistic efficacy of materials superimposed on the pure evidence of their versatility– was what motivated in 1969 one of the most famous exhibitions of the Whitney Museum of American Art de Nueva York: *Anti-Illusion: Procedures / Materials*. In the creative works making up this showing what was most outstanding was the desire

² This term about the rich imagery and many different connotations that a particular material may evoke has been taken from the sculptor Tony Cragg, quoted in Guldemond, J. (1999), “Artificial Respiration”, in Hummelen & Sillé (eds.), *Modern Art: Who Cares?* Amsterdam: The Foundation for the Conservation of Modern Art, p. 79.

to make works of art using materials outside the artistic tradition, though quite common in everyday life. They showed an intense concern with the perishable, the arbitrary, and what is intrinsic to the material. This signaled a radical change in approach that obliges the spectator to focus attention on the materials and processes, and not on the finished form, the final result.

Eva Hesse was one of the participating artists with the work called *Expanded Expansion*, a large sculpture formed by cloths of gauze impregnated with latex and held up with fiberglass posts. When San Francisco's Museum of Modern Art programmed a retrospective of Eva Hesse in 2002, this work, as well as a few others, could not be shown. Many of her works had deteriorated so much, thirty years after their creation, that they could not be moved owing to their extreme fragility³. We know by way of collaborators close to Hesse that she was well aware that her works might not be lasting, and not only did this circumstance not worry her, but she also may have considered it an attribute⁴.

The vulnerability of works like this one poses large dilemmas for collections and museums responsible for deciding what to do with them. That is why it is becoming more and more frequent for museum preservation departments to work hand in hand with artists in storing, together with the works pertaining to the collections, the necessary information on how to proceed when a work deteriorates in the more or less near future⁵. In the case of ephemeral materials, the objective is to preserve their qualities by protecting the works from light, damp, heat or bacteria, but what happens when these destructive factors actually form an integral part of the work? A special feature of a large number of art works is that they were made with ephemeral materials and that the deterioration resulting from the disintegration inherent to these materials was an essential part of the work itself. This changing condition of the material means that the

³ Sylvia Hochfield (2002), "Sticks and Stones and Lemon Cough Drops", *Artnews*, 101 (8), p.117.

⁴ Arthur Danto (1994), *Embodied Meanings. Critical Essays and Aesthetic Meditations*, New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, p. 268.

⁵ Some strategies that have been used to tackle the obsolescence of particular artworks in the Guggenheim Collection are explained in the Variable Media Network website: <http://www.variablemedia.net/> (accessed October 1, 2015)

work acquires a specific duration that coincides with the transformation or the final disappearance of the material used. Before verifying in what sense this duration in fact opens up a unique temporal dimension, a kind of *biography* that distinguishes the work itself, we should take into account the levels of temporality operating in the work and some of the principle mechanisms through which the temporal quality of art is evidenced.

3. Time Knots in Works of Art

In any work of art there is a complex knot of temporalities in which many threads cross, mix and superimpose on each other. There have been many attempts to untangle this bundle and they have given rise to some essential references⁶. In essence, a work of art is the sum of a time of production, a time of content and a time of contemplation. These three times can be more or less evident, have more or less responsibility in the work and take on different degrees of relevance in the understanding of the work. Acting separately or together, these levels can evidence the process, demand more attention from the observer, or represent or evoke past, future, or simultaneous moments, supported by the narrativity of the image or the power of its symbols. But there are other devices that permit a temporal expression in the work. The most immediate way to perceive the temporal nature of a work is to observe a transformation in it, an unequivocal sign of the passage of time. One manifestation of change is movement. It is worth remembering that after the first kinetic experiments carried out by the Surrealists, the perception of movement in the plastic arts was considered the most obvious transgression of the polemical separation between the arts of time and the arts of space. After a century of continuous experimenting it can be said, that, in general, the experience of movement in a work of art turns it into *an event* that depends on the observer and on the

⁶ Etienne Souriau (1949), "Time in the Plastic Arts", *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 8 (4), pp. 294-307; Micheline Sauvage (1953), "Notes on the Superposition of Temporal Modes in the Works of Art" in: Susanne Langer (ed.), *Reflections on Art: a Source Book of Writings by Artist, Critics and Philosophers*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, pp. 161-173; Christine Ross (2012), *The Past is the Present; It's the Future too. The Temporal Turn in Contemporary Art*, New York: Bloomsbury.

time the observer spends with it⁷.

Another way of perceiving change, and with it, the temporal dimension of art works, consists in making the creative process evident or even in making this process the work itself. The temporal dimension of a work of art is expressed in its evolution: if each work turns out to be either the effect or the sum of all its transformations, then the aesthetic and artistic experience will be mediated by all the marks and traces generated during its development. What is more, the evidence of the process itself can constitute an artistic strategy. For many artists it is common practice to create works that span very long processes, capable of multiplying the object and extending it in a period of time that can be long enough so as to leave open or unfinished works.

The experience of artistic temporality is also provoked, as we have said, by the change in the quality of the material. The use of peremptory materials generates a plane of temporality that, although different from those already mentioned, also integrates –as we shall see– evidence of the process and the experience of an event. It can also be affirmed that, through the fate of their materials, these works “live” their time and are deployed in it⁸. In this experience and in this passing that are inherent to the work itself there is an overlapping of the time of reception and the time of content. But it is not a matter of temporality being simply accommodated in the work as a representation and the evidence of time being delegated to a mere subjective manifestation. Rather, the time installed in the work is physically perceived, and it acts as the one in charge, as the creator, as a necessary collaborator in the work.

4. Biographies

The works of art we are now going to discuss are made with materials that change over time, and the artists chose them for this very reason. All of them also possess the common characteristic of a date when they were made and a date marking their disappearance. Between these two dates,

⁷ Doris Von Drathen (2004), *Vortex of Silence. Proposition for an Art Criticism beyond the Aesthetic Categories*, Milan: Charta, p. 143.

⁸ Mieke Bal, (1999), *Quoting Caravaggio*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 165-76.

all of them underwent a change that substantially altered their appearance and through these successive transformations we can follow a trajectory that could be described as similar to a *biography*. By passing through vicissitudes similar to those of any other living organism, these works embark on a unique journey and experience a process of deterioration; they are not there for us to contemplate in their imperturbable appearance, nor are they mute witnesses to our presence, but rather they share in some way the temporal plane with our own contingency.

Anya Gallaccio is an artist who uses all kinds of natural materials to create installations that come close to being events or to simulating living entities. And the fact that the materials that go into these works change and disintegrate over time has become her personal trademark⁹. The only constant in her work is that there is nothing really constant or permanent in them. On occasion she has said that her works are a *performance* and a collaboration, owing to the unpredictable nature of the everyday materials, which reveal unexpected and surprising results by renewing the potential of that which we commonly consume without paying attention. Her changing and perishable installations not only commit the observer visually, but also bring into play other senses, such as smell and hearing, in order to celebrate the secrets of the ordinary. In her determination to transform everyday things into something transcendent, Gallaccio recreates the cycle of life and death with its changes in form, color and smell¹⁰.

Take for example her work entitled *Whatever*, an enormous candle measuring 1.80 meters high and with a one square meter base that was lit on 22 January 2000 in one of the main squares in Innsbruck, Austria. Passers-by are explicitly invited to light the candle if it happens to be out so that it can always remain lit. The sculpture continuously changes form as the wax gradually melts. Two months later, subjected as it was to this process of change, the candle goes out and stops being a sculpture forever.

Andy Goldsworthy is another artist who works with similar substances taken directly from nature. For this artist, who develops his works starting with an investigation of the surrounding environment, the challenge is not simply to wait and see how things deteriorate or decompose and whether

⁹ Darian Leader (2003), "A Responsibility towards Objects", *Modern Painters*, vol.16 (3), p.73.

¹⁰ Gallaccio & Dean (2002), "A Ship in a Bottle", *Modern Painters*, vol.15 (3), pp. 26-9.

this provides an aesthetic result or not. For him, what is important is to make change an integral part of the work. Thus, the work of time –as material, as event and as process– plays a fundamental role, as he points out in his book, *Time*, in which he refers to these ephemeral and changing works that are not made to last, but rather to interact with nature and become part of its cycles of creation, destruction and renewal¹¹. Over several years this artist created some works in different places entitled *Clay Wall*, large walls of clay that gradually dry out and crack over the time of exhibition. In some cases, as in the *Clay Wall* built in the summer of 1999, the work includes different types of clay with different drying times, so that this difference, indistinguishable at the beginning, would become visible during the process. For Goldsworthy, these works that change their condition over the exhibition period, that dissolve or break up, dry up, crack up, and so on, show the true identity of a world in continuous change. Everything is change, and these works attempt to do justice to this evidence through powerful images of how things are, or better, of how things come to be, and of what the environment in which they are contained is like¹². Nonetheless it must also be said that the work of this artist, though perishable, is systematically recorded in photographs and has also been filmed in *Rivers and Tides*, the documentary made by director Thomas Riedelsheimer.

The last work I would like to discuss in this sense has often served as an example of ephemeral art and of how this type of work should be addressed. I refer to the installation called *Strange Fruit (for David)*, by Zoe Leonard. The work consists of 302 skins from different pieces of fruit that the artist had saved after eating the fruit. The skins or peels were sewn together and zippers, buttons and wires were added in a kind of repairing process. The artist, who began this work after the death of a friend and as a way of grieving, did not think about how to preserve the work until some time later, after it had been shown on many occasions and after the Philadelphia Museum of Art had committed to buying it. After working with German art conservator Christian Scheidemann for two years, they found a way to stop the decaying process of the skins. But then the artist decided that the deteriorated aspect of the skins was not enough, and to

¹¹ Andy Goldsworthy, (2000), *Time*, London: Thames & Hudson, p. 7.

¹² <http://www.sculpture.org/documents/scmag03/june03/goldsworthy/gold2.shtml> (accessed October 1, 2015)

remain faithful to the original idea that an essential part of the work was that it was composed of fragile and perishable elements, she finally took the mindful decision to not preserve them. The metaphor of disappearance was not enough; the work actually had to disappear. The work thus continued to be exhibited as long as possible, eliminating the pieces that could no longer be kept, either because they had been attacked by invasions of insects or because they were totally rotten. The artist considered this damage as part of the process, and the work was still exhibited with an agreement between the artist and the museum that they would jointly decide the moment at which it could no longer be shown. The fact that the work ended up in a museum, something which it was not originally created for, puts into question a series of widespread beliefs, such as the one that holds that museums are places devoted to harboring *intact* works of art. According to Ann Temkin, the curator of exhibitions at the Philadelphia Museum of Art de Arte de Philadelphia, the fact that *Strange Fruit* was in a museum made it much more visible than the other works that remained unchanged. This work confronts death, portrays it, and precisely because of this it seems much more alive to the eye of the observer than the objects that remain whole¹³.

5. *Vanitas* (Conclusion)

In the works mentioned earlier we find elements that surprisingly renew the old genre of *vanitas* painting. It is not a matter of chance that one of them, Leonard's *Strange Fruit*, formed part of the exhibition called *Vanitas. Meditations on Life and Death in Contemporary Art*. The showing, which included fourteen contemporary artists, confirms the continued relevance of *vanitas* in art, with an updating of the theme contrasting life and death in relation to current concerns¹⁴.

The Baroque *vanitas* works refer to the fragility of the individual and his world of desires and pleasures, presented as ruins, as something vain,

¹³ Ann Temkin http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications/newsletters/13_2/news1_1.html (accessed October 1, 2015)

¹⁴ John Ravenal (2000), *Vanitas. Meditations on Life and Death in Contemporary Art*, Richmond: Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, p.13.

empty and provisional. That is why the objects represented have a direct symbolic relation to the measuring and passing of time. These elements with which the pictorial genre alluded to the fleeting nature of life and taught transcendence are again appearing in many works of contemporary artists. But the overripe fruit, the candles that melt, the almost withered flowers, the skulls... now appear having added to their prior symbolic nature the effective presence of the real object. This is also the case with the powerful candle in *Whatever*, which does nothing more than put in the scene something so often represented in the Baroque *vanitas* works, with the difference that in the latter the candles were still and stopped in time. The orchestrated decompositions in this and other works by Anya Gallaccio have been described as explorations of the ephemeral and the unstable, and, the same as the *vanitas* works, they evoke our own disappearance, just like that of all organic matter. But unlike the classical *vanitas* works, the reference to destruction and disappearance is not recreated in the agony of life, but rather in the celebration of life with each and every one of its details. This contrast can also be seen clearly in the public intention of the work, as it enters into a dialogue with people in an open space, abandoning monologue and the darkness of the interiors folded on themselves in the Baroque *vanitas* works. And to the negative view of time as an agent of destruction portrayed in those interiors, they counterpoise the affirmative and creative sense of time through the materials, as in Goldworthy's "new ruins"¹⁵.

The *vanitas* paintings addressed death, but in themselves they were long-lasting objects. A certain aspiration to immortality or a desire to overcome with their works the inevitable transition to disappearance was not lacking in the artists of this genre. This presumed victory over the finite followed the motto *vita brevis, ars longa*, an intention of perpetuation that we still recognize in a good part of modern painting. Nonetheless, as early as the 17th century some painters explicitly renounced this motto, and instead of seeking in art a means to avoid death and thus aspire to a fictitious eternity, they suggested in their very works that even art is changeable,

¹⁵ Thomas F. Reese (1999) "Andy Goldworthy's New Ruins", in: M.A. Corzo (ed.), *Mortality Immortality? The Legacy of 20th Century Art*, Los Angeles: The Getty Conservation Institute, p. 25.

that art no less than life was transitory and evanescent¹⁶. This transgressive idea found pictorial expression in the representation of the material deterioration of the paintings themselves, a deterioration that was faked using trompe l'oeil. A unique example of this can be found in Cornelius Norbertus Gysbrechts, whose *vanitas* paintings added to the traditional elements of the skull, candles, soap bubbles, and so on, the optical illusion of the deterioration of the material medium of the pictorial image itself. In his paintings, the canvas appears to be torn off the stretcher frame, and the paint surface damaged and with signs of wreckage, a simulation device that serves to recreate the action of time and to attest to the falseness of the claim that art is something eternal. Despite the irony that Cornelius' paintings remain intact three centuries later, we can recognize that this dual intention has been updated and radicalized in the works that we earlier characterized as contemporary rehabilitations of *vanitas*. However, this updating differs in at least two aspects that actually show the conceptual originality of the works made with ephemeral materials and a contemporary mentality.

One of these differences has to do with the status of the works as representational artifacts and as temporal artifacts. As we have suggested, the innovation that Cornelius introduced to the *vanitas* genre is surprising for two reasons. First, because with his moderate attack on the canon he was foreseeing a specific conception of art, close to the current sensibility marked by finitude and contingency, and second, because by resorting to visual sensationalism he seems to reach a reflexive awareness of time, to the extent that not only does he represent the fleeting nature of time typical of the contents of *vanitas* works, but he also figuratively deposits the passing of time on the material and the medium. Nonetheless, Cornelius' paintings still fail to escape the strict frames of pure representation, and the passage of time is limited to being feigned, with no real effectiveness. In other words, they are still only representational artifacts on which time is "deposited"¹⁷. It aspires to be time but is not. In contrast, the versatility

¹⁶ Ivan Gaskell (1999), "The Image of *Vanitas*", in: Lippincott et al., *The Story of Time*, London: Merrel Holberton, p. 186-189.

¹⁷ Louis Marin comments how time is deposited in painted representation as a surface quality, and this is how it is preserved, invisible in its density. Louis Marin (2001), *On Representation*, Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, pp. 285-305.

of the ephemeral materials themselves unblocks this representational paralysis of time and allows it to be a creative agent. The works of art whose biographies we discussed earlier turn into temporal artifacts; they do not feign the passing of time; they implement it materially. These works go beyond pure representation to become generators of activity in which time is no longer just symbolic content, but rather functions as a performative agent that is effectively carrying out the meaning of the work.

The other fundamental difference lies in a divergent appraisal of time. Traditional *vanitas* favors a negative representation of time as a destructive agent of the visible world, despised as vain and superficial, instead extolling an imaginary beyond as what is real and true. Its ultimate intention is doctrinaire and the message implies the religious promise that there is an eternity. In the contemporary works, time is presented as transformative and as the generator of something new. If a position is taken in them favoring eternity or transcendence, it is no longer religious in nature: the eternal is not something that comes after death, but rather the incessant destruction of the now. Change and transformation are the only constants. Time has artistic responsibility because this acceptance of finitude and contingency has become interiorized in the works themselves. Thus, there are no more promises of salvation, but rather a vital and positive invitation to accept our changing nature.

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Beyond Beauty: The Values of Art — Towards an Interdisciplinary Axiology

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ABSTRACT. The modern Western tradition tends to equate art and aesthetic value. But such a conception is too narrow: aesthetic value does not have the monopoly of the many values involved in the creation, circulation and reception of art works. An interdisciplinary workshop on values, held in Paris in 2012, gathered philosophers, art historians, musicologists, sociologists, anthropologists, economists, jurists, and ended up in a collective book published in 2014. It allowed to display the repertoire of the most relevant values related to artistic experience, be they assigned to art works, artists or art lovers: besides beauty, we identified authenticity, autonomy, celebrity, expensiveness, morality, originality, pleasure, rarity, responsibility, significativity, spirituality, sustainability, truth, universality, virtuosity, and work. What is at stake here is not to demonstrate that such or such a value is or is not present in art works, artists or art lovers, but to observe the way various axiological expectancies are projected on the art world, according to artistic domains, cultural and historical contexts, as well as the social position of those who defend those values. A final focus on the value of celebrity provides a more detailed illustration of our proceedings: the meaning and relevance of the value of celebrity changes not only according to its ascription to artists (such as “stars”) or to art works (such as famous masterpieces), but also according to the concerned artistic domains, from visual arts and literature to cinema.

The modern Western tradition tends to equate art and aesthetic value. But such a conception is too narrow: first, because art does not have the monopoly of the aesthetical relationship to the world, as Jean-Marie Schaeffer clearly demonstrated; and second, symmetrically, because aesthetic value does not have the monopoly of the many values involved in the creation, circulation and reception of art works. By “values”, I mean the axiological principles according to which evaluations or attachments are implemented, be it by ordinary people or by scholars.

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1. The Workshop

An interdisciplinary workshop on the values of art was held in Paris in 2012. It gathered five philosophers, two historians, two art historians, two musicologists, one anthropologist, one economist, one sinologist, one jurist, and one sociologist (myself). The results of this collective workshop have been published in 2014 by the Presses universitaires de Rennes in a book edited by myself, Carole Talon-Hugon and Jean-Marie Schaeffer, under the title *Par-delà le beau et le laid: les valeurs de l'art* ("beyond beauty and ugliness: the values of art").

The idea was to display the repertoire of the most relevant values related to artistic experience, be they assigned to art works, to artists or to art lovers. Besides beauty, we identified 16 values which appear to be relevant in value judgements on art: *authenticity* (addressed by Belgian philosopher Thierry Le Nain), *autonomy* (addressed by French musicologist Esteban Buch), *celebrity* (addressed by myself, a French sociologist), *expensiveness* (addressed by French economist Muriel de Vriese), *morality* (addressed by French philosopher Carole Talon-Hugon, keynote speaker in the present conference), *originality* (addressed by French jurist Nadia Walravens-Madarescu), *pleasure* (addressed by French philosopher Jean-Marie Schaeffer), *rarity* (addressed by Swiss art historian Pascal Griener), *responsibility* (addressed by French art historian Eric Michaud), *significativity* (addressed by French philosopher Ioana Vultur), *spirituality* (addressed by French historian Pierre-Antoine Fabre), *sustainability* (addressed by French anthropologist Daniel Fabre), *truth* (addressed by French philosopher Sandra Laugier), *universality* (addressed by French sinologist Yo-laine Escande), *virtuosity* (addressed by French musicologist Bruno Moy-san), and *work* (addressed by French historian Etienne Anheim).

Our aim was to produce a descriptive analysis of the relationship of actors to the values they solicit in their evaluations, be it in ordinary experience or scholarly discourse. Our approach then was strictly neutral, free from any attempt to foster or dismiss one or another value. Besides this abstention from normativity, another specificity of our enterprise was that our object was not art, but the actors' relationship to art: in other words, what was at stake was not to demonstrate that such or such a value is or is not present in art works, artists or art lovers, but to observe the way vari-

ous axiological expectancies are projected on the art world, according to the artistic domains, the cultural and historical contexts, as well as the position of those who defend those values. We aimed, then, at evidencing the properties allowing a given value to be implemented in artistic judgment: be it the *objectal* properties of the art work itself, the *subjective* properties of the author of the judgment, or the *contextual* properties related to the spatial, temporal and cultural circumstances of a valuation.

In order to let this piece of collective work be available to non-French speakers, I would like today, first, to summarize a few main results ; and, second, to present one of those values – that is, celebrity – in order to provide a more detailed illustration of our proceedings.

2. Main Results

Any observer of contemporary visual art knows that beauty has quite completely disappeared in the learned judgments on the works pertaining to contemporary art. Similarly, our workshop helped develop some general conclusions about the various values we identified.

We could observe how *authenticity* progressively gained a central position in the Western relationship to art works, thus replacing relics as the typical target of such a requirement ; how *originality* became both the keystone of the juridical status of art works and a stronger and stronger requirement when passing from classic to modern art and, all the more, to contemporary art; how *money* became a marginal if not undesirable criteria of valuation from the Romantic era, while dramatically expanding on the market ; how *morality* lost part of its relevance with modern art, before being re-implemented in front of contemporary art transgressions of moral norms ; how *pleasure* regularly demonstrates a strong cleavage between the learned and the lay approaches to art ; how *responsibility* became a strong requirement when avant-garde and political “engagement” appeared as a positive property of modern artists or art works ; how *significativity*, or meaning, tends to replace beauty in the valuation of contemporary visual art, placing hermeneutics at the very center of the artistic comments on art works; how *spirituality* did not disappear when passing from classic to modern art, but was transmuted onto a more mystical than properly religious register ; how *virtuosity* swings between approval of an exceptional

talent and dismissal of a too superficial relationship to music ; how *work* as a value is typical of the poorly educated people, who tend to apply values belonging to ordinary experience - etc.

3. The Value of Celebrity

As for the value of celebrity, its meaning and relevance change according to two main parameters: first, its ascription to artists (such as “stars”) or to art works (such as famous masterpieces); and second, the concerned artistic domains, from visual arts , music or literature to cinema.

Concerning *art works*, celebrity can result *from* art works, be they visual (paintings, sculptures, engravings, photographs) or literary (biographies), or it can be a property *of* the very art works, if we consider that some of them are genuine “stars”, such as Leonardo’s *Mona Lisa*, Beethoven’s 5th Symphony, the Eiffel tower, or Proust’s *A la Recherche du temps perdu*. But in our learned world, celebrity – or, worse, visibility – tends to generate a loss of value, since it is equated to popularity, that is, vulgarity: a reason why celebrity becomes more an anti-value than a value. Thus we can observe that a one and same principle of judgment can be either positive or negative: a value can become an anti-value, according to the context.

Concerning *artists*, we have to distinguish between the ones who *produce* or create artworks (writers, painters and sculptors, music composers) and the ones who *interpret* art works (actors, musicians, dancers). As for interpreters, their celebrity has been very much transformed by the modern technologies of reproduction of images, transforming their celebrity into *visibility*, with major consequences that I tried to evidence in my book *De la visibilité*. As for creators, their visibility is rather scarce, except for a few exceptional ones (such as Picasso); but even celebrity may be a motive of disdain or defiance, since in our learned world what is supposed to be worthy is not the person of the artist, but the very art work: hence, once more, a certain suspicion on celebrity.

This fragile and easily dismissable status of celebrity can be observed through the fact that this principle of valuation tends to be more present in private interactions than in public statements. On the contrary, “beauty” appears as a typically “public” artistic value, standing high in the probabilities to see it expressed in almost any kind of context, by almost any kind

of actor, and about almost any kind of art work. This is why, in order to understand the place of celebrity in the hierarchy of values, it appears necessary to distinguish between “public” values, more legitimate and thus more akin to a public expression, and “private” values, less legitimate and thus reduced to private contexts. The higher the artistic domain is in the artistic hierarchy, the lower celebrity is in the axiological hierarchy, condemning it to more cautious or inter-individual modes of expression.

This is why celebrity, although it is strongly bond to publicity, can be named a “private” value, which means a weak value, low in the hierarchy of values. Be it about the models of art works, about the art works themselves, or about their producers or interprets, celebrity is, as a fact, extremely present in the axiological status of art, but, as a value, rather disqualified, as it is all the more powerful that the artistic quality is presumed to be low.

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Thick Aesthetic Concepts — Neue Perspektiven

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ABSTRACT. Warum noch ein Beitrag zum Thema *thick aesthetic concepts*? Die Debatte schien eigentlich längst erledigt seit Frank N. Sibley, Nick Zangwill und Jerrold Levinson die Möglichkeit der Existenz von solchen Begriffen kritisch eingeschätzt, teilweise negiert und das Thema mehr oder weniger ad acta gelegt haben. 2013 fährt Zangwill seinen skeptischen Ansatz in *Moral Metaphor and Thick Concepts* zurück. Nicht nur allein dieser Schritt ist Anlass genug, sich der Problematik erneut anzunehmen. Es entsteht auch der Eindruck, dass die Debatten um *thick aesthetic concepts* eher aus dem Zusammenhang gerissene Sprechakte untersuchen, statt verschiedene Anwendungsformen in ihrer Komplexität zu betrachten. Die Komplexität der hier diskutierten Begriffskategorie soll im Folgenden durch eine Annäherung an das Thema aus sechs verschiedenen Blickwinkeln unter Beweis gestellt werden. Hierzu gehören die antiskeptische Perspektive, die semantische Perspektive, die soziolinguistische und begriffstheoretische Perspektive, die epistemologische Perspektive, die epistemische Perspektive und die metaphysische Perspektive. Auf dieser Basis soll ein weiterer in der Forschung vorliegender Mangel behoben werden, denn die Diskurse rekurren auf ein relativ beschränktes methodisches Arsenal.

1. Einleitung

Was sind *thin* und *thick aesthetic concepts*? Sie lassen sich am besten anhand eines Beispiels erklären. Zwei Kunstkritiker befinden sich in einer Diskussion über eine Ming-Vase. Kritiker K befindet, dass die Vase als *schön* bezeichnet werden kann. Der Begriff *schön* wird in der Forschung zur Klasse der *thin concepts* zugeordnet. Seine Funktion besteht u.a. darin, den Gegenstand zu evaluieren. Unter Experten wird eine solche singuläre evaluierende Äußerung jedoch als ziemlich unbefriedigend erscheinen. Kritiker P kann deshalb von Kritiker K eine Begründung einfordern. Kritiker

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K kann entgegen, dass die Vase *filigran* gearbeitet sei und erläutert, warum er das Werk als *filigran* auszeichnet. Er zeigt auf bestimmte Partien der Vase und sagt: „Schauen sie dort auf das Bild des Drachens. Es ist mit einem unglaublichen Detailreichtum ausgestattet und in einer äußerst filigranen und feingliedrigen Weise gezeichnet.“ Die Standardtheorie in Bezug auf *thick aesthetic concepts* besagt, dass Termini wie *filigran*, *anmutig*, *virtuos* und *grazil* nicht nur einen konkreten Gegenstand, ein Theater-, Ballett- oder Opernstück beschreiben sondern zugleich evaluieren. In diesem Sinne wird von einigen Forschern die These geäußert, dass sie eine vermittelnde Position zwischen rein evaluierenden Begriffen wie *schön* und rein deskriptiven Begriffen wie *schmal* oder *blau* einnehmen. Es ist damit zugleich die Hoffnung verbunden, die Kluft zwischen Tatsachen- und Werturteilen, die beispielsweise im Kontext des logischen Empirismus von Ayer oder Carnap konstatiert wurde, im Bereich der Ästhetik zu überwinden.

2. Die antiskeptische Perspektive

Die alles entscheidende Frage ist, ob es überhaupt *thick aesthetic concepts* gibt. Die Antwort lautet: „Ja.“ Skeptische Argumente sind zurückzuweisen. (I) Nonkognitivisten wie Allan Gibbard (1992) und Simon Blackburn (2010) äußern Bedenken bezüglich der Ansprüche, die mit Rekurs auf *thick concepts* erhoben werden. Zwei der zentralen Ansprüche einiger Kognitivisten besagen, dass auf der Grundlage von *thick concepts* die Kluft zwischen Tatsachen- und Werturteilen überwunden werden könne und Objektivität durch den deskriptiven Weltbezug hergestellt werde. Die Zurückweisung dieser Thesen geht auf Ansichten von David Hume und Alfred Jules Ayer zurück, wonach das, was heute als *thick* oder *thin concepts* ausgezeichnet wird, lediglich Emotionen sind, die zum Ausdruck gebracht werden, und keine Tatsachen in der Welt darstellen. Ayer äußert sich folgendermaßen dazu:

Such aesthetic words as ‘beautiful’ and ‘hideous’ are employed, as ethical words are employed, not to make statements of fact, but simply to express certain feelings and evoke a certain response.”
(Ayer, 1952, 72)

(II) Die Existenz von *thick concepts* wurde von Blackburn (2010) in Frage gestellt, weil *thickness* kein lexikalisches Problem sei, sondern andere Möglichkeiten gegeben seien, um Einstellungen mitzuteilen. Hierzu gehören beispielsweise Gestik und Intonation. Ein Lexikon könne Wertungen genau deshalb nicht markieren, weil sie nicht konstant seien und je nach Kontext variieren. Eine andere Version dieses Arguments präsentiert Jerrold Levinson (2001), der behauptet, dass die Instabilität der Evaluation, auch bezeichnet als evaluative Flexibilität, im Rahmen von *thick aesthetic concepts* zum Skeptizismus führe. Dies deshalb, weil einige *thick aesthetic concepts* sowohl zu positiven als auch zu negativen Evaluationen führen können. Wenn wir demnach nicht genau die Wertung eines Begriffsvorhersagen können, dann sollten wir die evaluative Komponente außer Acht lassen und jene Kategorie lediglich als deskriptive Begriffe ausweisen. (III) Zudem geht Levinson davon aus, dass *thick aesthetic concepts* häufig durch andere Begriffe ersetzt werden können. Dies trifft beispielsweise auf den Begriff „gaudy“ zu, der substituierbar sei durch „bright, non-harmonious, eye-catching color combinations“ (2001, 318). Die Substitution mache deutlich, dass die Konzeption der *thick aesthetic concepts* eigentlich überflüssig ist. (IV) Im Anschluss an Zangwill (2001) vertritt Levinson die These, dass der evaluative Teil aufhebbar sei, ohne dass dabei semantische Anomalien entstünden. Levinson und Zangwill argumentieren diesbezüglich mit Paul Grice, der davon ausgeht, dass Evaluationen lediglich konversationelle Implikaturen darstellen.

Meines Erachtens führen diese Argumente jedoch nicht zwingend zu einem starken Skeptizismus bezüglich der diskutierten Begriffsklasse. Dies aus folgenden Gründen: Ad (I) Auch wenn man die Argumente, die gegen die Kognitivisten vorgebracht wurden, als plausibel erachten würde, führt das nicht zur Aufgabe von *thick concepts*. Denn selbst Blackburn (2010) geht davon aus, dass es einige *thick concepts* gibt. Blackburns Skeptizismus kann demnach als partieller Skeptizismus enttarnt werden. Ad (II) Blackburns These, dass der wertende Teil nicht lexikalisch abgebildet sei, kann mit Bezug auf *thick aesthetic concepts* nicht bestätigt werden. Im *Duden* wird beispielsweise der Begriff „virtuos“ umschrieben mit „meisterhaft“ und „technisch vollkommen“. Ein „Virtuose“ wird als „hervorragender Meister“ bezeichnet. Es werden also tatsächlich Wertungen vorgenommen. Blackburns Einwand, wonach Wertung transportierende Gestik und

Intonation nicht lexikalisch abbildbar seien, weil sie flexibel sind, weist eigentlich auf ein ganz anderes Problem hin. So vernachlässigt die im *Duden* vorgenommene Wertung das Problem der evaluativen Flexibilität. Zudem missachtet Blackburn einen wichtigen Punkt. Wenn Gestik und Intonation Wertungen übermitteln, wie verhält es sich mit Texten, die *thick aesthetic concepts* verwenden? Im Fall von Theaterkritiken kann der Leser nicht auf Gestik und Intonation rekurren. Die Wertung wird hier lexikalisch transportiert. Zudem bleibt unklar, warum evaluative Flexibilität in eine skeptische Position führen sollte. Es ist ein wesentliches Charakteristikum von *thick aesthetic concepts*, dass ihre Evaluation flexibel ist. Sie sind zudem Bestandteil von ästhetischen Urteilen, die nachgerade ein hohes Maß an Autonomie und ästhetischer Bildung voraussetzen. Kunstkritische Diskurse wären überflüssig, wenn ästhetische Evaluation stabil wäre. Ad (III) Das Problem der Substitution führt ebenfalls nicht zu einem starken Skeptizismus. Dies ist aus zwei Gründen nicht der Fall. Erstens können bestimmte Begriffe nicht einfach ersetzt werden. Die Wahl eines Begriffes wie *anmutig* beispielsweise im Kontext einer Theaterkritik geht häufig mit einer ästhetischen Absicht einher (*aesthetic point of purpose*). Die ästhetische Absicht besteht nicht einfach nur in der Beschreibung einer Handlung oder einer Bewegung, sondern in der Bewertung als zentraler Gegenstand von Kunstkritik. Diese Absicht kann zweitens durch die Substitution verloren gehen. Zugleich ist nicht ausgemacht, dass die von Levinson alternativ angebotenen Begriffe nicht ebenfalls Wertungen enthalten. Der Ansatz, anhand der Substitutionsthese die Wertung als irrelevant auszuweisen, schlägt folglich fehl und hat auch keinen Skeptizismus zur Folge. Dies gilt gleichfalls für Argument (IV), das in eine ähnliche Richtung tendiert. Wenn die Wertung lediglich in der Konversation impliziert wird und deshalb ohne semantische Anomalien aufgelöst werden kann, dann stellt sich ebenfalls die Frage, was mit Textformen wie Rezensionen oder Theaterkritiken anzufangen ist. Eine Theaterkritik stellt beispielsweise keine Form der Konversation dar, wie sie Zangwill und Levinson im Sinn haben. Eine solche Perspektivierung stellt jene Ansätze grundlegend in Frage.

Zusammenfassend lässt sich feststellen, dass alle skeptischen Argumente versagen. Einige von ihnen beruhen auf einer Grundannahme, die besagt, dass die deskriptive Komponente den zentralen Bestandteil von *thick aes-*

thetic concepts darstellt (Zangwill und Levinson). Wertungen könnten demnach vernachlässigt werden. Dann ist jedoch die Rede von einer solchen Begriffsklasse überflüssig, weil wir es nur noch mit vorwiegend deskriptiven Begriffen zu tun haben. Malcolm Budds (2007) Argumentation geht in eine ähnliche Richtung, denn er vertritt die Position, dass *thick aesthetic concepts* in rein deskriptive oder rein evaluative aufgelöst werden könnten. Die hier vertretene These behauptet hingegen, dass *thick aesthetic concepts* notwendig aus beiden Komponenten bestehen. Gestik und Intonation stellen selbstredend Transportmechanismen der Evaluation dar. Diese Mittel reichen jedoch nicht hin, um die gesamte Bandbreite der Verwendung solcher Begriffe einzufangen. Wenn Deskription und Evaluation notwendige Bestandteile sind, dann ist jedoch zu klären, ob sie beide für die Generierung von Bedeutung verantwortlich sind und ob sie miteinander interagieren. Dies führt unmittelbar zur Debatte *anti-disentangler* vs. *disentangler* auf einer semantischen Ebene. *Anti-disentangler* wie McDowell, Williams und Dancy vertreten die These, dass eine Isolation nicht möglich sei. Dies hat McDowell insbesondere in seinem Aufsatz *Non-Cognitivism and Rule-Following* (1981) hervorgehoben. *Disentangler* (Blackburn, Gibbard) bestreiten diese Position.

3. Die semantische Perspektive

Der semantische Diskurs in Bezug auf *thick aesthetic concepts* setzt bei Richard Hare (1972) und Frank Sibley an. Sibley, dessen Analyse sich in Teilen in dem Aufsatz *Particularity, Art, and Evaluation* (1974/2001) an Hares Position anlehnt, reagiert auf Argumente, die von Stuart Hampshire in *Logic and Appreciation* (1953) und von Peter Strawson in *Aesthetic Appraisal and Works of Art* (1966) entwickelt wurden. Hampshire und Strawson vertreten die Ansicht, dass ästhetische Beurteilungen nicht prinzipiengebunden seien. Strawson argumentiert zudem, dass es im Kontext der Ästhetik keine nicht-evaluativen Eigenschaften gebe. Damit hätte die reine Deskription keinen Platz in der Ästhetik. Sibley versucht genau dieses Argument durch seine Einteilung in rein deskriptive und rein evaluative ästhetische Begriffe sowie jene Mischformen, bei welchen zur deskriptiven Komponente eine evaluative hinzugefügt wird, grundlegend anzuzweifeln.

Zangwill und Levinson folgen Sibley und Hare insofern, als sie den deskriptiven Teil bei den hier diskutierten ästhetischen Begriffen als den primären anerkennen. Dem evaluativen Teil wird keine Funktion in Bezug auf die Generierung von Bedeutung zugewiesen. Eine ähnliche Strategie in der Metaethik verfolgen Blackburn (2010), Väyrynen (2012) und Eklund (2011), denn sie bestreiten, dass *thick concepts* überhaupt einen evaluativen Inhalt aufweisen. Die zentrale These der hier vorgelegten Untersuchung besagt hingegen, dass Sibleys Einteilung von *thick aesthetic concepts* in einen deskriptiven und einen evaluativen Bedeutungsgehalt durchaus überzeugt, denn wenn nicht beide Komponenten als bedeutungsgenerierend anerkannt werden, dann lassen sich in semantischer Hinsicht die diskutierten Begriffe in rein deskriptive Begriffe auflösen, womit dem Skeptizismus alle Türen geöffnet werden. Diese Behauptung zieht jedoch die Konsequenz nach sich, dass man zu dem Problem der Isolation Stellung nehmen muss. Diesbezüglich bietet es sich an, auf die Debatten in der Moralphilosophie zu rekurrieren. Es ist zu klären, ob sich nicht eine Alternative auffinden lässt, die allen Seiten gerecht wird, ohne ein Ausweichmanöver wie das von Zangwill und Levinson einleiten zu müssen. Meines Erachtens bieten sowohl die *anti-disentangler* als auch die *disentangler* interessante Argumente an. Blackburn (2013) weist zu Recht darauf hin, dass wir es mit zwei Aktivitäten zu tun haben. Diese Position lässt sich problemlos damit vereinbaren, dass sowohl deskriptive als auch evaluative Komponenten für den Gebrauch eines *thick aesthetic concepts* notwendig sind. Genau in diesem Sinne scheinen die Begriffe eng miteinander verknüpft zu sein. Die Begriffsanwendung ist an beide Aktivitäten gleichermaßen gebunden. Der Kontext des Gebrauchs und die ästhetische Absicht einen dabei die beiden Aktivitäten und generieren Bedeutung. In diesem Zusammenhang sind folgende Fragestellungen relevant: In welchem Kontext werden *thick aesthetic concepts* zur Anwendung gebracht? Handelt es sich um Kunstkritiken, Rezensionen, um Gespräche unter Laien oder unter Kunstkritikern? Damit geht die Frage einher, wer die Adressaten sind, d.h. wer mit den entsprechenden Äußerungen erreicht werden soll. Zudem ist zu klären, ob die Absicht etwa darin besteht, etwas zu beschreiben oder eine bestimmte Zielgruppe von einer Perspektive zu überzeugen? Ich behaupte, dass gerade im Kontext von Überzeugungsprozessen *thick aesthetic concepts* eine wichtige Funktion besitzen. Beabsichtigt beispielsweise ein Kunstkritiker

eine Zielgruppe von der positiven Qualität einer Aufführung zu überzeugen und rekuriert dabei auf Begriffe wie *anmutig* oder *grazil*, dann sollten erstens der Kritiker und zweitens die Adressaten um die evaluative Komponente dieser Begriffe wissen bzw. die evaluative Absicht der jeweiligen Äußerung erkennen können. Eine Berufung auf die Theorie der konversationellen Implikaturen von Grice wäre in diesem Zusammenhang deshalb problematisch, weil laut Zangwill und Levinson lediglich die deskriptive Komponente Bedeutung generiert und die evaluative Komponente aufhebbar ist. Würde in dem hier diskutierten Fall Bedeutung lediglich auf der Grundlage der deskriptiven Komponente generiert werden können, wäre der Adressat nicht in der Lage, die Absicht des Kritikers zu erkennen.

4. Die soziolinguistische und begriffstheoretische Perspektive

Eng verbunden mit der Frage nach dem Gebrauch ist die Thematik des Erlernens des entsprechenden Gebrauchs. Wittgenstein hatte diesen Punkt bereits in seinen *Vorlesungen zur Ästhetik* (1967) markiert. Jonathan Dancy spricht im Kontext der metaethischen Debatte von *moral upbringing*. Völlig unthematisiert ist bisher hingegen die bereits angedeutete Frage nach der ästhetischen Entwicklung und Erziehung. Wie erlernt man den Gebrauch von *thick aesthetic concepts*? Einen solchen Prozess vollständig zu bestimmen ist an diesem Ort nicht möglich, wenngleich Aspekte beleuchtet werden können. Es ist sinnvoll in diesem Zusammenhang eine neue Kategorie einzuführen, die begrifflich an Gilbert Ryles *thick descriptions* (1971/2009) anknüpft und sich mit Wittgenstein auf den alltäglichen Gebrauch konzentriert. Ich bezeichne diese Begriffsklasse als *thick ordinary language descriptions*. Ein umgangssprachliches Beispiel hierfür ist: „Der neue Song von Künstler XY ist abgefahren/ist fett/ist krass“. (Der Rekurs auf solche umgangssprachlichen Beispiele ist momentan sehr verbreitet.) Was unterscheidet nun die so genannte Ebene der *thickness* von *thick ordinary language descriptions* und *thick aesthetic concepts*? Zwei Kriterien können angeführt werden. Erstens ist dabei der Rekurs auf eine Erklärungsstrategie aus der Begriffstheorie notwendig und zweitens das Argument der ästhetischen Bildung. Im Rahmen des ersten Arguments beziehe ich mich auf die so genannten *Theory Theory of Concepts*, wonach Begriffe in Bez-

ziehung zu anderen Begriffen stehen und eine mentale Theorie darstellen. Susan Carey legt folgende Bestimmung vor:

Concepts are the constituents of beliefs; that is, propositions are represented by structures of concepts. Theories are complex mental structures consisting of a mentally represented domain of phenomena and explanatory principles that account for them. (Caray 1985, 198)

Careys Projekt besteht eigentlich darin, Begriffswandel in der Kindheit zu erklären. Mit einem Ansatz, der Begriffe als Theorien auffasst, lässt sich jedoch zugleich die Begriffsentwicklung auf dem Gebiet der Ästhetik erklären. Demnach handelt sich bei *thick ordinary language descriptions* um eine Minitheorie. Sie stellt einen relativ einfachen theoretischen Zusammenhang dar und bettet den Begriff in einen soziokulturellen Kontext ein. Wer solche Begriffe anwenden kann, benötigt demnach nicht zwingend ein hohes Niveau ästhetischer Bildung. Das Gegenteil ist der Fall bei *thick aesthetic concepts*. Wer in der Lage sein will, Begriffe wie *anmutig* oder *virtuos* in einem angemessenen Kontext anzuwenden, der muss über ein hohes ästhetisches Bildungsniveau und über eine elaborierte Theorie verfügen. Was bedeutet das im Konkreten? Wenn ein Phänomen wie der Tanz einer Balletttänzerin eingeschätzt werden soll, dann muss einerseits ein Bezug auf die Bewegungen hergestellt werden. Mit der Bestimmung einer solchen Bewegung als *anmutig* ist das Wissen verbunden, dass sie wohl eher fließend als ruckartig vollzogen wird. Doch nicht jede fließende Bewegung kann zugleich als *anmutig* charakterisiert werden. Es ist eine Theorie notwendig, die festlegt, unter welchen konkreten Umständen der Begriff angewendet werden darf. Geht man von der Behauptung aus, dass Begriffe wie *anmutig* nicht nur beschreiben, sondern zugleich evaluieren, dann ist zudem ein Wissen darüber unerlässlich, unter welchen Bedingungen auf welche Weise evaluiert werden kann – dies gilt vor allem vor dem Hintergrund des Problems der evaluativen Flexibilität. Im Gegensatz zur Minitheorie bezeichne ich das komplexe Wissen um den Zusammenhang von Phänomen, Weisen der Beschreibung und Evaluation als Maxitheorie. Der Rekurs auf die *Theory Theory of Concepts* ermöglicht schließlich, die graduellen Unterschiede der Begriffsverwendung im ästhetischen Kontext zu erklären.

5. Die epistemologische Perspektive

Zu den zentralen Diskursen der aktuellen Erkenntnistheorie gehört die Debatte um das Zeugnis anderer. Insbesondere Robert Audi weist auf dessen außerordentlichen Stellenwert hin:

If our only sources of knowledge and justified belief were perception, consciousness, memory, and reason, we would be at best impoverished. We do not even learn to speak or think without the help of others, and much of what we know depends on what they tell us. Children in their first years of life depend almost entirely on others for their knowledge of the world. (Audi 2011, 150)

Das Zeugnis anderer ist für Audi in erster Linie eine soziale Erkenntnisquelle. Im Kontext der Diskussion haben sich zwei Lager herausgebildet. Der auf Hume rekurrierende Reduktionismus behauptet, dass ein Zeugnis anderer lediglich dann eine Quelle der Erkenntnis ist, wenn diese als zuverlässig ausgezeichnet werden kann und mithin durch den Leser oder Hörer autorisiert ist. Eine Rechtfertigung der Zuverlässigkeit wird Hume zufolge durch Erfahrung und Induktion geliefert. Problematisch daran ist jedoch beispielsweise der Umstand, dass Kinder durch das Zeugnis anderer lernen, lange bevor sie in der Lage sind, die Quelle zu rechtfertigen. C.A.J. Coady (1992) hat auf zahlreiche weitere Probleme hingewiesen. Thomas Grundmann (2008) sieht einen Ausweg in einem externalistischen Verständnis von Rechtfertigung, wonach der Informant sich durch Aufrichtigkeit und Stützung auf zuverlässige Quellen auszeichnet. Das antireduktionistische Lager vermeidet hingegen den auf Hume zurückgehenden Ansatz. So geht Thomas Reid davon aus, dass das Vertrauen in das Zeugnis anderer nicht durch Erfahrung gerechtfertigt werden muss, sondern angeboren ist. Vor dem Kontext dieser Debatten stellt sich die Frage, ob das Zeugnis anderer relevant ist für die vorliegende Problematik. Schließt man sich der kantischen Position der *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (1790/1990, vgl. §8) an, dann müsste diese Frage negativ beantwortet werden. Dies deshalb, weil Kant dort in Anschlag bringt, dass das ästhetische Zeugnis anderer Beobachter keine hinreichende Basis für ein ästhetisches Urteil sein kann. Dieser Position folgen Frank Sibley (1965), Alan Tormey (1973), Philip Petit (1983) und Mary Mothersill (1984). Ein Gegner dieser kantischen oder

neokantischen Position ist Robert Hopkins (2000). Er bezeichnet den auf Hume zurückgehenden reduktiven Ansatz als *evidential model* und den auf Reid rekurrierenden als *transmission model*. Als Lösung des Problems schlägt er vor, dass das erste Modell für den Bereich der Ästhetik und das zweite für nicht-ästhetische Bereiche gilt. Im Unterschied zur vorliegenden Untersuchung werden in diesem Kontext *dünne ästhetische Begriffe* diskutiert. Aber wie verhält es sich mit *thick aesthetic concepts*? Will man nicht die extrem problematische These vertreten, von der vor allem Jerry Fodor eine Zeit lang ausgegangen ist, dass Begriffe angeboren sind, dann kommt man nicht umhin, Begriffe als etwas Erlerntes zu kennzeichnen. Doch wie werden Begriffe wie *anmutig*, *grazil* oder *virtuos* und deren Verwendung erlernt? Es besteht die Möglichkeit, einen Blick in ein Lexikon zu werfen. Das ist jedoch nicht hinreichend, um derartige Begriffe korrekt anwenden zu können, denn ich behaupte, dass eine Autorität notwendig ist, die am konkreten Fall zeigt, was beispielsweise ein *virtuoses* Violinenspiel auszeichnet oder woran eine *grazile* oder eine *anmutige* Bewegung zu erkennen ist. Dies ist ohne das Zeugnis anderer undenkbar. Die als Autorität ausgezeichnete Quelle muss zuverlässig sein. Ich vertrete die These, dass auch hier das evidenzielle Modell von Hopkins greift. Die in diesem Kontext wirkenden Normen sind hingegen sozialer Art und es kann ihnen keine absolute Gültigkeit zugewiesen werden. So gilt zum Beispiel Joachim Kaiser als ausgezeichnete Theaterkritiker. Daraus folgt jedoch nicht, dass seine Kritiken oder seine Verwendungsweise von ästhetischen Begriffen die einzig möglichen sind. Jeder Kritiker mag einen Wahrheitsanspruch damit verbinden. Doch Kritiken konkurrieren miteinander. Führt das in einen ästhetischen Relativismus? Mit Sicherheit nicht. Ich behaupte hingegen, dass Simon Blackburns Quasi-Realismus (vgl. Blackburn 1993) auch im Bereich der Ästhetik greift, was Blackburn mir bereits bestätigte. Er vertritt die Auffassung, dass in der Ästhetik eben solche Eigenarten anzutreffen sind wie in der Ethik. Was mit einem reinen persönlichen Wohlgefallen an einer visuellen oder auditiven Erfahrung beginnt, wird in der Form einer diskussionsfähigen Proposition zum Ausdruck gebracht, welche eine Art Reflexion des Gefühls darstellt. Dadurch, dass die Proposition zur öffentlichen Diskussion gestellt wird, ist die Möglichkeit der Zustimmung oder der Ablehnung durch andere gegeben. Angewendet auf *thick aesthetic concepts* hieße das, dass diese in

wahrheitsfähigen Urteilen zur Anwendung kommen. Entscheidend ist jedoch, dass Aussagen wie „die Tänzerin bewegte sich anmutig“ oder „das Violinenspiel von Künstler X bei der Aufführung Y war besonders virtuos“ zur Diskussion stehen und nicht schlechthin gelten.

6. Die epistemische Perspektive

Diese Perspektive geht der Frage nach, in welchem Verhältnis *thick aesthetic concepts* zu *thin aesthetic concepts* stehen. Drei wesentliche Positionen haben sich diesbezüglich herauskristallisiert: (A) Die Rechtfertigungsstrategie: *Thick* begründet *thin*. (Beardsley 1982) (B) Die Rationalisierungsstrategie: *Thick aesthetic concepts* sind Weisen von *thin aesthetic concepts*. Z.B.: *Anmut* ist die Weise, wie eine Bewegung schön ist. (Zangwill 2013) (C) Die Antirelationsstrategie: Es liegt keine Beziehung zwischen beiden Begriffsklassen vor. Während sich die Lager bisher unversöhnlich gegenüberstehen, soll eine alternative Position im Rahmen der Untersuchung entwickelt werden, wobei folgende epistemische These vertreten werden soll: Es lassen sich offensichtlich alle drei Strategien bei der Untersuchung des konkreten Gebrauchs nachweisen: (A) *Thick aesthetic concepts* bereiten die Verwendung von *thin aesthetic concepts* in einem ästhetischen Urteil vor. Ähnlich argumentieren Dancy im Kontext der metaethischen Debatten sowie Beardsley und Goldman in der Ästhetik. Entscheidend ist, dass die Vorbereitung in der Angabe von Gründen besteht, welche unter anderem durch *thick aesthetic concepts* geliefert werden. Begriffe wie *anmutig* und *virtuos* sind die Leuchttürme der ästhetischen Begründung. Dies lässt sich daran ablesen, wie solche Begriffe konkret verwendet werden. Hier ein Beispiel aus der Ballett-Kritik an David Dawsons *Giselle* von Isabell Steinböck: „Anna Kamzhina verkörpert die Giselle großartig in ihrer Anmut und brilliert als federleichte Tänzerin [...]“ (Steinböck 2014). Der Text rekurriert ferner bei der Beschreibung der Leistung der Tänzer auf Formulierungen wie: „Beide [Tänzer] meistern Dawsons anspruchsvolle Choreografie mit Bravour, wenn sie Hebungen in allen erdenklichen Positionen auf die Bühne bringen und sich dabei drehen wie Eiskunstläufer.“ Oder: „David Dawson bringt seine virtuoson Tänzer in diesem temporeichen 1. Akt an die Grenzen des Möglichen, wenn er klassischen Tanz mit modernen Bewegungen verbindet, die eine außerordentliche Koordination

erfordern.“ Begriffe wie *Anmut* oder *virtuos*, die zu der hier diskutierten Begriffsklasse gehören, erscheinen in einem durchweg als positiv zu bewertenden Kontext und es entsteht unweigerlich der Eindruck, als dienen sie dazu, ein dünnes Urteil argumentativ abzustützen und zu begründen. Zudem ist (B) die Frage der Perspektive bei Untersuchungen der epistemischen Rolle von *thick aesthetic concepts* nicht außer Acht zu lassen. Es besteht gleichsam die Möglichkeit, die Frage zu stellen, auf welche Weise etwas schön ist. Der dünne Begriff, der in Fall (A) Ziel der ästhetischen Beurteilung ist, ist in Fall (B) Ausgangspunkt, insofern als beim dünnen Begriff angesetzt wird und dann untersucht wird, welche konkreten *thick aesthetic concepts* zu dieser Qualifizierung führen. (C) Es sind jedoch auch Fälle zu beobachten, wo *thick aesthetic concepts* positiv evaluierend verwendet werden, das Gesamturteil der Kritik hingegen negativ ausfällt, also kein unmittelbarer Zusammenhang zwischen dicken und dünnen Begriffen zu beobachten ist wie sich am Beispiel einer Kritik von Wolf Banitzki an Sarah Ruhls Stück *Nebenan – The Vibrator Play* zeigen lässt: „Am Ende mussten sich die Damen doch auf ihre Ehemänner beschränken, denn der Maler hatte sich in die farbige Amme, anmutig gestaltet von Thelma Buabeng, verliebt“ (Banitzki 2015). Das Gesamturteil hingegen lautet folgendermaßen:

Allen Darstellern kann engagiertes und sehr präzises Spiel attestiert werden. Dennoch verpuffte allzu viel, und das nicht selten unter großem Aufwand. Schließlich handelte es sich um eine gute Boulevardkomödie, die textlich ein Feuerwerk an Komödiantik ermöglicht. Die wirklich amüsanten Momente waren vereinzelt und eher selten. Regisseurin Barbara Weber gelang es nicht, die Lawine der Komik loszutreten. Und für ein Aufklärungstück war die Geschichte dann doch zu dünn.

In Fällen der Klasse (C) wird die Leuchtturmfunktion noch stärker betont, eine Relation zu *thin concepts* muss nicht zwingend vorliegen. In allen drei Fällen (A-C) kommt den *thick aesthetic concepts* eine fundamentale Funktion zu. Es gilt die Frage zu beantworten, worauf diese zurückzuführen ist. Dies soll Gegenstand des anschließenden Untersuchungspunktes sein.

7. Die metaphysische Perspektive

McDowells Argument gegen Blackburn besteht darin zu behaupten, dass es moralische Begriffe gibt, die Bestandteile der Welt sind (*world guided*). Die Stärke solcher Begriffe wird dem Diskurs nach darauf zurückgeführt, dass die realistische Position, die mit dem Weltbezug einhergeht, nicht nur gegen nicht-kognitivistische Perspektiven in Stellung gebracht wird, sondern dass hiermit ein Wahrheitsanspruch und ein Anspruch auf Objektivität einhergeht. Im Kontext der aktuellen Debatten in der Ästhetik gibt es ebenfalls solche realistischen Positionen in Bezug auf ästhetische Eigenschaften. Vertreten werden sie u.a. von Jerrold Levinson (2001), Philip Pettit (1983), Eddy Zemach (1991) und Nick Zangwill (2001, 2013). Zu den typischen Vertretern einer nichtrealistischen Position gehören unter den Klassikern vor allem David Hume und Immanuel Kant. Aktuellere Positionen finden sich bei John W. Bender (1996, 2005) und Alan Goldman (1995). Entscheidend ist, dass Realisten von der Prämisse ausgehen, dass ästhetische Eigenschaften reale Eigenschaften von Objekten sind. Zangwill geht so weit zu behaupten, dass *dicke ästhetische Begriffe* metaphysisch reale Begriffe sind. Anti-Realisten wenden hingegen ein, dass gerade durch die evaluative Komponente ein subjektives Moment hinzutritt, wodurch das Realismus-Argument zurückgewiesen wird. Realisten erwidern darauf, dass es dann keine Normativität im Bereich der Ästhetik gebe. Problematisch ist aber dann wiederum, dass nicht nur Anspruch auf Allgemeingültigkeit eines ästhetischen Urteils wie bei Kant erhoben werden kann, sondern eine auf realistischen Normen gründende Objektivität. Diesen Streit kann meines Erachtens wiederum eine versöhnende Strategie schlichten. Ein möglicher Kandidat wäre die Anwendung der Theorie des Quasi-Realismus, die von Simon Blackburn mit Rekurs auf David Hume entwickelt wurde, auf den Gegenstandsbereich der Ästhetik. Der Quasi-Realismus stellt eine Variante des ethischen Nonkognitivismus dar. Alltägliche moralische Aussagen sind demnach nicht wahrheitsfähig und keine tatsächlichen Aussagen über die Welt, aber wir halten sie dafür, was auch richtig sei. Behandelt man solche Aussagen auf diese Weise, so bringt man seine moralische Einstellung zum Ausdruck und zeigt, dass man solchen Diskursen nicht indifferent gegenübersteht. Dies gilt offensichtlich auch für den Bereich der Ästhetik.

8. Konklusion

Das Ziel der Untersuchung bestand darin, Theorien zu überprüfen, die sich mit dem Thema *thick aesthetic concepts* befassen. Insbesondere in Bezug auf skeptische Strategien konnte gezeigt werden, dass einige Versionen genau deshalb problematisch sind, weil sie nur einen eingeschränkten Gegenstandsbereich beleuchten. Erweitert man jedoch die Bandbreite und schaut nicht nur auf die entsprechenden Sprechakte, dann wird deutlich, dass die gelieferten Argumente vor dem Hintergrund von bestimmten Formen der Kunstkritik ins Leere laufen. Zudem wurde die Absicht verfolgt, die aktuellen Diskurse für neue Methoden und Perspektiven zu öffnen. Diesbezüglich konnten lediglich neue Sichtweisen beleuchtet sowie Inspirationen für neue Diskurse geliefert werden. Eine vollständige Ausführung der Argumente steht noch aus und wird Gegenstand anschließender Untersuchungen sein.

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The Aesthechnics of Everyday Life: Suggestions for a Reconsideration of Aesthetics in the Age of Wearable Technologies

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ABSTRACT. This paper does not aim to provide definitive answers to the current debate around the recent line of aesthetic investigation known as Everyday Aesthetics. Neither does it seek to afford absolute methodological and categorial parameters to it. Its main purpose is to suggest a possible thematic approach that starts from a circumscription of the aesthetic inquiry in question to the world of design in its digitally connoted configurations, which today, more than ever, mediate and shape our everyday lives. It is hoped that this approach could contribute to clarify the dynamics through which the current state of the aesthetic is produced and perceived, and that it would encourage established aesthetic theories to reconsider the absoluteness of their traditional paradigms of investigation. But more importantly, this paper will be rooted in the growing significance that wearable technologies are potentially and progressively gaining nowadays.

I. Introduction

What is the aesthetic, *today*?

Until a few decades ago it was institutionally identified, justified and limited to the realm of art, which was its privileged field of production, manifestation and perception – indeed mainstream aesthetics *still* refers to the discipline as dealing with art, nature and beauty.

Nowadays, however, the traditional boundaries of aesthetics have been challenged by a set of phenomena and practices rooted in, and spread throughout, the everyday that are apparently extraneous to the discipline – that is, no longer exclusively art-centred – and are products of the current process of hybridation between “high” and “low” culture, or the intricate

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dialectics between depth and surface.¹ Yet, these phenomena and practices managed to gain ground among academic discussions, taking place within the fields of design, fashion, gastronomy, tourism, virtual modalities of leisure activity and socialization, human appearance, lifestyles and so forth... They all introduce a new experience of shapes, image circulation, creativity and consequent, compulsory responsiveness to such and several sensory *stimula* into the everyday itself. They generate often unforeseen shared and sharable taste tendencies, and unprecedented, or rather, previously unthinkable, aesthetic configurations.

Due to their polymorphous nature, the modes of manifestation and production of the aesthetic in the everyday, nowadays, might be addressed from several points of view, but within the framework of this paper, the focus will be on the relationship that exists today between digital technology and individuals, which we believe is already emblematic in the development of our quotidian system of interactions. These new experiential horizons are *literally* aesthetic – insofar as the term *aisthesis* refers to a perception by the senses – and, as such, philosophy should try to understand and get in touch with them. Indeed, the current set of practices linked to mobile electronic devices has made it a wide-spread phenomenon on different levels, in terms of shaping of taste preferences, sensory stimulation and perception (or receptivity), bringing back to the fore the term's etymological poignancy and often questioning the certainty of the natural character of perception itself (Matteucci 2015). All this not only in the framework of our daily activities, but also of our experiences of art and nature, “pillars” of classical aesthetic theories but, at present, realized through “untraditional” media.

In view of this peculiar situation, which is typical of our contemporaneity, aesthetics should, in fact, rethink the validity and absoluteness of its traditional investigation paradigms – art and nature – or, it should at least try to establish a fruitful dialectics between them and the elements that characterize, in an increasingly urgent way, the complex and multi-faceted aesthetic quality of contemporaneity itself.

¹ Wolfgang Iser addresses such dialectics in his *Aestheticization Processes. Phenomena, Distinctions and Prospects* (1996).

2. Everyday Aesthetics *versus* Everyday Aesthetics

In this redefinition process of the notion of the “aesthetic”, a central role is certainly played by the relatively new-born line of aesthetic research known as Everyday Aesthetics.² Its aim is to formalize a typology of investigation that transcends the boundaries of art (or nature), which have historically set the tones and defined the contents of traditional aesthetics. It is therefore focused on all those aspects of the everyday that have been neglected due to their too “mundane” or excessively “prosaic” as well as “superficial” nature. Everyday Aesthetics finally recognized the philosophical dignity of those features of everyday life that other fields (such as anthropology, sociology and semiotics, for instance), have made central in their research for decades. As a novel sub-discipline, it is still being drafted and, just like every ground-breaking element that interferes with a certain *continuum*, it generates some paradoxical issues, that if properly addressed could shed light – in this specific case – on the meaning of aesthetic experience more generally.

Everyday Aesthetics has several areas of interest: Kevin Melchionne (2013), for example, points out five of them, which he considers fundamental: they include our relationship with food, with our wardrobe, the ways we dwell, socialize, and “go out into the world for work or errands on a nearly daily basis” (Melchionne 2013). The list, though, could be extended to such topics as sports or weather (see Light, Smith 2005), economics, as well as the good practices of well-being and those of well-ness (see Matteucci 2015).

As far as it concerns the methodological approaches adopted by the various advocates of the movement, we can identify two of them in particular, which are classified, in relation to the position they assume towards the established aesthetic theory. On the one hand, some theorists still refer to an art-centred paradigm of investigation, by merely extending the range of objects fit for aesthetic attention, while maintaining traditional theoretical models and concepts (Forsey 2014). In the framework of this first approach, alternatively described as “The Weak Formulation” (Dowling 2010; Ratiu 2013), “Extraordinarist Stance” (Forsey 2014), or “Con-

² Noteworthy is the fact that the entry *Aesthetics of the Everyday* has been added to the Stanford Encyclopedia of Aesthetics *only* on September 30, 2015.

tinuistic Option” (Matteucci 2015) the aesthetic appraisal of the everyday takes place through a process of sublimation or elevation of everyday objects or activities to a level of *exceptionality*, which is comparable to the status of the artwork (the notion of “aura” as advocated by Thomas Leddy [2012], is emblematic of this specific philosophical path). On the other hand, some theorists approach the everyday as absolutely *ordinary*, by disentangling their parameters of aesthetic evaluation from every reference to the artistic realm. The latter is a methodology – symmetrically (as compared to the former) labelled as “The Strong Formulation” (Dowling 2010; Ratiu 2013), “Familiarity Stance” (Forsey 2014) or “Discontinuistic Option” (Matteucci 2015) – that generally stresses the importance of developing aesthetic attentiveness towards that, which provides comfort and security (Haapala 2005), or a sort of “sense of belonging”. As far as it concerns this second approach, the everyday is not *experienced as* “something else”, but its aesthetic relevance is rather meant to be identified within the *everyday per se*.

It is clear how this debate is extremely challenging, thought-provoking, and supplies material for further research, especially when the necessity to find a middle ground between the two, above-mentioned, “extremes” emerges, as proven by recent critical studies on the current “state” of everyday aesthetics. Nevertheless, such debate will not be further and exhaustively addressed in this context, although it surely provides a significant contribution to the development of the present essay.³

Let us consider again Everyday Aesthetics’ areas of interest: what emerges is an ample thematic inclusiveness which, if on the one hand is justified by the discipline being in the first phase of its development seems, on the other hand, to impede a punctual definition of it. Therefore, also in this case, two possible approaches can be identified: the first is the adoption of an “inclusivist” viewpoint, which is characterized by a broad thematic inclusivity (partly justified by the pervasiveness and consequent, frequent ineffability of aestheticization processes), such that it often seems to be too “fragile” and simplistic; the second, the adoption of an “exclusivist” viewpoint, which arises from the necessity to formalize a

³ For a more extensive analysis of such bifurcation, identifiable within the domain of Everyday Aesthetics, see: Dowling (2010), Ratiu (2013), Forsey (2014) and Matteucci (2015).

certain degree of strictness, or punctuality, that this recent branch of aesthetics sometimes seems to lose sight of. In other words, it advocates, due to the acknowledgement of both Everyday Aesthetics' "fragility" and "potential", *at least an initial* focus on a specific issue, in order to illuminate a more general question.⁴

3. Design as a Paradigm

The second theoretical option indicated coincides with the fruitful path followed by Jane Forsey in her recent publications. In these works she formulates a methodological proposal for the analysis of everyday aesthetic experience as genuinely ordinary, by narrowing her field of inquiry to *everyday designed objects*, rather than focusing on everyday activities, although she stresses the fundamental connection between the two of them.

The essential reciprocity between everyday designed objects – although with a focus on digital technologies – and our quotidian activities and interactions, as anticipated, is the core topic of this contribution.

Let's proceed gradually, though, and specifically from Forsey's identification of some properties that may contribute to find a middle ground between the two, previously addressed, and variously labelled, methodological-thematic "extremes". Such properties are: functional excellence, contextually specific knowledge, actual qualities of the thing in question, its quotidian use, and in-principle communicability of our judgements to others (Forsey 2013). Although Forsey's contribution would deserve to be properly addressed, in this context, we will limit our analysis to the recognition of its paradigmaticity, for it both affords a different angle in the framework of Everyday Aesthetics' questions, and also results as partly useful in the light of the understanding of the most recent developments in the field of ubiquitous, digital technologies from an aesthetic point of view, which is central for the present discussion. It, in fact, serves as an approach that could make emerge a series of current phenomena as sufficiently significant from a critical-aesthetic perspective (even if only as contrasting academically-taken-for-granted questions) and to which, a cer-

⁴ The same strategy is adopted, for instance, by Ossi Naukkarinen in his *Aesthetics of the Unavoidable. Variations in Human Appearance* (1998: 12).

tain degree of addressability should at least be recognized from the point of view of philosophical aesthetics' investigations, which, as we have seen, are no longer, necessarily limited to art-centred methodologies and topics.

To the properties enucleated by Forsey, I would add three further features – that partly overlap with them but which take into account multiple layers of design practices and activities that the Canadian philosopher does not consider, as they would probably not have been pertinent in the context of her inquiry – that in a previous research of mine (Iannilli 2014) I ascribed to design: a captivating appearance, usefulness (qualities which, if considered together, may be seen as a single property: hybridity), and ubiquity in everyday life.

The acknowledgement of these three further qualities arose from an interest in the phenomenon of an increasing popularization and spreading, within the everyday, of certain electronic devices – specifically of those featured with a touch screen technology and an Internet access – such as smartphones and tablets. As anticipated, in fact, they all introduce into the everyday, in a wide-spread and accessible manner, aesthetically significant configurations and dynamics. They have become crucially leading forces, which currently shape not only our taste, but the ways we perceive sensible forms and materials within the framework of our everyday lives, as well as the development of new creative and interactive, thus also often synesthetic, practices.

Furthermore, we are currently in the most acute and challenging phase of a process that started between the 19th and the 20th Century – the rise of *design culture* is clearly the protagonist of such process – and gradually determined, for the aesthetic experience, a shift from a *cultural* kind of paradigm (connoted by an aesthetics of gaze or contemplation) to a *cultural* kind of paradigm (connoted by an aesthetics of use, or rather, Usability, and more recently, User Experience, in which the importance of the *materiality* of design is progressively reduced, while the *possibility* of realizing a specific kind of experience becomes central). “Cultural” can be interpreted in two main manners: as the body of knowledge and skills evident in a given moment, or as the whole of (micro or macro) activities, which allow the development of an organism. In both cases – we must keep in mind the methodological perspective offered by design culture (that is to

say the enhancement of life quality, although nowadays, mainly, and inevitably intertwined with economic strategies, typical of consumer culture) – a relation based on an intrinsic manipulation and proximity with the object, although on different levels and in various modalities, is developed by both the designer and the user. On the one hand, the designer works so that the interaction with the object, designed for a specific function, becomes immediately accessible for the user. On the other hand, if the mentioned preconditions occur, the user can build a personal routine (which can, of course, be integrated with new elements and evolve) and a personal scheme of habits in various contexts (as in a sort of fidelity process realized thanks to the “quality”⁵ of the product), improving not only his or her system of competences, but also integrating (in a virtual or “actual” way) in the contemporary environment, which surrounds him or her. It is evident how all this could not even remotely happen in the context of a cultural conception of the object, connoted by an essential distance and inaccessibility of the latter, and by a consequent, specific kind of aesthetic experience that it might be able to afford. It is important to note, though, that this functional aspect of design is closely interweaved with the fictional aspect of our current economy, in which the pragmatic aspect of functionality itself is increasingly transcended by other kinds of values introduced by market trends. Such exchange between the *functional* and the *fictional* (Di Stefano 2015) aspect of design, certainly plays a central role in the framework of our everyday choices and aesthetically connoted activities.

However, in the specific context of the above mentioned research, the focus was on the role of touch screen interfaces in our current interaction with the world. It was observed how, in particular, services such as Google Maps, check-in through social media, social media itself, or any cartographically connoted and geolocate or social application, which usually contemplates a high level of image circulation, can shape – in different degrees and modalities of manifestation – our everyday, can make our relationship with the surrounding environment more efficient and “functional”, and let us see things that we would not have noticed, known or considered aesthetically valuable before. All this, thanks to the combination of the three

⁵ The term “quality” is bracketed here, for it must be understood in the context of the foresaid interplay between life quality’s enhancement and consumer culture, and not as belonging to mere traditional utilitarian criteria.

fundamental features cited before – a captivating aspect (as afforded by “surface” aestheticization processes), usefulness (not merely in a pragmatic fashion, but also meant as a sense of fulfilment, of gratification determined by the achievement of goals, which transcend the foresaid, nowadays often saturated, “mere pragmatic usefulness”) and everydayness (meant as constancy and ubiquity, both locally and globally). In that research, the notion of natural mapping (which is common, just like the foresaid properties, to both cartographic practices and to those of good design) was added to them, by expanding, in this way, the analysis on a semantic level. Natural mapping is a process that emphasizes the importance of resonance between form and function. Specifically, natural mapping “refers to a design methodology where the layout of the controls is intentionally arranged to resemble the spatial layout of the designed object or environment. [...] Natural mapping can be extended to the structural mapping of the physical human body” (van Tonder, Vishwanath 2015). Thanks to a combination of symbols and functions, it guarantees a high level of accessibility and usability of the object or experience, and also a high level of functionality, with a fundamental focus on the centrality of the human body (Norman 1998; van Tonder, Vishwanath 2015). This last observation about corporeality is particularly fruitful in terms of the suggestions that we would like to formulate in this contribution.

It must be noted, though, that further concepts were mentioned in that previous research: the concept of augmented reality and of immersivity (as well as that of *nowness*, as an extreme and immediate realization of the notion of everydayness). They were not thoroughly addressed, though – even if their complexity from an aesthetic-philosophical point of view was certainly recognized. The aim was, in fact, to make emerge the aesthetic relevance of a set of artefacts and experiences, which a large segment of consumers deal with on a daily basis, and therefore it seemed more coherent to focus on such devices as smartphones (Hand 2014) and tablets, which, as already pointed out, a considerable number of us own, use and interact with.

4. Developments

Although smartphones and tablets are the most popular mobile devices

available nowadays, at the same time, further aesthetic-technological horizons are rapidly arising and spreading, as well as the necessity to concretely constitute an aesthetics, which is both up-to-date, and that can make those phenomena, that have been gradually integrated into our everyday lives and experiences or that at least soon will be, intelligible. The phenomenon we are referring to is wearable technology, which, most likely, seems to be the “next step” to our current and extremely ubiquitous usage in the everyday of the foresaid touchscreen-interactive electronic devices.

What has been stressed so far, in this text, is the awareness of the crucial expansion in the everyday of fundamentally aesthetic phenomena, and the consequent necessity, in order to render them fathomable, to circumscribe the field of aesthetic inquiry to that which seems to be the most effective means to describe the peculiar relationship that exists today between us and our quotidianity, that is to say design. Nevertheless, at this point, two further circumscriptions have emerged as urgent: the first is the narrowing of design practices to those linked to touchscreen electronic devices with a mobile Internet access, and the second, to those referring to wearable technologies.

All this might seem quite “hazardous”, and probably experimental: wearable technologies, in fact, are still densely surrounded by uncertainty, as far as it concerns their long-term applicability in everyday human environments. Yet, they seem to be able to *embody* several features of the aestheticized (both on a superficial or deep-seated level), or ubiquitously aesthetic everyday, which, over recent years, part of philosophical, academic aesthetics, seems to have recognized as “addressable”.

Wearable technologies can, in fact, be seen as the current (but not final, and actually, partly still potential) stage of a path begun with the passage from analogue to digital in the field of design. A shift that started at the end of the 1980s, along with the development of Human Computer Interaction. All this determined the progressive re-modulation of the modernist couple “form/function” into the postmodernist couple “desire/technology” at the end of the 1990s. Such re-modulation was intensified by the advent of “New Economy” or “Economy of Desires”, when in Interaction Design, the priority shifts from Usability to User Experience (Marras, Mecacci 2015). Wearable technologies are an integral part of the recent turn towards “dematerialization”, “rapidity” (also due to a natural

tendency to obsolescence) and extreme “socialization” (although, mostly virtual), that digital technologies have been facing over the last few years and which is a specific feature of Ubiquitous Computing.

Now that the historical-material contextualization of “wearables” has been provided, it is important to focus on their fields of application: the virtual forms of leisure activity and socialization, war, fashion, health care and art, to name a few amongst the many.

The width and the heterogeneity of the just mentioned domains in which wearable technologies are currently active, or better, worn, is quite evident. All this denotes their intrinsic hybridity, which, after all, is also a specific feature of design in a broader sense. They are, in fact, characterized by a combination of artistic and scientific research, or rather, of a captivating aspect and usefulness, that is to say, a combination of desire and need, which is increasingly pervasive and evident in our everyday practices.

I believe that these few, basic concepts make emerge an extremely challenging and innovative set of aesthetic paradigms that connote our quotidianity, and that are, as already mentioned, no longer limited to the domain of art. What we have been witnessing in recent years, and are actually still witnessing, is, in fact, the shift from an art-centred to a progressively everyday practices-centred paradigm of aesthetics. From the aesthetics of gaze, which is often peddled as related to interactive or synesthetic experiences, but remains, at the end of the day, relegated to set up institutional places and moments characterized by a certain distance between subject and object, to the aesthetics of use, or rather, Usability, and more recently, User Experience, related to and rooted in a quotidian set of activities.

These experiences are based on proximity and immediacy; now the spectator becomes an actor (practices of code hacking and the development of DIY culture in the computer sciences, also thanks to the increasing availability and affordability of portable hardware and software are, in fact, quite common nowadays, in the age of native digitals), and the traditional idea of author shifts towards the broader and more inclusive concept of collective authoriality, where the single individual who “traditionally” creates a work of art, is replaced by a cooperation of skills owned by multiple individuals, from the designer, to the consumer who produces content (hence, the cross-disciplinary nature of this new paradigm of aesthet-

ics). By means of the process that I have just described, the fundamental principle of good Interaction Design is achieved: the minimization of the distance between the individual and the surrounding environment.

In this unprecedented horizon of aesthetics, or rather, *aesthechnics*, the combination of scientific and artistic research, or need and desire, often coincides with the dialectics between function and fiction (economy), which is a specific feature of our essentially commodified society. In this regard, it is no coincidence that wearable technologies represent the combination of two fundamental poles of our contemporaneity: digital technologies and fashion, which exemplify the inherent, already mentioned tendency towards obsolescence and towards the ceaseless image production and circulation, which are typical of our current experiential panorama. In other words, what we are facing in the present age, is the passage from a cultural to a spread, shared, or rather, cultural approach to aesthetics.

5. Interlude: Wearable Technologies *versus* Biodesign

The wordplay that the couple cultural/cultural determines once more seems to be useful in the description of a recent, yet successfully rising field of design, if we retain the notion that the term “cultural” can be interpreted both as the body of knowledge and skills evident in a given moment, or as the whole of (micro or macro) activities, which facilitate the development of an *organism*. This etymological point brings us to what can be described as opposing, although somehow sharing values and goals with wearable technologies: biodesign.

This recently born branch of design arose when a “new, more urgent, and arguably longer-term need” emerged in the first decade of the acutely industrialized and digitized 21st Century. It called for “a new revolution – the requirement for ecologically sound practices in design that guide scarce resource management, particularly in manufacturing and building” (Myers 2012: 12). Biodesign fields of application include fashion (bio-couture: bacteria-grown clothes), gastronomy, architecture (bio-tiles and bio-self-healing concrete), city planning, packaging, leisure activity, health care and art. Its main aim is to somehow go beyond mere nature or bio mimicry, which has so far characterized this research field. Nature or bio-mimicry,

in fact is essentially based on the imitation of natural or biological forms and functions, as shown, for instance, by Art Nouveau's phytomorphic decorations and structures or by Alvar Aalto's and Frank Lloyd Wright's, among the many, projects and works, which were designed to be integrated into the environment, although often in a purely metaphorical way. Biodesign aims at another kind of practice: a practice that would be active and effective on a more microscopic, or rather, genetic, level, while both generating bio-based material and using bio-based processes.⁶

Bio-design deals mainly with synthetic biology, but at the same time, given its main goal, that is to say, to enhance everyday life's and the environment's quality in a sustainable way, it also connotes a strong interdisciplinarity and cooperation of skills – from the scientific-academic field, to design, passing through art. But more importantly, due to its social issues-oriented engagement, this extremely innovative branch of design is not exclusively developed in University Departments frequented only by professionals such as the above mentioned biologists, designers, architects, engineers and artists but has also, over recent years, been opened to regular citizens, who want to learn the basics of the discipline and apply them within the framework of their everyday lives. This process is “facilitated by the availability of inexpensive equipment and emboldened by like-minded enthusiasts through instant communication over the web” (Myers 2012: 12). In these regards, non-profit organizations, or “community biolabs”⁷ are pursuing a DIY biology culture and making science more “captivating” for the average individual, working towards the establishment of a novel, environmentally conscious community that is directly involved in the development of biologically based materials, objects and processes which aim to make our everyday environments more sustainable.

Beyond the differences, what emerges is a number of similarities between wearable technologies and biodesign. Let's do a brief recap: cultur-

⁶ It must be noted, though, that due to the progressive miniaturization of its electronic components, it might be said that wearable technology precede the so called Organic Computing, in which the dissolution of the material aspect of design itself, corresponds to the possibility of modifying the human body, or more generally, any kind of living matter

⁷ Emblematical are, for instance, “The One Lab School for Urban Ecology” or “Gen-space” in New York.

ality, a social, collective dimension of production and usage, the so called DIY and “digital or genetic” code hacking practices, the combination of artistic and scientific research, of a captivating aspect, usefulness and ubiquity in the everyday, a strong interdisciplinarity and hybridity, and not least the possibility to use and modify living matter (as an extreme kind of articulation, as far as it concerns wearable technologies), with the consequent ethical implications, are peculiar aspects of both subjects of this “interlude”.

What is also note worthy, is the fact that the field of wearable technologies, that until just a few years ago was still considered “futuristic” or “utopic” is now even more real and realized, rather than theoretically “realizable”. On the other hand, the current literature (Myers 2012) shows that the categories that represent the state of progress of bio-design practices are labelled as “completed”, “in production”, “prototype”, “concepts” or “experimental fictions”. Among them, the last three categories, that is to say the more conceptual and hypothetical ones, are the most “prolific”, bringing bio-design, almost paradoxically, on a “futurability”, rather than on a contemporaneity dimension.

Nevertheless, as far as it concerns the “completed” or “in production” projects, these are fully emblematic of the above mentioned paradigms, and find a fruitful application in the fields of fashion and of those objects or devices whose dimensions allow their transportability. All this creates a conceptual and formal rhyme with the most basic feature of wearable technologies, that is to say their being wearable, but also the possibility they offer to create and share a specific identity, or image. The latter is nowadays often constantly changing, since it is also determined by market trends. Moreover, this process is typical of fashion and design, which now more than ever, are privileged articulations and socially and economically active statements about the individual’s aesthetic role in our contemporaneity.

6. Conclusions: A Workable Proposal and Three Possible Research Questions

It is exactly for all the previously addressed arguments, from the acknowledgment of a novel, current state of the aesthetic, to that of inadequate

responses to it from academic aesthetics, that we felt the urgency – although elaborated in the form of a workable proposal, since it is clear that we will have to wait for the developments in this field of technological research, before being able to proceed in concrete terms – to take the discussion to a different “level”. A level that is integrated to the user’s body, more than smartphones and tablets could actually do at this point in time, and that therefore greatly reduces the mediation (or friction) between the subject and the surrounding world (see, for example, Ryan 2014). In a way, then, that is spread and fruitfully liminal between the artificial and the natural, (and of course between artistic and scientific research, desire and need), a dialectics which is extremely topical nowadays and that we believe might positively contribute to the reconsideration of the validity and absoluteness of traditional paradigms of aesthetic investigation, or at least to establish a productive dialectics between old and new paradigms.

It is for these reasons that we suggest, in order to clarify the contents and methodologies for an aesthetics, or rather *aesthechnics*, rooted in the everyday and that can, then, make its significant instances emerge, to shift our attention to the phenomenon of wearable technologies. In fact, they do not just cover the broad range of activities that theorists of the movement of Everyday Aesthetics describe as the thematic pattern of their investigation (from our relationship with food, with our wardrobe, passing through the ways we dwell, socialize, to such topics as mobility, sports, weather, well-ness and well-being), with a specific and central focus on design, but they also seem promising for the establishment of further, contemporary, increasingly integrated, and almost paradoxically unperceivable, since they are ubiquitous, aesthetic experiential configurations.

In conclusion, three possible research questions, which may be answered, are:

1. Is it possible to define an authentic, contemporary aesthetics of the everyday, and that therefore is not uniquely bound to previous, art-centred criteria?
2. In the light of the significant spreading of technologies that mediate – and that basically facilitate – our relationship with reality (be it natural or virtual), how urgent is the redefinition of the notion of sensory perception

(traditionally meant as natural), which is essential to aesthetics, in terms of artificiality?

3. To what extent and how will wearable technologies effectively represent this eventual, unprecedented, aesthetic experiential horizon, which is progressively being embedded in our everyday activities and practices?

It is clear that these are only three questions from which, it is hoped, further, stimulating ones will arise. This essay, in fact, does not aim to answer them, but rather encourage a conversation and academic debate around them.

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Repenser Picasso. Le Désir Attrapé par la Queue et les Iconographies Culinaires de l’Absurde et de la Stupeur*

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ABSTRACT. Cette contribution s’inscrit dans le domaine de la recherche sur l’art et, plus précisément, dans le champ de la recherche sur les outils que l’esthétique, dans sa dimension de philosophie de l’art, peut appliquer à la révision des récits canoniques sur les artistes. Mon étude se concentre sur Pablo Picasso dans sa facette de poète et dramaturge, si peu connue y comprise par les spécialistes. Ma problématique principale consistera à élucider pourquoi Picasso considère ses écrits comme une partie essentielle de son œuvre créative, du point de vue de l’esthétique. J’examinerai un cas d’étude précis : la pièce de théâtre *Le Désir attrapé par la queue*, en prenant en compte aussi bien la date de son écriture (1941) que celle de sa première (1944). J’ai moi-même entrepris de traduire les textes littéraires de Picasso, en commençant par *Le Désir attrapé par la queue*. Dans l’esprit de Picasso, ainsi que dans ses textes, l’espagnol (de sonorité andalouse) se mélange avec le français et, dans une moindre mesure, le catalan.

This paper develops within the framework of research on art, specifically research on the tools that aesthetics, in its aspect of philosophy of art, may provide to revise conventional narratives about artists. The study focuses on Pablo Picasso, and more specifically, on his production as a poet and playwright, of which so little is known, even to specialists. My main goal is to determine how to speak of Picasso from an aesthetic perspective, considering his writings as an essential part of his work. This question will focus on a case study: the play *Le Désir attrapé par la queue* (Desire Caught by the Tail), taking in account both date of writing (1941) and of its première (1944). The tools used by aesthetics to assess the impact of this creative piece in the contemporary revision of narratives on Picasso will be presented in four sections.

* Cet article a été possible grâce au soutien du Ministère de l’Économie et de la Compétitivité espagnol au projet de recherche FFI2012-32614 ”Expérience esthétique et recherche artistique: aspects cognitifs de l’art contemporain”. Son titre est une paraphrase de l’ouvrage de Valeriano Bozal (2004).

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1. Repenser Picasso. Écriture picassienne et esthétique: des iconographies développées dans la tension entre la succession et la simultanée

L'esthétique et la philosophie de l'art interrogent la temporalité des œuvres artistiques au-delà de leur datation et leurs récits habituels. À ce sujet, la question de la relation entre la simultanée et la succession dans le processus créatif d'un artiste ou d'une époque artistique me semble particulièrement intéressante. Cette question devient particulièrement féconde pour la révision, à partir de l'esthétique, du récit sur l'œuvre de Picasso, car sa longévité créative trouve sa source dans la tension permanente entre la simultanée – comme forme temporelle prééminente de la peinture – et la succession – comme forme temporelle prééminente dans les collages, assemblages, gravures, céramiques et séries picturales. D'une certaine manière, le processus créatif de Picasso peut être lu comme la manifestation de la tension entre le simultanée/auratique et la succession/anti-auratique.

Dans cette tension réside, précisément, l'un des points forts de l'intérêt philosophique des écrits de Picasso. Cependant, il faudra auparavant prendre en compte un aspect important du point de vue du *journal de Picasso* (c'est-à-dire, du récit que Picasso lui-même construit tout au long de sa vie, avec des mots, des autoportraits, des iconographies et des dates). Le fait incontournable est que « le céléberrissime peintre » Pablo Picasso a persisté à se déclarer écrivain, même si presque personne, hormis certains proches, ne connaissaient cet aspect de son œuvre, qui, aujourd'hui encore, reste peu exploré, même par les spécialistes. Souvenons-nous que dans sa jeunesse, Picasso accrocha un panneau à la porte de son atelier du *Bateau-Lavoir* où il était écrit: « Au rendez-vous des poètes » et qu'il déclara, à l'âge adulte :

« Au fond, je crois que je suis un poète qu'il a mal tourné, tu ne crois pas? », ¹

Ou encore :

¹ “En el fondo, creo que soy un poeta que se ha equivocado de camino, no crees?”. Afirmation recueillie par Roberto Otero 1946, pp. 3-12 et aussi par Marie-Laure Bernadac et Androula Michael 1998, pp. 58 et 143. Picasso faisait des fautes d'orthographe, de ponctuation et de syntaxe en espagnol, catalan ou français, dans une sorte de rébellion contre la normalisation de ses textes. Je laisse ici l'écriture originale. Il faut noter aussi que je respecte le lieu où Picasso finit la ligne.

« Je pense que mon travail d'écrivain est aussi importante que ce du peintre. Matériellement j'ai consacré beaucoup de temps à ces deux activités. Peut-être un jour, quand je serai parti, je vais apparaître dans les dictionnaires de cette façon: Pablo Ruiz Picasso: poète et dramaturge espagnol. On conserve de lui quelques peintures. »²

Ses amis étaient principalement des écrivains et lui-même était un lecteur avide et raffiné de poésie, ainsi qu'un illustrateur de livres de poèmes. En outre, il était lui-même poète et dramaturge. Pablo Picasso écrit entre 1935 et 1959 un peu plus de trois cent quarante textes poétiques – prose poétique ou poèmes en prose, aucune de ces désignations ne semble être suffisamment précise – deux pièces de théâtre et un recueil de textes impossible à classer (*L'enterrement du comte d'Orgaz*, 1957-59). À mon avis, l'écriture de Picasso provient de la même matrice créative que sa peinture, son dessin, sa gravure, sa sculpture ou son collage. Elle permet à Picasso de formuler ou de résoudre des questions autrement insondables dans l'ordre strictement visuel.

Loin d'être un complément anecdotique de son travail plastique, l'écriture est l'un des territoires créatifs privilégiés pour affronter cette tension, au point de convertir les écrits littéraires de Picasso en une partie substantielle de son processus créatif et de son œuvre globale. De ce fait, son étude est susceptible de modifier profondément notre réception de la production plastique picassienne.

Nous pouvons affirmer que les textes littéraires de Pablo Picasso ne sont pas installés pacifiquement dans la succession, car ils sont très visuels. Ils réfutent l'exercice de la lecture avec leur visualité et, à leur tour, réfutent la visualité avec leur dense nature sonore, qui ne peut exister que dans la succession. Ce sont donc des textes qui, d'une part, sont construits de manière calligraphique, et avec des structures parallèles et des couleurs qui exigent une reconnaissance visuelle ; d'autre part, ils construisent des sémantiques essentiellement phonétiques, sans logique apparente, un fait

² “Creo que mi obra como escritor es tan extensa como la del pintor. Materialmente dedicado el mismo tiempo a ambas actividades. Quizá algún día, cuando yo desaparezca, apareceré descrito en los diccionarios de esta manera: Pablo Ruiz Picasso: poeta y autor dramático español. Se conservan de él algunas pinturas”. Dans l'édition en espagnol de *Le Désir*, 2009.

qui a conduit la plupart des (rares) critiques de l'écriture picassienne à considérer celle-ci comme une « écriture automatique », qualificatif qui, à mon avis, est inexact. Bien au contraire, l'écriture de Picasso opère en pleine conscience d'elle-même, de façon patiente, méticuleuse, précieuse et gongorienne.

Picasso écrivit environ deux-cents textes en français. Le reste de sa production (quelque cent-quarante textes) est en espagnol. On y devine aisément certaines expressions catalanes. Tous ces textes ont été superbement recueillis et édités par Marie-Laure Bernadac et Christine Piot en 1989 (Paris, Gallimard).

Mon approche aux textes picassiens s'inscrit dans un projet que prendra le titre *Picasso: écritures dans la cuisine*. Il s'agit une présentation en espagnol (ainsi que la traduction des textes dans cette la langue, lorsque les originaux sont en français) des textes de Picasso (y compris les pièces de théâtre et *L'enterrement du comte d'Orgaz*) qui font référence au territoire culinaire, c'est-à-dire: la cuisine comme espace, nourriture, recettes, orgues gustatives, instruments de cuisine, ordures... Le projet met en relief, analyse et interprète les correspondances créatives de Picasso avec tout ce qui touche à la cuisine comme matrice iconographique fondamentale.

Le projet est moins excentrique qu'il n'y paraît. De fait, si l'iconographie culinaire est plutôt absente de l'œuvre plastique de Picasso, sauf dans ses natures mortes, elle a en revanche joué un rôle essentiel dans ses écrits. D'emblée, soulignons le fait que Picasso a peint dans son atelier et écrit dans sa cuisine. En outre, ses textes sont remplis (pour plus de la moitié d'entre eux) d'iconographies culinaires. Certes, pour créer ces iconographies, la cuisine n'était pas juste un lieu dans l'espace, mais également un environnement générateur, quelque chose comme une matrice féconde qui vient palier les lacunes de l'ordre strictement visuel. L'iconographie culinaire chez Picasso est en lien direct avec son exil volontaire, l'idée d'un retour poétique au foyer et, en même temps, une *révolte politique* contre l'invasion de l'espace intime par l'armée de Franco.

Picasso: écritures dans la cuisine entreprendra dans un premier temps la traduction et l'interprétation du *Désir attrapé par la queue* car la cuisine joue un rôle essentiel dans cette pièce de théâtre et permet de tracer une iconographie culinaire des textes antérieurs et postérieurs, en particulier dans leur dimension philosophique et politique. Il s'agit d'une des deux pièces

de théâtre de Pablo Picasso et son unité de sens ainsi sa relative unité de temps, d'espace et d'action facilitent la lecture des autres textes. Ces quatre unités gravitent autour du culinaire.

2. Repenser Picasso. Esthétique et politique: les raisons politiques du *Désir attrapé par la queue*

Picasso écrivit la pièce de théâtre *Le Désir attrapé par la queue* pendant le premier hiver de la Seconde Guerre mondiale, plus précisément, pendant quatre jours de janvier de 1941, du 14 au 17. Le texte fut jeté au fond d'un tiroir, avec le reste de ses écrits. L'auteur organisa une lecture dramatisée de la pièce au cours du dernier printemps de la guerre, dans la maison de Michel Leiris, le 19 mars 1944 ; alors que certains documents publiés se réfèrent à une deuxième lecture qui eut lieu dans la maison de l'artiste le 16 juin de la même année, il s'agissait probablement plutôt d'une session documentaire et photographique,³ événement immortalisé par les célèbres photographies de Brassäi.

Je considère, avec Roland Penrose,⁴ que les motivations politiques sont à l'origine de l'écriture et de la représentation de la pièce. Certes, ces premiers jours de l'année 1941 étaient dominés par l'incertitude dans le Paris de l'occupation. Cette atmosphère étrange a, selon moi, nourrit la rédaction d'un texte qui deviendra une sorte de théâtre de l'absurde avant la lettre. Ce n'est pas par hasard si Albert Camus en fera la mise en scène dans la maison des Leiris, la même année où l'auteur de *Caligula* et du *Malentendu* achèvera son *cycle de l'absurde*. Ce n'est pas par hasard non plus si la première de *Huis clos* de Sartre, qui partage avec le *Désir* de troublantes affinités, sera donnée deux mois plus tard. Sartre joua par ailleurs l'un des personnages de la singulière lecture dramatisée du *Désir*.

Il faut ajouter à cet environnement intellectuel qui entoure le *Désir* le nom de diverses personnalités. Examinons la liste de ceux qui ont participé à l'une ou l'autre des deux événements.

— Personnages :

³ Comme me l'a fait remarquer le professeur Fèlix Fanès (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona), que je remercie pour son observation.

⁴ Roland Penrose (1982), pp. 393-9.

- Michel Leiris : Le Gros Pied
 - Jean-Paul Sartre : Le Bout Rond
 - Raymond Queneau : L'Oignon
 - Jacques–Laurent Bost : Le Silence
 - Germaine Hugnet : L'Angoisse Grasse
 - Dora Maar : L'Angoisse Maigre
 - Zanie Campan (Zanie Aubier) : La Tarte
 - Simone de Beauvoir : Sa Cousine
 - Jean Aubier : Les Rideaux
 - Louise Leiris : Les Deux toutous
- Photographe :
- Brassai
- Spectateurs:
- Henri Michaux, Jean Cocteau, Jean Marais, Valentine Hugo, Pierre Reverdy, María Casares, Jacques Lacan

La distribution des personnages est symétrique. Ainsi, quatre sont masculins, quatre sont féminins ; en outre, deux des personnages masculins sont au pluriel. Un point fondamental : les réunions de 1944 furent présidées par le portrait de Max Jacob que Picasso avait peint en 1915. La lecture dramatisée, probablement prévue des mois à l'avance, se transforma en hommage à Jacob, mort au camp de déportation de Drancy quatre jours (le 15 mars) avant cette première si singulière. Pour Picasso, la mort de Jacob fut, nul doute, une des premières manifestations tangibles de l'horreur des camps de déportation. L'absurde deviendra alors stupeur et conduira à une nécessité de représenter l'irreprésentable à titre d'hommage et d'exorcisme (procédures créatives qui allaient souvent de pair chez Picasso).⁵

Ainsi, si *Le Désir* fut en 1941 une pièce sur l'absurdité de la guerre, il devint en 1944, dans l'acte performatif de sa première, une réaction de

⁵ Comme l'explique André Malraux (1974), p. 18.

stupeur face à l'horreur doublée d'une affirmation de la *résistance* des intellectuels parisiens qui, dans les derniers mois du conflit, commencèrent à se révéler et à témoigner de leurs actions. Les merveilleuses photographies de Brassai, prises en juin 1944, sont devenues emblématiques de cette forme particulière de résistance.

3. Repenser Picasso. Les raisons philosophiques du *Désir attrapé par la queue*

Le Désir attrapé par queue a des raisons philosophiques. Ce n'est pas hasard s'il commence comme suit :

LE GROS PIED – l'Oignon trêve de plaisanteries nous voici bien
veillonnes et à point de dire les quatre verites premières à notre
cousine. II faudrait s'expliquer

une fois pour toutes les causes ou les consequences de notre mariage
adulterin

il ne faut pas cacher ses semelles crottées et ses rides au gentleman
rider

si respectueux soit-il des convenances⁶

La question fondamentale posée par Picasso dans *Le Désir attrapé par queue* pourrait être formulée ainsi : que faire avec le *désir* (érotique et philosophique) dans une époque où règnent l'absurde et la stupeur ? Il s'agit bien évidemment d'une variation picassienne sur le thème du *Banquet* de Platon. Mais si le *Banquet* de Platon portait sur l'Éros intemporel, pour Picasso, la question se noue autour de la possibilité (et de l'impossibilité) de lier *Éros* et *connaissance* en temps de guerre et d'horreur.

La référence au *Banquet* de Platon atteint son apogée à l'acte VI, qui est également le dernier :

LA TARTE - vous savez j'ai rencontre l'amour il a des genoux eco-
rchés et mendie

⁶ Pablo Picasso (1989 [1944]) *Le Désir attrapé par la queue*. Paris, Gallimard, 1989, p. 13. Touts les textes sont tirées de cette édition de et modifiés selon l'orthographe du document autographe.

de porte en porte il n'a plus le sou et cherche une
 place de controleur de autobus en banlieue – c'est
 triste – mais va l'aider – il se retourne et vous
 pique — gros pied à voulu m'avoir et
 ce lui qui c'est pris au piege– voyez je me suis mise
 trop longtemps au soleil — je suis couverte de
 cloques– l'amour – l'amour – voici une piece de cent sous changez-la-
 moi
 en dollars et gardez pour vous les miettes de pain de la menue monnai
 — au revoir à jamais – bonne fête mes amis —
 bonsoir – bien le bonjour – bonne année – et adieu —
 (elle releve sa jupe montre son derriere et saute
 en riant d'un bond par la fenetre à travers les
 les carreaux en cassant toutes les vitres—⁷

Picasso utilise la variation sur les œuvres des maîtres anciens comme procédure créative habituelle. *Le Désir attrapé par la queue* n'échappe pas à cette règle en adaptant le *Banquet* Platon aux courants philosophiques qui traversent ces années de la Seconde Guerre Mondiale. Ainsi, le texte naît dans la tension freudienne (puis lacanienne) entre *Eros* et *Thanatos*, la philosophie de l'absurde de Camus, la philosophie existentialiste d'inspiration sartrienne (splendidement incarnée par les rôles de l'Angoisse Maigre et l'Angoisse Grasse). D'autre part, le texte de Picasso entretient des correspondances intellectuelles avec d'autres textes littéraires à vocation philosophique, en particulier le cycle d'Ubu d'Alfred Jarry pour sa conception du pouvoir, les écrits de Georges Bataille pour leur conception de la sexualité, en reprenant notamment l'iconographie du « soleil pourri », ainsi que d'autres thèmes surréalistes.

Tout comme dans l'œuvre de Platon, dans *Le Désir attrapé par la queue*, la triade désir – connaissance – sexe s'articule autour d'un banquet. Dans le cas platonicien, il s'agit d'un banquet à vin, comme l'indique le titre

⁷ Pablo Picasso (1989 [1944]), p. 63-64.

original de *symposion*. Dans le cas de Picasso, il s'agit d'un banquet de la faim et du froid, qui s'inscrit dans une fuite de la réalité, contrairement à l'essentiel de sa production plastique. Ainsi, à une époque de restrictions sévères, les iconographies culinaires du *Désir* est riche et succulente. En dépit de tous les aspects sordides du quotidien (ce n'est pas un hasard si le lieu de l'action principale de la pièce est un *sordid hotel*), ce qui donne lieu parfois à des scènes cocasses, imprégnées de candeur, qui ne sont pas sans rappeler Charlot rêvant de délicatesses pendant qu'il mâche sa chaussure dans *La Ruée vers l'or* (1925) ou, dans le même film, la danse des petits pains.

En guise de conclusion, je propose un inventaire de l'ensemble de cette iconographie (voir l'annexe ci-jointe).

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Acte I / Scène I	Personnages Le gros pied Le bout rond La tarte L'angoisse grasse L'angoisse maigre Le silence La cousine L'oignon	Lieu villa / hôtel	Temps 2 h – ¼ (au dodo)
Type d'iconographies	Mots		
Iconographies culinaires peintes ou pouvant être peintes*			
*Parfois dans un seul fragment peuvent se trouver des iconographies mixtes.			
Iconographies culinaires non-peintes ou ne pouvant être peintes	Le gros pied . [...] deshabiller tout de suite le silence de son complet et le mettre nu / dans la soupe qui entre parenthèses commence à refroidir à une vitesse folle, pp. 14–5.		
Acte II/ Scène I	Personnages Les deux pieds de la chambre n° III Les deux pieds de la chambre n° V Les deux pieds de la chambre n° I Les deux pieds de la chambre n° IV Les deux pieds de la chambre n° II	Lieu un couloir dans l'Hôtel	Temps
Type d'iconographies	Mots		
Iconographies culinaires peintes ou pouvant être peintes	Les deux pieds de la chambre n° II les ombres dansantes de cinq singes mangeant des carottes		
Iconographies culinaires non-peintes ou ne pouvant être peintes			

Acte II/ Scène II	Personnages	Lieu	Temps
	La tarte Le gros pied L'oignon Le bout rond	un couloir dans l'Hôtel]	
	Mots		
Iconographies culinaires peintes ou pouvant être peintes	Texte dramatique – ils paportent des paniers pleins de victuailles des bouteilles de vin des nappes des serviettes des coteaux fourchettes –ils preparent un grand déjeuner sur l'herbe P. 23		
Iconographies culinaires non-peintes ou ne pouvant être peintes	Le gros pied Tes fesses un plat de cassoulet et tes bras une soupe d'ailerons de requins et ton et ton nid d'hirondelles encore le feu d'une soupe aux nids d'hirondelles mais mon chou mon canard et mon loup je m'affole je m'affole je m'affole je m'affole		

Acte III / Scène I	Personnage	Lieu	Temps
	Le gros pied		
Type d'iconographies	Mots		
Iconographies culinaires peintes ou pouvant être peintes			
Iconographies culinaires non-peintes ou ne pouvant être peintes	Le gros pied [...] réflexion faite rien ne vaut un ragoût de mouton mais j'aime beaucoup mieux le miroton ou bien le bourguignon bien fait un jour de bonheur plein de neige par les sins méticuleux et jaloux de ma cuisinière esclave slave hispano-mauresque et albuminurique servante et maitresse delaiée dans les architectures odorantes de la cuisine . – la poix et la glu de ses considerations detachées –		

	<p>rien ne vaut son regard et ses chairs hachées sur le calme plat de ses mouvements de reine –</p> <p>—</p> <p>ses sauts d'humeur ses chauds et froids farcis de haine ne sont rien au beau milieu du repas que</p> <p>le aiguillon du désir entre coupé de douceurs—</p> <p>—</p> <p>P. 27</p> <p>– la chemise relevé de sa beaute–son charme charmarre amarré à son corsage et la force des marées de ses graces – secuent la poudre d'or de son regard sur les coins et les recoins de l'evier puant – des linges etendus à secher à la fenetre</p> <p>de son regard aiguisée sur la pierre à couteau de sa chevelure emmelée — et si l'harpe aeolienne</p> <p>de ses gros mots orduriers et communs</p> <p>P. 28</p> <p>. – l'alure au grand galop de son amour – la toile née au matin dans l'euf frais de son nu — saute l'obstacle et tombe halletante</p> <p>sur le lit — je porte sur mon corps ces marques</p> <p>P. 28</p> <p>- la cuisinière électrique a bon dos</p> <p>P. 29</p>
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Acte III / Scène II	Personnage Le bout rond Le gros pied	Lieu chez gros pied	Temps L'heure des biscottes
Type d'iconographies	Mots		
Iconographies culinaires peintes ou pouvant être peintes	<p>Le bout rond il fait bon chez toi mon Gros Pied et quelle bonne odeur de marcassin roti</p> <p>P. 30</p> <p>[...] le gros chat s'y prenne — le tuer lui enlever la peau le couvrir entierement de plumes lui apprendre à chanter et a reparer les montres — apres ça tu pourras le rotir et te faire un bouillon d'herbes</p>		

	<p>P. 30</p> <p>folie folie folie les hommes sont fous – l'écharpe du voile qui pend des dis des persiennes essuie les nuages roses sur la glace couleur pomme du ciel qui se reveille deja a ta fenetre – je m'en vais au bistrot du coin lui arracher de mes griffes le peu de couleur chocolat qui rode encore dans le noir de son cafe – tres bon jour ce matin et a demain soir tout a l'heure P. 32</p> <p>Le gros pied . [BR]– quel froid . veux-tu prendre un verre d'eau ça te rechauffera les tripes P. 30</p>
<p>Iconographies culinaires non-peintes ou ne pouvant être peintes</p>	<p>Le gros pied</p> <p>ce matin a l'heure des biscottes et des figues mi-figue mi-raisin si fraiches — encore un jour de passé et c'est la gloire noire P. 30</p> <p>. mes grenouilles de jeux de taureau se portent bien mais le vin d'aloès que j'ai fait tourne P. 31</p> <p>. après ça tu pourras le rôtir et te faire un bouillon d'herbes P. 32</p> <p>. folie folie folie les hommes sont fous- l'écharpe du voile qui pend des dis des persiennes essuie les nuages roses sur la glace couleur pomme du ciel qui se reveille deja a ta fenetre – je m'en vais au bistrot du coin lui arracher de mes griffes le peu de couleur chocolat qui rôde encore dans le noir de son café – tres bon jour ce matin et à demain soir tout a l'heure P. 32</p>

Acte III / Scène III	Personnages L'angoisse maigre L'angoisse grasse La tarte La cousine Le gros pied
Type d'iconographies	Mots
Iconographies culinaires peintes ou pouvant être peintes	<p>Le bout rond il fait bon chez toi mon Gros Pied et quelle bonne odeur de marcassin roti P. 30</p> <p>[...] le gros chat s'y prene — le tuer lui enlever la peau le couvrir entièrement de plumes lui apprendre à chanter et a reparer les montres — apres ça tu pourras le rotir et te faire un bouillon d'herbes P. 30</p> <p>folie folie folie les hommes sont fous – l'écharpe du voile qui pend des dis des persiennes essuie les nuages roses sur la glace couleur pomme du ciel qui se reveille deja a ta fenetre – je m'en vais au bistrot du coin lui arracher de mes griffes le peu de couleur chocolat qui rode encore dans le noir de son cafe – tres bon jour ce matin et a demain soir tout a l'heure P. 32</p> <p>Le gros pied . [BR]– quel froid . veux-tu prendre un verre d'eau ça te rechauffera les tripes P. 30</p> <p>La cousine . c'est lui qui m'a appris à découper correctement une sole limande P. 34</p> <p>Texte dramaturgique la Tarte la Cousine et les deux Angoisses sortent chacune de leur poche de grands</p>

	<p>ciseaux commencent à lui couper des mèches de cheveux jusqu'à lui peler la tête comme un fromage de Hollande appelé « tête de mort »</p>
Iconographies culinaires non-peintes ou ne pouvant être peintes	<p>L'angoisse maigre [...] ses mains sont de transparentes glaces aux pêches et aux pistaches – les huîtres de ses yeux renferment les jardins suspendus bouche ouverte aux paroles de ses regards et la couleur d'aioli P. 33-34</p> <p>Le gros pied (en rêve) l'os de la moelle charrie des glaçons P. 35</p> <p>La cousine oh qu'il est beau ai ai ai qui ai oh qui ai ai est ai ai ai ai bo bo</p> <p>L'angoisse grasse a a a bo a a bo bo</p> <p>La tarte ai ai je l'aime ai ai aime bo bo ai ai ai l'aime ai ai bo bo bo bo P. 35</p>

Acte IV / Scène unique	Personnages	Lieu	Temps
	L'angoisse maigre L'angoisse grasse La tarte La cousine Le gros pied L'oignon Le silence Le bout rond La tarte Les rideaux		
Type d'iconographies	Mots		
Iconographies culinaires peintes ou pouvant être peintes	Le silence 1.800 adieu misère lait eufs et ere me voici maître du gros lot P. 40		

	<p>Texte dramaturgique grand silence de quelques minutes pendant les quelles dans le trou du souffleur sur un grand feu et dans une grande poêle on verra on entendra et on sentira frir dans l'huile bouillante des pommes de terre de plus en plus la fumée des frites remplira la salle jusqu'à l'étouffement complet P. 41</p>
Iconographies culinaires non-peintes ou ne pouvant être peintes	

Acte V Scène unique	Personnages	Lieu	Temps
	Le gros pied La tarte L'oignon La cousine		
Type d'iconographies	Mots		
Iconographies culinaires peintes ou pouvant être peintes	<p>L'oignon et la cousine <i>rentrent</i> olala on vous apporte des crevettes olala olala on vous apporte des crevettes</p> <p>Le gros pied – c'est charmant– on est en train d'en foutre un coup et vous venez nous deranger avec vas sales crevettes –que voulez-vous l'Oignon et toi Cousine qu'on foute de vos crevettes</p> <p>la cousine – des crevettes roses – des bouquets vous appelez ça « nos sales crevettes » on est gentil on pense à vous et vous nous engueulez –ce n'est pas chic</p> <p>L'oignon moi ca m'apprendra la prochaine fois a t'offrir des crevettes P. 51</p> <p>L'oignon cette gosse avait pour moi la saveur d'un bâton d'angélique P. 54</p>		

	<p>La tarte je me'n vais tout de suite poser les affiches lumineuses de mes seins à la portée de tous et faire mon beurre d'amour aux Halles centrales P. 55</p>
<p>Iconographies culinaires non-peintes ou ne pouvant être peintes</p>	<p>Le gros pied – jeu de hasard des cristaux enfoncés sur le beurre fondu de ses gestes equivoques – la lettre qui suit pas a pas le mot inscrit au calendrier lunaire de ses plis accroches aux ronces - fait eclater l'oeuf rempli de haine et les langues de feu de sa volonté emmanchee dans la pâleur du lys au point exact ou le citron exasperé se pâme- P. 45</p> <p>– [cigarettes] une fumée l'autre grillée et le troisième rôtie au feu sur la grille P. 46</p> <p>– Si jolie de ses tresses assaisonnent le ragoût de ses lauriers –et ses clous de girofle– P. 47</p> <p>– une tasse de thé et des rôties au miel j'ai une faim de loup et j'ai si chaud P. 48</p> <p>– <i>rentre tenant sousson bras un gros livre de comptes</i> voici votre goûter – pas d'eau au robinet – pas de thé – pas de sucre – pas de tasse ni soucoupe – pas de cuiller – pas de verre – pas de pain et pas de confitures – mais j'ai ici sous mon bras une belle surprise – mon roman et dans ce gros saucisson je vais vous couper quelques grosses tranches que je vais vous fourrer dans la tete si vous le permettez et voulez m'ecouter tres attentivement pendant ces quelques longues annees de nuit noire P. 49</p> <p>– Où les inquietudes démesurées deviendraient obsédantes et meurtrières pour la vue partielle du sujet mis à table P. 50</p>

	<p>– la salle de bal armé était pleine du sucre et de la saumure du beau et du meilleur de la chère société choisie P. 50</p> <p>Le gros pied si sa beauté m'excite et sa puanteur m'affole sa façon de manger à table de s'habiller P. 53</p> <p><i>etendu sur son lit et cherchant dessous le pot de chambre introuvable</i> je porte dans ma poche percée le parapluie en sucre candi des angles déployés de la lumière noire du soleil P. 54</p>
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Acte VI / Scène unique	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Personnages</th> <th>Lieu</th> <th>Temps</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>L'angoisse maigre</td> <td>chambre à</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>L'angoisse grasse</td> <td>coucher cuisine</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>La tarte</td> <td>et salle des bains</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Le gros pied</td> <td>de la villa des</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>L'oignon</td> <td>Angoisses</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tous les personnages</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Personnages	Lieu	Temps	L'angoisse maigre	chambre à		L'angoisse grasse	coucher cuisine		La tarte	et salle des bains		Le gros pied	de la villa des		L'oignon	Angoisses		Tous les personnages		
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Iconographies culinaires peintes ou pouvant être peintes	<p>Le silence 1.800 adieu misère lait eufs et laitière me voici maitre du gros lot P. 40</p> <p>Texte dramaturgique grand silence de quelques minutes pendant les quelles dans le trou du souffleur sur un grand feu et dans une grande poêle on verra on entendra et on sentira frir dans l'huile bouillante des pommes de terre de plus en plus la fumée des frites remplira la salle jusqu'à l'étouffement complet P. 41</p>																					
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Acte VI Scène unique	Personnages	Lieu	Temps
Type d'iconographies	Mots		
Iconographies culinaires peintes ou pouvant être peintes	<p>L'angoisse maigre le petit sac de pralines que je lui ai acheté hier à gros pied P. 60</p> <p>aux mains glacées des astres mort-nés frappant aux carreaux de ma fenêtre leur faim de loup et leur soif océane –l'énorme tas de bûches attendent résignées leur sort – faisons la soupe– (<i>lisant dans un livre de</i> <i>cuisine</i>) demi-quart de melon d'Espagne – de l'huile de palme – du citron – des feves – sel – vinaigre – mie de pain – mettre à cuire à feu doux – retirer délicatement de temps en temps une âme en peine du purgatoire – refroidir – reproduire à mille exemplaires sur japon imperial et laisser prendre la glace à temps pour pouvoir la donner aux poulpes</p> <p>. <i>criant par le trou d'égout de leur li</i>) soeur - soeur –viens– viens m'aider à mettre la table et à plier le linge sale taché de sang et d'excrements – dépêche-toi ma soeur la soupe est déjà froide et se fend au fond du miroir de l'armoire à glace - j'ai brodé toute l'entière apres-midi de cette soupe mille histoires qu'elle va te raconter en secret P. 61</p> <p>L'angoisse grasse <i>sortant toute depeignée et noire de</i> <i>saleté des draps du lit plein de pommes frites</i> <i>tenant une vieille poêle à la main</i></p> <p>L'angoisse maigre le diner est servi</p> <p>L'angoisse grasse vive la joie l'amour et le printemps</p> <p>L'angoisse maigre allons decoupe la dinde et sers-toi convenablement de la farce – le gros bouquet d'affres et d'épouvantes nous fait déjà des signes d' adieu – et les</p>		

	<p>coquilles des moules claquent des dents mortes de peur sous les oreilles glacées de l'ennui (<i>elle prend un morceau de pain qu'elle trempe dans la sauce</i>) ça manque de sel et de poivre cette bouillie – ma tante avait un serin qui chantait toute la nuit de vieilles chansons a boire P. 60</p> <p>. j'ai 600 litres de lait dans mes nichons de truie – du jambon – du gras double – du saucisson – des tripes – du boudin – et mes cheveux couverts de chipolata j'ai des genives mauves – du sucre dans les urines et du blanc d'oeuf plein les mains</p>
<p>Iconographies culinaires non-peintes ou ne pouvant être peintes</p>	<p>L'angoisse maigre La vieille machine à coudre qui fait tourner les chevaux et les lions du carrousel échevelé de mes désirs hache ma chair à saucisse et l'offre vivante P. 60</p> <p>. je reprends encore de l'esturgeon l'acre saveur erotique de ces mets tient fortement en haleine mes goûts dépravés pour les plats épicés et cruz P. 62</p> <p>L'angoisse grasse <i>S'adressant à la tarte</i> rentre –viens goûter avec nous</p>

Art and Knowledge: Kant's Perspective

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ABSTRACT. There is an ongoing debate in contemporary aesthetics and philosophy of art on the question whether we can learn anything from art. Aesthetic cognitivism claims that artworks have an important cognitive value and that such cognitive value partly determines work's aesthetic value. Anti-cognitivism, on the other hand, argues that even though artworks might give us some kind of knowledge, such knowledge is irrelevant for a work's value as art. Cognitive merits do not constitute aesthetic merits. The aim of my paper is to express a critique of this view. I intend to show that aesthetic value is a species of cognitive value and thus artworks can have a distinctive cognitive value. I develop my proposal in light of Kant's theory of aesthetic ideas.

I. Introduction

One of the main debates in current aesthetics and philosophy of art concerns the question whether we can learn anything from art. On the one hand, cognitivists argue that art works are an important source of knowledge. The kind of knowledge that is often associated with artworks is either propositional knowledge (the truth of thematic statements being mostly of social, moral, psychological or philosophical kind), conceptual knowledge (art works can challenge our established concepts and facilitate their refinement), experiential knowledge (knowledge of what-it-is-like, say what it is like to be jealous, homeless, etc.) and axiological knowledge or knowledge as understanding or acknowledging (i.e. recognizing the significance, value and consequences that mere knowledge of something has

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in relation to human experiences).¹ What is common to all (aesthetic) cognitivists' is the belief that such knowledge is relevant for aesthetic value of an artwork.² That is, works of art are good or bad partly in virtue of the knowledge they give us or fail to give us respectively.

On the other hand, non-cognitivists deny that art can give us any knowledge, at least knowledge that is non-trivial (not known before the work appears) and unique (that cannot be obtained by other means).³ For example, they claim that truth of thematic statements in artworks (say the thematic statement that 'one's emotional state is determined by past events' as implied in Haruki Murakami's novel *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage*) is something that we know all along, the knowledge of what-it-is-like to be jealous is something that we can never really know if we have never experienced jealousy, the refinement of our conceptual knowledge can be acquired more effectively from philosophical texts, and knowledge as understanding or acknowledging can be attained through real-life experiences. Since art does not give us any distinctive knowledge it cannot be said that it is relevant for artistic value. The purpose of art, anti-cognitivists argue, lies in the imaginative realization of the theme, rather than in the theme itself and what it communicates. That is, what matters in art is the organization and structure of elements and how these elements cohere

¹ The main proponents of propositional knowledge in art are Weitz (1943, pp. 338-348), Kivy (1997, 120-139), Mikkonen (2014). The leading proponents of conceptual knowledge are Carroll (2002, pp. 3-26), John (2003, pp. 142-159), Elgin (2007, pp. 43-54). For experiential knowledge approach see Schick (1982, pp. 31-39), Kieran (1996, pp. 337-351) and Gaut (2006, pp. 115-126). The main contemporary proponent of knowledge as understanding or acknowledging is Gibson (2003, pp. 224-237; 2009, pp. 467-385). For an earlier version of this approach see Graham (1995, pp. 26-37).

² There is a distinction between cognitivism and aesthetic cognitivism. Cognitivism is the view claiming that art works are an important source of knowledge and thus they are cognitively valuable. Cognitivism merely holds an epistemic claim. Aesthetic cognitivism, on the other hand, holds epistemic and aesthetic claim. That is, it argues not merely that art works are an important source of knowledge, but also that this capacity of art works to facilitate knowledge contributes to work's aesthetic value. According to aesthetic cognitivism, an artwork is aesthetically better (gives aesthetic pleasure) because of the knowledge we acquire from it, that is, because of its cognitive value (cognitive pleasure). See: Gaut (2006, pp. 115-126).

³ For the non-cognitivist position see: Lamarque and Olsen (1997), Lamarque (2006, pp. 127-142) and Stolnitz (1992, pp. 191-200).

into a unified pattern or an aesthetic form, thereby producing an aesthetic experience of pleasure or displeasure.

Both positions have their own merits. Cognitivists are right in claiming that there is much more to an artwork than just being aesthetically pleasing. We often admire artworks for their insightfulness, while we criticize other works for being shallow and superficial. Thus, it appears that our vocabulary of artistic appraisal is charged with cognitive value terms. On the other hand, anti-cognitivists also make a good point. The kind of knowledge that a cognitivist claims art is supposed to give is something that is either already known or can be obtained by other means. But if knowledge can be obtained by non-artistic means then what is so special about the cognitive value of art?

One way to defend the position that art has a unique cognitive value depends on showing that aesthetic value, essential to artworks, is cognitive. This is a difficult task to begin with, considering that aesthetic value has traditionally been distinguished from cognitive value based on the view that aesthetic experience depends on the feeling of pleasure or displeasure, and that feelings are essentially non-cognitive.⁴

The aim of my paper is to express a critique of this view and to show that aesthetic feelings of pleasure in the beautiful and displeasure in the ugly have inherent cognitive aspirations. I argue that the value of art lies in facilitating aesthetic experience of pleasure and displeasure due to the aesthetic form. Yet, in contrast to other aesthetic theories of art, I also hold that art works have a distinctive cognitive value. I aim to reconcile cognitive and anti-cognitive positions by claiming that aesthetic value is a species of cognitive value and thus artworks can have a distinctive cognitive value. I intent to show that apprehension of a meaning in an artwork is an aesthetic apprehension (i. e. meaning is apprehended through the feeling of pleasure or displeasure). I develop my proposal in light of Kant's theory of aesthetic ideas put forward in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*.

2. Cognitive Function of Aesthetic Ideas

In §49 of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* Kant puts forward a view

⁴ This is nicely pointed out by Pouivet (2000, pp. 49–53).

that the free play of imagination (responsible for experience of beauty and ugliness) can be stimulated not only by perceptual properties alone, but by ideas and thoughts as well. For example, he writes that beauty is “the *expression* of aesthetic ideas” (5:320, p. 197).⁵ Kant formulates an aesthetic idea accordingly: “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, p. 192).

It is suggested accordingly that aesthetic ideas are concrete sensible representations of imaginations (that is, images) and that these images are so rich and give rise to so much thinking that cannot be fully described by any determinate concepts. Aesthetic ideas are thus alike to ordinary images (such as image of a flower), but they are dissimilar to ordinary images in that no determinate concepts correspond to them (like an image of a flower corresponds to the concept of a flower). Since aesthetic ideas lack determinate concepts, they evade the possibility of cognition (they cannot be cognized in an ordinary sense, that is, by connecting intuition with its determinate concept). They are therefore called ideas.

Kant gives the following example of aesthetic ideas: “The poet ventures to make sensible rational ideas of invisible beings, the kingdom of the blessed, the kingdom of hell, eternity, creation, etc., as well as to make that of which there are examples in experience, e.g., death, envy, and all sorts of vices, as well as love, fame, etc., sensible beyond the limits of experience, with a completeness that goes beyond anything of which there is an example in nature” (5:314, p. 192).

As evident from this passage, aesthetic ideas can sensibly represent two kinds of concepts. On one hand, invisible beings, hell, eternity, god, freedom, mortality, etc., are *rational ideas (ideas of reason)*. They are: “concept[s] to which no intuition (representation of imagination) can be adequate”

⁵ References to Immanuel Kant are given in the text to the volume and page number of the standard German edition of his collected works: *Kants gesammelte Schriften* (KGS). References to the *Critique of Pure Reason* are to the standard A and B pagination of the first and second editions. References are also given, after a comma, to the English translation of *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, ed. Paul Guyer, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge University Press, 2000), which includes the “First Introduction” (KGS 20).

(5:314, p. 192). What is distinctive for them is that they can be thought, but not empirically encountered. For example, one can think of the idea of hell, but have no sensible intuition of it, that is, the content of the idea of hell cannot be experienced by the means of our senses. On the other hand, love, fame, envy, death, etc. are abstract concepts, feelings, emotions, and mental states which can be experienced (we can experience their concrete instances), yet they cannot be directly represented. For example, we can experience the state of loneliness, but one does not know how the idea of loneliness itself looks like, that is, one does not have an appropriate schema for such an idea (in comparison to the schema of, say, a flower as an abstract representation of essential features thought in the concept of a flower; petals, stem and leaves in a specific combination).

We see that what is distinctive for both kinds of concepts is that they have no appropriate sensible intuition. That is, they lack a determinate schema - a schematic image as to how these concepts ought to look like. They can be thus termed as *indeterminate concepts*.

Because aesthetic ideas are sensible representations of things that cannot be directly represented, they can be merely symbolic or metaphorical representations. Kant calls such symbolic presentations aesthetic attributes. Aesthetic attributes are "forms which do not constitute the presentation of a given concept itself, but, as supplementary representations of the imagination, express only the implications connected with it and its affinity with others" (5:315, p. 193). For example, Kant writes that Jupiter's eagle with the lightning in its claws is an aesthetic attribute of the king of heaven. Jupiter's eagle is not a logical attribute of the king of heaven, that is, it is not part of the concept of the king of heaven. When we think of king of heaven, we do not have in mind an image of an eagle. Rather, the image of a Jupiter's eagle merely expresses certain associations connected with the idea we have of the king of heaven (in terms of representing power, strength, freedom, being above the material world etc.). Accordingly, aesthetic attributes are certain thoughts, associations or mental links that hold between different concepts and objects (say, a concept of a lightning in the eagle's claws and the idea of power or illumination), and are stimulated by the perceptual form of the object.

It is the combination of these aesthetic attributes that yield an aesthetic idea as I will illustrate by the means of a more complex contempor-

ary video art work *Dead Sea* (2005) by an Israeli artist Sigalit Landau. Her work features hundreds of watermelons, joined together by a string forming a circle, floating on the Dead Sea. Between the watermelons, some of which are open thereby revealing the intense red colour of their flesh, lies the artist's naked body. One of her arms is placed by her side, while the other one is stretched out, touching the open flesh of a watermelon. The video shows, in slow motion, how the string is pulled, thereby rotating the artist's body along with it until the circle is completely untied and out of sight. Visually, this artwork affords a mesmerizing aesthetic experience. However, there is much to the artwork than its visual form being pleasing to the eye. Namely, each of these images work as an aesthetic attribute and it is the combination of these aesthetic attributes that constitutes the aesthetic idea of the work. For example, each watermelon might be said to be an aesthetic attribute standing for a year in one's life. The watermelons are pulled by an unknown source until the circle ends, the image of which might stand as an aesthetic attribute for the idea of powerlessness and determinism. The naked body of the artist, pulled along by the string, brings in mind the sense of vulnerability and helplessness. Open watermelons, revealing the intense red colour of their flesh, are like open wounds, symbolizing the presence of blood and pain in one's life. Furthermore, watermelons are half submerged in the sea which may be an aesthetic attribute standing for the life itself, yet, since it is the salt-saturated water of the Dead Sea, this in addition stand as an aesthetic attribute for the harshness of life itself. Taken together, these aesthetic attributes constitute an aesthetic idea of the artwork, that is, a concrete sensible representation of an idea, such as the idea of the inevitability of death or the idea of inseparability of life, pain and struggle.

One can notice that the relationship between an aesthetic idea, aesthetic attributes and indeterminate concepts is similar to the relation that exists between empirical intuition (say, a particular image of a flower), logical attributes (abstract representation of essential features thought in the concept of a flower) and a determinate concept (of a flower). Just like logical attributes constitute the content of the empirical concept, based on which we come to recognize a particular sensible manifold being of a particular kind (say, a flower), so too aesthetic attributes constitute the content of indeterminate concepts (say, of the king of heaven, or of the

idea of inevitability of death), and based on which we come to *recognize* particular aesthetic idea as representing a certain indeterminate concept.

As this example illustrates, an art work can be aesthetically valuable not merely due to its visual form alone, but because of the aesthetic idea it communicates to the audience. We appreciate the communication of aesthetic ideas, because they give us an intimation of the world of ideas and state of affairs that lie beyond sensory experience. For example, while we may experience our own state of hopelessness, there are limits to the degree of understanding of the idea of hopelessness itself that is available only from our own states. Through an artistic representation, however, we can gain a different perspective on this idea, for example, what the state of hopelessness and despair itself might look like, which can consequently contribute to a richer understanding of this idea. Such a view is implied in Kant's claim that concepts without intuition are empty (A51/B75). He refers to empirical concepts which need to be connected to empirical intuition in order to make sense of experience. Without empirical intuition, empirical concepts are mere words, without any substantive meaning. But the same can be said about indeterminate concepts (such as the concept of a heavenly being, hopelessness, vulnerability, etc.). Only by connecting indeterminate concepts with sensible intuition (by means of aesthetic attributes) can we truly say that we understand what indeterminate concepts mean.

But it is art in particular that deals with indeterminate concepts and themes that concern social, psychological, moral, religious and metaphysical questions. It is a unique ability of great artworks to provide a particular image, a concrete picture to such indeterminate concepts, that is, to connect an indeterminate concept with its particular and thereby to imbue indeterminate concepts with a more substantive meaning and understanding. To find a connection between indeterminate concepts and their particulars is in a sense a truth seeking process, since, as mentioned previously, we do not know how indeterminate concepts look like, that is, they do not have their own images. Truth seeking process consists in *recognizing* the many faces of an indeterminate concept or a theme, that is, how a particular indeterminate concept or a thematic statement looks like, how it manifests itself, not merely in the artwork itself, but in our everyday life as well. What is distinctive for great works of art is their abil-

ity to find the harmony between indeterminate concepts and a particular sensible manifold, that is, to express aesthetic ideas.

This is nicely illustrated by Michael Haneke movie *The Seventh Continent* (1989), an agonizing story of a well-situated Austrian family and their attempt to escape the feeling of emotional and social isolation in the modern world by choosing to commit a suicide. The mental state of emptiness and depersonalization that accompanies everyday life of this family is represented through images that are focused on objects, rather than on subjects. We do not see character's faces, but merely fragmented and isolated shots of their hands turning off the alarm clock, opening curtains, putting toothpaste on brush, tying shoes, making coffee. Through such a cinematic technique that emphasizes the state of imprisonment by our daily routines, Haneke managed to give a perceptible form to the feeling of emptiness of one's existence, and thereby provided us with a rare opportunity of *recognizing* certain mental states, emotions and ideas that cannot be directly represented. Through the depiction of emotionless and depersonalized performances of our daily routines, the film represents the idea of emotional emptiness, that is, how these emotional state themselves look like. We often experience such mental states, yet with a difficulty to have a clear look at it and therefore to properly understand it. Through the objectification of the idea of emotional isolation itself, we have an extraordinary opportunity to perceive this emotion in a formulated way. By giving us the possibility to recognize this idea itself, the movie confronts us with our own feeling of emotional isolation and with the reality of our own everyday lives. Accordingly, the cognitive value of artworks lies not merely in identifying or recognizing the harmony between indeterminate concepts or themes (say, emotional alienation in the modern world) and its particular instantiations (images that are focused on mundane objects and everyday rituals with no emotional interaction), but also in furnishing us with the opportunity for self-reflection and self-knowledge. Namely, through aesthetic ideas, art opens a dialogue between us, our subjective states (say, how emptiness is felt by me) and the objective projection of our subjective states (an image of the feeling of emptiness itself). A dialogue enhances a distance between one's subjective state and the objective vision of that mental state through which one's perspective can be revealed. In other words, in art as an expression of aesthetic ideas our own subjective exper-

iences become objects of our attention. Art thereby engages us in a cognitive process of identifying our own personal characteristics and information about ourselves, challenging our emotional, behavioural and intellectual patterns and acknowledging our inadequacies in our point of views and thoughts we attribute to our daily lives and experiences of ourselves. Accordingly, art as an expression of aesthetic ideas enhances one's self-exploration, by giving us the opportunity to reflect on the content of our own subjective experiences. It thereby fosters self-awareness and by giving us an objective vision of ourselves it facilitates self-knowledge and consequently self-change.

3. Aesthetic Ideas, Pleasure and Beauty

I argued so far that art works can have a unique cognitive value in virtue of the aesthetic ideas they express. What I want to consider next is the relation between aesthetic ideas and beauty. That is, what do aesthetic ideas, as sensible representations of indeterminate concepts, have to do with aesthetic pleasure of the beautiful? Kant does not give an explicit answer to this question, yet based on what he says about beauty and the notion of free harmony in general, a following explanation can be proposed.

In the previous section I argued that the relationship between aesthetic ideas, aesthetic attributes and indeterminate concepts is similar to the relation between empirical intuitions, logical attributes and determinate concepts. We come to recognize a particular aesthetic idea as representing an indeterminate concept in the same way as we come to recognize a particular object being of a certain determinate kind (say, being a flower). The difference is, as I will argue shortly, that in the case of an aesthetic idea this recognition proceeds by the means of pleasure and in making an aesthetic judgment, while in the case of recognizing an object being of a particular kind no pleasure is produced and judgment is cognitive.

According to Kant, our ordinary perception and recognition of objects proceeds by the means of a conceptual harmony between the imagination and understanding. The faculty of imagination gathers together or apprehends the manifold of intuition in order to bring it into an image and the faculty of understanding unifies this manifold under the concept of the

object. For example, we recognize a certain object as a flower by the application of the concept of the flower to the manifold of intuition. This harmonious activity between the faculty of imagination and understanding is required for ordinary cognition of objects. Kant claims that our perception of the beautiful proceeds in the same way, but with one substantial difference. Namely, in the perception of the beautiful the harmony between imagination and understanding is in free play because “no determinate concept restricts them to a particular rule of cognition” (5:217, p.102). That is, there is no determinate concept that we could apply to the representation (for example, we do not have a concept of beautiful flower; the concept of a flower by itself does not determine what a beautiful flower is, we simply find the perceptual feature in a flower aesthetically pleasing). The relation between imagination and understanding in the perception of the beautiful is merely subjective, Kant claims, since it refers only to the mutual relation between cognitive powers in the subject, without its relation to the object. Accordingly, while the harmony between cognitive powers in cognitive judgments is not merely subjective, but ends in the application of the concept to the object, and therefore in a cognitive judgment, the harmony between cognitive powers in perception of the beautiful is merely subjective (it does not apply concepts) and it results in a feeling of pleasure alone.

Now, an aesthetic idea meets the conditions required for the notion of free harmony. Namely, aesthetic ideas are sensible representation of indeterminate concepts (such as concept of hopelessness, loneliness, king of heaven, etc.). But we do not know how these concepts look like, that is, we do not have determinate rules in accordance with which to produce a manifold for such an idea. But if there are no determinate rules for the combination of a sensible manifold then this means that imagination and understanding are in a free play: “The powers of cognition that are set into play by this representation are hereby in a free play, since no determinate concept restricts them to a particular rule of cognition” (5:217, p. 102). Such a free play between imagination and understanding is constitutive for judgments of the beautiful (when the play is harmonious) and judgments of the ugly (when the play is disharmonious). Thus, the harmony (or disharmony) between imagination (responsible for the combination of aesthetic attributes in an aesthetic idea) and understanding (responsible for

applying an indeterminate concept) results in the feeling of pleasure (or displeasure). In other words, it is the same harmonious activity between imagination and understanding that necessitates recognition of a particular aesthetic idea as representing an indeterminate concept (i.e. recognizing the meaning of an artwork) that also necessitates a feeling of pleasure. Even more, it is feeling of pleasure itself that serves as a means of recognizing harmony between imagination (combination of aesthetic attributes in an aesthetic idea) and understanding (an indeterminate concept). Namely, since an indeterminate concept does not have an adequate sensible intuition, there is also no determinate way to demonstrate why and how an indeterminate concept and a particular aesthetic idea fit together. This is different in the case of a determinate concept, such as the concept of a flower and its empirical intuition, the image of a flower, since in this case we can demonstrate clearly for why they are in harmony by simply pointing out some of its features, such as having a stem, leaves and petals. But no such evidence can be given in the case of indeterminate concepts and aesthetic ideas. For example, we cannot explicitly point out as to why the image of watermelon's floating on the Dead Sea is in harmony with the idea of the inevitability of dead. Nonetheless, we do still recognize that they are in harmony, the difference being only that this harmony is recognized through the feeling of pleasure alone.

In sum, recognition of a meaning in the case of an aesthetic idea is an example of an *aesthetic recognition* (i.e. recognition of a meaning through the feeling of pleasure). It is the same features that give rise to the feeling of pleasure that also give rise to the meaning of the artwork. These features refer to the specific combination of aesthetic attribute, namely to the combination of aesthetic attributes that is internally coherent, consistent and purposive in respect to the idea it aims to express. This is nicely illustrated in Sigalit Landau's artwork, where the idea of inseparability of life and dead is carried out and represented through the combination of aesthetic attributes that nicely complement each other and where each thought and association, prompted by the perceptual form of the work, is connected with another, lightly building up, until it reaches the concluding idea. It is the aesthetic aspects that give rise to cognitive aspects of an artwork.

4. Further Implications of Kant's theory of Aesthetic Ideas

Kant's theory of aesthetic ideas has further implications for contemporary aesthetic theory. Namely, it can give a solution the problem known in philosophical aesthetics as the 'paradox of ugliness' in art, that is, how it is possible that we like, attend to and value art works that evoke in us intense feelings of displeasure and ugliness?

Based on my interpretation of Kant's theory of aesthetic ideas an object can be beautiful, that is, occasion the free harmony, not merely due to its perceptual features, but due to the combination of aesthetic attributes or thoughts as well. This implies that one and the same object can have both, perceptual beauty (or ugliness) and beauty (or ugliness) of an aesthetic idea. I argued that an aesthetic idea is constituted by the combination of aesthetic attributes, that is, by the set of associations or thoughts between different concepts and objects, and as such it cannot be simply identified with perceptual form of the object. While perceptual form of Sigalit Landau's artwork is constituted by the image of watermelons floating on the sea and the naked body of the artist, an aesthetic idea, on the other hand, is constituted by the combination of thoughts that are prompted by this perceptual form. Aesthetic ideas are accordingly certain kind of mental pictures or "inner intuition[s] of the imagination" (§:342, p. 219) that are provoked by the perceptual form of an object (such as the idea of powerlessness and determinism stimulated by the image of watermelons pulled by an unknown source).

The distinction between perceptual beauty (and ugliness) and beauty (or ugliness) of an aesthetic idea can help us to explain different kinds of aesthetic experiences we have when confronted with different kind of art works. For example, how we can appreciate aesthetically those types of art works, such as works of narrative art, poetry or conceptual art, whose value does not lie in the perceptual properties alone, but in the ideas, concepts and meanings that they evoke. What we find beautiful in such works of art is the structure of aesthetic attributes and how it harmonizes with the concluding idea or a theme, the set of associations that a work conjures. A work can have a beautiful aesthetic idea, even though it has no perceptual beauty (or ugliness).

Furthermore, this distinction can also explain how it is possible to find

certain artworks aesthetically displeasing and ugly, yet aesthetically valuable at the same time. Namely, what we find displeasing in such an art work is its perceptual form (perceptual ugliness), but what we find pleasing is work's expression of an aesthetic idea. So while the feeling of displeasure caused by the perceptual form of the artwork causes us to withdraw our attention from the work, the pleasure of aesthetic idea nevertheless holds our attention. This is nicely illustrated by Willem de Kooning's painting *Woman I* (1950-52). The painting is a representation of a woman's body. One can distinguish certain features of a female's body, such as her invasive breasts, bulging eyes, teeth spreading into a grinning smile, while the rest of the body - her arms and torso - is disintegrated, dismembered and dissolved into the spontaneous and dynamic brush strokes, with frantic lines and garish colours. The combination of colours and shapes seem inappropriate, incoherent and chaotic arousing the feeling of discomfort, frustration and displeasure. The painting fits well into what might be called Kant's category of genuine artistic ugliness – it is not merely the subject matter that is ugly, but the artistic representation of the painting itself.⁶ Nonetheless, even though the artistic representation of the painting is itself chaotic and displeasing, it can still be expressive and thoughtful, but this differs from beautiful works in that such conflict produces instability in the expression of ideas, contrary to a unified expression of the beautiful. For example, one can notice that De Kooning's *Woman I* has no straightforward interpretation, but it motivates an interpretative exploration of its meaning. The physical destruction of a female body might symbolically represent the destruction of the classical notion of a woman as a beautiful, virtuous and sensitive human being. This idea is suggested by the violence of the brushstrokes, the chaotic and aggressive combination of colours, the idea of sexual dominance expressed through the accentuation of the women's breasts, and the maliciousness, hostility and pretence conveyed by her grinning smile. Through the juxtaposition of two conflicting ideas, that is, the classical idea of a woman as a morally and aesthetically ideal

⁶Kant defines artistic beauty (ugliness) as a beautiful (ugly) representation or expression of a (beautiful or ugly) thing (5:311, p. 189). That is, an art work can present ugliness, but as long as this presentation itself remains pleasing, the art work can be positively aesthetically appreciated. But if the artistic form or artistic representation itself is ugly, then we have a case of genuine artistic ugliness.

human being and the directly opposing idea of a woman as an ugly, harmful and vile human being, the artist managed to express a new idea, namely the idea of a critique of a social, aesthetic and moral idealization of femininity. The expression of this idea is stimulating, thought-provoking and for this reason aesthetically significant, even though it is perceived with displeasure due to its visual form. This shows that also perceptual ugliness can be aesthetically significant, meaningful and a cognitively valuable experience because it is a unique way through which certain ideas, concepts and emotions, for which we do not have a full empirical counterpart, can be expressed.

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Science, Art, and Knowing-How: Merleau-Ponty on the Epistemic Qualities of 'Experimental Practices'

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ABSTRACT. This paper introduces a systematic framework for comparing the epistemic qualities of science and art based on the phenomenological thinking of Maurice Merleau-Ponty. I will draw on some of Merleau-Ponty's key writings in which he, on the one hand, stresses the main differences of science and art regarding their aims, purposes, and output, but, on the other hand, also emphasizes their similarities when it comes to describing the scientist and the artist being 'at work'. In my reading, Merleau-Ponty's approach calls for considering science and art as knowledge-generating practices: In scientific, but also in artistic practice, not only is it important that one acquires a field-specific know-how, but that one is able to alter the modality of one's own agency in performing a task. Learning how to do something in the sciences and arts amounts to an ongoing critical engagement with things, sorting out worse and better ways of approaching them. Therefore, scientific and artistic practices can be regarded as experimental practices that are not only valuable within the constraints of their respective field. Rather, they generally contribute to improving the knowledge of how to approach the world in an experimental and critical fashion.

1. Introduction

Science and art can be considered as two sides of the same coin. Ideally, both the scientist and the artist are free from the constraints of societal, cultural, religious or political norms.¹ Both seek to unveil some kind of

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¹ As a matter of fact, science and art are always subject to societal, cultural, religious or political norms. See, for instance, Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung: Philosophische Fragmente* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1987), Paul De Man, *Aesthetic Ideology* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1992), Jacques Rancière, *The*

truth, a truth about the world we live in, about nature, and about human beings. However, although the sciences and arts seem to share some of their basic objectives and intentions, the differences between them are conspicuous: While science normally aims at knowledge of facts, and laws of nature the arts seldom take an interest in knowledge or in facts. Indeed, the arts are free to produce their own system of truth, while science is restricted to seeking the truth in what is given. The arts are allowed to generate a fictional world, while science has to stay on the firm ground of reality. As a consequence, scientific findings are generally considered to have epistemic value while artworks are often not regarded as generating or imparting knowledge. It is the question of knowledge that reveals a profound difference between science and art.

In this paper, I want to reconsider this ostensible difference by taking a look at science and art in terms of epistemic, that is to say knowledge-generating practices. I claim that when focusing on the practices of scientists and artists, viz. the way scientists and artists engage with their objects when they are “at work,”² they can be considered as eliciting a similar kind of knowledge, namely a practical kind of knowledge. Although the declared aims of science and art might be incongruous, especially in terms of the kind of knowledge they are said to generate (or fail to generate), they tend to proceed in a like manner in order to achieve their disparate objectives. One might say that they set about achieving different goals while they act similarly. I contend that this similar way of acting, which basically comes down to a profound examination of the object of interest, while varying and ‘checking’ different possible stances towards it is a practice that is itself epistemic. Not only is it a technique that allows for producing knowledge about something; rather, it also generates and trains a know-how, i.e. knowing how to approach a matter critically. By “critical” I mean the ability to make out differences (on perceptual and conceptual levels) and to balance the pros and cons of taking on different perspectives.

Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible (London: Continuum, 2004). However, it is interesting to note that the freedom of scientific and artistic practices is still underlined as a distinguishing feature when it comes to comparing them to other practices, such as explicitly political, cultural, economic, educational etc. practices.

² Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 17.

Therefore, on a practical level one can acquire a similar kind of knowledge through engaging in scientific and artistic practices, while the epistemic results of this engagement can still be regarded as profoundly different.

In order to develop my argument I will draw on some of Merleau-Ponty's illuminating remarks concerning scientific and artistic practices. One of the main reasons why I think it is fruitful to bring in Merleau-Ponty's position is that his approach focuses on the similar practices scientists and artists engage in while he underlines the important epistemic differences between scientific findings and artworks. In his later writings this two-level approach is especially important for developing a methodologically sophisticated ontology, which envisions the perfect philosopher as a scientist and an artist at the time.

The paper has four divisions. (1) I will start by sketching what I mean by 'knowledge from practice' and 'practical forms of knowledge,' drawing on some key concepts and distinctions from Gilbert Ryle and Michael Polanyi. (2) I will then outline distinct epistemic practices and relate them to certain exemplary forms of practical knowledge they elicit. On a systematic level, I will introduce a difference between everyday practices and experimental practices and argue that while in everyday practices we are inclined to learn something useful, in experimental practices we are free to train ourselves to perform tasks critically. (3) Having conceptualized scientific and artistic practices as experimental practices, I will turn to Merleau-Ponty's understanding of scientific and artistic practice. I will focus on what he says concerning the scientist and the artist being at work. (4) Finally, I will consider the main parallels and differences between scientific and artistic practices and conclude that both are experimental practices that can improve critical abilities.

2. Knowledge from Practice and Practical Knowledge

Contemporary epistemologists often distinguish between two³ different kinds of knowledge: Knowing-that, i.e. propositional or theoretical know-

³ Fantl stresses that there is a third kind of knowledge commonly referred to: We cannot only know how or know that, we can also know a person. This knowing a person is neither knowing-how nor knowing-that, but it describes a kind of being acquainted with somebody or something. Cf. Jeremy Fantl, "Knowledge How," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia*

ledge, and knowing-how, i.e. practical knowledge, often referred to in the prominent ‘embodied cognition’⁴ debate. The main differences between knowing-that and knowing-how concern the object of knowledge, the way knowledge is acquired and the way it is expressed. The object of theoretical knowledge can generally be considered as a “concept” in the broad sense of the word. Theoretically, I can know that Barack Obama is the president of the United States or I can know that water freezes at a temperature of zero degrees Celsius. In contrast, the object of practical knowledge is an “action” or a “practice.”⁵ Practically, I can know how to cook, how to ride a bicycle or how to play the guitar.⁶ Here, knowing-how amounts to practical knowledge. What is more, while theoretical knowledge can be acquired without practical engagement, but rather through reflection, insight or testimony⁷ for instance, practical knowledge depends

of Philosophy (Fall 2014 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, retrieved October 2, 2015, from <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2014/entries/knowledge-how/>.

⁴ Theories of embodied cognition underline that cognition consists not only in acting out cognitive capabilities in the narrow sense, but entails also perceptual and motor capabilities. A great many authors claim that a cognizing agent actively engages with the world and, herein, interacts with the environment as a physiological organism. Cf. Francisco Varela, Evan Thompson, and Eleanor Rosch, *Cognitive Science and Human Experience* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), Alva Noë, *Action in Perception* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004), Shaun Gallagher, *How the Body Shapes the Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), Anthony Chemero, *Radical Embodied Cognitive Science* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009).

⁵ Glick stresses that, in some cases, talk about knowing-how seems to be confusing, as one might use the proposition “S knows how to do something” also for describing a theoretical kind of knowledge, for instance, in cases when somebody who has read a great deal of theory about, say, painting, theoretically knows how to paint. He, therefore, suggests that we refer to the more precise epistemological distinction between theoretical and practical knowledge. Cf. Ephraim Glick, “Two Methodologies for Evaluating Intellectualism,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 83/2 (2011), 398–434.

⁶ The “object” of practical knowledge is, further, qualified in a certain way. Ryle underlines this when he argues that knowing-how can be partial while knowing-that must be total. I either know that or I don’t. In contrast, I can also know how to do something better than you do. See Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (London: Penguin Books, 1990), 57–8.

⁷ Testimony is an important source of theoretical knowledge, since we learned most of what we know through reports of others. One of the first authors to stress the epistemological importance of testimony is David Hume. See David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 1/3/9.

on repeated practice and training.⁸ Accordingly, knowing-how can be classified as knowledge from practice.⁹ Finally, while knowing-that is normally expressed by means of propositions – “Barack Obama is the president of the United States,” “Water freezes at a temperature of zero degrees Celsius” – knowing-how is closely connected with agency and is articulated in the course of bodily¹⁰ actions.

One author who famously introduced a two-fold epistemological distinction between a theoretical and a practical kind of knowledge already in the late 1940's is Gilbert Ryle. For instance, he discusses cases such as knowing how to play chess or knowing how to play an instrument. He emphasizes that, although there is some sort of theoretical knowledge involved in playing chess or playing an instrument, the ability to perform these tasks “well, i.e. correctly or efficiently or successfully”¹¹ goes beyond a mere execution of theoretical prescriptions. Accordingly, Ryle emphasizes that actually knowing-how to do something cannot be reduced to knowing that something has to be done in a certain way.¹² Like Ryle, Michael Polanyi underlines the epistemological importance of practical knowledge. He introduces the term ‘tacit knowing’ in order to account for a non-theoretical dimension of knowing. ‘Tacit knowledge’ is meant to describe implicitly knowing how to do something in the very act of doing it.¹³ It is called ‘tacit’, since it cannot be reduced to what can be expressed by words. For Polanyi, focusing on tacit knowledge means to revolutionize the very idea of what it means to know: “I shall reconsider

⁸ This is because learning in a practical respect is closely connected with a process of embodiment.

⁹ Ryle hints at this difference regarding the acquisition of knowledge, too: “Truths can be imparted, procedures can only be inculcated, and while inculcation is a gradual process, imparting is relatively sudden. It makes sense to ask at what moment someone became apprised of a truth, but not to ask at what moment someone acquired a skill.” (Ryle, *Concept*, 58).

¹⁰ By “bodily” actions I mean also perceptual or emotional actions.

¹¹ Ryle 1949, *Concept*, 29.

¹² In his own words, Ryle tries to account for “what it is for someone to know how to perform tasks” (Ryle 1949, *Concept*, 28).

¹³ In this respect it can be compared to Ryle’s stressing the difference between *knowing that* and *knowing how*. Polanyi explicitly hints at the parallels between Ryle’s and his own conception of knowledge. See Michael Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966), 7.

human knowledge by starting from the fact that *we can know more than we can tell*.¹⁴ For Polanyi, just as for Ryle, this ‘knowing more than we can tell’ cannot be acquired by pure reflection, insight or through testimony; it can only be acquired in the course of repeated ‘practice and training’¹⁵. Polanyi designates tacit knowledge as a process of ‘indwelling’.¹⁶ Regarding the relatedness of theoretical and practical knowledge, he claims that even in cases where knowing-how seems to be dependent on knowing-that, theoretical knowledge can never fully determine practical knowledge: “Rules of art can be useful, but they do not determine the practice of an art; they are maxims, which can serve as a guide to an art only if they can be integrated into the practical knowledge of the art. They cannot replace this knowing.”¹⁷ What is more, according to Polanyi, somebody who intends to become an expert in a certain practical field – such as specific crafts, but also in specific sciences¹⁸ – needs to “learn by example.”¹⁹ Accordingly, practical knowledge as a qualified skill is passed from a master to an apprentice. Personal contact between master and apprentice is indispensable for acquiring a skillful way of doing something. “To become an expert wine-taster, to acquire a knowledge of innumerable different blends of tea or to be trained as a medical diagnostician, you must go through a long course of experience under the guidance of a master.”²⁰ Consequently, somebody who wants to acquire knowing-how must submit to tradition and authority.²¹

Ryle, by contrast, emphasizes that it is the practical engagement itself that serves to sort out the right way of doing something from the wrong

¹⁴ Polanyi, *Tacit Dimension*, 4.

¹⁵ This is a phrase I borrow from Nelson Goodman. He stresses that one can only come to see like an expert through a process of practice and training. See Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1976), 103.

¹⁶ See Polanyi, *Tacit Dimension*, 17.

¹⁷ Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (Mansfield Centre: Martino Publishing, 2013), 50.

¹⁸ For Polanyi the case of the scientist is crucial, since he himself worked as a chemist before turning to philosophy.

¹⁹ Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, 53.

²⁰ Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, 54.

²¹ A serious problem Polanyi’s account faces is that it cannot explain the development of new skills. If a learner must submit to tradition and authority in order to learn from them, it seems impossible to acquire any new knowledge.

way. As such, teaching through tradition and authority plays a minor role in his account. In order to understand how repeated practice and training can lead to a skilled way of doing something and not just any way of doing it, it is, however, necessary to have criteria and standards that distinguish the right way of doing something from the wrong way. For Ryle, knowing how to do something therefore amounts to a qualified way of doing something. Knowing how to cook amounts to cooking well, knowing how to play football amounts to playing in a strategically and technically adept way. Therefore, know-how entails awareness of those criteria and standards that qualify a performance as a good performance. What is interesting about Ryle's account is that, for him, these criteria and standards do not have to be acquired through teaching; they can be acquired in the very course of practical engagement, which is viewed as a process of trial and error. Thus, it is through repeated practice and training that one can learn to do something skillfully. "We learn *how* by practice, schooled indeed by criticism and example, but often quite unaided by any lessons in the theory."²² Practice and training, however, must not be restricted to simply repeating former performances, since mere repetition is not enough for learning how to do something well. Here, a skill essentially differs from a habit. According to Ryle, skills are intelligent practices whereas habits are non-intelligent practices. For him, it is "the essence of intelligent practices that one performance is modified by its predecessors. The agent is still learning."²³ During the learning process an agent engages in acts of reflection upon his performance, he "thinks what he is doing, he is ready for emergencies, he economizes in effort, he makes tests and experiments," he acts "with some degree of skill and judgement."²⁴ While Polanyi contends that the novice has to submit to authority in order to benefit from a historically, culturally or socially established standard, Ryle argues that in order to engage in an intelligent practice, it is indispensable that the novice acts as a critical and judging agent who critically evaluates her own performance constantly: "Training [...], though it embodies plenty of sheer drill, does not consist of drill. It involves the stimulation by criticism and example of the pupil's own judgement. He learns how to do things thinking

²² Ryle, *Concept*, 41.

²³ Ryle, *Concept*, 42.

²⁴ Ryle, *Concept*, 42.

what he is doing, so that every operation performed is itself a new lesson to him how to perform better.”²⁵ When Ryle states that know-how ultimately stems from “performing critically in trying to get things right,”²⁶ he basically refers to this process of ongoing reflection and self-evaluation that the novice performs hand in hand with the action itself. As a consequence, his account allows one to consider the novice’s learning process and self-organization not only as apt, but as essential for constituting practical knowledge. Since know-how consists in hitting upon the right way to do something, a learning agent needs to be open in the course of an ongoing process of experimenting and testing in order to sort out the right way of performing the task. What Ryle does not explain, though, is how one comes to acquire the skills of performing critically and sorting out the best option for doing something. The self-organizing structure of practical learning processes seems to be stuck within a black box.

Based on Ryle’s and Polanyi’s approaches, know-how can be defined as the practically enacted knowledge of how to do something in a skilled way, which is derived from repeated practice and training. The learning agent needs practice and training in order to distinguish and select the best way of doing something. While Polanyi emphasizes that, on top of practical engagement, the novice needs to follow an example, Ryle stresses the learning process as potentially independent and self-organized.

3. Epistemic Practices

Both authors, Ryle and Polanyi, emphasize the importance of being involved in a particular practice for acquiring know-how. However, not every practice qualifies in the same way for learning a skill. Some practices can be regarded as bearing more epistemic potential than others. In the following, I will argue that practices which are qualified as ‘experimental’ are of particularly great epistemic value. This is because, as I will show, these practices trigger the self-organizing structure of the learning process.

Let us start by considering the kind of practices Ryle and Polanyi have in mind. While Ryle mainly focuses on craftsmanship, sports and intellec-

²⁵ Ryle, *Concept*, 42.

²⁶ Ryle, *Concept*, 29.

tual practices, Polanyi also takes an interest in scientific practices. Neither Ryle nor Polanyi extensively elaborate on specifically artistic practices.²⁷ What is more, neither of them introduces a conceptual framework which would help to distinguish between different types of epistemic practices. Ryle is generally much more concerned with practices that are dependent on established rules and standards, such as playing chess or golf. A skilled chess player has to follow the rules of the game. However, although playing chess is dependent on knowing the rules of the game, it must not be understood as the execution of theoretical prescriptions. For Ryle, knowing how to play chess entails that a player is able to practically enact the rules of the game, which can be learned in the course of playing several games. Polanyi, on the other hand, takes an interest in professional expertise and scientific practices. Accordingly, he considers practical knowledge as something that is learned by example in consulting with established professionals and scientists. According to Polanyi, a scientist has to stick to certain rules or standards. One learns these standards by following the example of somebody who already knows how to do something well.

With their respective accounts, Ryle and Polanyi lay emphasis on different aspects of epistemic practices. While Ryle is mainly interested in how a performer can come to know how to do something correctly in the course of repeated practice and training, Polanyi stresses that the epistemic qualification of a practice is something to be learned from an expert in the respective practical field. From my point of view there are advantages and disadvantages in both accounts: With Ryle it is possible to explain the self-organizing structure of learning. Yet his account does not provide much insight into how one ought to organize the learning process. It seems to be plainly given. With Polanyi, on the other hand, somebody else guides and organizes the learning process: a teacher, an expert in the field, an authority. Following the example of a teacher guarantees the quality of practice and training, i.e. that the know-how acquired is qualified as a knowing how to do something well. Nevertheless, the submission to tradition and authority does not allow one to understand the further development of better ways of doing something. It is clear, however, that creative devel-

²⁷ One exception must be noted, namely playing an instrument. Nevertheless Ryle does not describe playing an instrument as an artistic activity, in the sense of a creative practice, but rather as some sort of sophisticated technique.

opment of the existing and established know-how is crucially important especially when it comes to scientific and artistic practices.

In order to account for the specific epistemic nature of scientific and artistic practices, it is necessary to understand to what extent they differ from other practices and, eventually, from each other. A first step in considering the specificity of scientific and artistic practices lies in distinguishing between everyday and unusual ones. Drawing on Merleau-Ponty's systematic investigations of human practices in *The Structure of Behavior* and *Phenomenology of Perception*, it is possible to introduce a basic distinction between those practices aimed at learning how to do things normally²⁸ and those practices aimed at learning to do something in a way that differs from how we do things normally. While in the course of everyday practices we usually learn something useful for our ordinary lives, in the course of unusual practices we do not acquire habits that are useful for our everyday conduct, but that are apt to break out of the common. Let us consider one everyday practice that Merleau-Ponty offers as an example: Driving a car. We learn to drive a car by repeated practice and training. Somebody who wants to drive a car not only needs to understand the technical mechanisms –, she also needs to integrate the machine into her own "body-image."²⁹ This expansion of one's own body is dependent on becoming slowly acquainted with the body-machine interaction.³⁰ As soon as

²⁸ Merleau-Ponty calls everyday practices "habits." A habit "is knowledge in the hands, which is forthcoming only when bodily effort is made, and cannot be formulated in detachment from that effort." Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (London: Routledge, 2003), 217. Authors like Annas point out that, although habit and skills depend on habituation, they have to be distinguished. See Julia Annas, "Practical Expertise," in *Knowing How: Essays on Knowledge, Mind and Action*, ed. John Bengson and Marc A. Moffett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 101–112.

²⁹ "To get used to a hat, a car or a stick is to be transplanted into them, or conversely, to incorporate them into the bulk of our own body. Habit expresses our power of dilating our being-in-the-world, or changing our existence by appropriating fresh instruments." Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 127.

³⁰ Merleau-Ponty refers to the case of knowing how to use a stick for the purpose of orientation: "If I want to get used to a stick, I try it by touching a few things with it, and eventually I have it 'well in hand', I can see what things are 'within reach' or out of reach of my stick. There is no question here of any quick estimate or any comparison between the objective length of the stick and the objective distance away of the goal to be reached." Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 127.

somebody knows how to drive a car, she knows how to operate the machine in relation to and in accordance with her own bodily movements. To a certain extent, she needs to forget about the technical nature of the machine in order to perceive it as a transgression of her own bodily limitations and as an extension of her own body. As a consequence, she must not engage with the machine in a critical way; once she knows how to drive a car, she simply has to practically execute her practical knowledge, and does not need to consciously compare the width of the car to the width of obstacles on the road, for instance. She has literally incorporated the possibilities and the limitations of the machine: “If I am in the habit of driving a car, I enter a narrow opening and see that I can ‘get through’ without comparing the width of the opening with that of the wings [...]. [T]he car ha[s] ceased to be [an object] with a size and volume which is established by comparison with other objects.”³¹ For Merleau-Ponty, practical knowledge is closely connected with bodily adaptation. One knows how to do something only if one’s body knows how to do something: “As has often been said, it is the body which ‘catches’ (*kapiert*) and ‘comprehends’ movement. The acquisition of a habit is indeed the grasping of a significance, but it is the motor grasping of a motor significance.”³²

In cases where somebody knows how to do something in theory, but not in practice, this person is considered to have some kind of disability.³³

³¹ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 126–7.

³² Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 126. “We say that the body has understood and habit has been cultivated when it has absorbed a new meaning, and assimilated a fresh core of significance.” Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 130.

³³ For Merleau-Ponty pathologies and disabilities are important objects of phenomenological research. He thinks that in many cases we can understand how the body and consciousness normally work in the very moment that they cease to work normally. His analysis of apraxia, a severe motor disorder, is thus fundamental for his concept of the motility of the body: “What we have called the body image is precisely this system of equivalents, this immediately given invariant whereby the different motor tasks are instantaneously transferable. It follows that it is not only an experience of my body, but an experience of my body-in-the-world, and that this is what gives a motor meaning to verbal orders. The function destroyed in apraxic disturbances is therefore a motor one. ‘It is not the symbolic or sensegiving function in general which is affected in cases of this kind: it is a much more primary function, in its nature motor, in other words, the capacity for motor differentiation within the dynamic body image’.[] The space in which normal imitation operates is not, as opposed to concrete space with its absolute locations, an ‘ob-

For Merleau-Ponty, everyday practices constitute bodily incarnated knowledge³⁴ and this lays the foundation for being-in-the-world. Practical, bodily knowledge is the basis for all other forms of knowledge, including theoretical, intellectual knowledge. Since Merleau-Ponty considers habits to be the primary kind of practical knowledge, repetition is a key element of know-how. In everyday life, we tend to repeat actions in a way that ‘prove themselves’ in practice. It is through this repetition that one becomes habituated to doing something a certain way.³⁵ Usually, habits guide behavior and actions while not being thematic on a conscious or reflective level. A habitual way of doing something amounts to doing something in the same way it has been done in the past.

Whereas everyday practices are essential for constituting the habits that guide common behavior and actions, unusual practices can break the cycle of ordinary life. Scientific and artistic practices are two examples of non-everyday practices that explicitly require one to criticize established ways of doing something and generating new ways of doing it. According to Merleau-Ponty, the arts transgress the given: “One might show, for example, that aesthetic perception [...] opens up a new spatiality, that the picture as a work of art is not in the space which it inhabits as a physical

jective space’ or a ‘representative space’ based on an act of thought. It is already built into my bodily structure, and is its inseparable correlative.” Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 125

³⁴ Merleau-Ponty rejects the term “knowledge,” since he regards it as a term stemming from an intellectualist paradigm that he intends to criticize. He introduces various terms in order to account for what I consider as practical knowledge or know-how, for instance “habit,” “knowledge in hands,” or, referring to Lhermitte and Trelles, “praktognosia.” “Our bodily experience of movement is not a particular case of knowledge; it provides us with a way of access to the world and the object, with a ‘praktognosia’, which has to be recognized as original and perhaps as primary.” Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 124.

³⁵ “One acquires a habit by repeatedly doing the same thing. Through this repeated activity, the body becomes familiar with the behavior, so that engaging in it comes to feel like ‘second nature’.” Komarine Romdenh-Romluc, “Merleau-Ponty: Actions, Habits, and Skilled Expertise,” in *Philosophy of Mind and Phenomenology: Conceptual and Empirical Approaches*, ed. Daniel O. Dahlstrom, Andreas Elpidorou and Walter Hopp (New York: Routledge, 2016), 98–116, here: 100. See also: Komarine Romdenh-Romluc, “Habit and Attention,” in *The Phenomenology of Embodied Subjectivity*, ed. Rasmus Thybo Jensen and Dermot Moran (Cham: Springer, 2013), 3–19.

thing and as a coloured canvas. That the dance evolves in an aimless and unorientated space, that it is a suspension of our history[.]”³⁶

Artistic and scientific practices implement a kind of know-how that is slightly different from habitual ways of doing something. We learned to walk by practice and training, by repeating those actions that have proved themselves in practice and thus develop a habitual way of walking. However, if an anthropologist or physicist seeks to understand the development of the erect posture of man or the physiological requirements of walking, she will have to suspend the tacit, habitual knowledge of how to walk in order to approach the phenomenon from another perspective. In order to be able to walk, one does not need to take a scientific approach to walking. And it also seems to be obstructive to engage in a habitualized practice if one wants to investigate the origins of that habitual know-how. For a physicist who wants to understand the physiological conditions of walking, the observation and study of similarities across many different cases of walking are indispensable.

While habitual behavior and actions are derived from mere repetition, knowing how to do something in the fields of science and the arts depends on critically referring to established ways of doing it and experimenting with alternative approaches. Progress is possible only upon the condition that one can transgress given practical knowledge by finding and exploring other possibilities of approaching the task or object. In his lecture notes on “Nature,” Merleau-Ponty emphasizes that scientific engagement precisely consists in an open and experimental way of approaching the matter of research. Accordingly, he states that the scientist “intervenes” by exploring various possibilities to start off her research. The concern of “the scientist is to find a foothold. His thinking is directed by the concern not of seeing, but of intervening. [...] Does he also often work like a blind man by analogy? Did a solution work out for him? He tries it on something else, because that time it was successful.”³⁷ The essence of the scientific attitude, as Merleau-Ponty presents it in this passage, is that one approaches or a matter of interest in an experimental way: The scientist directly plunges into the midst of diverse possibilities in order to finally

³⁶ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 258.

³⁷ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Nature: Course Notes from the Collège de France* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2003), 86–7.

“find a foothold.” Unlike the philosopher, the scientist does not engage her object through a reflective distance, with trying to understand, but she begins with actually doing something, i.e. arranging a scientific setting and observing the scientific object that interests her from different angles. In the process of scientific investigation she proceeds by applying the principle of ‘trial and error’. If something works out, she will move onward, if an experimental set-up does not produce the output intended, she will design a different one. In order to be open for different approaches, it is necessary, however, that the scientist suspends her habitual behavior and actions. The ideal point of departure for scientific research is a state of relative ignorance, i.e. where one does not already know how to do something, in order to then be able to freely explore various possibilities. Accordingly, scientific practices essentially differ from everyday practices in that they require one to consciously suspend established, useful ways of doing something. Thus, they can be regarded as experimental practices.

Like scientific practices, aesthetic practices are characterized by reflecting upon and transgressing existing approaches to phenomena. The artist paradigmatically explores the ways the world and its objects can be seen and, further, tries to evaluate the strategies for translating the different ways of seeing into artworks. Merleau-Ponty claims that these artworks have finally “led us back to a vision of things themselves”³⁸ and have, in this sense, managed to overcome historically and culturally established practices of seeing. In order to “view the things themselves” it is necessary to suspend the views of those objects that operate according to existing norms. Hence, aesthetic practices – just like scientific practices – involve a critical distance from everyday practices, a distance achieved by taking on different stances that are, according to my definition, experimental in nature.

4. Merleau-Ponty on Scientific and Artistic Practices

So far, I have argued that scientific and artistic practices essentially differ from everyday practices by virtue of their experimental approach to the matter of interest. In this section I will further explore Merleau-Ponty’s

³⁸ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The World of Perception* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 93.

understanding of scientific and artistic practices with the aim of uncovering their similarities and their differences. I will show that although scientists tend to be less guided by “primordial experience” than artists when they are at work, they still have an analogical approach to their matter of interest in terms of critically relating themselves to established ways of viewing things within an experimental process of finding new perspectives. Finally, I will contend that it is exactly this practice and training that strengthens the critical faculty in a practical respect and makes both science and art fields of immense epistemic impact.

Let us begin with an exploration of Merleau-Ponty’s conception of scientific practices before turning to his consideration of artistic practices. In order to avoid any misunderstandings, it must be stated that Merleau-Ponty’s view of the sciences is highly ambivalent, especially when we regard the whole range of his writings. While the early Merleau-Ponty is generally concerned with the positive impact of scientific research on phenomenological analyses, he distances himself more and more from this affirmative view in later works. It could be stated that while in *The Structure of Behavior* and *The Phenomenology of Perception* the phenomenologist at large shows a pro-scientific attitude³⁹, he becomes a critic of science in *The Visible and the Invisible* and even more evidently in the last essay published during his lifetime *Eye and Mind*. However, I believe it is possible to reconsider this development and introduce a more nuanced understanding of Merleau-Ponty’s relationship to science.⁴⁰ As I have to restrict myself to some few

³⁹ He treats scientific findings as one side of a matter and thus considers them within a dialectical setting. That does not mean that his pro-scientific attitude makes him accept scientific findings uncritically. Quite to the contrary, it makes him engage with science and criticize it without, however, neglecting its results.

⁴⁰ Kisiel is one of the few authors who emphasizes Merleau-Ponty’s positive attitude towards the sciences throughout his work. Theodore J. Kisiel, “Merleau-Ponty on Philosophy and Science,” in *Phenomenology and the Natural Sciences*, ed. Joseph J. Kockelmans and Theodore J. Kisiel (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 251–273.

Other authors, like Baldwin, contend that already in his early writings Merleau-Ponty shows an anti-scientific attitude. Thomas Baldwin, “Merleau-Ponty’s Phenomenological Critique of Natural Science,” *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement* 72 (July 2013), 189–219. See also Stephen Priest, *Merleau-Ponty*, (London: Routledge, 1998), 26, who stresses that philosophy is not to use scientific methods, or Robert P. Crease, “Phenomenology and Natural Science,” in *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2012), retrieved September 15, 2015 from <http://www.iep.utm.edu/phenomsc>: “Others to follow, including Gadamer and

passages here, I will concentrate on his exploration of modern physics, since here he is concerned with a field of research – nature and natural being – in which the artist also takes an interest. Both the scientist and the artist seek to get a grasp of nature, which means, for Merleau-Ponty, that they ultimately try to touch upon the primordial, since “[n]ature is the primordial – that is, the non-constructed, the non-constituted[...]. Nature is an enigmatic object, an object that is not an object at all; it is not in front of us. It is our soil [*sol*] – not what is in front of us, facing us, but rather, that which carries us.”⁴¹

The scientific investigation of nature is a topic that starts to intrigue Merleau-Ponty in the second half of the 1950's. It is one of the big issues in the development of a new ontology, which he designates as ‘indirect’ or ‘lateral’ ontology.⁴² A reconsideration of the investigation of nature is also a centerpiece for Merleau-Ponty's search for an alternative philosophical method. In his last, unfinished work *The Visible and the Invisible* he notes some of the most basic traits of such an alternative method. Just as in his earlier work, Merleau-Ponty turns his attention to the empirical sciences in this context. Once modern physicists came to realize that they are not engaging with independent and unrelated phenomena – with truths in themselves – but that their relation to the observed determines both the very act of observing and the phenomena observed, they should have also come to understand that it is impossible to go on believing that “the physical object in itself pre-existed science.”⁴³ For Merleau-Ponty, the classical scientific notion of truth is still valid in modern science, and this indicates incoherence between the scientific practice of observing and the theory of modern physics. In observing natural phenomena, modern physics presupposes ‘perceptual faith’, i.e. a way of immediate relatedness to the natural appearance of phenomena. However, in the actual production of scientific knowledge, this perceptual faith, which refers to a dimension of

Merleau-Ponty, for various reasons did not pursue the significance of phenomenology for natural science.”

⁴¹ Merleau-Ponty, *Nature*, 4. For Merleau-Ponty's understanding of nature see also Renaud Barbaras, “Merleau-Ponty and Nature,” *Research in Phenomenology* 31/1 (2001), 22–38.

⁴² See e.g. Merleau-Ponty, *Invisible*, 125, 141, 178, 248, 255.

⁴³ Merleau-Ponty, *Invisible*, 15.

experience that Merleau-Ponty considers ‘primordial’, is more and more curtailed, as the scientific findings are still expressed in the terminology of objective, neutral being. It is this objective, neutral being that runs contrary to Merleau-Ponty’s understanding of nature. Nevertheless, modern physics’ focus on the situated occurrence of observation and, connected with this, its emphasis of the relativity of natural appearances fits well with Merleau-Ponty’s peculiar notion of nature. It is the practice of scientific observation, i.e. what the physicist actually does when she is ‘at work’,⁴⁴ that stresses the “interdependence of the whole of the observable with a situated and incarnate physicist.”⁴⁵ Although the physicist engages with the observed phenomena in a way that allows him to approach nature, a ‘prescientific preconception’ underlies the production of theoretical meaning in modern physics. As a consequence, in *The Visible and the Invisible*, Merleau-Ponty finds it necessary to stress the limits of the scientific engagement with nature. Hence, he must highlight what modern physics ignores, what it does not focus on in its actual achievements. “We will have to show how the physical idealization goes beyond, and forgets, the perceptual faith. For the moment it was enough to note that it proceeds from that faith, that it does not lift its contradictions, does not dissipate its obscurity, and nowise dispenses us – far from it – from envisaging it in itself.”⁴⁶

In *Nature* Merleau-Ponty approaches the operations of modern physics in a more nuanced way. This is mainly because, besides pointing to the normative conditions of scientific research, he also recognizes the critical potential of science. What the philosopher has to do, is to take a close look at modern science and its connected critical operations. “Science is not an unmotivated instance. We have to psychoanalyze science, purify it. Scientific consciousness lives in the natural attitude, as Husserl said, and it ignores Nature because it is there: it is a naive and uncritical enjoyment of the natural certitude. [...] But modern science often criticizes

⁴⁴ “This permits us to advance the notion that no ontology is exactly *required* by the thought proper to physics at work [...], that in particular the classical ontology of the object cannot claim to be enjoyed by it, nor can it claim a privilege *by principle* [...]” Merleau-Ponty, *Invisible*, 17.

⁴⁵ Merleau-Ponty, *Invisible*, 15.

⁴⁶ Merleau-Ponty, *Invisible*, 18.

itself and its own ontology.”⁴⁷ The point of ‘criticizing itself and its own ontology’ is, like in *The Visible and the Invisible*, linked to questioning the relation between the scientist and the scientific object – the observer and the observed – from which modern science departs when it is ‘at work’. So the positive motivation he ascribes to modern science is the same like the one he ascribes to art. Unlike his final work, in *Nature* Merleau-Ponty faces the question of what the philosopher not only can, but also what she must learn from the scientist – and not what the scientist should learn from the philosopher. This is due to the fact that, according to Merleau-Ponty, “the position of the philosopher is not without risk,”⁴⁸ especially as regards the practical engagement with the matter of interest. While the philosopher is eager to ‘see’, i.e. to understand the world, the scientist starts her work by directly engaging with it. Merleau-Ponty thus states that the scientist seeks to intervene while the philosopher distances herself from the world. “The concern of the philosopher is to see; that of the scientist is to find a foothold. His thinking is directed by the concern not of seeing, but of intervening. He wants to escape getting bogged down in the philosophical way of looking at things. [...] The philosopher must see behind the back of the physicist what the physicist himself does not see.”⁴⁹ The main difference between philosophical and scientific practices, as Merleau-Ponty expresses it in this passage, is that, approaching a problem philosophically, one does not engage with things, but touches on them from a reflective distance, while the scientist plunges into them. According to Merleau-Ponty, the philosopher should follow the example of the scientist. This is because, unlike the philosopher, the scientist does not begin her engagement with trying to understand, but she starts with doing something, i.e. observing the scientific object that interests her. By engaging with the matter directly, the scientist faces an actual experience, while the philosopher merely tries to grasp the phenomenon inhabiting a non-experiential state.

The scientific practice referred to in this context is a particular one. According to Merleau-Ponty, this particular practice has emerged out of the development of modern physics, namely quantum physics. In 1905

⁴⁷ Merleau-Ponty, *Nature*, 85.

⁴⁸ Merleau-Ponty, *Nature*, 85.

⁴⁹ Merleau-Ponty, *Nature*, 86-7.

Albert Einstein revolutionizes the idea of conceptualizing nature as an objective entity.⁵⁰ The results of scientific experiments cannot be regarded as ultimate because the physical phenomena examined are taken to be part of a reality that is relative to the scientist observing them. Accordingly, with modern physics one must come to admit that “the existing things are not individual realities, but generic realities.”⁵¹ This revolution not only has consequences for the designation of scientific findings, it also has consequences for developing alternative scientific practices based on “the new relation established between observed thing and the measurement.”⁵² The new conception is connected with a different understanding of the scientific instrument. Instruments are not anymore regarded as an extension of the senses. Rather, they are considered to ‘produce’ a phenomenal field that turns out to be directly related to them. Accordingly, the modern physicist investigates nature through an “engaged operation.”⁵³ It is the conception of how the action of measuring is ‘engaged’ that calls for a final revision of the classical “objective” approach to nature. But this is not all. For Merleau-Ponty, it also calls for a revision of the transcendental ability to think in terms of a truly embodied ‘cognition’. “The situated and incarnated aspect of the physicist must succeed the universal ‘I think’ of transcendental philosophy.”⁵⁴ If philosophy wants to take a page out of the book of modern physics, it has to face the necessity of a situated confrontation with the observed object. It has to stick to a radical notion of experience, not primarily in founding its theory, but in enhancing its practice.

Looking at these passages from *The Visible and the Invisible* and *Nature* is

⁵⁰ In his short essay “Einstein and the Crisis of Reason” from 1955, Merleau-Ponty uncovers the paradoxical attitude Einstein has towards revolutionizing the very idea of truth. He says that although Einstein himself claims that he wants to apprehend the world “in a wildly speculative fashion” (Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Signs* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 192), he still sticks with a classical notion of truth and knowledge. “Einstein held on to both ends of the chain – classical physics’ ideal of knowledge and his own ‘wildly speculative’, revolutionary way. The physicists of the following generation have for the most part let the first end go.” Merleau-Ponty, *Signs*, 193.

⁵¹ Merleau-Ponty, *Nature*, 92.

⁵² Merleau-Ponty, *Nature*, 93.

⁵³ Merleau-Ponty, *Nature*, 94.

⁵⁴ Merleau-Ponty, *Nature*, 97.

interesting, since Merleau-Ponty here underlines the differences between the physicists' more practical knowledge – knowing how to approach the world – and her more theoretical knowledge – the knowledge generated in terms of scientific findings. The practical aspect of knowledge becomes evident when one considers the scientist at work: She approaches the matter of research with the awareness that she is directly related to it. It is this very relatedness that makes it impossible to simply investigate an objective world from a distanced point of view. Following Merleau-Ponty, scientific practice must therefore be considered as an “engaged operation.” The scientist has to start from her situatedness and further explore her own relation to the observed in the course of an ongoing process of “finding a foothold.” From there she knows how to “intervene”: She is supposed to act out her own bodily, situated perspective of observing in relation to the observed. She can enhance her practical knowledge of how to perform as a bodily and situated scientist, which is fundamentally different from ordinary forms of knowing how to do something bodily: She seeks new ways of relating herself to the observed and thus critically examines the situation given in contrast to other possible points of view, being aware of her own body at work, without merely intellectualizing the situation. She then continually tests and experiments and – drawing on Ryle's concept of knowing-how – “performs critically in trying to get things right.”⁵⁵

In the texts referred to above, Merleau-Ponty clearly states that scientific practices are of the utmost importance for his ontological project, since they present a way of approaching natural phenomena in an experimental and critical fashion, without universalizing them in the way that the philosopher normally does. In this, scientific practices are similar to artistic practices. Artistic practices too are important for his philosophical project because they help one to know how to approach natural phenom-

⁵⁵ I think it makes good sense to describe what Merleau-Ponty here analyzes in terms of scientific practice as non-normalized scientific practices, referring to Kuhn's notion of “normal science.” Cf. Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962). It would be misleading to suppose that all scientific practices are characterized by continually trying to find a foothold. Normalized scientific practices usually simply execute established ways of doing things and are thus probably more similar to everyday practice than to what Merleau-Ponty describes as the scientist's being at work.

ena.

Much of what Merleau-Ponty says about artistic practices is embedded in his analyses of Paul Cézanne's work. In the early text "Cézanne's Doubt"⁵⁶ Merleau-Ponty attempts to understand the peculiarity of Cézanne's painting. According to him, Cézanne tries to overcome the problem of impressionism. Impressionists try to capture the impression of the moment and totally focus on the atmosphere, without taking an interest in the object and its nature. Questioning this approach, Cézanne wants to rediscover the object behind the atmosphere.⁵⁷ Accordingly, his main intention is paradoxical in wanting to present an object as a solid entity without reducing the occurrence of its appearing. It is this paradox in Cézanne that renders his painting a never-ending endeavor and that characterizes his artistic practice as an open-ended exploration of possibilities. For Merleau-Ponty, Cézanne's artistic practice amounts to an in depth-study of how to view the world. Through his paintings Cézanne inquires into the very nature of perception. As such, the practice of painting can be compared to a scientific study of perception, although it is conducted in a way that is different from the carefully set up experiments in traditional science.⁵⁸ Merleau-Ponty still views Cézanne as some sort of scientist who studies the nature of perception by way of painting. What is interesting about the artist's "quasi-scientific" approach is that his "findings" are not presented in the objectifying language of science, but in the sensual expression of images. The painted image reflects the painter's approach to the painted object and thus gives viewers the opportunity to participate in his quasi-scientific practice, rather than just receive information about the results of his investigations.

The epistemic relevance of artistic and aesthetic⁵⁹ practices and their

⁵⁶ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Cézanne's Doubt," in *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader: Philosophy and Painting*, ed. Galen A. Johnson (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1993), 59–75.

⁵⁷ Merleau-Ponty, *Cézanne*, 61.

⁵⁸ Again, it might help to refer to the difference between the practices of normal science and non-normalized scientific practices here.

⁵⁹ I distinguish between artistic and aesthetic practices in order to highlight the difference between contemplating and producing artworks. In my terminology, aesthetic practices are practices of contemplating artworks or aesthetic objects more generally and artistic practices are practices of producing artworks.

relatedness to scientific practices also becomes evident when one looks at “The Film and the New Psychology.” Here, Merleau-Ponty explicitly hints at the parallels between what can be learned about the nature of perception from “new psychology,” referring to Gestalt theory especially, and what can be learned about it in the course of cinematic experience. In particular, it is the temporal aspect of the Gestalt that becomes evident in watching films. The time-structure of spontaneous perception can be studied in the very moment a movie shows “how something takes on meaning.” “Movies [...] always have a story and often an idea [...], but the function of the film is not to make these facts or ideas known to us. [...] The joy of art lies in its showing how something takes on meaning – not by referring to already established and acquired ideas but by the temporal or spatial arrangement of elements.”⁶⁰ Gestaltpsychologists try to engage with the structure of spontaneous perception scientifically, while in cinematographic experience this structure is activated without a scientific investigation. Accordingly, the epistemic benefit of engaging with aesthetic practices, like watching a movie, can be characterized as learning about how perception is structured. Hence, aesthetic practices are comparable to scientific practices: in the present case, both study perception. The main difference between aesthetic and scientific practices is, however, that the knowledge acquired through aesthetic practices is practically enacted through and through, that is to say, it is not expressed in terms of propositional statements.

While in these two early essays Merleau-Ponty is mainly interested in new approaches to perception, in the late text *Eye and Mind*, he seeks out an alternative way of investigating Being. It is the artistic practice of painting that opens up this alternative way. While Merleau-Ponty accuses scientific and even philosophical knowledge⁶¹ of neglecting Being by employ-

⁶⁰ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Sense and Non-Sense* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 57–8.

⁶¹ *Eye and Mind* thus paradigmatically exposes Merleau-Ponty’s highly ambivalent rapport with science. My suggestion is to read his rejection of science – e.g. where he stresses that science does not engage with things, but manipulates them (see Maurice Merleau-Ponty, “Eye and Mind,” in *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader: Philosophy and Painting*, ed. Galen A. Johnson (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1993), 121–149) – as a rejection of scientific truth and the objectifying language science makes use of when encapsulating their findings.

ing an objectifying language that fixes its fluctuation and tries to order its naturally unordered aspects, he holds that it is possible to approach Being directly through painting. The artist – again paradigmatically embodied by the painter Cézanne – responds to the natural world that he encounters in the very act of painting. He has what Merleau-Ponty designates a ‘primordial experience’.⁶² Primordial experience is a mode of experience that is more profound and thus more close to the ‘brute’ or ‘wild’ being that Merleau-Ponty focuses on in his later phenomenology.⁶³ The brute or wild being is a being that grounds beings in the world and is closely connected with the notion of nature. Both refer to an unorganized, unstructured level of experience with which we are unfamiliar in everyday life, since we normally tend to organize and structure our experiences. It is due to this striving to determine and order things that it becomes nearly impossible to grasp the phenomenal appearance of wild being. Philosophy, science and everyday life here present practices which prevent us from acquiring knowledge of Being. It is only through the arts, especially through painting, that one is able to gain some sort of knowledge that has ontological relevance.⁶⁴ Interestingly, this ontological knowledge turns out to be a practical kind of knowledge: It consists in knowing how to encounter the world in a primordial way. For Merleau-Ponty, the painter, Cézanne, establishes a practice that allows him to practice and train this kind of knowledge. The reason why it allows one to do this, is that it leaves behind the normative limitations of perception in everyday, scientific and philosophical life. The painter is free to take on different stances towards the world, to test and experiment with viewing things from various sides. She continually seeks and finds new approaches to the visible, new aspects of it. Even in the very moment she makes some kind of statement about it, namely when she has finished producing an image, she does not restrict the view to one and only one perspective. Merleau-Ponty claims that the painted image still evokes a primordial kind of perception insofar as it does not simply show something, but rather exhibits a non-objectifying

⁶² For Merleau-Ponty ‘primordial experience’ is a kind of pre-ordered experience that cannot be translated into language. Aesthetic experience is exemplary for Merleau-Ponty’s understanding of primordial experience. See Merleau-Ponty, *Cézanne*, esp. 63–64.

⁶³ See e.g. Merleau-Ponty, *Invisible*, 168–170, 183, 211.

⁶⁴ Merleau-Ponty, *Eye*, esp. 128–129.

way of seeing. According to him, the image somehow functions like a mirror, since it mirrors the practice of painting and thus the painter's bodily engagement with Being. This practice of painting is not to be regarded as a 'knowing' or 'disposing' access to Being; rather, it is based on a challenge. For Merleau-Ponty, the painter is an agent who Being itself challenges to engage in his practice. Since the painter responds to the spectacle of the world – and does not invent anything in the proper sense of the word – the painted image is meaningful to everybody. The image is regarded as a bodily mediated visible, a “visible to the second power”⁶⁵ or as a “*coherent deformation* imposed on the visible.”⁶⁶ As this “visible in the second power,” the image is not a material object or an identifiable thing; it is not something that could be *described*. Merleau-Ponty maintains that it is not the image that is perceived in aesthetic experience, but that one perceives “according to” or “with” the image.⁶⁷ This means that the image is not a specific object that is experienced aesthetically, but that it evokes a certain kind of experience, namely aesthetic experience. In this, it is a reflected visibility that is an expression “in the second power” exactly because it does not appear as something specific, but that – thanks to its peculiar way of appearing – opens up a specific way of experiencing.

Through the experience of an artwork, one can participate in a practice that opens up a level of perception that directly touches upon Being. This pure Being has not been manipulated and objectified by science or philosophy. Accordingly, Merleau-Ponty's late aesthetics focuses on the possibility of gaining ontological knowledge through participation in artistic and aesthetic practices. While Merleau-Ponty contends that the painter encounters 'Being' while she is painting, her primordial experience is reflected in the painted image. As such everybody can experience it.⁶⁸

5. Experimental Practices with Epistemic Value: Science and Art

Drawing on *Eye and Mind*, we can claim that the painter is a person who is actively at work, bodily engaging with Being. She does not know how

⁶⁵ Merleau-Ponty, *Eye*, 126.

⁶⁶ Merleau-Ponty, *Signs*, 78.

⁶⁷ Merleau-Ponty, *Eye*, 126.

⁶⁸ Merleau-Ponty, *Eye*, 126–127.

to state anything about the ontological features of Being, but she knows how to ‘intervene’, how to proceed in a practical respect in order to touch upon it. Interestingly, in *Nature* Merleau-Ponty also ascribes to the modern physicist the ability to engage with nature and, so to speak, with Being. The reason why the physicist seems eligible for a serious engagement with nature is the same reason why the painter is favored for an ontological investigation. Both of them intervene. Both are at work, situated and embodied. Both know how to approach their matter not by way of thinking, but by way of doing. And both act in a way that is opposed to classical philosophical methods and everyday practices. It might therefore appear to be an enigma that in *Eye and Mind* Merleau-Ponty completely disregards science and its ability to touch upon nature and Being. The enigma falls away when one considers that what Merleau-Ponty actually criticizes in his last reflections on science is scientific output, viz. the theoretical knowledge produced by science, and the scientific strategies developed in order to secure an increase of output.⁶⁹ However, Merleau-Ponty still en-

⁶⁹ *Eye and Mind* opens with the following diagnosis: “Science manipulates things and gives up living in them.[] Operating within its own realm it makes its constructs of things; operating upon these indices or variables to effect whatever transformations are permitted by their definition, it comes face to face with the real world only at rare intervals.” Merleau-Ponty, *Eye*, 121. Merleau-Ponty begins his last essay with an entire rejection of a scientific approach to things, because he accuses science of neglecting them. In contrast to his remarks in *Nature* he does not regard the methods and the knowledge of modern science as revealing. Rather, he states that science does not ‘live in things’, because it ‘manipulates’ and transforms them. Scientific experiments do not reach out to a level of radical experience when scientists stick to their prefigured models. They normally do so because the prefigured models proved to be successful in the past. In *Eye and Mind*, Merleau-Ponty regards science from the angle of its political and ideological intentions focusing on its actual output and how it achieves to generate it. Science is not anymore an approach of interest for his ontological investigations, because he regards it as eager to produce objective, propositional knowledge that can be used for organizing and systematizing the world and that, therefore, neglects nature on a very principal level. In order to become able to produce objective knowledge, it also has to limit the scope and the method of experimenting. Merleau-Ponty here concentrates on what science wants to say, what it seeks to understand, and on what it therefore tries to get a hold in terms of propositional statements. He does not anymore regard science as an experimental practice, as an engagement with nature, as an ‘intervention’. One could say that Merleau-Ponty does not anymore lay eyes on what scientists *do*, but on what they *say* and what kind of politics science pursues. Therefore he further does not refer to the process of ‘trial and

visages another dimension of scientific practice, namely the more free and experimental, the more critical side to it when he considers the modern physicist at work in *Nature* and *The Visible and the Invisible*.

I therefore suggest that we take the similarities between the practical engagement of the scientist and the artist seriously, and refer to them in order to account for the epistemic content of “experimental practices.” Both scientific and artistic practices can be regarded as experimental practices. By ‘experimental’ I do not mean voluntarily staging a situation in a laboratory environment, for the purposes of analysis in accordance with pre-figured models. Rather, by ‘experimental’ I mean an approach that freely tests different perspectives on a subject that results in the acceptance of some perspective as proper and the rejection of others as improper. An experimental practice, then, is a practice that allows for examining and checking different stances. Viewed against the conceptual framework of experimental practices, there are a number of remarkable parallels between scientific and aesthetic practices.⁷⁰ According to Merleau-Ponty, both the scientist and the artist are truly at work, meaning that both really engage with the matter of their interest in an open, experimental way. As such, they touch upon the relationship between observer and observed – scientist and scientific object on the one hand and artist and artistic object (which is not the artwork in the proper sense, but rather the object the artist engages with as a model for the production of an artwork) on the other hand. The scientist and the artist are both incarnated and are exposed to the particular objects they engage with. They open themselves up to the world in a responsive manner and do not merely act in a given, habitual fashion. They are both open to doing things differently. Referring to Ryle, scientific and artistic practices can be called intelligent practices, since scientists and artists experimentally and critically develop new approaches to encounter the world with the aim of finding better methods,

error’, to the scientific ‘practice and training’ he finds intriguing in *Nature*. They do not form an aspect of scientific politics. They represent only a trait of a changing practice in modern science.

⁷⁰ Kuno Lorenz, for instance, claims that through aesthetic practices one can acquire perceptual knowledge, while through scientific practice one can acquire conceptual knowledge. Kuno Lorenz, “Perceptual and Conceptual Knowledge: The Arts and the Sciences,” *Philosophia Scientiae* 2/1 (1997), 147–160.

stances or points of view. Neither of them amounts to a mere habit. In scientific, but also in artistic practice, not only is it important that one disposes of a skill, but that one is able to alter the modality of one's own agency in performing a task. As such, know-how involves an openness for and responsiveness to having new experiences, specifically in the sense of viewing things from another perspective. At the same time, know-how also involves a kind of attentiveness, or awareness, of one's own actions, which is requisite for being able to change one's point of view. Learning how to do something in the sciences and arts amounts to an ongoing critical engagement with things, a kind of experimental approach to a matter from different perspectives, sorting out worse and better ways of approaching it. This procedure, which can be considered as both experimental and critical at the same time, is crucial, since the repeated performance of a task can only be considered as altering the quality of an action (and, thus, as a learning activity in the proper sense of the word) under the condition that this very action is critically framed and evaluated against the backdrop of other ways to do it.⁷¹

There still remain a number of differences between scientific and artistic practices. One core difference is that the artist's practical knowledge is directly reflected through the image. Science is forced to put its findings into writing and make use of the objectifying character of language therein. This is why Merleau-Ponty's treatment of the sciences and their value for approaching nature or Being is highly ambivalent, while his appreciation of painting remains unabated. Although in *Eye and Mind* Merleau-Ponty rejects the objectifying character of science as neglecting perceptual faith and primordial experience, he characterizes scientific practice as an experimental practice and, as such, implicitly compares it with aesthetic practice in texts like *The Visible and the Invisible* and in *Nature*, where it is more

⁷¹ Cézanne wants to make an adequate painting and continues to paint, because he never arrives at producing the perfect picture. Merleau-Ponty is fascinated by Cézanne's repeated engagement with the same subject – such as Mont Saint Victoire – and interprets the approach of painting it again and again as the attempt to adequately respond to his primordial perception. This never-ending attempt making an adequate painting is reflected in Cézanne's painting and can be perceived when viewing his images. Therefore, the important epistemic character of an image does not lie in imparting some kind of information about brute or savage being, but in reflecting a certain perceptual mode of approaching the world.

clearly pronounced. Another difference between the two practices can be seen in the distinct intentions the scientist and the artist have when they are at work. According to Merleau-Ponty, the artist aims at having a primordial experience, while the scientist does not intend to do so. The scientist in a way only happens to touch upon the primordial in ultimately seeking a higher truth. The search for a higher truth is something that makes scientists also more likely to fail to engage in a truly experimental practice. The scientist researches for the sake of finding something in the end. The artist – very likely – also engages in painting, sculpting or filming with the aim of producing an image. However, the image, ideally, reflects the practical knowledge of its author and cannot be reduced to some kind of theoretical knowledge that is imparted by way of signs. As such, the image represents the very possibility of passing on the knowledge of how to approach the world in an experimental and critical fashion. Thus my conclusion is that engaging in artistic and aesthetic practices should not be regarded as a mere training for artists or connoisseurs of art. Quite to the contrary, practice and training in the arts – in terms of both production and contemplation – is valuable for improving the knowledge of how to approach the world in an experimental and critical fashion in general. Recent empirical studies have underlined that arts education therefore has a considerable impact on scientific excellence.⁷² There is evidence that repeatedly engaging in aesthetic practices improves those practical skills that are of particular importance for free, experimental and critical perception and thinking. The ability to perceive and think freely, experimentally and critically is essential for finding new answers to questions. With regard to practice and training in scientific practices there may also be a positive impact on artistic and aesthetic know-how. Therefore, I think it would be interesting to further inquire into what both scientists and the artists can

⁷² See, for instance, Andrew Needle et al., “Combining Art and Science in “Arts and Sciences” Education,” *College Teaching* 55/3 (2007), 114–119; Burton, Judith M., Robert Horowitz, and Hal Abeles, “Learning in and through the Arts: The Question of Transfer,” *Studies in Art Education* 41/3 (2000), 228–257; Fiske, Edward B., (ed.), *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning*, 1999, retrieved October 18, 2015 from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED435581.pdf>; Russ Chapman, “Improving Students’ Performance Through the Arts,” *Principal* 77/4 (1998), 20–26, Elliot W. Eisner, “Does Experience in the Arts Boost Academic Achievement?,” *Journal of Art & Design Education*, 17/1 (1998), 51–60.

learn from each other when being at work in the other's "lab." This is to be examined on another occasion.

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The Unpredictability of the Political Effect of Art

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ABSTRACT. According to Jacques Rancière, the political effect of art can be explained in terms of the experience of a sensory clash (*dissensus*), a political awareness and a mobilization for a political action. The political effect is unpredictable or incalculable. In my paper, I want to challenge the condition of unpredictability by showing that Rancière's description of the political works of art allows the artist to draw some guidelines of how to successfully create a political art. I will also point out what are the consequences of the unpredictability claim to the definition of political art. I will argue that since the reception of political art depends on socio-political situations and the experience of a sensory clash is not repeatable, there is no room for universal, timeless political works of art in Rancière's theory.

1. The Political Effect of Art

For Jacques Rancière, something is a work of art if it produces a new perception of the world. It can be characterized as the conjunction of three processes or three steps: first, it produces a *sensory form of strangeness*, second, it develops a *political awareness* of the reason for that strangeness, and third, it *politically mobilize* individuals as a result of that awareness (Rancière, 2010, p. 142). The political effect of art, thus, must be described in these terms.

The production of a sensory form of strangeness is the most central term in Rancière's text on political art. He calls it the efficacy of *dissensus* which is a specific kind of conflict between *sense* and *sense*: "Dissensus is a conflict between a sensory presentation and a way of making sense of it, or between several sensory regimes and/or 'bodies'" (Rancière, 2010, p.

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139). As Joseph Tanke explains it, the aim of political art is not simply to change political regimes but to change the meaning of life (Tanke, 2011, p. 83). In other words, a work of art must create a new experience that distinguishes itself completely from the everyday life experience; it offers experiences “fundamentally dissimilar from the everyday ordering of sense” (Tanke, 2011, p. 103).

As a result of the *dissensus*, we experience a clash or a shock. Rancière calls it an *artistic shock* (Rancière, 2010, p. 143) or a *sensible or perceptual shock* (Rancière, 2004, p. 63). The reason for the experience of a shock is that the work of art discloses “some secret connection of things hidden behind everyday reality” (Rancière, 2009a, p. 41) and the disclosure comes as a shock for us. Rancière also believes that the *dissensus* can be created by juxtaposing heterogeneous elements in the form of collage or montage. His favourite example of political art is Martha Rosler’s series “Bringing the War Home” from the 1970s. In these photomontages, Rosler juxtaposes photographs of the Vietnam War with the images of happy American domestic life. The aim is to reveal one world behind another: the war conflict behind domestic comforts (Rancière, 2009c, p. 56). To quote Rancière: “The connection between the two images was supposed to produce a dual effect: awareness of the system of domination that connected American domestic happiness to the violence of imperialist war, but also a feeling of guilty complicity in this system” (Rancière, 2009b, p. 27). Other examples of political art include Bertolt Brecht’s play *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* (1941) in which “heterogeneous elements are put together in order to provoke a clash” (Rancière, 2009a, p. 42), and John Heartfield’s photomontages from the 1930s and 1940s (*ibid.*).

2. The Unpredictability of Political Effect

A necessary condition for the political art is that its hidden meaning or effect must *not* be anticipated (Rancière, 2009b, p. 103). There are and cannot be any guidelines for the artist of how to create a political art. For instance, it is a common mistake among artists to have the underlying assumption that “art compels us to revolt when it shows us revolting things” (Rancière, 2010, p. 135). For Rancière, political efficacy is always unpredictable or incalculable:

But there is no reason why the sensory oddity produced by the clash of heterogeneous elements should bring about an understanding of the state of the world; and no reason either why understanding the state of the world should prompt a decision to change it. There is no straightforward road from the fact of looking at a spectacle to the fact of understanding the state of the world; no direct road from intellectual awareness to political action. (Rancière, 2009b, p. 75).

It is generally agreed that Rancière's texts "do not contain a model to create or read political images" (Ramos, 2013, p. 220). As John Roberts summarizes, for Rancière there are "no generalized rule-following modes or suitably trained spectators; on the contrary, there are only freely determined spectators and freely determined works" (Roberts, 2010, p. 77). The reason for the impossibility for rules lies in the aesthetic regime of art. For Rancière, political art must be created in the aesthetic regime of art.¹ As Rancière explains it, "The aesthetic regime of the arts is the regime that strictly identifies art in the singular and frees it from any specific rule, from any hierarchy of the arts, subject matter, and genres" (Rancière, 2004, p. 23). Accordingly, there are no rules for the artist of how to represent a subject matter and no rules for the spectator of how to read or understand the work. Thus, the exclusion of the rules applies both to the artist and to the spectator.

However, Rancière's texts give us reason to conclude that the experience of *dissensus* does not depend on an individual but is rather communal, that there are underlying tendencies and attitudes in a society that make us react in a certain ways. Also, the change in thinking and attitude occurs both on the side of the artists and the beholders. For instance, Rancière believes that the ineffectiveness of contemporary art is occasioned by the fact that the dissensual world has become self-evident (Rancière, 2010, p. 143), and the artist present meanings that are known and shared by everyone. As a result, contemporary art either plays on the very undecidability, arrange heterogeneous elements into a positive recollection, invite people

¹ In Rancière's view, there are three regimes or three major distributions of the sensible in art: i) ethical regime of images, ii) the representative regime of art, and iii) the aesthetic regime of art (Rancière, 2004, pp. 20-30). He believes that the rise of the aesthetic regime or art is concurrent to the French Revolution and the rise of modern art.

to be engaged in new forms of relationships, or emphasize the connection or similarity between heterogeneous elements. These four forms – the joke or play, the collection, the invitation and the mystery – are the main examples of contemporary art (Rancière, 2009a, pp. 46–48).

Rancière believes that an example of a joke or play is Wang Du's work "Les temps du monde" (1988). Comparing Martha Rosler's series "Bringing the War Home" with Wang Du's work, Rancière states:

So in both cases an image of American happiness was juxtaposed with its hidden secret: war and economical violence in Martha Rosler, sex and profanity in Wang Du. But in Wang Du's case, both political conflictuality and the sense of strangeness had vanished. What remained was an automatic effect of delegitimization: sexual profanity delegitimizing politics, the wax figure delegitimizing high art. But there was no longer anything to delegitimize. The mechanism spun around itself. (Rancière, 2009a, p. 44)

In other words, Wang Du's work does not have the effect of *dissensus* since it does not reveal any hidden meaning previously unknown to the spectator. It is very likely that his aim was to show that behind the happy image of the Clinton couple there is a dirty secret, but "since it is very difficult to find anybody who is actually ignorant of such things, the mechanism ends up spinning around itself and playing on the very undecidability of its effect" (Rancière, 2010, p. 144). Now, if we hold on to the idea that the experience of a work of art is purely singular or individual, then all we need to do to prove that Wang Du has made a political art is to find someone who has never heard of Clinton's affair and for whom it might come as a shock. But, surely, this is not the view that Rancière wants to defend. It seems more plausible to claim that Rancière is critical of contemporary art because it has failed challenging the prevalent understandings of the life in a society in general. But if so, then there is no reason why the artist could not predict the efficacy of his work: if he/she takes into account the current tendencies in society and discloses some hidden meanings previously unknown to the public, he/she has all the reasons to expect the audience to be effected by his/her work, and most likely will succeed.

3. The Definition of Political Art

For Rancière, the definition of political art is equal to the definition of art, since “art under the aesthetic regime is necessarily political” (Yepes, 2014, p. 50). It has been claimed that Rancière’s definition of art is too narrow since it leaves out much of contemporary works that are generally considered to be art (Yepes, 2014, pp. 50–51). My aim is to show that his definition is, on the contrary, too vague or inclusive. His definition does not help to classify artworks and to explain how certain political works continue having the status of an artwork throughout the history.

As stated in the previous chapter, the simple juxtaposing of heterogeneous elements is not sufficient for the *dissensus*. The artist must choose the elements wisely as to reveal a hidden meaning yet unknown to the public. It also means that one and the same work can have different effects depending on the time it is presented to the public. For instance, Rancière believes that Jean-Luc Godard’s film *Histoires du cinéma* is an example of a *mystery of copresence* and not that of *dissensus* only because it was made in the late 1980s and 1990s. To quote Rancière:

If it had been made twenty years ago, this collage could only have been understood as a dialectical clash, denouncing the secret of death hidden behind both high art and American happiness. But in the *Histoires du cinéma*, the image of denunciation is turned into an image of redemption. (Rancière, 2009a, pp. 47–48)

But, in my view, if the understanding of a work depends on the socio-political situations of a given time or general knowledge prevalent in a specific time period, then there is no reason why a work that unsuccessfully presents itself as a political art *now* or in the *past* could not be understood as political art in the *future*.² We cannot rule out the possibility that a work of art can have a different effect on the viewers in some new context in some other time. In fact, Rancière is not ignorant of this. He says that: “Depending on the times, it [*Les Misérables*] has been seen as a

² Some critics even question to idea that the political effect reveals itself immediately: “...if there is no one-to-one correlation between a given work of art and a political community, the ‘political’ effect of art is *always and necessarily* one of delay and distancing.” (Roberts, 2010, p. 77)

catechism with socialist leanings, ignorant bourgeois sentimentalism over class struggle, or a first-rate poem whose democratic meaning is not to be found in the din of the revolutionary barricades but in the individual and quasi-subterranean obstinacy of Jean Valjean” (Rancière, 2004, p. 62). Accordingly, I claim that Rancière’s theory does not exclude the possibility that every work can *potentially* be a work of political art and this makes it difficult to classify or make a list of political art. Moreover, since it is also possible that a work of art that caused a sensory clash at the time it was made does not have the same effect in the future (in some other context in another time), it raises the question whether a work that *was* considered to be a political art can *still* (continuously) be classified as a work of political art.

Finally, a political art must create the *dissensus* and that, in turn, causes a shock in the perceiver. The shock is an *original effect* (Rancière, 2009b, p. 73). But an original effect cannot be repeated. Accordingly, a work of art can create a new sensory clash – a new way of seeing a world – only once. It will not be a *new* way of understanding the world the next time we see it. But if so, then Martha Rosler’s works are no longer political art since her collages do not cause a sensory clash for the contemporary perceiver anymore, neither mobilize him/her for a political action. The hidden meanings have already been disclosed and do not come as a shock anymore. Thus, I would argue that Rancière theory does not sufficiently explain how a work of art can *continue* being a political art throughout the history. Rancière theory does not leave room for universal definition of political art.

4. Conclusion

My aim was to show that although Rancière claims that the political effect of art is unpredictable, his texts allow us to conclude that by taking into account the current socio-political situations and the prevalent public understanding of the world, the artist can be successful in his expectations to cause the effect of *dissensus* in the audience.

Also, my aim was to show that Rancière’s definition of political art is not too narrow but instead too vague or inclusive: first, every work can

potentially be a work of political art, and second, if we take that the political effect of a work of art depends on socio-political context then it may not be a work of art in some other context in the future, and if we take that the political effect is necessarily an original unrepeatable shock then a political art must necessarily cease having political effect in the future.

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Kundry Must Die — Stage Direction and Authenticity

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In Nikolaus Lehnhoff's production of Richard Wagner's *Parsifal* (English National Opera, 1999), the character of Kundry didn't die at the end of the third act "lifelessly sinking to the ground in front of Parsifal" as mandated by Wagner himself. Instead, she overcomes the "unnatural" separation between men and women and leads Parsifal and the other surviving knights away from the castle of the Grail. Despite its being highly thought provoking and quite consequential with the overall philosophical re-interpretation of the drama by Lehnhoff, this change is nonetheless a betrayal of Wagner's specific instructions.

Some recent bibliography has questioned the merits and indeed the ethics of stage productions that deviate from the original to the point that the work is no longer recognisable as such.¹ There even seems to be a blatant contradiction in the case of opera productions where extreme care is placed upon philological fidelity in the orchestra pit – in the spirit of historical authenticity – while at the same time a radical reinterpretation of plot and historical context is pursued on stage. Some arguments have been produced against extreme liberality in stage direction and, more specifically, in opera. First, that it subscribes to an obsolete metaphysics of being and appearance. Ever since Patrice Chéreau's revolutionary staging of Wagner's *Ring* in Bayreuth (1976) a trend has been set of dressing up characters in unexpected costumes with the intent of displacing them, and indeed the whole plot, from their original cultural ethos. Applied to costumes and sets and the overall social and cultural environment, this "updating" is nowadays pretty much the standard in opera production. Detractors of this stylistic option have argued that this trend is rooted in a misguided metaphysics by considering that whatever the appearance of the

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¹ Cf. Catteau, 2012: 15.

character, its “essence” remains the same, and they counter argue that in theatre appearance *is* the essence. If you change the first, you corrupt the latter because basically “underneath the appearances of Tartufe, Wotan, Falstaff or Don Giovanni there is nothing and no one. These characters are to their complete extent their own appearances and nothing other”.² A related criticism argues that the interpreters compelled to collaborate with this “wrong metaphysics” and the radicalism of at least some of these choices can no longer believe in their roles, resulting in disenchanted and mediocre representations.³

Second, that this kind of stage production derives from prejudice and ignorance regarding different epochs other than the contemporary, which ultimately explains the obsessive need to “update” costumes, settings and behaviours. Third, that it fosters a kind of nullification of what is intrinsically external to our culture, namely by producing “politically correct” versions of what is ultimately incorrigible. In this paper these two objections will be synthesized under a broader criticism, namely the one that argues for the need to respect the original work, the author’s intentional agenda and the idiosyncrasies of its time of inception in order to produce an authentic instance of the work. A fourth objection declares that this trend in opera production is the by-product of a theatrical culture where the role of the producer has been over-emphasized. This fourth objection is also related to questions regarding the definition of authentic performance. Ultimately, there is a moral choice to be made: either we admit to challenge the author’s instructions or we limit the producer’s creativity.⁴ This moral choice is also entrenched in the on-going debate about the definition of “performance” opposing the defenders of performance-qua-interpretation (Wollheim, Carroll) and those who argue in favour of performance-qua-production (Saltz, Osipovich and, more remotely, Rorty and Fish).

Although I’m intuitively inclined to accept the priority of production, there is much to consider in the arguments of more conservative accounts. This is what this paper proposes, a panoramic view of what should count as proper performance of a notational dramatic text. In order to do that,

² Catteau, 2012: 52.

³ “Comment Cassandre peut-elle invoquer l’ombre d’Hector avec son bonnet de la Croix Rouge sur la tête?”, Catteau, 2012: 16.

⁴ Cf. Kidnie, 2009

I'll be juggling with two different kinds of materials. On the one hand, the arguments with which philosophers of music, in particular, have tried to define what should count as "correct" performance. On the other hand, the philosophical discussion about what a theatrical performance is (descriptively as well as normatively). At the intersection of both lines of thought we expect to find some illumination as to whether Kundry should live or die.

I. *Kundry Must Die!*: the Identity of Dramatic Works

Opponents of radicalism in theatre and opera have argued that "appearance" is the essence of a theatrical production and that by changing the former one is actually corrupting the latter. "Appearance" encompasses not only the costumes and the scenographic environment but also the specific plot and conniving that surrounds the cultural framework that surrounds the characters "in a given time and place", motivating their sets of beliefs and desires properly immersed in that *hic et nunc*, including the historical contingencies of her time. One cannot *update* a character – e.g. Don Giovanni turned drug dealer in New York, as in Peter Sellars celebrated version - and expect this network of meaningful characterizations to remain intact. And if the appearance is subverted, the essence is lost: "Don Giovanni, the trader, seduces but no longer defies religious beliefs; from then on, to avenge the dead and to appeal to the justice of God are no longer verisimilar because today's seducers have nothing to fear".⁵ Their proper costumes literally contain their dramas and their eras in an inextricable way and should therefore be preserved as conditions of meaning and dramatic identity.

But how exactly should we distinguish what elements of the characters' appearance are indeed part of their essence? For instance, is Aeneas in Berlioz' *Les Troyens* more meaningfully portrayed as a historically accurate (according to contemporary criteria) Trojan soldier or rather as the idea of what Berlioz believed to be the accurate characterization of a Trojan soldier? Isn't it at least arguable that a more archaeological minded contemporary presentation of Aeneas could also be perceived as severing some

⁵ Catteau, 2012: 54.

of the traits that we find in Berlioz's work? After all, from what we now know, Greek and Trojan societies were much less exuberant than what we can infer from Berlioz's plot and music. A trimmed down Aeneas is a more truthful one? And where lies the boundary between the character's *being* and mere pastiche?

a) Autographic / Allographic

Let us go back for a second just to recall what are arguably the two most operative contemporary ways of establishing the identity of a dramatic work in text and performance: Nelson Goodman's allographic / autographic art distinction and Richard Wollheim's type-token ontology. According to Goodman, autographic artworks are fully determined by their history of production and so every detail of the work is constitutive of its identity (painting, sculpture, etchings); by contrast the identity of allographic artworks can be fully preserved in notational form, which means that any accurately "spelled" copy of the allographic work *is* the work.

Goodman's theory has the advantage of fully acknowledging that in dramatic art the work is located in the performance itself and that performance is not merely an add-on to the text.⁶ However, what could count as a performance of the work is highly restricted since only those performances that comply with the text are genuine. Since accuracy is of the essence, this leads to some strange consequences, some of which are perfectly admitted by Goodman himself:

"Since complete compliance with the score is the only requirement for a genuine instance of a work, the most miserable performance without actual mistakes does count as such an instance, while the most brilliant performance with a single wrong note does not."⁷

Although admitting that the brilliant pianist who inadvertently has failed a couple of notes during her performance may have produced a more aesthetically satisfying version of the sonata than the mediocre student who carefully hits every note, still the former doesn't count as an instance of the work. Also, the many questions that have been raised – namely by musicologists – against Goodman's notion of "correct" script have shown that

⁶ Cf. Kidnie, 2009: 15.

⁷ Goodman, 1976: 186.

this constitutes at least a problematic way of defining the proper ontology of performative arts.

b) Types and Tokens

In this respect, Wollheim's adaptation of Peirce's type-token theory seems to constitute a safer bet than Goodman's. Works of literature and performance are not "objects" because there is no corresponding physical entity. Instead the object is a token of a type (respectively, my copy of *Ulysses* and Joyce's manuscript; tonight's performance of *Der Rosenkavalier* and Strauss's handwritten score).⁸ This entails two important consequences:

- i) That any property of the token which is not simply a consequence of the token's material existence (e.g., Waltraud Meier's height or Christopher Ventris' voice colour in Lehnhoff's *Parsifal*) may be transmitted from the token to its type. This prevents Wollheim's notion of type to become a kind of Platonic ideal form and although the type is immaterial we may still speak of it as having physical properties (imported from the token): "There is nothing that prevents us from saying that Donne's *Satires* are harsh on the ear, or that Dürer's engraving of *St Anthony* has a different texture, or that the conclusion of 'Celeste Aida' is *pianissimo*."⁹ Significantly, in the case of the performative arts there are many properties of the token that will not be transmitted to the type. They are "in excess" of the type and constitute the "element of interpretation" which will shape different performances of the same work. A difficulty here is that it is impossible to tell apart the "element of interpretation" from those properties that will be shared with the type. Wollheim describes this as a chicken-egg problem: without prior knowledge of the "Ideal" work we cannot determine what is essential to either type or token. Therefore we cannot determine whether a particular token is "genuine" or even whether two or more particulars are tokens of the same type.¹⁰ As we shall try to demonstrate a bit later, one way to solve the chicken-egg problem is to think of the relation between token and type as a kind of reflective equilibrium, a continuous shuttle between the dramatic and the literary works.

- ii) This provides the basis for Wollheim's thesis – presently most prominently

⁸ Wollheim, 1980: 75.

⁹ Wollheim, 1980: 82.

¹⁰ Cf. Kidnie, 2009: 18.

defended by Noël Carroll - according to which each performance is an interpretation of a play. This thesis has faced some important contemporary opposition (David Saltz, David Osipovich) arguing in favour of the primacy of production and denying that the relationship between play and performance is one of interpretation.¹¹

The notion that to play a role involves interpretation is already imbedded in many languages. In French, Italian, Spanish or Portuguese, for instance, one can use interchangeably that someone is playing (*jouer, jugar, actuar*) or that she is interpreting (*interpréter / interpretar*) a role. Wollheim acknowledges this analogy and argues against the eliminability of interpretation in the performing arts. He compares what he calls “performative interpretation” – what musicians or players do – with “critical interpretation” the activity of art critics or scholars. “It is, I suggest, no coincidence that this activity, of taking the poem or painting or novel in one way rather than another, is also called interpretation.”¹² The object of interpretation is always the text – musical or literary – and even when we take a performance to be the object for interpretation we are not concerned with the meanings suggested by the performance but rather with the “critical interpretations” of the play implicit in the performance, which is fully paraphraseable. When we interpret a performance, sustains Wollheim, we are always considering possible alternative performances, which would present the original text in a different way: “*we are not suggesting or arguing for alternative ways in which the actual performance might be taken*. Our interpretation is on the occasion of a performance, not about it”.¹³ The obvious outcome is that the performance is perceived as a mere looking glass because the audience “reads through the performance to the play”.¹⁴ This clarifies the parallel between the pair work-critical essay and the pair play-performance.

c) Plays and Recipes

¹¹ “Stage direction [‘mise en scène’] is no longer conceived here as the transfer of one text into a representation, but rather as the scenic production by which an author (the stage director) has all the authority and permission to give form and meaning to the whole performance.” (Pavis, 1996)

¹² Wollheim, 1980: 84.

¹³ Wollheim, 1980: 85.

¹⁴ Saltz, 2001: 299.

Noël Carroll has presented a weaker version of Interpretationism by using “interpretation” in a different sense: instead of comparing performances to critical assessments (as Wollheim does), he compares them to culinary achievements: performative interpretations are like the filling of a recipe.¹⁵ There is however an important difference between the two philosophers. For Wollheim, interpretation was the real function of performances: they provide occasions for interpreting the play and the play remains the focus of the spectator’s attention (in a way, Kundry is already dead even, or especially, if she survives). Carroll, on the other hand, remains silent about the spectator’s real focus of attention.¹⁶

Still, Carroll’s version also has its problems. First, because the metaphor may be taken the other way around: two similar interpretations of a “recipe” may lead to two very different executions: as Saltz puts it, when preparing an apple pie I use Granny Smith apples while the recipe suggested Roma apples. In fact, the performer’s interpretation of the meaning of the play is an interim stage of the production and may very well be compared to the cook’s interpreting the meaning of the recipe. But afterwards, actors and producers move on to make a series of choices that “are consistent with their interpretation” (Saltz, 2001: 303) and there is no reason to call these choices as interpretations. Second, because to accept the analogy between performance and cooking may very well lead us in quite the opposite direction as the one prescribed by Carroll: as the goal of cooking is not to “be true to the recipe” but to prepare a good meal (one that will be evaluated on its own terms) so too the goal of a performance is to produce an engaging and aesthetically satisfactory experience: thus, the spectator very seldom perceives the aesthetic object as being distinct from the production.¹⁷ Third, apple pies are the products of the recipe; but dramatic performances *are* the execution of a play, they are constituted by the act itself of saying the lines and following the stage directions. The way an actor follows the play’s instructions is aesthetically relevant but the way a cook follows a recipe is not important, i.e., the way she chooses to execute the recipe doesn’t matter.

What this all shows is that the difference between recipes and perform-

¹⁵ Cf. Carroll 2001, 2006.

¹⁶ Saltz, 2001: 302.

¹⁷ Saltz, 2001: 303.

ances is not to be found in the intrinsic properties of the type (plays or recipes) or of the activities involved in following the respective instructions but “simply in the audience’s perception”.¹⁸

Still, although a contemporary shift from interpretation to production seems to constitute an effective way to reply against those who complain about directors who drift away from the text – see section 3 below –, the decision whether Kundry should live or die cannot be simply answered as constituting a pure production option. Kundry’s survival is far more disruptive than D. Giovanni’s change of profession or Fidelio’s playing Gameboy in prison. To return to Wollheim’s type-token model, it clearly epitomizes a philosophical twist in the overall meaning of the original plot and is thus one of those properties that can be transmitted to the type. Even in Saltz’s model, it is an option taken at the interpretative interim stage. Therefore, it raises other questions concerning the limits of interpretation and the distinction between a proper instance of the work (a compliant instance, in Goodmanian terms) and an adaptation. To follow this we now turn to the way the question has been tackled by philosophers of music.

d) Intentionalist Authenticity

The discussion surrounding the notion of authentic musical performance is extremely diverse and we could list the presence of at least four major arguments in favour of historically *controlled* performances: the intentional, the sonic, the practical and the phenomenological.¹⁹ In view of our prob-

¹⁸ Saltz, 2001: 304.

¹⁹ First, the “intentionalist” argument that holds that historically minded performances are the best way to carry out the author’s intentions and that to follow these instructions is both an ethic and an aesthetic duty. Secondly, the “sonic” argument: performers should try to come as close as possible to the original sonic experience of the work. Thirdly, the “practical” argument: the replication of the past sonic, or dramatic, event is not exactly the goal of musical performance but it should nonetheless be undertaken according to the original modes or practices. And finally there is the “phenomenological” argument according to which the performance truthfulness lies on the ability to reproduce the experience of the original piece by trying to accomplish an object similar to the one experienced by the initial audience. This last proposal is much more flexible when it comes to define the range of what correct performances could be like but it poses nonetheless some intriguing questions. For instance, if properties such as “surprising”, “original” and “daring” were historically attributed to the work in its original context, then they

lem I shall concentrate on the notion of intentionalist authenticity and hopefully withdraw some criteria to measure the extent to which we are we conditioned by the author's plot or *didascalia*: must Kundry die?

The "intentionalist" argument holds that historically minded performances are the best way to carry out the author's intentions and that to follow these instructions is both an ethic and an aesthetic duty. Some authors distinguish between "strong intentions" (those that must be carried out in order for the performance to comply as performance of that work) and "weak intentions" (those that are to some extent discardable or negligible) and the question emerges as to what could count as a weak intention. For instance, when we consider those works whose libretti and didascalia were written down by the composer himself (e.g., Berlioz or Wagner) could stage directions be considered part of the "weaker intentions" group?

Intentionalists like to invoke the argument of analyticity that holds that being true to the manifestations of the author is integral to the very notion of what it is to perform a musical work. On ethical terms, being true to the composer's intentions can easily be seen as a duty not only towards the composer herself but also towards the audience. On aesthetic terms, it is argued that being true to the composer's intentions is at least a safe bet towards attaining a good and aesthetically more rewarding performance.

Naturally, any mentioning of "intentions" brings along the charge of "intentional fallacy". Determining the author's intentions vis-à-vis the performance is often difficult to accomplish although it is also true that in many cases we already hold reliable information that would eventually bring forth the author's intentions. For instance, the original 1882 settings of *Parsifal*, as authorized by Wagner himself, were only destroyed in the 1930's and there are enough photographic documents that could justify an archaeological performance of the work.

Of course, Beardsley and Wimsatt's don't object to the recognition of intentions *in* the work but rather to the relevance of the author's intentions

must have produced an experience characterized by "surprise", "perplexity" or even "outrageousness". What would then count as a phenomenologically correct performance of that work? Would this not ultimately justify the kind of theatrical "audacities" that many find so objectionable? Much of this discussion regarding the concept of correct performance is specific to music, particularly in the case of arguments two and three.

outside the work, and namely that these external intentions are necessary to establish the content and meaning of the work – the need to “consult the oracle”, as they put it. *Strictu sensu*, the “intentional fallacy” affects this esoteric kind of intentions and not the explicit intentions in the work.

But even if we take for granted that we can reach a reasonable insight of the author’s intentional agenda stashed within the work, particularly regarding the different ways of performing her works, we have to acknowledge that intentions are not all the same and that they have different degrees of importance. Randall Dipert has distinguished 3 levels of musical intentions. First, low-level intentions, which include the choice of instruments, the fingering, etc. Second, middle-level intentions, which are those that relate to the intended sound: “temperament, timbre, attack, pitch, and vibrato”. And third, high-level intentions, “which are the effects the composer intends to produce in the listener”. Significantly, these intentions are sometimes incompatible among themselves and one of the tasks of the performer is to decide what level should be granted more weight, assuming that high-level intentions usually take precedence. For instance, in the third number of the *Magnificat* in D, Bach’s low-level intention was to use the oboe d’amore of his day in order to produce a given tone quality (middle-level intention) and thus to achieve an expressive effect on his audience (high-level intention).

“But that tone and quality and, hence, the effect Bach wanted, might be better achieved today, given the conditions of modern musical performance, by the modern French oboe d’amore (...). That being the case, we cannot serve Bach’s middle – and high-level intentions most fully without going against his low-level ones”²⁰

Two consecutive problems arise in this respect: first, that it is not always easy to distinguish between *strong* and *weak* intentions, i.e., those that determine what a correct performance of a given work should be like and those that are merely presented as advices or recommendations. Second, that many times the intentions are not fully consistent with each other if not altogether contradictory among themselves. The problems with distinguishing strong and weak intentions are even more complicated in

²⁰ Kivy, 1988: 225.

the case of opera if we inscribe stage directions, settings and didascalia in the author's intentional agenda. One could imagine that Wagner's highest-level intention in *Parsifal* was to celebrate a dying cultural ethos, one that his audience would relate to and feel threatened by, say, a commoditized society. To forsake earthly love – through the alienation of women – and adopt a mystical connection to the universe was part of that ethos' set of values. To this time and age this message seems exhausted and doesn't seem likely to appeal to an informed audience. A renewed bond between Parsifal and Kundry – instead of her suppression –, at the end of the opera, does seem to set a more universal tone and indeed an *Aufhebung* of Wagner's own over sexualized views. It also has the interesting consequence of enhancing the serenity and all-embracing quality of much of this opera's music (or at least, of removing one serious moral obstacle to its enjoyment) and thus reinforce a high-level musical intention.

This question leads to a second problem. In cases where the intentional agenda of the author is not fully consistent, can we still talk about intentionalist authenticity? Lower-level intentions are usually more accessible than higher-level intentions. But if in order to fulfil the majority of the author's intentions one sacrifices some higher-level intention, that does not seem very authentic (that is why many historic-oriented performers follow the more safe and explicit lower-level intentions and neglect middle and high level ones). Again, the case gets worse if we are talking about stage direction.

There are other reasons by which intentions can become incompatible among themselves. With time, a given network of intentions may lose its consistency and lead to performances that are no longer pleasing. For instance, the surprise effect of using exotic instruments, such as early uses of the clarinet in works by Handel, Vivaldi or Rameau, has long ceased to exist given the vulgarization of the use of that instrument. Thus, a first level intention is now incompatible with a third level intention. If circumstances may alter the success of certain intentions, then it seems reasonable to argue that it is impossible for the composer to have full knowledge of what will work better for future performances of her work. In this sense, the substitution of the clarinet for a more exotic instrument – considering today's expectations –, the fashionable update of D. Giovanni's costumes or Kundry's survival may very well become ways of better attaining the

composer's higher intentions.

Defenders of intentionalist authenticity could reply in two ways: 1) there is not such thing as higher intentions; 2) lower level intentions are never incompatible with higher level intentions, at least not in a definitive way. The first reply sustains that if higher intentions did exist then composers would be willing to sacrifice performative instructions for anything that would cause the intended effects in the minds of the listener.²¹ The only relevant higher-level intention would be that the audience hears a performance that satisfies the middle level intentions, i.e., the prescribed sonic experience. But this seems to apply only to a limited number of musical works, namely those that are somehow affiliated with the idea of artworks as autonomous, formal aesthetic works. For many others, the arousal of emotions in the audience was clearly an essential intention of the work – and this was definitely the case with *Parsifal*.

According to the second reply, the cultivated listener will always be able to adapt herself to the original conditions and will resist falling into the temptation of neglecting the work's *Zeitgeist*. This suggests, of course, that one may always “return” to a set of expectations that will fulfil the higher intentions leaving intact the lower ones. However, this seems to imply, for instance, that harpsichords or lutes would somehow lose their antiquated aura and be again heard as natural and popular instruments and that modern audiences would always be able to revive the original hearing conditions, always corresponding to the higher intentions without changes in the lower intentions. And this is not plausible.

e) *A Fine and Delicate Balance*

It is a historical fact that most operas were conceived as *ontologically flexible*. It is doubtful that Haendel or Donizetti conceived the first versions of their respective operas as constituting the definite work. They were rather conceived as recipes that could undergo changes in view of circumstantial demands. Wagner changed many segments of *Tristan und Isolde* during rehearsals in order to adapt to the conditions of its first performance – particularly because of the problems the original score presented to his own choice of singers. The same happened with Meyerbeer's *The Prophet*

²¹ Cf. Edidin, 1991: 414

with the composer ending up by preferring the “altered” version. All these cases present important exceptions to considering the composer’s original work as a repository of sovereign intentions, an *Urtext* never to be defied.

Nevertheless, many critics hold that works of art are like organic entities and that any change in details will compromise the whole. The axiom of delicate balance could be traced back to Aristotle’s *Poetics* (51a) when he compares a well-crafted tragedy to a living organism. Any alteration of one of its elements alters the whole. Of course, this organicity is perceived as a characteristic of fine works of art and an essential criterion for distinguishing between better works and lesser pieces. This implies that respecting the full agenda of intentions of an artwork is only commendable in the case of works that present a very high level of organic interdependence. This introduces some relativity in the axiom because the obligation to comply with the composer’s full agenda of intentions depends upon the degree of organicity presented by the work. Since not every musical work adhere to the axiom then, at least for works that don’t adhere, one cannot sustain that the alteration of an element will necessarily produce an inferior version of the whole.

Peter Kivy extends his discussion of the axiom by considering two meanings of delicate balance: the objective and the impressionistic. The first states that any minute change of the work’s elements jeopardizes its cohesion and quality. The second argues that perfect balance is more an impression induced in the spectator and can accommodate certain changes within reasonable boundaries. The first being overly ambitious and demanding, it is the second meaning that better corresponds to the spirit of the axiom. However, this second version does not correspond to the spirit of intentionalist authenticity since it does not validate the fact that the author’s intentions should be maintained at all cost. And if that sense of completeness and coherence can be attained without a careful preservation of those intentions, then the burden of proof is passed onto the defender of intentional authenticity: she now has to demonstrate that respecting the author’s intentions always and necessarily result in aesthetically more pleasing performances of the work. Kivy seems right in arguing that we cannot rule out that “disrespectful” performances may have other aesthetic merits – like that of constituting an original *ontophany* for the spectator, who is then able to repeat the experience of discovery of the

original spectators - and thus be at least equally aesthetically rewarding.

The axiom of delicate balance also seems to vary according to the artistic excellence of the composers. It is far more plausible to believe that alterations introduced in the staging of a Wagner opera will produce an inferior work than to believe it would also be necessarily the case with a work by Donizetti. But even in the case of undisputed masterpieces this axiom should not be perceived as universal truth. Kivy compares the axiom to Leibniz's theodicy (Kivy, 1995: 171-173): the work performed according to the axiom of delicate balance is comparable to the best of all possible worlds. Just like Leibniz, its proponent wants us to accept it *a priori*, i.e., independently of the actual results of performing the work according to the author's intentions. Just like tokens of earthly misery and sufferance will not affect the fact that this is the best possible world (the global outcome, from a divine perspective, will always be *in toto* better than the alternatives) so mediocre performances that result from strict obedience to the author's intentions won't suffice to show that this is not the best way of performing the work.

Consider again our previous line of reasoning. Kundry's not dying at the end is a way of stressing the universal appeal of *Parsifal* in a secularized and far less sexualized society than Wagner's. Arguably, to the ears of contemporary audiences, it intensifies some important aesthetic properties of the music, like its serenity and equanimity.²² The defender of the axiom could characterize this as an illusion resulting from a lack of familiarity with the opera as a whole. A return to the original script will suffice to show that the author's recipe is always the best option. And even if the great majority of contemporary operagoers would prefer the updated version, still it would be possible to defend that from an overall, superior, far more general perspective – one that is eventually impossible to fully grasp, such as Leibniz's God view – the accepted alterations jeopardize the whole. One is left with an epistemological choice: do we accept *a priori* reasons for sustaining that the author's choices are always the best, à la Leibniz, or do we place all choices in the "trial of experience" (Kivy) and accept only those that receive a positive verdict?

²² This echoes the arguments of ethicists according to which the subtraction of any ethical flaw in an artwork would also increment the work's aesthetic appeal.

2. *Should Kundry Die?* : Performative Counterfactualism

Some detractors of intentional authenticity, such as Peter Kivy, hold that intentions are a function of what is available to the composer at the time when she wrote the piece. If the frame of possibilities were different – say, broader – would she have made the same choices? Counterfactually, it is always possible – if not desirable – to think what the composer would intend given the present range of possibilities. If we adopt a strict intentionalist view and try and follow the author's options exactly as she has intended them in the original context, we lack precisely the knowledge of the circumstances and availability of options that have determined those intentions – and therefore one can hardly speak of understanding the author's intentions. On the other hand, if we adopt a counterfactual view and try to imagine what would the author want given the current set of possibilities we may find ourselves barred from inferring an updated set of intentions given all the overwhelming and perplexing questions that arise out of the temporal and cultural distance between the composer's time and our own.

Peter Kivy thinks that counterfactualism is simply a question of using a basic rule for inferring the intentions of other people and that these are always relative to the options available. This inference is sometimes a test to our knowledge of others and our awareness of their innermost desires: Wanda wishes to be a nurse but we know that, if her family's financial status would change, she would rather be a medical doctor, *even if she had never expressed that desire before*. In the case of composers of the past, our inference powers face the challenge of historic and cultural difference. If William, the man born in Bristol in 1769, chose to be a sailor when the alternative was to be a blacksmith, one can infer that, had he been born in 1991, he would probably choose a relatively challenging and adventurous profession, such as pilot or astronaut (not sailor, much less challenging and adventurous now that in the XVIII century). Basically, what Kivy shows is that some of the counterfactual questions, in particular those that assist us in projecting intentions from the past into the present, are fully intelligible and many find plausible answers. This implies that to literally follow the author's intentions only becomes the default position when historic and cultural differences make it impossible to come up with reasonable ques-

tions and / or plausible answers. Still, Kivy argues that, even the hard cases (“must Kundry die?”), one can still reach some intelligible and answerable questions.

Some authors argue that this counterfactual updating of intentions is as absurd as asking whether I would like Wagner if I were a penguin: nothing could be me and be a penguin and nothing could be Bach and live today.²³ However, it seems right to consider that counterfactuals do have different degrees of plausibility: it is less implausible to imagine Bach being teleported to the XXI century than to imagine an entity that would be me *and* a penguin. Other authors argue that it is wrong to imagine that if, for instance, Bach would still be alive today he would still be interested in the music he wrote more than 250 years ago or that, considering all the options available today, he would still be writing the same kind of music.²⁴ The counterfactualist replies that the options available to our hypothetical Bach are restricted to the fact that we are considering how to perform his works today.²⁵

A third objection against counterfactualism accepts that many counterfactual questions are indeed intelligible and suggest reasonable answers but that it is also counterfactually reasonable to assume that authors would nevertheless hold on to their initial options. Kivy replies that from the fact that an author has intended something in accordance with her context of available options and conditions does not follow that she would intend exactly the same thing given our current context – the context changes the intentional path. Also, a composer’s high-level intentions should always be taken as a basis for inferring what she would want in the present context, and *nothing can replace that inference*. To ignore this is indeed a case of historic inauthenticity.

Other opponents to counterfactualism (like Stephen Davies) accept that it is plausible that composers could engage on some kind of counterfactualism but suggest that they would nevertheless prefer the original options. Counterfactualism, of course, suggests otherwise. Intentions are related to the available set of options. If we counterfactually increase the range of those options we also increase the basis for a careful discussion

²³ Young, 1996: 198.

²⁴ Butt, 2002: 77.

²⁵ Lopes, 2010: 245.

of what would work better in the present circumstances. This works as a kind of reflective balance by which we compare the way the composer worked within her given set of options with the widened contemporary set of options. The composer's choices act as a focuser assisting in the task of choosing the best available options; it is a way of seeing our objective in the distance. It is not so much a question of asking whether the composer would "prefer" a more contemporary reading but rather whether she would agree with its terms. To use a musical metaphor, this way of thinking about the interpretation of works is a kind of transcription. And if changes in instrumentation, pace or rubato in order to adjust to different acoustic environments constitute a common practice within that kind of reflective equilibrium, why should staging instructions be more rigid and inflexible?

This leads to the question of how far can we go in entertaining different options before we start messing with the very identity of the work.²⁶ It could be said that beyond a certain point the *new* intentions of a composer are no longer intentions about the performance of the work but are rather constitutive of a new version or a new work altogether. Naturally, this objection is supported by an ontology of musical works that stipulates a rather strict pattern of tolerance and inflexible conditions of compliance with the original work. Of course, it is easier to deflect this kind of objections if we are talking about musical options in which case it is rather easy to agree on reasonable limits of tolerance (one could choose to play a given line written by Bach for an oboe d'amore by a cor anglais but not by a trumpet, for instance²⁷). It is rather more difficult to accept that the fact that Kundry doesn't die at the end of Parsifal does not affect the identity of the work, its "delicate balance".

Counterfactualism is indeed a powerful breakthrough in considering the work's "authenticity". Nevertheless, all things considered, counterfactualism still remains a way of acknowledging the author as the supreme authority albeit in a mitigated way. It's all about the performer's ability to engage on a kind of "theory of mind" with the author at its centre. Its difference *vis-à-vis* intentionalism is not one of nature but of the degree.

²⁶ Davies, 2001: 223-224.

²⁷ Lopes, 2010: 255.

What happens then if we turn our back to the author?

3. *Kundry May Live* : A Reflective Equilibrium

Against the ontology of dramatic works proposed by philosophers such as Goodman, Wollheim or Carroll, recent authors such as David Saltz, David Osipovich or Margaret Kidnie have tried to show that mere “interpretation” is not sufficient to describe the relationship between a literary play and its performances. For one, the parallel Wollheim establishes between critical accounts and dramatic performances doesn’t hold. The concept of “interpretation” really seems to exhaust the relationship between a critical assessment of, say, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, and the play *Pelléas et Mélisande*: if something is a critical assessment *and* interprets *Pelléas et Mélisande* it can only be a critical assessment of *Pelléas et Mélisande*. However, the fact that something is a performance and interprets *Pelléas et Mélisande* is not sufficient to make it a performance of Maeterlinck’s play.²⁸ Musical poems by Sibelius or Schönberg are both performances and interpretations of the play, and David Saltz would also argue that a lecture on *Pelléas et Mélisande* is a kind of performance but not a performance of *Pelléas et Mélisande*.²⁹ Also, it is often when the elements of the performance depart more radically from the text being “interpreted” that the spectator becomes aware of the performance as functioning “effectively and unambiguously” as an interpretation.

Consequently, it is denied that the immediate type of a performance is an interpretation and it is proposed instead that it is rather a production. This paradigm shift turns theatrical experience less centred on an “allographic” object but rather based on the “autographic” instant of production.

Saltz and Osipovich seem to be closer to a description of the phenomenology of the theatrical spectator, who is more involved with the production than attentive to the text - Saltz goes even so far as to add that “watching-for-the-play” (i.e., looking for the interpretation) only manages to describe the idiosyncratic experience of the drama critic, not that of

²⁸ Saltz, 2001: 300.

²⁹ Saltz, 2001: 300.

the common spectator. However, this reference to the phenomenology of spectators may easily backfire. We may accept that the circumstantial spectator may be focused entirely on the production values but it also seems right to assume that the more common and moderately cultivated spectator is involved with a more or less conscious shuttle between the current production, previous productions and knowledge of the text. This could be described, again, as a kind of reflective equilibrium. The text retains its heuristic character above the causal connection between production and play and suggests a different way to think about the dramatic object.

One way to perceive that a simple exclusively disjunctive option between interpretation and production is wrong is also grounded in the spectator's phenomenology. There is a kind of Oedipus effect or self-contradiction involved in pursuing either option. A super radical production may very well trigger in the audience a kind of première feeling in which awareness of the text becomes prominent (it is, after all, the spectator's main reference and her lifejacket in tormented waters), and therefore appear as oddly authentic. A hyper-conservative and respectful production may appear strangely anachronistic and pastiche-like with production options obstructing a clear connection to the text. There is a kind of pragmatic truth of the dramatic work³⁰ that is being continuously produced through the reflective equilibrium between play and performance. Any lack of consensus regarding a given production ("should Kundry die or not?") marks the present limits of a dramatic work and its pragmatically built ontology.

The question whether Kundry should live or die becomes then salient in the mind of the spectator and judged against Wagner's initial prescriptions, the history of this opera's production in the last 133 years, and our own history of versions of that opera. This questioning, I take it, is a way through which *Parsifal* becomes an opera for our time.

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Aesthetics as Dividual Affections

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ABSTRACT. Together with the philosophies of Gilbert Simondon, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Gilles Deleuze I will reflect once again on the possibility of the foundation of aisthesis/aesthetics in primary sensuous processes. I start with the idea of first passive-active processes which I call affections since they are supposed to bring about themselves in/as first energetic tensions, zones of vibration and sensation. Thanks to the relations and resonances between them they constitute fields of sensuality as non-personal and pre-individual preconditions for the development of more complicated, among other human sensibilities and later on artistic articulations.

Such primary affections have been unfolded by the French philosophers Merleau-Ponty and Deleuze as first quasi-ontological foundations. They are called quasi-ontological since they do not establish an inalterable and essential being, but processes of timing and of becoming. Both thinkers conceive of this quasi-foundation as a twofold and paradoxical figure: as temporal infinity able to affect itself while repeating its infinite past and, by doing so, constituting itself as an ever forthcoming present. Therefore it is called (self)affection in Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of perception*. Its twofold figure of repetition and constitution, of self-affection and affection of others is then applied to other processes of timing such as sensuous and sensitive becomings, not least to artistic practices and works of art. While providing its own foundation it sets free dynamic processes of differentiation and intensification of sensuous articulations up to the point where they transcend and transform themselves into surfaces of organic – or artistic - sensibility. Since this paradoxical process has the capacity to establish as well the immanent process of temporal differentiation as timing as such it is called primary transcendental aesthetics by Deleuze.

Thanks to the dynamic of this self-affecting process, it is supposed to bring about more complex, anorganic and organic constitutions such as the anthropogenesis. The becoming human is conceived with Sigmund Freud, Deleuze and Simondon as a complexification of the multiple and initially not coordinated sensuous inscriptions building up a surface of incorporeal expression and bringing about other capacities in qualitative jumps such as perception, emotion, consciousness and thinking. It does not come as a surprise that this human being is understood as a metastable equilibrium

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of heterogeneous layers of individuation which has to incessantly struggle for integration and coherence.

At this point I want to claim a significant correction of the philosophical terminology: Since the human being is affected by so many bio- and socio-technological processes, I want to argue that we can no longer consider it an individual, undivided entity. Besides the fact that humans today are involuntarily captured and controlled by hidden technologies, they also participate frenetically in digital communications up to the point of being intrinsically entangled with countless human others. But also thanks to our refined technologies of observation and registration we are forced to acknowledge that human beings are co-constituted by billions of microorganisms which influence and maybe constitute their psychophysis. This is why we have to recognize that the human being is an ever divided entity of voluntary or involuntary participation which should no longer be related to "individuality", but should be conceived of as ever changing "dividuation".

The term dividual is used twice by Gilles Deleuze: in a positive sense in his film studies in order to characterize the expressive and ever changing articulations of filmic art works; in a rather negative sense in his small text *Society of Control* where he conceives of the epistemological and political shift from analogous to numeric times. In his eyes this technological shift transforms the human subject into an indefinite self-modelling process which varies according to other fluctuations of the social field, such as the currency or the demographic rates. Since the single person gets numerically and statistically related with abstract and impersonal processes, Deleuze speaks of new modes of subjectivation: „The individuals have become dividual“. Being dividual or a dividuation as I would prefer to call it expresses a twofold passive-active status of the single human being: the status of being affected as well as affecting countless many, not only human beings. In this sense human subjectivation can be compared with filmic processes and their ever changing dividual expressions. They act like aesthetic ensembles temporally framed by their particular expressions. They have a certain affective and cognitive coherence, but they permanently divide themselves according to their multidirectional participations. Their future will depend on their affective management and their subversive use of affections.

In a last step I want to present an example of filmic dividuation: The essay film "Passing Drama" of Angela Melitopoulos. It refers to the topic of human migration by demonstrating in close-ups that all things and their metamorphoses can be portrayed as processes of migration. The film provides series of so called images of affection which do not only prove that each image is in permanent transformation, but that it consists of an infinity of microimages and pixels which remind their constitution in temporal simu-

lacra. By doing so, the film exposes its own foundational processes in quasi-sensuous data by claiming for a political recognition of human migration.

Aesthetics in my understanding does not only consist in theories of art, but, as has been stated now for at least 250 years, should try to unfold a sensitive logic as primary capacity able to found and to bring about other capacities such as perception, feeling and reason. Nevertheless the relatedness of the two aesthetical aspects has not been unfolded, as far as I know, until today. In Kant's philosophy they remain separated as two aspects which we can call the objective and subjective part of aesthetics. Therefore I want to promote here an aesthetical-epistemological figure which is able as well to found a capacity of sensual recognition as to deliver an aesthetical norm for the discussion of art.

Together with the philosophies of Gilbert Simondon, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Gilles Deleuze I want to present this figure as a necessary twofoldedness which means that it has to respond to two needs at the same time: it has to fulfil the paradoxical task of constituting itself as primary sensual process and of bringing about all further processes of becoming. These processes are supposed to develop a heterogenesis of sensuality and sentience which allows to determine as well historically changing human subjectivations as changing aesthetical articulations. These articulations can then be evaluated according to their reflection of their primordial heterogeneous foundation. This twofold figure I call it "affections". Affections, as I want to explain further with Merleau-Ponty and Deleuze, can be developed as primary self-affections and as stimuli for processes of becoming of all sorts.

Affection, the Latin translation of Aristotle's pathos, do not only express a passive quality of human capacities, but can be considered minimally active in the way that they bring together at least two different terms, provoke reactions between them while holding them in distance. Affections can therefore be called a disjunctive synthesis, opening up a space between related terms. This space is considered by Henri Bergson as the precondition for the development of a sensitive capacity between perception and action. This third capacity is supposed to be the human capacity as such, since it interrupts the stimulus-response-automatism and allows

the development of sentience and emotions. I want to consider this capacity of opening up a sensitive space, of assembling different sensuous terms and provoking temporal and autopoietical processes between them as the foundation of aesthetics.

These heterogeneous terms can then be unfolded as the reason for the formal heterogenesis of art works and for their temporal dynamics which hinder the art work to be ever entirely realized. They also reveal anthropogenesis as an open process, especially today where our affective capacity is constantly stimulated by sensory technologies, defying us and forcing us to develop new capacities such as “hyperattention”. Thanks to their autopoietic dynamics they defy the artistic creation and bring about new artistic concepts and affects.

Therefore I want to claim further that thanks to the foundation of human subjectivations and of art works in heterogeneous affections and of their continuous reaffections we can no longer speak of undivided, individual entities, nor for the human beings nor for the art works. Deleuze uses the term *dividual* for a positive description of expressive articulations in musical and filmic art works: But he also employs it in a rather negative sense when he tries to conceptualize the epistemological and political shift from analogous to numeric times. In his eyes this technological shift transforms the human subject into an indefinite modulation which varies according to other fluctuations of the socio-economic field. Since the single person is numerically and statistically correlated to abstract processes, Deleuze speaks of new modes of subjectivation: „The individuals have become *dividual*“¹. Being *dividual* or a *dividuation* as I will call it, expresses an ambivalent status of the human being as of the art work in our times: the status of being affected by multiple informations thanks to our many forms of participation and of affecting countless others. Expanding on these few remarks of Deleuze I want to conceive human subjectivations and art works as *dividuations*; thanks to their foundation in *dividual* affections we can reconnect the subjective and objective part of aesthetics.

¹Deleuze, Gilles, “Postscript on the Societies of Control,” <https://files.nyu.edu/dnm232/public/deleuzepostscript.pdf> (retrieved February 25, 2014), p. 5.

1. Affection as Foundation of Aesthetics

The concept of „affection“ has a long history in philosophy which dates back to the theologian Augustine in the 4th century A.D. and his translation of Aristotle’s “pathos” into Latin. The concept develops a social impact in modernity when, at the beginning of the 18th century, Scottish-English philosophers start using it in a positive anthropological sense. As a result of the English Glorious Revolution and the „Declaration of Rights“ in 1689, the Third Earl of Shaftesbury conceives the idea that man has inborn moral sense and natural reason. Together with other philosophers such as Hutcheson, Hume and Smith he develops an anthropological thinking which, in clear opposition to the earlier negative conception of mankind in the philosophy of Hobbes, is based on the idea of a „natural sympathy“ between all human beings. Shaftesbury attributes man with a natural „feeling or affection for his likeness“ (II, 4, 82)² and a „natural compassion“ for his „fellow-creatures“. With the philosophy of Spinoza he shares the assumption that affections in general are part of the aesthetical-ethical disposition of man and therefore have to be treated in an affirmative way. Different from Spinoza, Shaftesbury conceives affections as oriented towards society and public life. Affections are considered „highest pleasures“ (I,2,1,65)³, since they provoke „social pleasure“ and „mental enjoyments“. In English and later in French philosophy we encounter the expression „social affections/affections sociales“; Hutcheson even coins the term „publick affections“ and observes „desires of the pleasure arising from publick happiness“⁴. Social progress is linked with the idea of self-affection of mankind and will, in the long run, lead to the American and French revolutions at the end of the century. David Hume, as the most famous philosopher of this tradition, claims that the affective similarity between men brings about natural compassion and allows for identification and imaginary substitution among human beings. The aesthetics of the enlightenment are based on this idea⁵.

²Third Earl of Shaftesbury, „An Inquiry concerning Virtue or Merit,“ in: idem, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, Vol. II, Farnborough, 1968, p. 5–176 (82).

³Ibid., p. 65.

⁴Francis Hutcheson, „An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue“ (1725), in: *Collected Works*, Vol. I, Hildesheim, 1971, p. 1–276 (7).

⁵David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Aalen, 1964.

In the middle of the 18th century, Alexander Baumgarten, the first German theorist of philosophical aesthetics, wanted to extend philosophical reflection beyond the rational domain. In the dawn of the German enlightenment he learned to understand that the traditionally privileged „logic of reason“ has to be completed by a „cognitio sensitiva/logic of sensual recognition“⁶. Immanuel Kant in his *Critique of pure reason* also claims that recognition arises from two sources, the receptivity of impressions and the spontaneity of reflection. But although Kant states that reason is founded in a passive capacity and that perception is based on affections, he does not provide a critical explanation of this first receptive capacity. Deleuze criticizes him for not building a bridge between receptive passivity and rational activity.

Why do I mention this philosophical tradition? Why does it seem relevant to me? I refer to this tradition since I conceive affections myself as a basic human capacity enabling us to build up connections with the outer world, with non-human and human beings, with nature and society. Affection is the ecological sense of all living beings, since it connects their natural drive with their psychic desire; it attaches them to others and makes them aware of their being embedded in social and natural assemblages. But the main reason for reflecting on affections today is the assumption that affective management changes over time and that the contemporary inhabitant of the western – and probably also of the non-western – world, models his affectivity in a way different from, let's say, thirty years ago. We can observe a profound change in the formation of our affective capacities because of the transformation of the media technologies, because of dominant cultural techniques as well as globalized spatiotemporal orders and certain interconnections of organic and technological devices. These changes force us to claim that we no longer deal with the same sort of subjectivation as in the second half of the 20th century. The move away from slow techniques of reading, writing and interpreting towards fast communication of images and texts, towards almost instantaneous exchanges of short messages made possible by the digital and social media, the permanent affective irritation of the internet user by available information and by its reception in real time, produces new forms of perception and affective

⁶Alexander Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, Hamburg, 2007, p. 20, translated M. Ott.

reaction to the world. Since individual orientation is nowadays negotiated within a globalized world, an intercultural framework and transnational communication, the affective relation gets constructed in totally different ways than some decades ago. We practice social affections in a far more radical way than the English philosophers could dream of. These are not necessarily based on a natural inclination towards mankind, but probably more on a fascination for technical devices and for new possibilities of communication.

We can also observe changes in affective practices in the domain of the arts. On the one hand the globalized film industries compete among each other in global affect management; they target the spectators worldwide with codified masses of images and sound and establish globalized orders of affectivity. Popular movies produce ever more violent expressions of affect and submit the viewer to an ecologically inadequate treatment of his sensual life. On the other hand artistic films try to elaborate new affective qualities. Since nowadays they often oscillate between documentation and fiction, they defy the affectivity of the viewer; they no longer search for the identification of the viewer with the represented protagonist and his destiny as in the aesthetics of the enlightenment. They rather try to subvert the codified modes of expression and to provide undetermined affects, which stimulate the reflection and loss of identification of the viewer with given standardized emotions. We encounter filmic articulations which question the globalization of social affections by exposing their political and uniforming character or by pointing at the fundamental contingency of any possible expression.

In order to better understand what we have in mind when we speak of affections, we want to question recent philosophical positions and their understanding of affections, before reflecting on contemporary modes of affection. Philosophically speaking we can observe that affections, while being a topic in philosophy since its very beginning with Plato and Aristotle, have always been treated as a less valuable capacity than reasoning. In Aristotle's anthropological reflection of *Peri psyches/De anima*⁷, affection is connected with external causes, such as sensual data, provoking a passive reaction in the human being. Since Aristotle thinks more highly

⁷Aristoteles, *Peri Psyches*, Cambridge (Mass.), 1882.

of the internal causes, from the personal will, he devalues affections as „pathos“, as passive and receptive processes. Beginning with this interpretation, the philosophical history of affection is connected with deprecation. Furthermore, philosophy has not always differentiated between affective sensations and visual perceptions, but has often considered them identical. Only in the philosophy of Spinoza does affection get acknowledged as a natural process which has to be appreciated like everything which belongs to nature. Therefore we would like to claim, with Spinoza, the English philosophy and other more recent philosophers, that affection is the most basic self-constitutional act of a living being, building up a primary sensuality and hereby founding other capacities such as perception, imagination and reasoning. In this sense, certain French philosophers of the last century not only develop an anthropogenetic explanation of sensuality and the affective processes that go along with it; they even claim that affections are primordial ontological processes initiating first processes of timing and of material-spiritual syntheses long before the emergence of living beings. With these philosophers we want to elaborate on affections, in an extended understanding of aesthetics, as ontological foundations, as basic human and non-human capacities and as specific expressions of works of art. Since affections are liminal processes, they cannot be observed as such, but can be deduced from the effects they bring about in living beings and in symbolic acts. We want to question the affective articulations we can see and hear as symptoms of the human and symbolic development of our times.

As you know, the 20th century offers different phenomenological, psychoanalytical and poststructuralist explanations for the genesis of primary sensuality. Edmund Husserl develops the idea of primary passive constitutions of human sensuality. The observation of the „phenomenon of affection“ leads him to the assumption of a primordial „passive synthesis“ constituted in „pure passivity“. Husserl's conception of affection is also criticized by Deleuze for not being critical enough and for reporting the passive constitution to an already established conscious ego while being prior to it and being the condition of possibility of such an ego.

The psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud is the first one to conceive of unconscious inscriptions and of the principle of pleasure as already minimally active capacity preorganizing the psychic development. Interestingly

affection in Freud's understanding appears as a constitutional act which dates back to preindividual times and cannot be observed in its causation, but can be reconstructed according to the effects and symptoms it produces. The assumption of a hidden „big bang“ of affection is formulated in Freud's theory of primordial innervations of phylogenetic heritage, of ontogenetic experiences in childhood, of inscriptions of traumatic events which cannot be remembered but co-organize the psychic reality.

The two philosophers who explicitly deal with affections and develop them as prepersonal and non-individual constitutive processes are Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Gilles Deleuze. Interestingly Merleau-Ponty determines affections as primary acts of self-constitution and equates them with the logically necessary self-constitution of time as infinity, as endless self-repetition and ever changing process of timing. For him time is the primary subject: „If time is the subject, then self-constitution is no contradiction. (..) Time is ‚affection of itself by itself‘; (..) here affection and being affected are the same“⁸. Time is considered a circular and paradoxical process insofar as time must already be given in order to bring about processes of timing; at the same time it can only constitute itself in these processes. Being endless by definition and therefore always advancing itself, it constitutes itself by repeating a forever lost past and by synthesizing it into present sensual moments. This twofold structure of affection as repetition and constitution, as passivity and activity, as immanent genesis and possibility of further constitutions - I want to consider this figure as primary aesthetics. Deleuze opposes it to Kant's conception of time and space as form a priori and pre-given entities, comparable to Newton's theory of absolute time and space. Primary aesthetics as self-constitution of time together with sensual data provide impersonal and non-individual sensualities; they are not focused on anthropomorphic perceptions or feelings. They develop temporal dynamics and affective resonances between heterogenetic signs; human sentience is one possible result of their unfolding and of the continuous captivation between organic dispositions and sensual data.

The process of forming human sentience can be understood in an analogous way: We constitute ourselves in unconscious syntheses and must

⁸Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, London/New York, 1962, p. 425f.

therefore be considered “totally passive and active at the same time”⁹. The organic „origin“ may be located in drives and may be provoked by inner and outer stimuli, as Freud suggests. But human affection is always already self-affection of unconscious inscriptions, psychophysical processes and cultural stimulations. In opposition to Husserl’s idea of primary passivity of the ego, Deleuze underlines that the formation of sensuality is accompanied by minimal „local egos“, which are minimally active. Thanks to their contractions and integrations the heterogeneous inscriptions can constitute habits and memory; the minimal egos enable an ever wider synthesis of time and finally a complex synthesis of reflection in an active ego: „the active ego is a global attempt of integration“¹⁰. The formation of the human capacities is conceived as a process of continuous complexification and of self-transcendation which enables the human being to re-affect and transform itself into an open metamorphosis. Deleuze resumes the process of affection as a bodily event which surpasses itself and creates a non-corporeal surface of expression, which can be coded by cultural signs. In the German word „Sinnlichkeit“ the two-fold character of affection, its „origin“ in sensual senses and its creation of an intelligible sense can be expressed. In the English language this process seems to split into two different meanings, sensations becoming the basis of sensuality, sense the basis of sensibility.

Deleuze’s conception of an immanent and transcendental aesthetics is more profound than the aesthetics of Kant: As we have heard Kant divides the ego into passive receptivity and active rationality corresponding to the two sides of his aesthetic theory: the objective element of sensation guaranteed by the absolute form of space and time, the subjective element incorporated in pleasure and pain”¹¹. If instead the process is conceived as passive-active affection, it necessarily repeats and intensifies itself and brings about other capacities and expressions. Anthropogenesis must therefore be considered an open process, changing with the stimulation of the outer world; the same is true for art works which thanks to their heterogeneous dynamics can never be entirely realized.

⁹Ibd., p. 428.

¹⁰Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, London/New York, 1994, p. 98.

¹¹Ibd.

2. Dividual Affections in Art

Spinoza concedes that an individual has the more potentiality, the more its different „individuations“ get affected and the more affections it develops with other bodies. Since we constitute ourselves in processes of reaffection, we have to countereffectuate our affections and involuntary repetitions in order to discover our form of repetition very much like works of art. This specific repetition cannot be considered an individual law, since it repeats early unconscious inscriptions and varies their impersonal and non-individual character. Gilbert Simondon underlines the metastability of the single person thanks to the need of integrating preindividual sensualities in which the psyche is founded. The single person can be compared to the dweller of a city who realizes that his personal emotions are only a variation of the affective attitude of the city. Deleuze and Guattari even claim that the single person should immerse himself into the impersonality of the social field and become nameless and imperceptible. For Deleuze such attempts of becoming dividual, of becoming everybody or nobody are prerequisites of an ethical existence.

Together with Guattari he states in *Mille Plateaux*¹² that affects are dividual articulations long before becoming human emotions. They read literary texts as the result of affections between the writer and non-human beings, mainly animals; they try to prove that artistic creations start with affections between normally incompatible terms: „Affects are exactly these becomings non-human of man“¹³. They put forward an affection for water and fish in the literary texts of Virginia Woolf, an affection for beef in the German novels of Karl Philipp Moritz. A work of art, they state in *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?*, is characterized by the non-psychological affect it provides and by the new percepts and concepts based on it. In contrast to Kant, who considers drawings as the highest quality of art because of their formal harmony with the human capacities, the authors appreciate a work of art according to its distance to human affectivity and to its dissolution of formal standards. On the basis of the dividual aesthetics they read even paintings – in contrast to Hegel – as an unfolding of time.

¹² Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Minneapolis, 1987.

¹³ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, New York, 1994, p. 160.

In his film theory Deleuze develops the idea of an auto-affection of film. He isolates a certain film image called the „image of affection“¹⁴: This image, mainly realized in close-ups, is interpreted as a sort of self-exhibition of the visual qualities thanks to which the filmic narration is interrupted and the spatio-temporal context of the film eliminated. By undergoing its central perspective and exhibiting the tactile character of its surface, the image presents itself like an icon and intensifies its visual qualities in this self-presentation. By that the whole film receives an affective quality and produces an affective expression which cannot be attributed to the emotion of the filmmaker or the viewer. While exposing its iconicity, it nevertheless de-individualizes its sensual articulations thanks to the filmic techniques: by enlarging the human face in close-ups, by continuously varying the framing of the shots, by transforming the aesthetic qualities of the ensembles within the frames, by contrasting the visual with the auditive signs and so forth. The same is true for serious musical compositions where the multiplicity of voices is not homogenized, but presented in its heterogeneity. Today the dividuality of images and sounds is reinforced by their inevitable relatedness to the electronic field of images and sounds where it gets more and more dividualized.

In the hope of corresponding to certain ideas of vitality, these visual and auditive works of art unfold semiotic proliferations and escape the constraint of formal unification. They replace formal laws by way of becoming informal; they strive to become limitless very much like time. Demanding works of art even attempt to reflect their limits of articulation and to expose the contingency of their expression. An example of such a demanding work of art is the film „Passing Drama“ by Angela Melitopoulos, a German-Greek female filmmaker living in Berlin.

Her film thematizes migration by quoting different Greek persons, among others her father, who because of political changes in Europe at the beginning of the 20th century had to leave the place where they were born and had to migrate to several different countries. The film does not express the result of migration mainly through personal testimonies, but through affective and abstract images and sounds showing movements of all sorts. It connects close ups of different metamorphical processes, of

¹⁴Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema I. The Movement-Image*, Minneapolis, 1986, p. 98.

changing surfaces, of movements of proliferation, thereby evoking the continuous transformation of everything and performing the inevitable, impersonal and non-individual character of migration.

The film *Passing Drama* thematises migration by quoting different Greek persons who because of political changes in Europe at the beginning of the 20th century had to leave their place of birth and had to start a new Odyssey. The film expresses this dividual destiny of migration less through personal testimony than through impersonal and abstract images and sounds of affection and connects them in a loose manner in order to remember the weaving process of Penelope and the contingency of each narrative. It connects close ups of different metamorphical processes, of changing surfaces, of movements of proliferation, to a sort of tapestry, in order to evoke the endless and dividual character of migration as the destiny of all, not only human living beings.

3. Some Afterthoughts on Human Dividuations

As I have stated, the dividual status, today, should not only be attributed to works of art, but to all living beings. Thanks to our epistemological shifts, to our microscopic observations as well as to our ecological widening of the epistemological field, all living beings seem interconnected with other organisms and must be recognized as qualitative variations and differentiations of dividual biodiversities. When discovered as entities inhabited by millions of microorganisms which affect their psychophysical constitution, they do not necessarily lose their affective coherence, but must be determined as parts of environmental multiplicities from which they cannot be easily separated. When biotechnologies influence our neural processes we can no longer consider ourselves as individuals. On the macroscopic level the dividual status becomes even more obvious: We are interrelated with sociotechnologies in such intense ways that we can hardly separate ourselves from these devices. They not only stimulate our participation, but make a profit from our passivity and our affective needs; they control and take over our desires, our spatial orientation, our personal profile and become part of our body. Therefore we cannot but understand ourselves as dividuations very much like filmic works of arts, continuously reframing

our relation to the world. We should learn to appreciate our connectedness with everything thanks to our affections by impersonal and non-individual sensualities.

For that reason we should also fight for open access in electronic media and for the abolishment of the global electronic divide which hinders certain populations to get affected by aesthetical qualities. To connect the unconnected, to get affected by intolerable situations and to express them by aesthetical means is still a political act to do. Democratic tactics can consist in the construction of affective relations between places where people can express their affections and places where they cannot.

On the other hand we should realize that we are permanently over-affected by sensual data, by commercials, music and images even without wanting it. Therefore we not only discover our laws of repetition and affection, but also of their selection and reduction. We have to become aware of our limits of affection and of the necessity to protect us against affective overflow – we have to decide which degree of dividuality seems good for us. Our aesthetical action must consist in a conscious self-modelling and self-questioning of our capacities while not forgetting that our so-called individuality is nourished and kept mobile only by the dividual affective sensualities which make us feel connected with others and bring about new aesthetical expressions and new social forms of interactivity and interpassivity.

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***‘Bring a Camera with You’:
The Posthumous Collaboration of
Ahmed Basiony and Shady El Noshokaty***

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ABSTRACT. In this paper, I investigate the role of digital technology and its relationship to gesture in the posthumous collaboration of Ahmed Basiony and Shady El Noshokaty, drawing upon the philosophy of Bernard Stiegler. Picking up where Basiony left off, El Noshokaty frames the presentation of two seemingly disconnected videos—documentation of a performance that Basiony was preparing for the 2011 Venice Biennale and his footage from the Tahrir Square protests where he was killed—resulting in *30 Days of Running in the Place*. This fulfillment is possible due to what Stiegler refers to as epiphylogenesis, or the development of new ways of being through technological innovation. Digital technology has introduced new forms of tertiary retentions, or the process of externalising memories beyond the fragility of living beings into the facticity of the non-living, affecting how these are externalized and shared. Stiegler describes how the repetition of tertiary retentions can lead to indifference, as images and sounds are played back over and over again, dulling the senses of human recipients as they are transformed into passive consumers, resulting in symbolic misery, or lost of participation in the symbolic. The development of new forms of participation that attempt to re-develop and re-use these technologies provide platforms for coming together and becoming together. Drawing from Stiegler’s relationship between aesthetics and politics, specifically his understanding that a political community is one that comes together and feels together, I describe how El Noshokaty fulfills Basiony’s gesture while presenting a new means of participation that offers an escape from symbolic misery. In this action of common becoming, the artists present dedication to the politics, aesthetics, and ethics of a better society.

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I.

On January 25, 2011, protests began in the Arab Republic of Egypt that would soon transform the political future of that nation. On January 28, which is now referred to as the “Friday of Rage,” Egyptian artist and activist Ahmed Basiony was killed as the result of police sniper-fire during protests in Tahrir Square. At that time, the artist was preparing a proposal for the Egyptian national pavilion at the 2011 Venice Biennale. After his death, the in-progress work was presented as *Thirty Days of Running in the Place*. Some of the video in this work, which consists of five-channels of projected video, includes documentation of a performance, originally presented in 2010, where Basiony wore a sensor-fused plastic suit that calculated the levels of sweat produced and the number of steps taken while jogging in place for one hour every day over a period of thirty days. The data was presented as a grid of colored squares that was projected live during the performance for the audience to see. Created using open source programming, in this piece, Basiony focuses on the act of being consumed and the transformation of energy from bodily waste—sweat and heat—to fuelling an aesthetic manifestation as he runs in place. This is also the work he was initially proposing for the Biennale pavilion. Other video presents footage of the Tahrir square uprisings filmed by Basiony just prior to his death. The pairing of these two videos is jagged and confusing. The juxtaposition is intentionally uncoordinated with the interplay of images differing with each viewing: even though each channel plays the same 12-minute looped footage, they play at different times. Both videos were created by the artist, though he did not envision their final presentation. The final version of the work was conceived of posthumously by a friend of the artist and a curator of the Egyptian Pavilion: Shady El Noshokaty.

In this paper, I investigate the role of digital technology and its relationship to gesture in the posthumous collaboration of Basiony and El Noshokaty, drawing upon the philosophy of Bernard Stiegler. Picking up where Basiony left off, El Noshokaty frames the presentation of these two seemingly disconnected videos by relating the span of the artist’s life, thirty-two years, to that of the government of former Egyptian president Muhammad Hosni El Sayed Mubarak. Mubarak served as president from 1981 to 2011 and Basiony died at the age of 32—making him just as old

as Mubarak's regime, which the protests of 2011 helped bring to an end. El Noshokaty describes how the videos juxtapose the energy wasted by a person through the act of jogging in place with the energy wasted by a nation (El Noshokaty, 2012). Basiony initiated the work with his artistic gestures present in the original performance. He then died in the midst of performing gestures of protest. El Noshokaty brings together these aesthetic gestures and political gestures through the final presentation of the Biennale installation. While there have been numerous studies regarding the role of social media in enabling the "Arab Spring" of 2011 (see Castells, 2012; Shahine, 2011; Wolfsfeld et. al, 2013), the significance of *Thirty Days of Running in the Place* emerges from the ability of one artist to carry on the aesthetic and political gestures of another.

Posthumous collaboration can simply be defined as when a living artist completes the work of a dead artist. For example, after an extensive collaborative practice while alive, German-French Dadaist Hans Arp continued to collaborate with his wife, Sophie Taeuber, after her death in 1943. According to Renée Riese Hupert, Arp tore drawings they created together, forming collages that function as "ways of denying the spouse's death. There she remained a living force and her work served as an inspiration" (Hubert, 1993, p. 26). More recently, artists Civia Rosenberg and May Stevens created *Crossings*, in which both women made art from the photographs of their deceased sons. In response to these works, Andrea Liss states: "[k]eeping the departed one close yet not completely absorbing his spirit into that of the living is an apt and poignant metaphor for incomplete incorporation of the other and 'impossible' mourning" (Liss, 2009, p. 144). Referring to Jacques Derrida, Liss describes how impossible mourning "refuses Sigmund Freud's concept of complete incorporation of the other for a less overwhelming concept of one's embrace of the other's leaving" (Liss, 2009, p. 144). This process allows for the deceased to remain as other, permitting him to remain external through death. It is a respectful acknowledgement both of the other as other, but also of his passing. Art of this nature, according to Liss, can function as an intersubjective space that invites mourning and healing. As these examples show, posthumous collaboration is not novel—there are various instances of artists, writers, and composers completing the works of others after death. However, the circumstances surrounding the untimely death of Basiony are what make

this particular partnership notable.

El Noshokaty's ability to collaborate post-humously and subsequently carry on Basiony's aesthetic and political gestures is possible due to what Bernard Stiegler refers to as epiphylogenesis, or technical evolution (Stiegler, 1998). Inspired by the anthropological work of André Leroi-Gourhan regarding the relationship between gesture and technology, Stiegler argues that humanity and technology are not autonomous. Rather, they have co-evolved as memories are systemized by means of technology into inheritable communities and cultures. Epiphylogenesis is produced by tertiary retentions, or the process of externalizing memories beyond the fragility of living beings into the facticity of technics, which includes writing, physical objects, sound recordings, photographic imagery, and video. Stiegler states:

Epiphylogenesis, time spaced and space temporalized, is the sedimentary store of events among which we live without knowing it. It is memory that is transmitted down the generations (which haunt and *spiritualize* each other). Being spatialized it is exteriorized and retained *in the facticity of the non-living* — protected from the *fragility* of the living (Stiegler, 2014, p. 33).

When defining tertiary retentions, Stiegler builds upon Edmund Husserl's distinction between perception and imagination. To clarify, primary retention, or perception, is a person's retention of memories as experiences unfold. For example, when having a conversation, primary retention occurs when the meaning of each word informs the meaning of proceeding words. It exists as a passing present. Secondary retention, or imagination, is the retention of memories that belong to the past as the memories that each individual develops. It occurs when I am able to recall a conversation from my memories using my imagination. Stiegler adds the notion of tertiary retention to this model, treating technology as "a prosthesis, memory externalized" (Stiegler, 2014, p. 34). Tertiary retention occurs when memories are externalized through technology. If I recorded a conversation and play back the recording, then that is an example of tertiary retention.

These can take explicitly mnemonic forms, such as video and writing, but also, non-mnemonic forms. For example, again referring to Leroi-

Gourhan, Stiegler describes how certain tools, such as those created from flint, were vital to the early development of humanity. These tools are artificial organs; contributing to the functionality of the human body. At the same time, the tools hold a record of human manufacture, as they rely upon certain operational sequences and gestures that are passed down through their creation and use (Stiegler, 1998). Therefore, according to Stiegler, there is a connection between tools and gestures, technics and language, that make tertiary retentions possible: “cortex and tools are differentiated together, in one and the same movement” (Stiegler, 1998, p. 176). Digital technology introduces new forms of tertiary retention, as it revolutionizes how memories are retained and shared. Words, images, and other traces are now codified through micro-electronic structures that are subject to the algorithms of search engines “that automate reading and writing, and that index, ‘tag’ and categorize the new metalanguages [...] — the totality of which results in generalized traceability and trackability” (Stiegler, 2015a, pg. 7). Thus, digital technology introduces new kinds of *hypomnēmata*, or external memory supports, where new conditions for repetition become possible (Stiegler, 2015b).

In his original performance, Basiony uses digital technology customized for this particular purpose using open source programming as a means of translating his kinaesthetic actions into visual data. His physical entropy is externalised and presented visually as a grid of colors. He also uses video to document this performance; just like, he utilizes video in order to capture the Tahrir Square protests. Basiony’s body is both his artistic tool and means of protest; however, his gestures do not cease upon his death. Instead, because his actions are externalised as tertiary retentions, they are deferred and inherited by El Noshokaty. Even though El Noshokaty was not present at the Tahrir Square protests, tertiary retentions allow him to collaborate posthumously. He shares Basiony’s final moments with us along with his aesthetic and political desires. The footage becomes the impetus for collective action as these memories are transmitted to the audience. The phrase “bring a camera with you” is taken from one of Basiony’s final Facebook posts, in which he describes how people can prepare for the protests in Tahrir Square:

It is necessary to be fully equipped while participating in the revolu-

tion: a bottle of vinegar to overcome the tear gas, protective masks and tissues to inhale vinegar, self-defense sprays, athletic shoes, Pradoral tablets, food and drinks... It is prohibited to use violence against security agents and to insult them. Vandalism is also forbidden for this is our country. Bring a camera with you and don't be afraid or weak. January 27 at 12:09 am (Basiony 2011).

Mixed within this list of bodily protection and safety measures is the mention of a camera: what can be an artistic tool, a means of capturing joyful life moments, or in this instance, an opportunity to make history concrete and share it with others. This statement emphasizes the importance that Basiony placed on documenting these events, and is itself also a tertiary retention. Tertiary retentions preserve memories, but also political and aesthetic gestures.

Through tertiary retentions, epiphylogenesis provides conditions for collectivity—the constitution of a *we* (Stiegler, 2014). Tertiary retentions also make it possible to have identical repetition of the same temporal object (such as video). However, this repetition can have different impacts. On the one hand, Stiegler describes how the same temporal object can produce different temporal phenomena, which means that the primary retention, or perception, of this phenomenon, may vary. Each time a recording is played, the perception of it can differ, which in turn impacts how the imagination recalls the recording. Every iteration holds the potential for difference. On the other hand, the repetition of tertiary retentions can lead to indifference, as images and sounds are played back over and over again, dulling the senses of human recipients as they are transformed into passive consumers:

[T]emporal recordings that have become tertiary, which is to say recorded [...], are time materialized and they organize the relationship between primary and secondary retentions in general, allowing for their control. And difference can be annulled by tertiary retentions just as much as it can be intensified by them: repetition can lead to indifference (Stiegler, 2014, p. 34-5).

Specifically, during the twentieth century, technological development encouraged its users to behave as consumers, especially when deployed

through marketing. Stiegler states: “[t]he audiovisual techniques of marketing lead, moreover, to a situation where, through the images I see and the sounds I hear, my past tends to become the same as my neighbor’s” (Stiegler, 2014, p. 6). Pasts become less differentiated as individuals lose their singularity, resulting in what Stiegler refers to as symbolic misery, or “the loss of individuation which results from the *loss of participation* in the *production of symbols*. Symbols here being as much the fruits of intellectual life (concepts, ideas, theorems, knowledge) as of sensible life (arts, know-how, mores)” (Stiegler, 2014, p. 10).

However, Stiegler does not believe that we need to resign ourselves to this fate: “It is certainly not a matter of condemning the industrial and technological fate of humanity. Rather, it is a case of reinventing this fate” (Stiegler, 2014, p. 6). The development of new forms of participation that attempt to re-develop and re-use these technologies provide platforms for coming together and becoming together. I propose that the posthumous collaboration of Basiony and El Noshokaty involves these new kinds of participation. The work is the result collective production that serves different functions for each of the artists, allowing them to come together intersubjectively. The work carries traces of Basiony’s aesthetic and political intentions through the performance video and the protest videos. Notably, the work remains under the name of Ahmed Basiony, and by placing the dates of his birth and death under his name, it is clear that he is deceased. These details are also reinforced in curatorial statements. Basiony is explicitly presented as the primary artist.

However, El Noshokaty submitted the proposal and work in place of Basiony. As such, the videos have different meanings for the two artists, with neither being lost in the presentation of the work. The performance video was Basiony’s initial prototype for the Biennale exhibition while the protest video was the documentation of history in the making — two distinctive pieces of footage that are both significant to Basiony, though not originally envisioned to appear in tandem. El Noshokaty brings these two together, merging Basiony’s artistic vision with his activist practice — his artistic and political gestures. At the same time, this work functions as a memorial for Basiony: a way to honor his memory by fulfilling his desire to present in the Venice Biennale while preventing his death from becoming lost in the official history of the Tahrir Square uprisings.

For Stiegler, aesthetics and politics are interconnected: “the question of politics is a question of aesthetics and, vice versa, the question of aesthetics is a question of politics” (Stiegler, 2014, p. 1). Notably, his understanding of aesthetics emerges from an expanded notion of *aesthēsis*, or sensory perception, which means aesthetics is defined as “that of feeling and sensibility in general” (Stiegler, 2014, p. 1). However, as Noel Fitzpatrick emphasizes in his reading of Stiegler, the “political calling of the aesthetic should not, however, be confused with a simple question of politically engaged art” (Fitzpatrick, 2014, p. 120). Instead, the politics of art emerges from its shared sensibility and the participation of the other. As Stiegler states:

The question of politics is essentially that of the relation to the other in a feeling-together or *sympathy*. The problem of politics is one of knowing how to be together, to live together, to stand each other and stand together, across and starting from our singularities (much more profound than our ‘differences’) and beyond our conflicts of interest. Politics is the art of securing the unity of the state in its *desire* for a common future, in its in-dividuation, its singularity as becoming-one. Such a desire assumes a common aesthetic ground: being together is feeling together (Stiegler, 2014, p. 10-11).

With *Thirty Days of Running in the Place*, the political content of the work is significant, though the conditions of feeling together involved in its production are vital. This piece, born out of the death of an artist and a governmental regime, attempts to contextualize a historical moment while preserving the intentions and gestures of an individual. It is a piece of passion, of hope, and of impossible mourning; an explosion of art and emotion that grapples with history as it unfolds. In *Thirty Days of Running in the Place*, El Noshokaty carries Basiony’s aesthetic and political gestures. It also functions as an opportunity for El Noshokaty to mourn a friend while capturing the zeitgeist of current events in Egypt, sharing these experiences with the Biennale audience. In this action of common becoming, the artists present dedication to the politics, aesthetics, and ethics of a better society.

2.

Up to this point, I have restricted my discussion in relation to the work of art, *Thirty Days of Running in the Place*. However, there are some questions that emerge from this research that are beyond the scope of this particular paper, though I believe require further analysis. Particularly, *Thirty Days of Running in the Place* was originally presented at the Venice Biennale, a major contemporary art event that is loaded with political and financial implications through its institutional power structures. As this is far from being a neutral platform for the presentation of art, the question emerges: how does this context affect the political reception of the work? In other words, can art presented at the Venice Biennale fulfill Stiegler's criteria for new forms of participation, as the institutional context potentially reinforces the conditions for symbolic misery, specifically patterns of consumer behavior that occur (and can be encouraged) at this event?

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Sensible Knowing in Kant's Aesthetics

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ABSTRACT. This paper treats the distinctive form of knowing found in Kant's aesthetics that follows the idea of sensible cognition first introduced by Baumgarten in his *Aesthetics*. My argument is to show how Kant still legitimates this sensible knowing in his aesthetics, despite his insistence on the non-knowledge of the aesthetic judgment. I develop my argument under three considerations. First, I situate Kant's aesthetics in relation to that of Baumgarten in order to show how Kant can regard the sensible ordering of aesthetic experience in the beautiful to be like reason and can be of the sensible without being merely sensible. Second, I analyze the ordering into unity that Kant attributes to the beautiful in relation to the reflective judgment in order to show just how Kant can attribute order to sensible experience without an ordering by a concept, and specifically without an ordering by a concept of perfection. Third, I analyze the notion of a generative connection in aesthetic experience made possible by the principle of purposiveness in order to show how the beautiful is related to the feeling of the furtherance of life. It is this feeling of life, which produces a connection among things, that reason cannot produce and at the same time generates a "sensible knowing."

1. Introduction

In this paper I want to consider the peculiar form of knowing that is in place in Kant's aesthetics. That Kant's aesthetics involves knowing is undoubtedly a controversial claim since Kant insists in the *Critique of Judgment* that the aesthetic judgment cannot be a judgment of knowing because it does not meet the restricted requirements for knowing established by the first Critique. The aesthetic judgment, a judgment concerning the beautiful, is not a matter of knowledge because it does not meet the requirement of the ordering of the concept necessary for knowledge. What I intend to show is not really so controversial when we recognize from a

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broader perspective that Kant employs a very restricted criteria for knowledge. To the point, with it he appears to have completely abandoned the distinctive kind of knowing that characterized aesthetics when it was first introduced by Baumgarten as a science of sensitive cognition. For Baumgarten aesthetics is the science of sensible knowing qua sensible—a science that Baumgarten also identifies as a theory of the liberal arts, suggesting by this that it would be a science appropriate to the knowing that takes place in the humanities.¹ In what follows I want to specifically show how Kant in fact still legitimates this sensuous knowing in his aesthetics, despite his insistence on the non-knowledge of the aesthetic judgment.

2. First Consideration

As a first consideration, I want to situate Kant's aesthetics in relation to that of Baumgarten. When Baumgarten first characterizes aesthetics as a science of sensible cognition, he does so within the framework of the Leibnizian-Wolffian tradition in which the science of reason comes to express the perfection of the world through the requirements of clarity and distinctness. While Baumgarten acknowledges the determination of the character of sensible cognition in this regard, namely, that sensible cognition can be clear because, like reason, it is capable of allowing someone to recognize the thing represented, it cannot produce distinct knowledge. It does not allow someone to enumerate the marks that would sufficiently distinguish one thing from another, and, as confused rather than distinct, sensible cognition is inferior to rational cognition. Baumgarten's unique claim, though, is that a greater cognitive value can be given to confused cognition. He argues that the sensible has a richness of particularity that is lost in the attempt to construct universal science. More so, he insists

¹ Alexander Baumgarten's (1714-1762) *Aesthetics* is a two volume work written between 1750-1758. The work remained unfinished. Baumgarten was a student of Christian Wolff and follows in the same line of development of the German metaphysical tradition as Kant. It is worth noting that in this same period in France Abbé Batteux wrote *The Fine Arts reduced to a Single Principle* (1746). And in England Edmund Burke writes *An Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1756). Kant's own early work on aesthetics from 1764 has the interesting title *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*.

that this confused knowing does not necessarily lead to error, but is itself a condition for the discovery of truth. "Nature," he writes, "does not jump from darkness to clarity. It is thus through dawn that we travel from night to noon" (Baumgarten, 1750, §7).

Baumgarten will call this science of sensible cognition aesthetics, and if there is to be aesthetic truth in this regard, it will require establishing a norm, a measure, appropriate to its order of knowing.² For Baumgarten this norm could not be produced through a species of an inductive logic, which simply extracts generalities from sense and leads away from a science of sensible knowing dealing with particulars, with its element of feeling. For Baumgarten this norm is nothing other than that of perfection. As characterized by Leibniz, perfection involves the "power to harmonize with the greatest number of conditions" and reality is to be measured by its perfection. For Wolff, following Leibniz, this perfection is understood on a formal level as the order or harmony of the parts in a whole—a unity affirmed by its harmonious parts—and in the sensible this perfection is attributed to the beautiful.³ Baumgarten, who follows Wolff, will also attribute perfection in this sense to the beautiful. The beautiful is thus defined as the perfection of sensible cognition, where perfection is simply the ordering in the agreement of the manifold, in relation to which there is a manifestation of a feeling of pleasure analogous to an attribute that when manifest in rational knowing is called truth (Bosanquet, 1922, p.184). Aesthetics as a science of the beautiful is similar to reason; it is an *ars analogon rationis*.

There is something undoubtedly daring in this claim that the realm of the sensible with its element of feeling has something of the same character as reason. If we are to believe Hegel, this daring amounts to a foolishness or at best "wearisome on account of its indefiniteness and emptiness," since feeling is "the indefinite dull region of the spirit; what is felt remains enveloped in the form of the most abstract individual subjectivity" (Hegel, 1975, p. 32). But is this art, which Baumgarten also describes as a theory of the liberal arts, foolishness? It might be if the *analogon* would be

² Such aesthetic truth could be, for example, a particular narrative in which there would be traits that are not mutually contradictory, as well as a coherence and unity to the narrative.

³ For Wolff, "*perfectio est consensus in varietate*" (Wolff, 1736, §503).

understood as similar to reason in the weakest sense of similarity, i.e., as merely the sensible presentation of logical perfection. But Baumgarten understands this art as truly parallel to that of reason insofar as both involve a connection among things—an ordering not unlike a ratio—despite the fact that the connection among things in the confused cognition of the sensuous involves several powers, including memory and imagination, as well as sensuous anticipation.⁴ In the perfection of sensuous cognition there is a unity of a material richness and the beautiful designates that ordering of the object that is bound not by reason, but by the sensuous itself. The beautiful, as that peculiar sensuous ordering, is not reason, while being like reason, and is of the sensuous without being merely sensuous—the same designation for the beautiful that appears in Kant's aesthetics.

But when Kant then writes his aesthetics of the beautiful it becomes evident that he is not developing further Baumgarten's aesthetics, since he dismisses the status of cognition in aesthetics. And yet Kant too recognizes its autonomy and also sees in the beautiful the quality of ordering, establishing thereby a relating of one to another, of part to a whole, not unlike the operation of reason.⁵ In the beautiful there is the feeling of universal life, a feeling in which intelligent life comes into accord with itself. Thus for Kant too there is no retreat from a daring to see in the sensuous something of the character of reason.

⁴ The *analogon rationis* is thus not an expression intended to privilege the logical, but is intended as a way of expressing for the first time the very autonomy and legitimacy with respect to knowing of sensuous representation. Aesthetics is to be that science that does not turn away from the essential medium of the sensuous. The art of the *analogon rationis* is an attempt to take hold of what the logical cannot grasp, namely, the sensuous particularity and the individuality commensurate with it. The science of the beautiful looks to the sensuous connection without the ordering of the concept.

⁵ In recognizing the autonomy of aesthetics Kant actually takes over in a decisive way, with the proper qualification the quality of perfection in the beautiful that functions as an ordering of multiplicity. The qualification is Kant's refusal to define the beautiful through a concept of perfection in the object. In §15 of the *Critique of Judgement*, Kant argues that the judgment of taste is independent of the concept of perfection in the sense that the object of taste is not conceived by means of a concept of purpose and thus does not involve the perfection of the object. Accordingly, Kant is opposing the substantial sense of perfection as suitability, but not necessarily the formal sense of perfection as harmonious order (See, Kant, 1972, p. 62-5).

3. Second Consideration

As a second consideration, I want to pursue the ordering that takes place in Kant's aesthetics of the beautiful, the ordering that I would hesitantly call the logic of the non-logic of the aesthetics of the beautiful. For Kant this ordering is tied to the more encompassing ordering that will complete the critical system. It is tied to the non-legislating cognitive faculty of judgement which is simply "the faculty of thinking the particular as contained under the universal" (Kant, 1972, p. 15).⁶ If the universal, i.e., the rule, is given to it, the judgment subsumes the particular under it and is a determinate judgment.⁷ If only the particular is given, as in the case of heterogeneity of the diversity of empirical laws in nature relative to the unity of the natural knowledge, the judgment must search for the appropriate universal to carry out its function of subsumption. In this case the judgment is reflective. The reflective judgment thus has the specific task of providing this unity—the unity that would not only bring the experience of nature to a higher unity, but also the life of reason with respect to nature and freedom. The peculiarity of the reflective judgment is that it brings about this order without attributing the order to objective rules, or through an ordering by a concept.⁸

⁶ In his *Logic* from 1800, Kant defines judgment as "the presentation of the unity of consciousness of several presentations, or the presentation of their relation so far as they make up on concept" (Kant, 1974c, p. 106).

⁷ At a simple level, my empirical observations can issue in a judgment, this is a book, a determination made by relating the individual thing (this book here) to a concept (of book). As the determinate judgment is employed in the legislation of understanding, a category is related/ applied to a manifold of intuition.

⁸ From early on Kant had an interest in aesthetics—more properly, what one should call an empirical aesthetics, since he did not think that a *critique* of aesthetic taste was possible. Although he writes to Marcus Herz in 1771 indicating that he intends to write a work on aesthetics, as late as 1781 he considers this critique of taste an unlikely possibility. But by 1787 Kant found what he was looking for. He is able to write a critique of taste because he finds a distinct a priori principle that would give a rule to the feeling of pleasure and displeasure involved in taste. But when Kant then names the three parts of philosophy that have a priori principles he does not include aesthetics, but names them as theoretical philosophy, teleology, and practical philosophy. The obvious question is how Kant moves from his intended purpose to write a critique of taste to teleology. While initially concerned with a reflection on taste, which Kant situates in terms of judgment, Kant soon became concerned with the unity of the system. In this concern, Kant looked

How so? Reflecting in general, Kant tells us, is comparable to a deliberation.⁹ I see an object I do not recognize, and as such I cannot assume it under a general concept, but must search for it in another manner. In this search I can only proceed by combining likenesses with others and separating out difference as a way of generating its identity. In this way, reflecting proceeds from the particular to a general in its orientation to order. And if the general concept can only be given through reflecting, the reflective *judgment*, in effect, gives “a law from and to itself.” What is decisive here is that the comparing and combining, without a concept in advance, amounts to something like an imagined ordering, generating its own measure through an expectation of order, an anticipation of an ordered unity. Without this anticipation of an ordered unity the order would be infinitely deferred. Reflection thus requires a principle that does not just provide the *necessary condition* for the judgment’s function of subsumption, but serves as a *guide* for reflecting, and as such it can only be a *subjective* principle. Kant names this principle for proceeding in reflection to bring about the unity sought the principle of purposiveness (*Zweckmässigkeit*).¹⁰

for a way to unite nature and freedom through the judgment. If the judgment is to make possible the transition between nature and freedom, it can do so only in relation to the concept of a unifying supersensible ground of nature—a ground that would in some fashion then truly unite human life. The judgment provides this orientation in the concept of purposiveness. Thus the *Critique of Judgment* is written and justified as part of the critical system on the grounds of an a priori principle, viz., the purposiveness of nature, that in fact can only be ascribed to aesthetic judgment, since the teleological judgment, which presupposes a concept of the object, is not a pure reflective judgment.

⁹ Reflecting in general is comparable to a kind of deliberation in which one is “to compare and combine given representations with other representations or with one’s cognitive powers with respect to a concept which is thereby made possible” (Kant, 1965, p. 16). “Reflektieren (Überlegen) aber ist: gegebene Vorstellungen entweder mit andern, oder mit seinem Erkenntnisvermögen, in Beziehung auf einen dadurch möglichen Begriff, zu vergleichen und zusammen zu halten” (Kant, 1974b, p. 24).

¹⁰ As subjective, the principle is only a principle with respect to a formal purposiveness of nature, providing the condition for proceeding in reflection in order to bring about the unity sought: The purposiveness of nature is a rule whereby “nature is represented by means of this concept *as if* an understanding contained the ground of the variety of its empirical laws” (Kant, 1972, p. 17). In the subsequent section of the Second Introduction, Kant explains the transcendental status of the principle and defines the transcendental concept of purposiveness of nature as “neither a natural concept nor a concept of freedom, because it ascribes nothing to the object (of nature), but only represents the

What Kant means by purposiveness is not the simple idea of purpose as an adaptation to an end, as if purpose is simply deliberate creation, like the purpose of a clock is to indicate the time of day. Rather, purpose designates a specific form of unity where the concept of purpose acts as the cause of the actuality of the object (Kant, 1972, p. 55).¹¹ It is in effect something like intelligent agency such that what is attained by the reflective judgment is an ordering—an order of design where nature is not a mere aggregate; i.e., one part is not just adjacent to another part, but has its existence connected to that other part. But what then is the unity experienced by purposiveness? It would appear to be not much different from the idea of perfection as it was presented by Wolff and Baumgarten. Purposiveness appears to be much like the harmonious unification of the parts of a manifold.¹² Kant, though, will insist that he is not introducing a concept of perfection in this context, even though he admits that objective internal purposiveness does come close to the predicate of beauty. The obvious reason for this is that perfection requires the concept of what sort of thing the object is to be. What concerns Kant is not finding the perfection in something for which there is a determining in advance what the object ought to be—a matter for objective and thus conceptual determination—but only that in reflecting we judge the “subjective purposiveness of an object, not its perfection” (Kant, 1965, p. 33). It is in this subjective purposiveness that we experience an order that cannot appear under the conditions for theoretical knowledge, but is available to us in the realm of the sensuous.

Here we rejoin the matter of aesthetics, for it is with the aesthetic judgment of taste that the reflecting subject experiences a pleasure in the agreement instituted by the principle of purposiveness. The feeling of pleasure in an aesthetic judgment of taste is bound up with a purposiveness on a merely subjective basis as the harmony of the form of the object with the cognitive powers of imagination and understanding. This pleasure expresses a subjective formal purposiveness of the object, one that can

peculiar way we must proceed in reflection upon the objects of nature in reference to a thoroughly connected experience, and is consequently a subjective principle (maxim) of the judgment” (Kant, 1972, p. 20).

¹¹ See (Zamito, 1992, p. 90).

¹² See (Cassirer, 1981, p. 287).

only “prompt” the concept of purposiveness in nature. And this ordering carried out by reflecting in relation to a formal purposiveness upon the form of the object is precisely the order of the beautiful. Accordingly, the judgment that something is beautiful is made in reference to the form of purposiveness of an object that occasions a feeling of pleasure in the harmony of the cognitive faculties.

In describing the aesthetics of the beautiful in this way, it would appear that we are far removed from any logic of sorts, even a non-conceptual logic within aesthetics. Is it possible yet to see here a “logical” ordering taking place that is distinctive to the sensuous condition of aesthetic determination? To answer this question let us note Kant’s further description of the beautiful. In order to set the satisfaction in the beautiful apart from the satisfaction occurring in relation to the merely sensuous, Kant insists that regarding the beautiful there is both a universal and necessary *satisfaction*. In the case of universality, the universality is to be understood as the general validity with respect to the feeling of pleasure. Aesthetic universality postulates a universal voice that imputes the agreement of everyone, as if to say, in making a judgment of taste such as “this rose is beautiful,” I postulate that you too would say the rose is beautiful. In the case of the necessity, the necessity is simply called exemplary; “it is a necessity of the assent of all to a judgment which is regarded as an example of a universal rule that we cannot state” (Kant, 1972, p. 74).¹³ In this context, what is exemplary always exists in an individual presentation.

Accordingly, in the beautiful there is a non-conceptual ordering in which it is impossible to give a conceptual rule. The very exemplarity of the beautiful signals an absent law. But if the rule is missing, from where do we get the exemplary force of the example? What gives the singularity of the beautiful its ordering power (the very aesthetic universality and necessity prescribed in it)? Because the ordering by the concept is restricted by Kant at every turn, we know that it cannot come from the ordering through the logic of concepts. Rather, as we have seen with respect to the self-generated, and self-binding of the principle of purposiveness in the

¹³ The idea of exemplarity also occurs in the discussion of genius in §46 of the *Critique of Judgment*. Genius is a talent for producing that for which no definite rule can be given, and this originality is its first property, but its products should be exemplary in the sense that they serve as a rule of judgment for others.

reflective judgment, the ordering power comes from, for want of a better phrase, the generative connecting occurring within the sensuous. To explain this in more detail, let me turn to my final consideration.

4. Third Consideration

When Kant defines the aesthetic judgment in relation to the feeling of pleasure and pain at the outset of the Third Critique, he does so by separating this feeling from mere sensation. To quote the text: The aesthetic judgment is one in which “the representation is altogether referred to the subject and to its feeling of life under the name of the feeling of pleasure and pain” (Kant, 1972, p. 38). The feeling distinctive to aesthetics is the “feeling of life,” and we would assume that the life referred to here is something more than biological life. But how much more is not at all clear, since life in relation to pleasure and pain is certainly a component of biological life. We are able to gain some clarity on this from Kant’s remarks in his *Anthropology*. Here he defines life as the alternation of states of pleasure and pain, and describes both, but most certainly with respect to pain, as a vital force. Thus immediately we can say that the life at issue in aesthetic judgment is life in its vivification, life in its making alive of life. Pleasure is thus not a blind feeling, but the feeling of life being promoted. And pain, he tells us, must precede pleasure since in its opposition to pleasure it is “the spur of activity in which we feel our life” (Kant, 1974a, p. 100). Kant captures this distinction in his aesthetics in relation to the beautiful and the sublime. With the sublime there is a feeling of a momentary check to the vital forces, whereas the beautiful “is directly attended with a feeling of the furtherance of life [*Beförderung des Lebens*]” (Kant, 1972, p. 83). This furtherance of life appears to be possible only under the condition where life is in accord with itself, which is precisely what is displayed by the beautiful.

We have a further indication of what Kant means by this idea of the furtherance of life from his *Nachlass*. He writes: “It all comes down to life—whatever vivifies [*belebt*] is pleasurable. Life is unity; taste has as its principle the unity of vivifying sensations.” And to this Kant then adds: “freedom is original life and its coherence [*Zusammenhang*] is the condition

for the harmony [*Übereinstimmung*] of all living; thus that which furthers the feeling of universal life is the cause of pleasure. Do we feel ourselves at home in universal life?" (Kant, 2005, p. 443). The vital force of life is thus a force relative to the highest order of life, viz., freedom, which Kant identifies in the third Critique as the supersensible ground of nature.¹⁴ And in another note Kant writes: "That appearance which awakens the consciousness of the promotion of life in intuition is beautiful," adding parenthetically, "either immediately through the object (appearance) or through reflection (beautiful cognition)" (Kant, 2005, p. 511). Accordingly, we can say that in the aesthetic reflective judgment, in beautiful cognition, there is a feeling of pleasure as the feeling of intelligent life relative to its promotion. It is a feeling beyond mere passivity: "We linger in our contemplation of the beautiful because the contemplation reinforces and reproduces itself." In the feeling of pleasure there is an awareness and engagement in the world of sense—the experience of freedom bound up with its materiality. The feeling of life (*Lebensgefühl*) is bound up with a spiritual feeling (*Geistesgefühl*).¹⁵

But let us not take Kant's position as one that is simply concerned with the bridge between nature and freedom, which is clearly signaled by the

¹⁴ In his *Lectures on Ethics* Kant writes: "Freedom is the faculty which gives unlimited usefulness to all others. It is the highest order of life The inner worth of the world is freedom in accordance with a will which is not necessitated to action. Freedom is the inner worth of the world" (Kant, 2001, p. 125).

¹⁵ The issue here is best expressed through what Kant calls the sensible illustration in the beautiful, i.e., the beautiful as a symbol of the moral good. It is only in the capacity for symbolic sensible illustration that the beautiful

gives us pleasure with an attendant claim to the assent of everyone else, in which the mind is at the same time aware of a certain ennoblement and elevation That is the *intelligible* to which taste looks, with which our higher cognitive faculties are in accord In this faculty judgment does not see itself . . . as subject to the heteronomy of the laws of experience; it gives the law to itself in respect of the objects of so pure a satisfaction . . . ; and it sees itself, both on account of this inner possibility in the subject as well as on account of the outer possibility of nature that corresponds to it, as related to something inside the subject itself and outside of it, which is neither nature nor freedom, but which is connected with the ground of the latter, namely the supersensible in which the theoretical faculty is combined with the practical in a mutual and unknown way, to form a unity" (Kant, 1972, p.199).

In the particular vividness of the beautiful—a vividness in relation to a felt accord—the mind is strengthened, *as if* it has received confirmation that it is universal life.

idea of a spiritual feeling. Let us consider the full import of the peculiar ratio that lies within the idea of the furtherance of life. For this we have to bear in mind the precise character of the order produced by the reflective judgment. It does not produce an analytic order, as the understanding does with respect to nature, but rather, an as-if order of connectedness to the whole. Herein we encounter a very different ratio than that of theoretical reason. The contingency that remains after the understanding has performed its function, cannot be subsumed under a universal. The principle of purposiveness for the reflective judgment connects what is individual without bringing the individual under a universal that would displace the individuality for the sake of a concept of universality. Through the principle of the reflective judgment there is a rule of organization, not a concept for subsumption. It is, one could say, a ratio of harmony, of accord—a ratio in which there is a feeling of pleasure.

Let us call this organization the organization of sensible reason. It is reason occurring within a life in which the perfect rationalization of the real can at best be displayed through sensible illustration, as if for human life alone there is the beautiful. The idea of a sensible reason, though, is ultimately without construction, i.e., there can be no science of the beautiful.

5. Conclusion

To conclude, I only want to briefly recall Baumgarten's idea of new science that would be an *ars analogon rationis*. For him sensible cognition is similar to rational cognition insofar as it also carries out the generally understood operation of reason: the ability to recognize identity and difference among things, and to estimate. In its parallel to pure reason Baumgarten will insist that aesthetics has a degree of truth—a degree of truth that would be in relation to what is individual. Kant's protest to Baumgarten's version of aesthetics was always in plain sight. Aesthetics for Kant is not a matter of a confused cognition, nor is it to be understood in relation to a concept of perfection. And yet, he recognizes along with Baumgarten that aesthetics belongs to human life as the way of traveling from "night to noon." He too sees the need for understanding the connection among things in a way that pure reason cannot itself produce.

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Philosophizing through Moving-Image Artworks: An Alternative Way Out*

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ABSTRACT. Noël Carroll has claimed that there is at least one film —*Serene Velocity* (1970)— that may be said, unequivocally, to be an example of doing philosophy through film, even if he does not think that this is the only example. Simultaneously, he has stood for the possibility of a genuine philosophical interpretation (that is, the interpreter does genuine philosophy) by fine-tuning the conceptual analysis initiated through certain artworks, as *Serene Velocity*.

In order to defend the genuine philosophical nature of this kind of interpretations, Carroll compares it with the task of the historian of philosophy and with the task of being an interpreter of a literary “philosophical artwork”. I would hold the claim that there is a conceptual gap between both members of the comparison that can’t be fulfilled by means of Carroll’s strategy.

In his attempt to answer the question ‘can motion pictures do philosophy, and not only ever illustrate philosophical ideas?’, Carroll appeals to a very restricted notion of philosophy when he stipulates that, in order to be a piece of “original philosophizing”, something has to be *philosophical* “in the strong sense of being an original addition to the fund of philosophical knowledge”. Nevertheless, there is a biased answer tainted by the presuppositions of the previous question. If we try to rethink Carroll’s main question in the light of a broader notion of philosophy, the field of answers may be interestingly enlarged: for example, borrowing the Wittgensteinian idea of philosophy as a way to respond to “aesthetic perplexities” and the “dimensional” structure of understanding.

There are two questions in the primary background of my paper. The first question is “Is it possible to do philosophy through films?” The second

* This paper is part of the research projects FFI2011-23362, funded by the Spanish Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación, and 18958/JLI/13, supported by Fundación Séneca. Agencia de Ciencia y Tecnología de la Región de Murcia

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question is “Can interpretations of motion pictures ever be authentically philosophical in their own right?”

I will take as a main reference of my paper the answer to those questions offered by Noël Carroll in his article “Philosophizing through the Moving Image: The Case of ‘Serene Velocity’” (*The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*. Vol. 64, No. 1, 2006).

I am convinced that Carroll’s article contributes to shedding light on these matters. Nevertheless, my aim is to criticize some aspects of his answers and, subsequent to those criticisms, to claim for an alternative way (or maybe complementary way) of putting the answers in a framework.

In his “Philosophizing through the Moving Image: The Case of ‘Serene Velocity’”, Noël Carroll challenges the question ‘can motion pictures do philosophy, and not only ever illustrate philosophical ideas?’ The answer for him in this paper is that there is at least one film —*Serene Velocity* (1970) by Ernie Gehr— that may be said, unequivocally, to be an example of doing philosophy through film, even if he does not think that this is the only example. *Serene Velocity* is a significant example of minimal experimental filmmaking, a silent film of 23 minutes. The filmmaker positioned his tripod within a corridor and then proceeded to alter his zoom lens every four frames “like the slide on a trombone —moving it forward and backward at a regular pace—“ says Carroll (Carroll 2006, 178). And, following again Carroll’s words, “As a result, the different focal lengths of the zoom shot are juxtaposed at uniform intervals to each other, resulting in different phenomenological effects. For example, when slightly dissimilar segments of the zoom shots are adjacent to each other, the screen becomes animated and the hallway appears to give birth to the impression of movement” (Carroll 2006, 178). Carroll does not think that *Serene Velocity* is the only example of doing philosophy through film, but he thinks that “one example is enough to quell skeptical misgivings about the possibility altogether of producing philosophy by means of the moving image” (Carroll 2006, 174). In fact, at the end of the article Carroll concedes that “I have relied on the experimental cinema to build my argument. I do not believe that this is the only place when one can find philosophizing through the moving image. It may occur in the mainstream narrative cinema”.

Naturally, Carroll distinguishes between motion pictures doing philosophy (philosophy through film) and motion pictures just illustrating or re-

counting philosophy (philosophical questions, philosophical authors, etc.) like when we use films as educational resources for philosophy. Derek Jarman's film *Wittgenstein* or a filmed discourse by Arthur Danto on the transfiguration of the commonplace are good examples of the first kind, but there philosophy "has not really been made *by means of* the art of the moving image — namely, by means of the characteristic expositional devices of the various motion pictures genres, including their recurrent visual, audio, and narrative structures" (Carroll 2006, 174).

In order to overcome skeptical arguments, Carroll avoids the films putting forth or illustrating or instantiating philosophical ideas with cinematic élan (psychoanalytic ideas, for example, in the case of W. Pabst's *Secrets of a Soul*), but not conveying a general belief "to warrant the sort of general claims that are the stuff of philosophy" (Carroll 2006, p. 175). Thus, Carroll focuses on conceptual films, rather than empirical ones (either narrative or experimental ones), such as *Serene Velocity*. Gehr's film can easily be classified as a minimalist film because it pursues reflexivity through reduction (as minimal art generally does). *Serene Velocity* is a kind of meta-cinema and invites the viewer to reflect on the difference between photography and cinematography (as *moving* images).

Serene Velocity is philosophical in the robust sense assessed by Carroll in front of the skeptic. It means that *Serene Velocity* is a genuine instance of philosophizing through moving images because "[its] topic, the nature of the motion picture, is unquestionably philosophical. This is surely not the only question that a philosopher may ask of motion pictures, but it is undeniably one of them. Moreover, *Serene Velocity* proposes its answer to that question by means of the art of the motion picture — by the juxtaposition of settings on the zoom lens. Indeed, the film and its argumentative purport is entirely an affair of visual invention, thoroughly without words, except for the title." (Carroll 2006, 179).

Nevertheless, there is a second possibility (the less-robust one, we could say): the question of whether interpretations of motion pictures (not just the motion pictures themselves) can ever be authentically philosophical. In other words, *Serene Velocity* is an example of philosophizing through the moving image because it is a piece of conceptual analysis to the effect that movement is a necessary condition of film. But an interpretation of *Serene Velocity* can go beyond the conceptual analysis implicit in Gehr's film

(and that interpretation may also involve a contribution to philosophy) because “he did not merely identify a necessary condition of the film medium, but found an essential, defining feature of the larger art form of which film is but a part” (Carroll 2006, 183). For Gehr, says Carroll, “cinema was film; the motion picture was celluloid based. Since 1970, the proliferation of different technologies for producing moving images, however, has grown and continues to grow. Now it is possible to make movies without film; the prospect of completely computer-generated moving pictures is in the offing.” (Carroll 2006, 183) Of course, a genuine philosophical interpretation is possible not only concerning philosophical films (in the robust sense, as in *Serene Velocity*), but also concerning non-strictly-philosophical films, and even non-filmic artworks.

So, a second challenge in Carroll’s article is to stand for the possibility of a genuine philosophical interpretation (that is, the interpreter does genuine philosophy) by fine-tuning the conceptual analysis initiated through certain artworks. In this regard, an interpretation of the significance of *Serene Velocity* may also involve a contribution to philosophy by refining and adjusting the conceptual analysis implicit in Gehr’s film in philosophically pertinent respects. My first criticism concerns Carroll’s strategy devoted to defending the possibility of a genuine philosophical interpretation by fine-tuning the philosophical significance of an artwork (what I called the second challenge of his article). In order to defend the genuine philosophical nature of this kind of interpretation, Carroll makes use of two kinds of comparisons. On the one hand, he compares it with the task of the historian of philosophy —“who in reconstructing the arguments of a past master, Kant, Leibniz or Plato for instance, fills them out in ways that go beyond the letter of text but arguably not beyond its spirit. For instance, identifying and supplying the premises an Immanuel Kant or a G.W. Leibniz neglected to articulate in an argument in order to make the argument go through, or clarifying a concept that a Plato left ambiguous in a way that puts his theory back in the game” (Carroll 2006, 182)—. On the other hand, Carroll compares the interpretation of *Serene Velocity* with the task of being an interpreter of a “philosophical artwork” (p. 182) such as Luigi Pirandello’s *Six Characters in Search of an Author*. I quote Carroll’s text:

“For example, Pirandello, through the voice of the Father, in the ‘outside’ or philosophical part of the play, says that stage characters have ‘more life than people who breathe and wear clothes.’ Here, the interpreter needs to gloss what Pirandello could mean by ‘life’ here. Where the interpreter helps out by finding an interpretation of his highly suggestive, intriguing, but somewhat obscure observation that is philosophical true —such as that fictional characters are more vivid because they are more unified in that they are tailored expressly for the stories in which they are found— the interpreter is obviously doing philosophy. That is, both Pirandello and the interpreter are cooperating in discovering a philosophical insight; Pirandello by initiating the thought, albeit imperfectly, and the interpreter by fleshing it out.” (Carroll 2006, 182)

I would hold the claim that Carroll’s comparisons are quite unfair to the extent that they presuppose the philosophical label of Kant’s texts or Pirandello’s work whereas the philosophical label of artworks such as *Serene Velocity* is not presupposed. There is, then, a conceptual gap between both members of the comparison that cannot be fulfilled by means of Carroll’s strategy. For the challenge here is to justify that interpretations of a film (or of an artwork) can be philosophical in their own right. Carroll chooses unequivocal labelled second terms of the comparison in order to equate the first term with the second one. Nevertheless, Carroll makes a good effort to underline the philosophical root of the interpretative task by pointing to the “going beyond”, “clarifying”, “identifying” or “supplying” in all the compared cases. Carroll could maybe adjust downwards the telescopic sight of his shotgun, instead of upwards, in his comparison. I agree with him when he says that the conceptual analysis of *Serene Velocity* that he proposes as interpretation is a genuinely philosophical one, but why is it not also a most basic activity, for example to catch the right way to understand an introduction in a musical piece, or to catch the right way to understand the role of colour on a canvas or in the complete work of a painter? For me, it is very clear that there is a conceptual moment in very quotidian (even if not continuous) experiences in which, for example, the apprentice musician is unable to understand the right way to play a score and is invited by his teacher to see something in a certain way (that musical phrase as an introduction, for example), or he is invited to compare or to

contextualize it in a certain way; sometimes the matter is just to be able to catch the expressive gesture on a hand (of an orchestra's conductor); in those situations, I feel myself called to interpret something in a way, that is, to find myself settled in a new dimension of understanding. I do not need to think in "historians of philosophy who recast certain theses of Baruch Spinoza in a way that illuminates contemporary debates about materialism" (Carroll 2006, 183). It seems to me that Carroll would have chosen a less extreme example (even aiming his shotgun upwards) without needing to appeal to clearly labelled ones. In fact, no artist can foresee all the interpretations of his work (not even Cervantes), but it does not turn every interpretation in a philosophical one. Maybe Cervantes would be a much labelled example in terms of "philosophizable" literature. But not even a pulp writer such as Eugène Sue could foresee how *Les mystères de Paris* would be read by a European reader of the XXIth century. In a similar vein, all artworks contain gaps which have to be filled in or completed by the interpreter in his cooperative task. It also seems to me that Carroll would have chosen a less labelled interpretation than that of a historian of philosophy: indeed, when a historian (not necessarily of philosophy) has to reconsider what it is 'to make history' in front of a perplexing text or historical fact, he is doing philosophy in a relevant sense.

In fact, the previous quotation by Carroll saying that the nature of the motion picture is a philosophical question, though "this is surely not the only question that a philosopher may ask of motion pictures" (Carroll 2016, 179) gave us a clue about the narrow scope of Carroll's concept of "philosophical" here. In other words, it seems as if, for Carroll, something could be 'philosophical' just if it is a question made by a philosopher (and not by an artist or a spectator, for instance).

My criticism leads us to the core of Carroll's article, concerning the problem of how to recognize the genuine philosophical nature of a conceptual activity —moving images *qua* philosophy—. In his attempt to answer the question 'can motion pictures do philosophy, and not only ever illustrate philosophical ideas?', Carroll appeals to a very restricted notion of philosophy when he stipulates that, in order to be a piece of "original philosophizing" (p. 179), something has to be *philosophical* "in the strong sense of being an original addition to the fund of philosophical knowledge" (p. 174). Thus, there is a biased answer tainted by the presuppositions of the

previous question. Indeed Carroll's claim for a strong sense of *philosophical* is very appropriate in order to get away with some obstinate *clichés*: showing actors mouthing the classic doctrines of dead philosophers onscreen, or getting some living philosopher to present their cutting-edge ideas to the camera, are not genuine examples of philosophizing through moving-image artworks. Other films (such as Pabst's films or Woody Allen's films quoted by Carroll) can be considered to put forth some elements of philosophical theorizing, or may succeed in crafting a counterexample to a philosophical claim, but all those cases are far from being said to *do* philosophy in a genuine sense. To that extent, I agree with Carroll's strategy and I am convinced that it is really valuable in order to clarify the discussion.

Naturally, Carroll is aware of the deep implications of his particular answer to the question about philosophical interpretations. After having ruled out a too controversial Hegelian conception of philosophy ("in which tracking the state of society in terms of the play of dialectical forces is philosophical, then interpreting the interaction and mutation of such factors as manifested in a motion picture will count as philosophy"[Carroll 2006, 182]), Carroll says:

"Perhaps a less contentious view of philosophy is that conceptual analysis is at least an important part of philosophy, even if philosophy *tout court* involves more than just conceptual analysis. If this is granted, then perhaps we can get a leg up on answering our question by investigating whether a film interpretation can ever contribute to conceptual analysis." (Carroll 20106, 182)

I agree with Carroll's assessment that "philosophy *tout court* involves more than just conceptual analysis". Nevertheless, I am not sure that I agree with him in what he means by "more than just conceptual analysis", because Carroll plays here with an implicit ambiguity. Of course, finding Friedrich Nietzsche's myth of the eternal return embedded in the film *Groundhog Day* (Harold Ramis, 1993) "is not philosophical in terms of creating original philosophy" (Carroll 2006, 182), even if it is a conceptual analysis of the film. "More than just conceptual analysis" here is precisely the originality lacking in that interpretation. And "originality" refers at the same time to *philosophical* "in the strong sense of being an original addition to the fund of philosophical knowledge" (p. 174) and to the "going

beyond” characterizing the cooperative task of the interpreter. It seems sometimes as if Carroll would subsume the second sense under the first one, that is, the creative task of the interpreter has been necessarily (or automatically) assimilated as a contribution to the fund of philosophical knowledge. And then it is quite easy to know what interpretation “would be worthy of the sobriquet of ‘philosophy’” (Carroll 2006, 182). We have enough academic criteria (reviews, books, conferences, syllabus, etc.) to look into it.

The problem—in my opinion—is that, by following this line of argument, we would probably lose an essential sense of philosophy: the sense in which philosophy points to an activity, a moment of the cognitive process—not exclusive to academic specialists or professional philosophers, of course—and not just to a theoretical *corpus of knowledge*. If we try to rethink Carroll’s main question in the light of a broader notion of philosophy, the field of answers may be interestingly enlarged. For example, if we borrow the Wittgensteinian idea of philosophy as a way of responding to “aesthetic perplexities” (*Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief*, chap. IV), and the “dimensional” structure of understanding (*Philosophical Investigations*, II, XI), the philosophical activity looks very similar to the act of putting on the table the plans of my home’s electrical circuits. At this moment, we stop using the switches and plugs as we usually do and the concept is considered *as* a concept, that is, isolated from its usual cogwheel in language (in the usual *language games*) and is now in its related place connected with other concepts. This kind of activity plays a very significant role for authors, audiences, historians, critics, and not just for philosophers.

Ultimately, ‘can we do philosophy through moving-images?’ The answer is obviously ‘yes’, for we can do activities of conceptual clearing up, of viewing a thing in a new comprehensive dimension, an *übersichtliche Darstellung* where the previous perplexity loses its itching effect, through films, pieces of film or kinetic experiments, as well as through words, still images (such as photos, paintings or drawings) or sounds (music or a particular voice inflection). In fact, we are doing that when a painter needs to stop painting (he is maybe just stopping painting a canvas or he is maybe stopping his entire career as an artist: it is not relevant here) and to seriously consider the question ‘what does it mean to paint?’ in order to change

one's style, or when somebody is able to appreciate an artwork, a part of an artwork or the whole work of an artist as being really valuable (or understanding it in the right way) from a new angle or perspective provided by a gesture, a good analogy or a new context. And then, the question of the philosophical status of a particular film (such as *Serene Velocity*) or a specific film genre (such as *avantgarde* or experimental films, fiction films, etc.), even if it remains to be seen as a pertinent one, looks at a new range of relevance, or, at least, looks at the issue in a more balanced way.

Nevertheless, *philosophy* as a moment, as an attitude —not just a thing, like a film or a text— is compatible with a sense of *philosophy* in which there may exist a territory of those philosophical activities that can be specially or specifically characterized by means of a philosophical tradition, some 'theoretical credentials' (p. 184) or an academic protocol.

My suspicion is that Carroll's argument has ignored (firstly) what could be called 'the *protocol* factor' in his approach to the main question, to bring it back (secondly), in an underhand way, when he claims for the original philosophical status of cases such as *Serene Velocity* by comparing them with other examples of philosophical works.

Carroll is right when he notices that, in order to be "philosophical", the thing has to be made by means of the art of a medium (and not only to illustrate or bring up a philosophical topic). He is right also when he notices that a "philosophical" interpretation means a certain "going beyond" related to the object of that interpretation. But "going beyond" does not exclusively concern philosophy understood as a corpus of knowledge (governed by the protocol factor). The "going beyond" may also concern the personal and everyday task of clarifying and gaining access to new dimensions of understanding (in art, in science, in history and even in everyday life). I have faith that the Wittgensteinian idea of 'seeing aspects' (going beyond the starting point of perceptual situations) has something relevant to tell us in that sense.

Of course, my criticism far from ruins the contribution of Carroll's article, but it could help to relocate it in a richer perspective. At the moment, to finish, let me just pose some additional questions and try to answer them providing an alternative way out.

Firstly, is it possible, then, to build a catalogue of philosophical films, in Carroll's robust sense of 'philosophical'? Perhaps yes, despite the fact

that Carroll himself insists on a very restrictive criterion, especially with reference to the avant-garde tradition: “I still do not believe—for the reasons expressed in my earlier work—that there are as many of these works as some commentators on the avant-garde appear to believe, but now I concede that there may be some, whereas earlier I was more skeptical.” (Carroll 2006, p. 184 n.1) Nevertheless, in my opinion, the actual utility of such a catalogue is less probable than the utility of a catalogue of non-strictly-philosophical films similar to the tacit catalogue that all we usually use in our philosophy courses or classes.

Secondly, is there some relationship between the philosophical character of the object-film and the philosophical character of the interpretations aroused by this object-film? Is the first status dependent on the second status and deepness? I think that *Serene Velocity* contains in its intrinsic qualities all the potential power of the further philosophical interpretations, regardless of Gehr’s initial awareness of it.

Finally, maybe the most important question is not whether there are (or not) philosophical films (or even philosophical moving images), but rather what ‘philosophical’ means in this context. Indeed, we are constructing a genuine philosophical experience, after Carroll and after the film, in practising the exercise of questioning. In other words, the really interesting question is how the features of the ‘philosophical’ can appear in artistic and creative products (regardless of the artistic medium: film, painting, music...) but also in the interpretations of artistic and non-artistic objects, as well as in other wide-ranging human activities.

So that is why I claim for a tension between a notion of philosophy as a corpus of knowledge (more or less subject to protocols), and a notion of philosophy as a moment of the thinking process, a very particular and characteristic movement of thinking not exclusive to philosophers at all, even if as Wittgenstein said, the philosopher is used to seeing flowers or berries in the forest where the man “who is not used to searching in the forest for flowers, berries, or plants, will not find any because his eyes are not trained to see them.” (Wittgenstein 1998, 29)

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Beauty and the Sensory-Dependence-Thesis

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ABSTRACT. The sensory-dependence-thesis claims that beauty necessarily depends in part on sensory properties. Consequently, judgements of beauty about non-sense-perceptual features or objects like, for example, character traits or mathematical proofs, can only be understood metaphorically. Aestheticians have disagreed about this thesis throughout the history of aesthetics. Despite this enduring disagreement, hardly any meta-theoretical debate about the sensory-dependence-thesis exists. This paper aims to start such a debate. It accepts Gaut's challenge that the burden of proof is on the defenders of the thesis and examines four arguments supporting it. According to the first argument, the sensory-dependence-thesis should be accepted because judgements of beauty are made immediately and must therefore depend on immediately accessible, sensory properties. According to the second, because it best explains the intuitively appealing and widely accepted acquaintance principle. According to the third, because, etymologically considered, "aesthetic" means "pertaining to sense perception" and hence all aesthetic properties have to partly depend on sensory properties. According to the fourth, because any theory of beauty should avoid impoverishing our means of expression and rejecting the sensory-dependence-thesis would lead to such an impoverishment. This paper argues that although the first three arguments fail, the fourth provides a good metatheoretical reason for the sensory-dependence-thesis.

i. Introduction

Think of a piece of music, a birdsong, a painting, or a landscape, and try to imagine that you find them beautiful. And now try to imagine that how they sound or look like has not influenced your judgements of beauty. Assumedly, that is hard to imagine. The beauty of those objects depends on their sensory properties, especially, on their sounds and colours.¹ This

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¹ This paper will not discuss whether beauty can only depend on visual and auditory, perhaps even only on visual properties, as some authors suggest, see, e.g., Scruton (2011), p. 20; Tatarkiewicz (1972), p. 166; Tolstoy (1899), pp. 13-14. It allows that beauty can also depend in part on gustatory, olfactory, and tactual properties.

does neither mean that beauty itself is a sensory property, nor that it completely depends on sensory properties, only that it partly depends on them. This thesis is rather uncontroversial. It becomes controversial, however, if beauty has to partly depend on sensory properties. Exactly this is the claim of the sensory-dependence-thesis. If one accepts this thesis, judgements of beauty about non-sense-perceptual features or objects cannot be interpreted in a literal sense. Non-sense-perceptual features or objects cannot be directly perceived by the senses, although they might be accessible by means of sense perception.² The character of a person, for example, has no colour, or sound, or any other sensory property. Although gestures or facial expression are perceptible by the senses and can give some hints, what kind of character a person has needs to be *inferred* based on various observations.³ Consequently, a judgement of beauty about the character of a person, that is, a judgement of inner beauty, can only be understood metaphorically. The same holds for judgements of beauty about proofs, theorems, theories, or ideas, or about the mere content of poems or novels, or about non-sense-perceptual conceptual works of art.

The sensory-dependence-thesis is controversial as a look into the history of aesthetics shows. Although ancient and medieval philosophers tend to reject the thesis, whereas contemporary aestheticians tend to accept it, one finds defenders and opponents of it at all times.⁴ Defenders are amongst others Beardsley, Burke, Danto, Kant, Schiller, and Zangwill.⁵ Opponents are amongst others Gaut, Hutcheson, McGinn, Plato, Plotinus, and Reid.⁶

Opponents can point out that that we attribute beauty to non-sense-perceptual features and objects in everyday life.⁷ From time to time, we speak about beautiful character traits, characters, or souls, about the beautiful content of literary works, about beautiful theorems, proofs, and ideas,

² See, e.g., Binkley (1977), p. 269; Costello (2013), p. 277; p. 295; Shelley (2003), p. 372.

³ See, e.g., Schmitt & Altstötter-Gleich (2010), p. 9.

⁴ For example, Plato (1925, 298 a) and Aristotle (1997, 146a.21) mention the view that beauty is what is pleasant to the eyes and ears, see also Tatarkiewicz (1972), pp. 165-166.

⁵ See, e.g., Beardsley (1962), p. 624; Burke (1990), p. 83, pp. 101-102; Danto (2003), p. 93; Kant (1986); Schiller (1971), p. 28; Zangwill (2001), p. 122, p. 127.

⁶ See, e.g., Gaut, (2007), chap. 6; Hutcheson (2004), p. 24; McGinn (1997), chap. 5; Plato (1925); (2006); Plotinus (2002); Reid (1796), p. 424; p. 448.

⁷ See, e.g., Gaut (2007), p. 124; Meskin (2004), p. 74.

and so on. Furthermore proverbs like “True beauty comes from within” testify the widespread belief that beauty should not be restricted to the sensory realm. But other proverbs like “Beauty is only skin-deep” support the sensory-dependence-thesis. And defenders of the thesis can point out that we do not attribute beauty as naturally and easily to non-sense-perceptual features and objects as to sense-perceptual ones. If we call a person beautiful based on her character, we not simply say that she is beautiful. We tend to add that we speak about inner beauty. If, on the other hand, we judge her to be beautiful based on her outward appearance, we feel no need to explain or clarify our statement. So the sensory-dependence-thesis is controversial both on a philosophical and a pretheoretical, intuitive level.

Given this disagreement, it surprises that hardly any aesthetic debate about the sensory-dependence-thesis exists.⁸ The reason might be that the sensory-dependence-thesis follows, for example, from Kant’s theory of (free) beauty, but not from a Platonic theory of beauty. The crucial question might not be whether to accept the sensory-dependence-thesis, but whether to accept a Platonic, or Kantian, or any other elaborated theory of beauty. Thinking about the sensory-dependence-thesis independently from an elaborated theory of beauty, that is, on a metatheoretical level, might not be necessary.

But not few aestheticians accept or reject the sensory-dependence-thesis not as a consequence of their theories, but as a basic assumption.⁹ And it is a natural first step into elaborating a theory of beauty to think about the scope of beauty, that is, about what kind of objects can be called literally beautiful. Accepting the sensory-dependence-thesis leads to a narrow scope of beauty allowing only judgements of beauty about sense-perceptual features and objects to be understood literally. Rejecting the

⁸ Exceptions prove the rule, see, e.g., Gaut (2007), chap. 6. Some authors discuss the extended sensory-dependence-thesis, that is, whether aesthetic properties have to partly depend on sensory properties, see, e.g., Carroll (2004); Shelley (2003); Zangwill (2001), chap. 8. Section 4 of this paper will discuss the extended sensory-dependence-thesis in detail.

⁹ For example, Burke and Reid both explain beauty in terms of loveability, but whereas Burke (1990, p. 83) accepts the sensory-dependence-thesis at the beginning of his treatise, Reid (1796, p. 448), denies it.

thesis leads to a wide scope of beauty allowing also judgements of beauty about non-sense-perceptual features and objects to be understood literally. The scope of beauty determines which judgements a theory of beauty has to analyse in detail. Furthermore, a wide scope is sometimes considered as suggesting a subjectivist theory.¹⁰ Additionally, a wide scope gives a reason to reject a theory of beauty that cannot explain judgements of beauty about non-sense-perceptual features or objects.¹¹ A narrow scope, on the other hand, gives a reason to reject or restrict a theory of beauty that allows non-sense-perceptual features and objects to be literally beautiful. So the sensory-dependence-thesis can influence what kind of theory of beauty one formulates and/or whether one approves of an elaborated theory. Some metatheoretically acceptable arguments for or against the sensory-dependence-thesis are desirable. The premises of such arguments should not only be acceptable by representatives of one specific elaborated theory of beauty, but of different theories of beauty in order to count as metatheoretically acceptable.

Gaut argues that the burden of proof rests with the defenders of the thesis.¹² Attributing beauty to non-sense-perceptual features or objects is neither uncommon, nor obviously false, nor senseless. This provides prima facie evidence for a literal interpretation. In order to argue against such a literal interpretation, the sensory-dependence-thesis has to be defended because it blocks a literal interpretation. This article accepts Gaut's challenge. It considers four arguments supporting the sensory-dependence-thesis, at which one can find hints in literature. Section 2 discusses the argument of immediacy, section 3 the argument of the acquaintance principle, section 4 the etymological argument, and section 5 the argument of irreducibility. It will turn out that only the fourth argument provides a good metatheoretical reason for the sensory-dependence-thesis. To avoid any misunderstanding, this paper defends the sensory-dependence-thesis only with respect to beauty. It does not extend it to all aesthetic properties.

¹⁰ See, e.g., Reid (1796), p. 779; Sircello (1975), p. 5.

¹¹ See, e.g., Plotinus (2002), p. 28.

¹² See Gaut (2007), p. 124.

2. The Argument of Immediacy

To begin with, sometimes we say something like “I can see that this rose is beautiful” or “I hear the beauty of this song”. Straightforwardly interpreted, this way of speaking implies that beauty itself is a sensory property. But, first, beauty would have to be perceptible by different senses, although normally sensory properties can only be perceived by one sense. Colours can be seen, sounds be heard, and so on. And beauty is not always purely visual or auditory (or purely gustatory, olfactory, or tactual). The beauty of some objects does not neatly fall into one of these categories. The beauty of a person, for example, is not purely visual, but also partly auditory and olfactory.¹³ So beauty would be a rather odd sensory property, not clearly connected to one of the senses. Secondly, if two persons perceive an object under the same circumstances and if their senses are not seriously impaired, they should have the same sense perception. But they can and often do disagree in their judgements of beauty.¹⁴ Thus if we say that we perceive that something is beautiful, this way of speaking should not be understood as implying that beauty itself is a sensory quality.

Rather, this common way of speaking may simply point out that how we perceive sensory properties and how we form judgements of beauty saliently resemble each other, namely, in their immediacy. We immediately see, for example, that a rose is red and immediately judge that it is beautiful. Inspired by this similarity, one can try to develop an argument for the sensory-dependence-thesis, even for its stronger version: (P₁^{IM}) Judgements about the beauty of x are/can be made immediately. (P₂^{IM}) If judgements about the beauty of x are or can be made immediately, beauty has to depend on immediately accessible properties of x. (P₃^{IM}) Immediately accessible properties of x are its sensory properties or depend on those. Consequently, beauty has to depend on sensory properties. The crucial question is what “immediately” exactly means in the context of this argument. One can think of a temporal, an epistemic, and a logical interpretation.

Temporally interpreted, “immediately” means “immediately after the first acquaintance with x”. Undisputedly, *some* judgements of beauty are

¹³ See, e.g., Etcoff (1999), pp. 235–241.

¹⁴ See, e.g., Hutcheson (2004), p. 24.

made immediately after the first acquaintance with an object. Sometimes we meet someone and instantly think “Wow, what a beautiful person”. Sometimes we see a hitherto unknown painting or hear piece of music for the first time and can appreciate their beauty straightaway. Examples like these are numerous. Sometimes the beauty of an object strikes us at once.

Sometimes, however, one forms a judgement of beauty, only after one has been acquainted with an object for some time, and the object in question has not always changed during this time. Sometimes one needs to look at a painting or to hear a piece of music again and again in order to appreciate their beauty. This observation does not yet defeat a temporal interpretation of PI^{IM} as long as we could have judged the beauty of the painting or the piece of music at once. Perhaps, we have not seen the painting’s beauty at once because we have been inattentive or have concentrated on the “wrong” features. If we would have looked more carefully, we could have instantly seen its beauty. Perhaps, we have not heard the music’s beauty because we have had a lack of musical education at this time. Otherwise, we would have heard the beauty at once.

But some works of art are very complex, and one simply needs time to get to know the whole work, no matter how well educated one is and how attentively or carefully one studies the work. And judgements of beauty are not only about works of art. Think, for example, about judgements of beauty about human beings. At the first encounter with a person, one gets to know one aspect of her character, if one is lucky. In order to really get to know her character, one needs time, one has to observe her in different situations at different times, and has to talk and listen to her. That is why judgements of beauty about the character of a person cannot be made immediately after the first acquaintance with a person. One can deny that this an examples of a literal judgement of beauty, but this would beg the question. So temporarily interpreted, only some, but not all judgements of beauty can be made immediately after the first acquaintance with an object.¹⁵ But this restricted reading of PI does not suffice to argue for the sensory-dependence-thesis, which applies to all judgements of beauty.

¹⁵ See, e.g., Hume (2006), p. 5; Reid (1796), p. 455.

Epistemically interpreted, “immediately” means “without any (conceptual) knowledge about x”. This interpretation is inspired by remarks of Hutcheson and Kant.¹⁶ Basically, both authors defend the same idea.¹⁷ We can form a judgement of beauty about an object even if we do not know what kind of object it is. We do not have to know whether it is a human being, a work of art, a flower, or anything else. We also do not have to know what it symbolises or which purpose it fulfils. Judgements of beauty do not require any conceptual knowledge about an object.

But if one prefers a theory of beauty explaining beauty primarily in terms of perfection, some conceptual knowledge about the object of the judgement of beauty seems to be necessary. Representatives of such theories would hence reject the epistemic interpretation of P_1^{IM} . And even Kant would only defend the epistemic interpretation of P_1^{IM} with respect to some judgements of beauty, namely, those of free beauty. Judgements of dependent beauty presuppose a concept of the object in question.¹⁸ So one cannot metatheoretically defend that all judgements of beauty can be made without any (conceptual) knowledge about the object in question, and the epistemic interpretation of P_1^{IM} therefore is not a good premise for a metatheoretically acceptable argument in favour of the sensory-dependence-thesis.

Logically interpreted, “immediately” means “non-inferentially”. Accordingly, P_1^{IM} claims that judgements of beauty are not inferred from principles. Representatives of aesthetic rationalism would reject such an interpretation of P_1^{IM} .¹⁹ Yet, following the British empiricist tradition and of course Kant’s influential aesthetic theory, the logical interpretation of P_1^{IM} has become a commonplace in aesthetics.²⁰ And our everyday life experience seems to confirm this assumption. We do not reason out that something is beautiful, although we sometimes try to explain our judgements of beauty afterwards. And we lack any sufficiently concrete principles of beauty from which we could infer that something is beautiful,

¹⁶ See Hutcheson (2004), 25; Kant (1963), AA V 207.

¹⁷ Carroll (2001, pp. 25-26) interprets Hutcheson in this sense.

¹⁸ See Kant (1963), § 16.

¹⁹ See, e.g., Beiser (2009), p. 2; Shelley (2013), § 1.1.

²⁰ See, e.g., Hutcheson (2004), 25; Kant (1963), AA V 216; Mothersill (1984), chap. IV/V; Shelley (2013), § 1.1.; Sibley (1965), p. 153.

and aesthetics has failed to provide us with such principles. The logical interpretation of P_1^{IM} is hence both intuitive appealing and widely accepted in aesthetics.

Hutcheson points out that forming a judgement of beauty resembles sense perception in this respect.²¹ We also do not infer that an object possesses a certain sensory property, we simply perceive it. This is one of the reasons why Hutcheson speaks of taste as an internal sense. This similarity, however, does not yet secure the success of the argument of immediacy. The logical interpretation leads to problems defending P_2^{IM} . It does not follow from the non-inferentiality of judgements of beauty that beauty has to depend on non-inferentially accessible properties. Let us assume that the beauty of an object partly depends on a property, which has to be inferred. Yet, inferring the property and forming a judgement of beauty are two separate processes. After one has inferred that the object possesses this property, one can non-inferentially form a judgement of beauty.²² That is why the logical interpretation of the argument of immediacy fails at P_2^{IM} .

To recap, the temporal and the epistemic interpretation cannot defend P_1^{IM} with respect to all judgements of beauty, and the logical interpretation cannot defend P_2^{IM} . So although forming a judgement of beauty resembles sense perception, both are made non-inferentially, this resemblance does not suffice to establish the sensory-dependence-thesis.

3. The Argument of the Acquaintance Principle

The second argument draws on the so-called acquaintance principle. The basic idea of the acquaintance principle is that one cannot judge and appreciate something aesthetically without a first-hand experience. Judgements of beauty are traditionally considered as examples of aesthetic (value) judgements. Hence the acquaintance principle also applies to them, and sometimes the principle is explicitly formulated with reference to judgements of beauty.²³ Focused on judgements of beauty, the principle claims

²¹ See Hutcheson (2004), 25.

²² See, e.g., Hume (2006), p. 5; Shelley (2013), § 1.1.

²³ See, e.g., Kant (1963), p. AA V 216; Reid (1796), p. 429.

that a first-hand experience of an object is prerequisite for a judgement of beauty. Consequently, I cannot judge an object to be beautiful if I am not personally acquainted with it, even if someone else has described it to me or has asserted that it is beautiful.

The argument of the acquaintance principle is inspired by an observation made by Konisberg.²⁴ Often the acquaintance principle and the sensory dependence of beauty (or aesthetic properties in general)²⁵ are mentioned and defended in the same context.²⁶ Therefore it seems natural to speculate that a close connection between the acquaintance principle and the sensory-dependence-thesis exists. This leads to the argument of the acquaintance principle: (P₁^{AP}) A judgement of beauty about x requires a first-hand experience of x. (P₂^{AP}) The best explanation why a judgement of beauty about x requires a first-hand experience of x is that beauty has to partly depend on sensory properties of x. P₁^{AP} states the acquaintance principle focussed upon judgements of beauty. P₂^{AP} claims that the sensory-dependence-thesis best explains the acquaintance principle. So if one does not want to give up the acquaintance principle, one should also accept the sensory-dependence-thesis. One should be equally committed to the sensory-dependence-thesis as to the acquaintance principle.

Wollheim introduces the acquaintance principle as “a well-entrenched principle in aesthetics” (Wollheim 1980, 223). And various aestheticians do indeed accept the principle.²⁷ And it is not only widely accepted in aesthetics, it is also intuitively appealing.²⁸ One might object that some authors have raised the acquaintance principle to question in recent years and that it has undergone various reformulations.²⁹ For the sake of the argument, however, let us accept P₁^{AP} for the moment and turn to P₂^{AP}.

A basic objection against P₂^{AP} might be that the acquaintance principle appears to be an aesthetic axiom for which no further explanation

²⁴ See Konisberg (2012), pp. 159-160.

²⁵ See in detail section 4 of this paper.

²⁶ See, e.g., Kant (1963), AA V 216; Pettit (1987), p. 25; Tormey (1973), p. 39.

²⁷ See, e.g., Kant (1963), AA V 216; Eaton (1994), p. 392; Mothersill (1961), p. 78; (1984), p. 160; Pettit (1983), pp. 25-26; Reid (1796), p. 429; Sibley (1965), p. 137; (1974), p. 16; Tanner (2003); Tormey (1973), p. 39; Wollheim (1980), p. 223.

²⁸ See also Konisberg (2012), p. 153.

²⁹ See, e.g., Budd (2003); Hanson (2015); Hopkins (2006); Konisberg (2012); Livingston (2003); Meskin (2004); Robson (2013).

can be given. But in order to accept its axiomatic status, one has to show why possible explanations are not convincing. As P₂^{AP} proposes a possible explanation, one has to take P₂^{AP} seriously, even if one thinks that the acquaintance principle is an aesthetic axiom.

If one accepts the sensory-dependence-thesis, knowing the sensory quality of an object, especially, how it looks or sounds like, is prerequisite for a judgement of beauty. One way to gain this knowledge is to perceive the object by the senses, which is one way to get personally acquainted with it. Sometimes a personal acquaintance with an adequate surrogate can be equally sufficient.³⁰ If I see a high-quality photography of a painting or hear a high-quality recording of a concert, I might be able to judge the beauty of the originals. If one accepts the sensory-dependence-thesis, whether a reproduction is adequate depends on whether it can exactly or at least sufficiently convey the sensory quality of the original object.³¹

A mere verbal description of an object does not enable us to form a judgement of beauty according to the acquaintance principle. The sensory-dependence-thesis can help to understand why. Although I can learn from another person that a rose is red, I cannot learn how exactly the rose looks like. A description can convey that an object possesses certain sensory properties, but cannot convey its exact sensory quality. Therefore one cannot base one's judgement of beauty on a verbal description, it seems.³²

Admittedly, a verbal description alone is not enough. But imagine a very sensitive observer or listener who possesses the ability to describe an object in detail, vividly, and exactly. And imagine a person with an extremely well trained sensory imagination. Guided by the description of the person who has actually perceived the object, the latter person might be able to imagine the object *as if* she actually perceives it. She might be able to form a judgement of beauty without having actually perceived it in this case.³³ Although this scenario is not impossible, however, it is rather unlikely. Both, the person actually perceiving and describing the object

³⁰ See, e.g., Binkley (1977), p. 266; Carroll (2004), p. 414; Hopkins (2006), pp. 90-92; Tormey (1973), p. 39, Meskin (2004), p. 74.

³¹ For a criticism of this criteria, see, e.g., Hanson (2015), pp. 252-254; Livingston (2003), p. 263.

³² See Binkley (1977), p. 266.

³³ See, e.g., Hopkins (2006), pp. 93-94.

and the person imagining it, have to fulfil too many demanding requirements. Secondly, even if a person manages to imagine an object as if she actually perceives it, she has a quasi first-hand experience. The sensory-dependence-thesis can hence explain a slightly modified version of the acquaintance principle, namely, that a judgement of beauty about *x* requires a first-hand or quasi first-hand experience of *x* (or an adequate surrogate).

The acquaintance principle does not only deny that judgements of beauty can be based on mere verbal descriptions, but also that one can adopt a judgement of beauty from someone else. If someone tells me that a rose, which I have not seen myself, is beautiful, I am not justified in adopting this judgement of beauty, even if I know that the person is trustworthy. Aesthetic judgements seem to be not transferable from person to person (or at least only on rare occasions). The sensory-dependence-thesis should also explain why this is the case in order to count as the best explanation of the acquaintance principle.

An asymmetry regarding the reliability of sensory and aesthetic testimony is notable, though.³⁴ If someone has perceived an object under normal circumstances, if her sense perception is not seriously impaired, if she remembers what she has perceived, if she does not want to deceive me, I can learn from her which sensory properties an object has. If, for example, she tells me that a rose is red, I am justified believing that the rose is red. According to the acquaintance principle, however, I cannot adopt the belief that the rose is beautiful, even if she tells me that it is. If so, how can the sensory-dependence-thesis explain the problematic status of aesthetic testimony?

Besides this, one would have to argue that the sensory-dependence-thesis provides the best explanation in order to defend P_2^{AP} . One has reason to doubt this because it makes sense to apply the acquaintance principle also to judgements of beauty about non-sense-perceptual features or objects. First, also in the case of non-sense-perceptual features or objects, a mere description of non-sense-perceptual features or objects might not be sufficient for a judgement of beauty. Admittedly, sometimes a verbal description is the way to become acquainted with of some non-sense-perceptual features or objects. Hanson argues, for example, that

³⁴ See Pettit (1987), p. 25.

descriptions yield acquaintance with some conceptual works of art.³⁵ But not every non-sense-perceptual feature or object can be fully grasped by a mere verbal description. If someone paraphrases the content of a novel, outlines the basic idea of a mathematical proof, or enlists some character traits, these descriptions are an inadequate basis for a judgement of beauty. Rather, one should actually read the novel, understand and think through the mathematical proof, or meet the person personally and observe her in different situations in order to be able to judge their beauty. In other words, one needs a first-hand experience of these non-sense-perceptual features or objects in order to be able to judge their beauty. As these examples illustrate, first-hand experience does not have to be understood as first-hand sense-perceptual experience.³⁶ Secondly, also judgements of beauty about non-sense-perceptual features or objects are not transmissible from person to person. It is problematic to adopt a judgement of beauty simply because someone else says that the content of a novel, a mathematical proof, or the character of a person is beautiful.³⁷ Once again, a first-hand experience seems to be necessary. To sum up, the acquaintance principle can also make sense in the case of judgments of beauty about non-sense-perceptual features or objects. If so, not the sensory dependence, but another feature of beauty seems to be the best explanation of the acquaintance principle, if it can be explained at all.

To sum up, as the acquaintance principle can be defended without being committed to the sensory-dependence-thesis, P₂^{AP} can be rejected. Therefore the argument of the acquaintance principle fails independently from the question whether one should actually accept the acquaintance principle.

4. The Etymological Argument

So far, not much attention has been paid to the fact that beauty counts as a paradigmatic example of an aesthetic property. The etymological roots of

³⁵ See Hanson (2015), p. 252.

³⁶ See, e.g., Eaton (1994), p. 392; Hopkins (2006), p. 90.

³⁷ Meskin (2004, pp. 89-90) claims that aesthetic testimony in the case of proofs and theories is reliable.

the word “aesthetic” lie in the ancient greek “aísthēsis”, meaning “pertaining to sense perception”.³⁸ Hence, etymologically considered, only something with a close connection to sense perception deserves to be called aesthetic.³⁹ This consideration motivates the etymological argument: (P1^E) Aesthetic properties have to partly depend on sensory properties. (P2^E) Beauty is an aesthetic property. Consequently, beauty has to partly depend on sensory properties. The core of this argument is the extended sensory-dependence-thesis, which P1^E formulates.⁴⁰ But is the extended sensory-dependence-thesis metatheoretically acceptable?

First, aesthetic properties are mostly discussed, sometimes even defined as properties relevant for art criticism in recent aesthetic debate.⁴¹ But not all properties of works of art, which seemingly matter for art criticism and evaluation, depend on the works’ sensory properties. Think, for example, of Duchamp’s *Fountain*.⁴² Danto says about this work: “it is daring, impudent, irreverent, witty, and clever” (Danto 1981, pp.93-94). These properties influence the value of Duchamp’s *Fountain* qua work of art.⁴³ But they do not depend on the work’s sensory properties. Even if you have not seen the *Fountain*, if you know that it is an urinal customary in trade of 1917, which Duchamp has signed and put into an art exhibition, you can judge the work as daring, impudent, irreverent, witty, and clever. How exactly the *Fountain* looks like, which colour it has, or whether something is reflected in its surface is not crucial. Or think about the criticism and evaluation of literary works of art.⁴⁴ Assuming that the content of a literary work is irrelevant for the work’s value as a work of art is rather odd. Thus it should possess aesthetic properties. As the content of a literary work is one of its non-sense-perceptual features, the content’s aesthetic properties cannot depend on sensory properties, though. Hence if one thinks about aesthetic properties in terms of properties relevant for art

³⁸ See Kovach (1974), p. 9.

³⁹ See Kovach (1974), p. 9.

⁴⁰ The extended sensory-dependence-thesis corresponds to Shelley’s (S)-thesis (2003, p. 364) and Zangwill’s weak dependence thesis (2001, p. 127).

⁴¹ See, e.g., Gaut (2007), pp. 34-35; Goldman (2009); Kivy (1975), p. 197.

⁴² See, e.g., Carroll (2004), p. 418; Shelley (2003), p. 368.

⁴³ See Shelly (2003), p. 370.

⁴⁴ See, e.g., Binkley (1977), p. 269; Carroll (2003), p. 420; Eaton (1994), p. 392; Livingston (2003), pp. 265-266; Shelley (2003), pp. 373-375.

criticism, one has to reject the extended sensory-dependence-thesis. Otherwise one cannot properly criticize and evaluate some works of art.

Zangwill defends the extended sensory-dependence-thesis against this objection.⁴⁵ He distinguishes between aesthetic and artistic properties. Aesthetic properties determine the aesthetic value, artistic properties the artistic value of a work of art. And although some artistic properties are aesthetic, not all of them are. The extended sensory-dependence-thesis provides a distinguishing feature. All aesthetic, but not all artistic properties have to depend in part on sensory properties.

The advantage of this proposal is that it clearly distinguishes two separate questions, which became intermingled by the development of aesthetics and art philosophy. On the one side stands the purely art philosophical question what determines the value of a work of art qua art. On the other side stands the broader aesthetic question what an aesthetic property is. *Prima facie*, one does not have to concentrate on art in order to answer the second question because not only works of art possess aesthetic properties as the example of beauty well illustrates.

To explain what an aesthetic property is and how it is to be distinguished from a non-aesthetic property is notoriously difficult to answer and is intensively discussed in aesthetics. It is noticeable, however, that most attempts to define aesthetic properties or at least to point out salient features are not committed to the extended sensory-dependence-thesis. Let me illustrate this with some examples. First, aesthetic properties might be defined as taste properties.⁴⁶ Normal intelligence and sense perception alone are not enough to attribute aesthetic properties, rather taste as a special aesthetic sense is required. This proposal is not committed to the extended sensory-dependence-thesis as it explicitly distinguishes taste from the 'normal' senses.⁴⁷ Secondly, one can agree with Sibley that aesthetic properties depend on non-aesthetic ones and that the attribution of aesthetic properties is non-condition-governed.⁴⁸ But as non-aesthetic properties are not only sensory ones, the extended sensory-dependence-thesis does not follow from this proposal either. Thirdly, Kivy emphasises

⁴⁵ See Zangwill (2001), p. 137.

⁴⁶ See, e.g., Hungerland (1962-1963), p. 43; Sibley (1959), p. 421; (1965), p. 135.

⁴⁷ See also Hutcheson (2004), p. 24.

⁴⁸ See, e.g., Sibley (1959), (1965).

that we consider and enjoy aesthetic properties for their own sake.⁴⁹ But nothing prevents us from enjoying the funniness of a joke's payoff for its own sake, even if it does not depend on the sound of the words used to tell the joke. Furthermore, some authors approach aesthetic properties by giving examples.⁵⁰ Many of these exemplary aesthetic properties do not have to depend on sensory properties. Think, for example, of being unified, sentimental, or tragic. Thus, to define or at least to better understand aesthetic properties, one does not have to defend the extended sensory-dependence-thesis.

So although the extended sensory-dependence-thesis makes sense etymologically, it cannot be defended on a metatheoretical level, and hence the etymological argument fails. One can wonder whether thereby one has not found an argument against the sensory-dependence-thesis, namely, if one also rejects P2^E.⁵¹ According to P2^E, beauty is one aesthetic property amongst others. Sometimes, however, beauty is considered to be a verdictive aesthetic property, to use Zangwill's terminology.⁵² If so, judgements of beauty are the same as aesthetic value judgements. Sometimes judgements of beauty are even considered as equivalents to judgements of artistic value.⁵³ If so, saying that a work of art is beautiful means the same as saying that it is a good work of art. Aesthetic success or merit now depends on aesthetic properties, artistic success or merit on artistic properties.⁵⁴ If the extended sensory-dependence-thesis holds neither for aesthetic nor for artistic properties (if one wants to draw such a distinction), beauty does not necessarily depend on sensory properties either. The etymological argument can be turned into an argument against the sensory-dependence-thesis, it seems.

Sometimes "beauty" is indeed used as a synonym for "aesthetic success", sometimes also for "artistic success". Another, narrower meaning of beauty, however, exists.⁵⁵ First, it makes sense to point out that some

⁴⁹ See Kivy (1975), pp. 209-211.

⁵⁰ See, e.g., Goldman (2009), p. 125; Kivy (1975), 197-198; Sibley (1959), p. 421-422.

⁵¹ Collingwood (1938, pp. 38-41) and Bell (1913, pp. 11-16) claim that beauty has nothing to do with aesthetic consideration. This is, however, a rather unusual position.

⁵² See Zangwill (2001), chap. 1.

⁵³ See, e.g., Kovach (1974), p. 30; Mothersill (1984).

⁵⁴ See, e.g., Zangwill (2001), chap. 1.

⁵⁵ See, e.g., Scruton (2011), p. 13.

works of art are good works of art, some even masterpieces without being beautiful.⁵⁶ Duchamp's *Fountain* or Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger* are just two examples of such works of art. Secondly, it also makes sense to point out that something can be aesthetically valuable without being beautiful.⁵⁷ Just think of a sublime mountain view. If so, "beauty" in this narrower sense is not a synonym for "aesthetic success" or "artistic success", although a work of art can become a good work of art (partly) because it is beautiful, or something can count as aesthetically valuable because it is beautiful. P₂^E refers to this understanding of beauty. If beauty is only an aesthetic or artistic property among others, rejecting the extended sensory-dependence-thesis does not exclude that the sensory-dependence-thesis holds for some aesthetic properties. Whether beauty is one of those aesthetic properties is still an unanswered question.

5. The Argument of Irreducibility

Short remarks of Burke and Danto inspire the fourth argument. At the beginning of his treatise on beauty, Burke writes:

"By beauty I mean, that quality or those qualities in bodies by which they cause love, or some passion similar to it. I confine this definition to the merely sensible qualities of things, for the sake of preserving the utmost simplicity in a subject which must always distract us, whenever we take in those various causes of sympathy which attach us to any persons or things from secondary considerations, and not from the direct force which they have merely on being viewed." (Burke 1990, p. 83).⁵⁸

Danto mentions a similar idea:

"Some people are beautiful, some are not, some are downright ugly. These differences we register through the senses. We are attracted

⁵⁶ See, e.g., Danto (2003), pp. 33-37; Nehamas (2007), chap. 1; Tatarkiewicz (1972), p. 177.

⁵⁷ See, e.g., Beardsley (1962), p. 626.

⁵⁸ See also Burke (1990), p. 101-102.

to people because of their beauty, and even fall in love with them because they are beautiful. But human beings have qualities of intellect and character that attract us to them despite their lack of beauty. [...] To be sure, we often commend these qualities by speaking of them as “beautiful” –but this has nothing to do with aesthetic considerations at all, and it seems to me that it muddles the concept of beauty irreparably if we say that these qualities are another species or order of beauty. [...] I propose we restrict the concept of beauty to its aesthetic identity, which refers to the senses, [...].” (Danto 2003, p. 92).

Burke accepts the sensory-dependence-thesis for the sake of simplicity and in order to avoid distractions. Danto fears that without the sensory-dependence-thesis the concept of beauty becomes irreparably muddled with other concepts. So both authors defend the sensory-dependence-thesis in order to prevent “beauty” from becoming a superfluous or muddled concept. The argument of irreducibility aims to elaborate this idea: (P1^{IR}) A theory of beauty should not impoverish our means of expression. (P2^{IR}) A theory of beauty has to distinguish irreducible from reducible judgements of beauty in order to prevent impoverishing our means of expression. (P3^{IR}) If a theory of beauty rejects the sensory-dependence-thesis, it loses the means to distinguish irreducible from reducible judgements of beauty. That is why a theory of beauty should accept the sensory-dependence-thesis.

One aim of a theory of beauty is to better understand what we express by calling something beautiful. It aims at conceptual clarity. In order to achieve this aim, it concentrates on judgements of beauty, that is, on judgements using the formulation “x is beautiful” or variations of this formulation, and then try to analyse and to explain them. P1^{IR} emphasises that a theory of beauty should feel obliged to do grasp the full meaning of judgements of beauty in their analysis. Otherwise it impoverishes our means of expression. A theory of beauty should help us to express ourselves more clearly because we better understand what speaking about beauty means, we should not be less able to express ourselves precisely.

In the case of some judgements of beauty, let us call them reducible, speaking about beauty can easily and without loss of meaning be replaced by using another concept. Sometimes, for example, if I say that a rose is

beautiful, *all* that I want to say is that the rose is agreeable. “Beauty” is just another name for agreeableness in this case. Insofar it is superfluous. Our means to express ourselves would not be impoverished if we could only speak about agreeableness and never about beauty. Not all reducible judgements of beauty might have exactly the same meaning. Depending on the context of utterance and the object in question, “x is beautiful” might sometimes mean “x is agreeable”, sometimes “x is attractive”, sometimes “x is perfect”, sometimes “x is artistically good”, and so on. A theory of beauty should carefully distinguish these different meanings. If it does not and tries to find a common denominator of these different meanings, it might conclude that the concept of beauty is extremely vague and uninteresting because all that the reducible judgements seem to have in common is that they convey a somehow positive evaluation.⁵⁹ Or it might conclude that “beauty” is a muddled concept because the different meanings of the replaceable judgements of beauty seem to be at best connected by a family similarity, if at all.⁶⁰ If all judgements of beauty were reducible, a theory of beauty could only differentiate between their different meanings. If it then would suggest that we should avoid speaking about beauty and use instead the respective synonyms, this would not impoverish our means of expression. It would rather lead to conceptual clarity and precision.

If, however, some judgements of beauty are irreducible, this procedure would impoverish our means of expression. In the case of an irreducible judgement of beauty, speaking about beauty cannot be replaced by using another term without loss of meaning because we can only or best express what we want to express by saying “x is beautiful”. This does not mean that irreducible judgements of beauty cannot be analysed or explained at all. For example, part of the meaning of an irreducible judgement of beauty might be that the object in question is pleasant. The point is that this does not exhaust its whole meaning. Irreducible judgements should therefore not be treated as or confused with reducible judgements.

But why should one assume that some judgements of beauty are irreducible? The recent aesthetic debate does not pay much attention to beauty. Beauty has lost its predominant position. Perhaps, aesthetics has learned

⁵⁹ See Beardsley (1962), pp. 623-624. Wittgenstein (1968, p. 20), e.g., comes to such a conclusion.

⁶⁰ Wittgenstein (1979) hints at such a conclusion.

its lesson and has understood that “beauty” is an uninterestingly vague or simply muddled concept, which is superfluous in the end, and therefore does not discuss it anymore. But this is neither the only nor the best explanation why contemporary aesthetics lost its interest in beauty. Aesthetics nowadays mostly concentrates on art philosophical questions. It is sometimes even defined as mere art philosophy.⁶¹ And attempts to define art or to explain the value of works of art in terms of beauty got out of style because works of art, especially, contemporary works of art do not aim at beauty.⁶² Contemporary aesthetics does not think much about beauty because beauty does not play a prominent role in art, and not because the concept of beauty is proved to be superfluous.

Professional art criticism set aside, we often speak about beauty. And even if we sometimes could express ourselves equally effectively and precisely without speaking about beauty, it is a rather strong assumption that we could always forgo speaking about beauty. Furthermore, it is remarkable that philosophers have tried to elaborate theories of beauty (nearly) at all times. This enduring interest in judgements of beauty can be best explained in my opinion if some judgements of beauty are irreducible. They fascinate philosophically because it is a challenge to grasp and to explain their full meaning.⁶³ One can thus assume that some judgements of beauty are irreducible. If so, they should be distinguished from reducible ones.

According to P₃^{IR}, one loses the means to distinguish irreducible from reducible judgements of beauty if one rejects the sensory-dependence-thesis. This premise is inspired by Burke’s and Danto’s remarks. It is not an unreasonable assumption that beauty can be explained in terms of attractiveness, especially, if one thinks about human beauty. A person’s attractiveness can depend on her mere sense-perceptual features like her visual appearance, the sound of her voice, or her smell, but also on her non-sense-perceptual features like her character traits or intellectual abilities. If I simply call someone attractive, it is not clear whether her attractiveness depends wholly, or partly, or not at all on her sense-perceptual features. Some judgements of human beauty resist to be analysed in terms of attractiveness just because of this. Speaking about attractiveness can-

⁶¹ See, e.g., Beardsley (1981), p. 4; Binkley (1977), p. 267.

⁶² See, e.g., Danto (2003); Nehamas (2007); Tatarkiewicz (1972), p. 177.

⁶³ For a similar idea, see Mothersill (1984), p. 11.

not capture the sensory dependence of beauty. If we could not express this, this would impoverish our means of expression, especially, because no other equally well-established concept other than beauty exists that highlights sensory dependence and has more or less the same meaning. So the irreducibility of these judgements of beauty has to be preserved. If one rejects the sensory-dependence-thesis, however, one cannot differentiate these apparently irreducible judgements of beauty from reducible ones, and would hence impoverish our means of expression.

To generalise this idea, think of all the synonyms of beauty, which are discussed: “attractiveness,” “agreeableness,” “artistically goodness,” “usefulness,” “perfection,” and so on. None of these synonyms bears a direct connection to the sensory realm. Non-sense-perceptual features and objects can be attractive, agreeable, artistically good, useful, perfect, and so on. If one gives up the sensory-dependence-thesis, the same is true for beauty, and hence it does not speak against an equation, although other reasons might speak against it. In the case of some judgements of beauty, however, what makes them irreducible is exactly that one wants to point out the sensory dependence. Because of this, none of these synonyms can capture the full meaning of these judgements. If one rejects the sensory-dependence-thesis, one cannot explain why this is the case. If, however, one accepts the sensory-dependence-thesis, this explains why they are irreducible and why the proposed synonyms can only capture part of their meanings. They cannot convey the sensory dependence of beauty. No matter whether one tries to analyse beauty primarily in terms of agreeableness, attractiveness, artistically goodness, perfection, and so on, if one gives up the sensory-dependence-thesis, one loses one’s means to point to the sensory dependence. If so, one impoverishes our means of expression, which a theory of beauty should avoid.

If one pursues this line of thought and keeps in mind that the extended sensory-dependence-thesis has been rejected, this provides another reason to give up the sometimes-made equation between judgements of beauty and judgements of aesthetic or artistic success. Neither aesthetic, nor artistic merit does have to depend on sensory properties, but beauty has to, as I have just argued.⁶⁴ To distinguish beauty from aesthetic and artistic

⁶⁴ See also Beardsley (1962), p. 635.

success leads to further conceptual clarity.⁶⁵ And the sensory-dependence-thesis at least partly justifies this distinction. As already emphasised, conceptual clarity and precision is a major aim of a theory of beauty.

6. Conclusion

This paper has raised the question whether one should accept the sensory-dependence-thesis. It has aimed to answer this question metatheoretically, not drawing on assumptions only acceptable for representatives of one specific elaborated theory of beauty because the sensory-dependence-thesis can influence what kind of theory of beauty one formulates and/or whether one approves of, rejects, or restricts an elaborated theory of beauty. This article has accepted Gaut's challenge that the burden of proof rests with the defenders of the thesis. The first argument has tried to deduce the sensory-dependence-thesis from the immediacy of judgements of beauty. But a temporal and an epistemic interpretation of "immediate" does not allow to claim that all judgements of beauty can be made immediately, and a logical interpretation not that judgements of beauty have to depend on immediate, that is, non-inferentially accessible properties. That is why the argument of immediacy fails. The argument of the acquaintance principle fails because the acquaintance principle can be defended without defending the sensory-dependence-thesis. Thus the sensory-dependence-thesis cannot provide the best explanation for the principle. The etymological argument has to be rejected because it rests on the extended sensory-dependence-thesis. Not all properties, which contemporary aesthetics treats as aesthetic, depend on sensory properties. The argument of irreducibility, in contrast, provides a good metatheoretical reason to defend the sensory-dependence-thesis. It argues that theories of beauty should not impoverish our means of expression. Rejecting the sensory-dependence-thesis, however, would confine the richness and precision of our means of expression. In the end, this article defends the sensory-dependence-thesis. It has not elaborated or defended any particular theory of beauty, though. This task is set next.

⁶⁵ See also Danto (2003), p. 58.

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Schiller's Interpretation of the 'Critique of the Power of Judgement' — A Proposal

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ABSTRACT. Contrary to standard interpretation, Schiller does not attempt to refute Kant in his early writings of the 1790s, even though his *Kallias-Letters* are based in a critical review of the third critique. His criticism, however, pertains primarily to Kant's neglecting of the analysis of objects that are subject to aesthetic evaluation. While such an analysis appears to be beyond the scope of transcendental aesthetics as presented in the third critique, Schiller consequently seeks to provide something to that affect and furthermore endeavours to develop objective criteria without subordinating the judgement of taste to the concept of objects.

This is made possible on account of Schiller changing the perspective from a transcendental analysis to the application of said analysis to an empirical object.

Rather following than refuting the (subjective) requirements of the free play of the cognitive faculties, Schiller brings forward the essence of beauty as *freedom in the appearance*. Consequently, beauty requires any given object to allow the impression as if it had not been shaped by an artist.

Schiller holds that for this impression to be possible, the object has to display such properties upon which the idea of self-determination or freedom can be transferred. Whereas the subjective capacity of reason is a necessary element, it must additionally be accompanied by an occasion, as it were, in the object.

If Schiller's idea of an objective criterion can reasonably be deduced from Kantian aesthetics, as Schiller appears to suggest, it might be possible to shed some light on two rather interesting elements with regards to aesthetics. Firstly, a criterion which correlates directly with an object that is to be aesthetically arranged offers some guidance as to the actual shaping of the aforementioned object. Secondly, Schiller touches the aspect of realising and by doing so improving one's own taste.

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1. Introduction

Much attention and philosophical scrutiny have been given to Kant's remarks on aesthetics in his third critique. Friedrich Schiller, however, albeit one of the most important poets in German literature and a self-proclaimed Kantian yet fails to gain philosophical interest when it comes to his early writings on Kant and aesthetics. Instead especially the Kallias-Letters have been met with strong scepticism by scholars and have subsequently been dismissed. Schiller's early project of developing an objective criterion of beauty did not seem at all to be compatible with Kant's transcendental idealism.¹

Consequently, many scholars have primarily concerned themselves with analysing the ever so many discrepancies between Schiller and Kant, resulting in a mainly one-sided reception of Schiller's Kallias-Letters, while the great potential that lies in this contribution to aesthetics has been overlooked.²

Contrary to standard interpretation, I shall therefore attempt to show that Schiller did not take it upon himself to refute Kant, but rather to develop his findings further with regards to an art theory.³

As ambitious as this may seem, this paper is necessarily going to remain rather modest. I am going to restrict myself exclusively to the Kallias-Letters⁴ since their proper understanding serves as a prerequisite of the understanding of any following philosophical writings, the aesthetic education for instance. Furthermore instead of proposing an entire interpretation of the Kallias-Letters, I am merely going to point out a change of perspective that systematically connects the Kallias-Letters with the third critique.

¹ Cf. for instance Latzel (1975), Düsing (1967), Rosalewski (1912)

² Robert also considers Schiller to refute Kant, but at least attests the innovative character of his theory. Cf. Robert (2007)

³ Although Schiller's own account of his adoption of critical philosophy is highly ambivalent, I refer to a very clear statement that he makes in a letter to the prince of Augustenburg. Cf. FA VIII, p. 493-494

⁴ In the following all direct citations from the Kallias-Letters will be cited according to the translation by Berstein which is the only one I found to be suitable. I owe the reference to a remark which Frederick Beiser made in the introduction to his work *Schiller as philosopher: A re-examination*

As it will hopefully become clear, Schiller is not concerned with furthering Kant's insights on the transcendental structure of the judgement of taste. In fact, he presupposes those findings and asks—from the perspective of an art critic and an artist—what properties a specific object has to display in order to be at the center of an aesthetic judgement. In other words, what sort of depiction is able to invite an agent to make a judgement of taste?

Although Kant's transcendental perspective does not involve an analysis of the specific objects that can or are to be aesthetically evaluated, the third critique offers some comments as to the products of art.

That is where I shall begin and then proceed to examine Schiller's criterion in view of the aforementioned change of perspective. Finally, I am going to exemplify my findings for which I am going to make use of two descriptive scenarios, both of which are provided by Schiller himself.

2. Products of Art

Reviewing Kant's stand on aesthetic objects it is apparent that the only thing that can be evaluated—or reflected upon, rather—if we are passing a judgement of taste, is the form of the given object or the representation thereof.⁵ To be more precise it is the form of finality that can be encountered as long as the object does not overwhelmingly display any end to which it has been designed. Of course, an object that has been produced as a means to an end, too, can be at the center of a judgement of taste—were the power of judgement not to consider the purpose.⁶ Otherwise, it would be a teleological judgement.

But for the sake of my paper, I am going to exclude each judgement that happened by chance, if you will. Instead, I will only concern myself with objects that are specifically designed to cause aesthetic pleasure. Not only

⁵ In the following the *Critique of the Power of Judgement* (denoted as KU) is cited according to the pagination of the first edition from 1790 (denoted as A). I favour this edition to the *Akademieausgabe* which serves as the standard edition to be cited amongst Kantian scholarship on account of Schiller only having read the first edition from 1790.

⁶ There is a remark that seems to indicate that there are objects or forms that are more suitable than others with regards to an aesthetic evaluation. Cf KU A 69-73; moreover Esser (1997), p. 162f

does this condition seem useful regarding the subject of willfully designed objects, or in other words the arts, but it also meets with the criteria that Kant applies in his division of the different kinds of the concept of art itself.

The term of *aesthetic art* contains two different meanings. On the one hand it describes any kind of product that is supposed to entertain an audience and in doing so cause direct sensory pleasure. On the other hand it includes products which are specifically designed to cause aesthetic pleasure.⁷ Thus, such pleasure is the result of the reflection of the power of judgement and correlates directly with a specific harmony of the cognitive faculties.⁸ I will not be able to discuss the free play of the faculties here any further since it is a far too controversial part of Kant's aesthetic theory.⁹

What seems to be far more important in light of Schiller's reading of the critical philosophy is a rather particular observation which Kant makes regarding the arts and their evaluation.

He remarks that each product of art, simply in order to be a product of art, not a mere result of chance, must have an end that it is supposed to fulfill.¹⁰ This seems quite obvious since a product of art is a product of an artist who intends to depict something specific. He has to shape an object and therefore has to have some conception about the form of this object.

What does that entail for the object in relation to the judgement of taste? While a product of art must necessarily have an end, a judgement of taste must not be based upon such end or concept of the object that it is reflecting upon.¹¹ Consequently, the artist is required to shape an object to such an extent that it does not display its end, or as Schiller might say, its logical nature (logical nature here being merely another word for what

⁷ KU A 175

⁸ KU A 27-32

⁹ A systematical interpretation of the free play of the faculties with regards to Schiller's adoption of this key element of Kantian aesthetic remains to be delivered. That Schiller has, in fact, adopted the free play to some extent is highlighted in the fifth Kallias-Letter. "Since the understanding is the faculty which searches out the ground of an effect, the understanding must be put into play. The understanding must be spurred to reflect upon the form of the object: merely about the form, for understanding has only to do with form." Bernstein (2004), p. 161

¹⁰ KU A 178

¹¹ *ibid.*

Schiller understands under concept).¹²

Taking recourse to the beginning of my first point, the product of art is required to display a form of finality without presenting any purpose that has been given to it by an exterior influence, in this instance, the artist.

What does that entail for the concept of art which Schiller finds in the third critique and is going to be the basis of his own thoughts on the matter? It is precisely the point when the aforementioned change of perspective sets in. Moreover, it brings me to my second part.

3. Schiller's Change of Perspective

Let me try and make clear why this change of perspective and Kant's remark on the mechanical requirement of each object that has purposefully been shaped proves to be quite so important with regards to the issue of Schiller's interpretation of Kant.

In the first and very short letter of the Kallias-Letters Schiller intends to compare his own approach on the matter of beauty and aesthetics with Kant's critical philosophy. He reassures the reader, his friend Körner, that a judgement of taste does not and must not require a concept of the object or otherwise. However, he proceeds to remark that each product of art and most of all aesthetically valid objects in nature do have a purpose, an end. Since Kant's transcendental perspective does not allow him to bind aesthetic evaluation to the concept of an object, Schiller indeed appears to refute Kant by stating that each such object is bound naturally to its logical nature which then, however, has to be overcome by the artist through an aesthetically valid design. In the first Kallias-Letter Schiller concludes as follows.

“Kant wanted to cut precisely this knot by assuming a *pulchritudo vaga* [free beauty] and *fixa* [fixed], and by claiming, rather strangely, that every beautiful thing which is subsumed under the concept of a purpose is not a pure beautiful thing at all; that an arabesque or something similar, which is seen as beautiful, is seen as purer in its beauty than the highest beauty of humanity. I think that this observation may have the great advantage of being able to separate the logical

¹² FA VIII, p. 301

from the aesthetic. Ultimately, however, this observation seems to miss the concept of beauty completely. For beauty presents itself in its greatest splendour only once it has overcome the logical nature of its object, and how can this be done if there is no resistance? How can it provide a form for completely formless material?"¹³

If one is to look closely enough, it becomes apparent that the often claimed tension between the two thinkers does not find any foundation in Schiller's claims. He simply argues from a different point of view that does not separate him from Kant at all, but, in contrast, is already incorporated in the third critique.

While Kant argues that a judgement of taste can either be free or adherent, depending on whether the judgement is not at all or partially based upon a concept, Schiller argues that a product is always determined by a purpose. Kant argues as a transcendental philosopher, whereas Schiller argues as an artist.

It is due to this change of perspective that certain difficulties, even in Schiller's own evaluation of his interpretation of Kant's critical philosophy, have been arising.

If my argument is valid so far, Schiller's approach can be characterised as follows. If a judgement of taste indeed has a priori character whose transcendental requirements can be analysed and isolated, what does that entail regarding the artistic process and the evaluation of an object? Schiller's simple thought seems to be: if the judgement of taste has transcendental requirements, an object has to, as it were, match those requirements. It has to reflect those requirements, a form of finality without presenting any purpose for instance, and in this way encourage an agent to pass an aesthetic judgement. In order to shed light on the matter precisely how an object would have to be designed in order to meet these requirements, it is necessary to develop an objective criterion. This is not supposed to determine the judgement of taste which is, as Kant repeatedly stated, simply not possible, but rather to invite someone to pass a judgement of taste. Thus, taste remains a necessary element of the equation, but the artist is not completely left to chance, as one might put it.

¹³ Bernstein (2004), pp. 146-147

In the following I am not going to get into the issue why Schiller identifies beauty with self-determination or freedom; nor will I discuss paragraph 59 of the *Critique of the Power of Judgement*.¹⁴ As with the free play of the faculties, the answer to these questions, albeit interesting and precisely at the core of Schiller's interpretation of Kant's critical aesthetics, would require a far more detailed analysis than I am able to offer at this point.¹⁵

In part following the form of finality Schiller brings forward the essence and definition of beauty as *freedom in the appearance* which determines the display or rather depiction of freedom as the essential element of beauty. Since in accord with transcendental idealism freedom is an idea and as such not a phenomenon of the material world and can therefore not be represented in it, Schiller demands the artist only to shape the object with the result that it purports to be free. Hence, beauty requires any given object to allow the impression as if it had not been shaped by an artist—beauty of art that is. But since Schiller, again in accordance with Kant, holds that beauty of art has to appear as nature and vice versa, his argument still applies.¹⁶

So Schiller makes good on his claim that a product of art, or any given object really that is supposed to be open for a judgement of taste, would have to overcome its logical nature. In order to succeed in doing so it has to appear self-determined, which seems to clarify what Schiller means when he talks about the freedom of an object. His basic thought being that a product that represents its purpose seems to be determined by an exterior influence and ergo does not allow a judgement of taste. Consequently, it has to appear self-determined.

“Of course reason is necessary to make such use of the objective qualities of things as is necessary in the case of beauty. But the subjectiv-

¹⁴ Nevertheless a proper understanding of paragraph 59 and its connection to the Kallias-Letters is a crucial part of any interpretation of Schiller's works altogether.

¹⁵ Cf. footnote 10. Cf. also Esser (1997), p. 163-186

¹⁶ Certainly, this argument requires a more detailed analysis. But since Schiller's concept of technique is beyond the (narrow) scope of this paper, I am not going to get into that. It is, however, interesting to note that according to Schiller his concept of technique derives directly from Kant's claim that a work of art must appear as nature and vice versa. Cf. KU A 177-178

ity of this use does not negate the objectivity of this ground, for even the perfect, the good and the useful are constituted such that their objectivity rests on much the same basis. 'Of course the concept of freedom itself or the positive aspect of reason are only placed into the object by considering the object under the form of the will, but reason does not give the negative aspect of the concept to the object since it finds it already present. The ground of the object's already granted freedom thus does lie in it itself, although freedom lies only in reason.'¹⁷

In other words, the artist is to shape the object to such a degree that it allows an agent to transfer the idea of his own self-determination, his own freedom so to speak, upon the object. Although the transfer of the idea of freedom remains a capacity of an agent's subjective faculties, Schiller holds that for the transfer most likely to happen the object has to display such properties upon which the idea of freedom can be transferred. Whereas the subjective capacity of the power of judgement remains, of course, a necessary element of the process, it must additionally be accompanied by an occasion, as it were, in the object—at least as long as one is arguing from an artist's point of view. Regarding beauty of nature, however, an objective criterion can give aide as to the question why a certain arrangement has pleased an agent.¹⁸

As a result Schiller presents us with a transcendently based criterion which correlates directly with an object that is to be aesthetically arranged and thus offers some guidance as to the shaping of the aforementioned object. Thereby allowing the artist to have recourse to some sort of rules or rather a set of guidelines in the artistic process.

4. Application of this Theory

Schiller's theory does beg the question, what *freedom in the appearance* or self-determination is supposed to mean exactly or how these awfully ab-

¹⁷ Bernstein (2004), p. 167

¹⁸ Schiller's entire project appears to allude to Kant's concept of art criticism which he develops in paragraph 34 of the *Critique of the Power of Judgement*. There he holds that any given aesthetic object should be evaluated with respect to the transcendental findings.

stract terms could ever be applied to an object of art, let alone entail an entire art theory. This brings me to my third and final point.

Since Schiller's criterion cannot determine, but is supposed to guide an artist as well as an agent passing a judgement, it can only be made quite clear by applying it to a scenario.

A draught horse, for instance, that has been carrying out its purpose year after year will show grave signs of this rather strenuous and exhausting work. The load that it has been pulling will have rendered its movements clumsy and accordingly it is going to show a certain weariness.¹⁹ The strength that it has to summon in order to do its work does not come easily and certainly not by the mere nature of the horse. It has to surpass his usual amount of strength in order to move the load, and therefore its movements are determined by that load or indirectly the will of its owner. That is why such a horse, or the depiction thereof, would not appear to be self-determined since its entire body clearly shows the influence of an exterior force. One can plainly observe its purposiveness as well as its purpose.²⁰

A Spanish palfrey, however, which has never been used to any form of labour, as it were, is not driven by anyone but itself; or at least it does not appear to be in the analogy. Its every move is solely determined by its instinct, its very nature; nothing but its instincts guide its steps. It does not serve any other purpose than its very own. For its nature—which is to be conceived as the totality of its parts and their relation to one another in contrast to everything that is accidental to the object²¹—seems to lie exclusively within itself. As no exterior force can be discovered, as the palfrey remains throughout its depiction very well within its own right, it appears to be self-determined.²²

Accordingly, if a painter were to depict a landscape which is covered by the branches of a large tree, there would be two possibilities at his disposal to reveal the background.²³ He might make the tree drop its branches by an exterior force such as a strong wind or even at the hands of human be-

¹⁹ FA VIII, p. 303

²⁰ FA VIII, p. 302

²¹ FA VIII, p. 301

²² Ibid.

²³ FA VIII, p. 312-313

ings. In this case the tree would have been compelled to move its branches, therefore would not have acted voluntarily. It would have to step out of the restraints of its instinctive, or natural existence. Or to put it as follows: the basic reason why such a depiction does not display any self-determination is due to the fact that the artist endeavours very clumsily to bend its material in order to serve a certain mechanical purpose which destroys all signs of freedom. One does very well notice that the branches have been moved in order to show the background; thereby clearly revealing the influence of the artist rather than the voluntary behaviour, as it were, of the tree itself.²⁴

Alternatively, and this is the course to be taken according to Schiller, the painter could choose an older or wilder tree that drops its branches voluntarily as well as peacefully in order not to carry the entire weight thereof. Its depiction would, then, be that of an object determined by its own nature, by the harmonic interaction of its parts.²⁵

In spite of the fact that all descriptions of objects of art with regards to what renders them beautiful must seemingly remain within the realm of a metaphorical account—thereby even more emphasizing the point that Schiller could not possibly have striven to develop an objective criterion of beauty in terms of a determining objective property—the basic thought which he attempts to express is as follows. Any depiction that is supposed to evoke aesthetic pleasure must not appear to be shaped by an artist, but rather to be a result of self-imposed, as it were, rules or actions.²⁶

As much as it allows an audience to enjoy the landscape, it allows them to see the idea of self-determination. The easily and gracefully moving palfrey as much as the peacefully resting tree allow or encourage—one might even go as far as to say, to a certain degree it demands—the view of freedom, of an idea to which only a human being could ever aspire. Each product of fine art as well as each aesthetic object within nature grants us such an experience and therefore bears witness to our most noble cause.

²⁴ FA VIII, p. 314

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ In this regard it is going to prove useful to take a closer look at the concept of *beautonomy* which Kant considers to be the principle of the power of judgement. Particularly how Schiller incorporates this notion of a self-imposed principle with respect to beautiful objects. Cf. FA VIII, p. 306

5. Conclusion

I am going to end on this note. Perhaps this fragment is able to give an inkling as to the broad horizon of Schiller's rather original thinking. Of course, I have merely hinted at the depth of his aesthetics and subsequent works; a complete systematical interpretation of the Kallias-Letters on the grounds that have been proposed in this paper yet remains to be delivered.

But I do hope that it has become clear why I am advocating for the opinion that the Kallias-Letters ought to be interpreted in the proposed regard. Namely to clarify the requirements of a product of art as well as the evaluation thereof in light of the transcendental structure of a judgement of taste.

It is my strong belief that from this understanding (alone) Schiller's examination of Kantian philosophy ought to be re-evaluated (and could adequately be appreciated).

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Hannah Arendt's Interpretation of Kant's 'Judgment' and its Difficulties

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ABSTRACT. This paper aims at 1) reconstructing Hannah Arendt's theory of judgment in short, 2) discussing her interpretation of Kant's theory of judgment mainly through her *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, 3) pointing out the inappropriate interpretation she made and 4) suggesting possible amendments in order to ameliorate her interpretation. I begin the discussion with her theory of judgment and her interpretation on Kant's Judgment. And then I show the concept *sensus communis* is essential for her interpretation on Kant's political philosophy. Subsequently, I argue that she should not muddle up the difference between reflective and determinative judgment and in what sense the aesthetic judgment and political judgment should not be treated at the same thing. At last, I suggest we should consider the conceptual distinction between *sensus communis logicus* and *sensus communis aestheticus* and the importance of the teleological judgment for Kant's political philosophy in order to reinforce her interpretation.

i. Introduction

Hannah Arendt planned to write *The Life of the Mind* in three parts, *Thinking*, *Willing* and *Judging*, in order to review and to consolidate her entire intellectual life. However, her sudden death just right after the completion of the draft of *Willing* terminated the project and left us her seemingly uncompleted thoughts on the power of judgment, which is in her eyes one of the most important capacity for a political being. Nevertheless, some academics think that Arendt had more or less completed her reflection on the related topic. We can actually abstract her thoughts from her works or postscripts, especially her *lectures on Kant's political philosophy*.¹

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¹. Ronald Beiner, "Hannah Arendt on Judging" in Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's political philosophy*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 91-92.

In the lectures, Arendt constitutes her theory of political philosophy on Kant's aesthetics rather than on his moral philosophy. It seems to be an unusual choice since Kant himself established his moral and political philosophy on practical reason (*praktische Vernunft*) instead of the aesthetic faculties, namely, (power of) judgment (*Urteilkraft*). Arendt nevertheless claims that the first part of the *Critique of Judgment*, namely *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment*, contains the concealed part of Kant's political philosophy, and furthermore, she wants to elaborate her ideas by interpreting the concepts of "sociability" (*Geselligkeit*), which is deeply rooted in the concept of *sensus communis* in the context of the third *Critique*.

Although her interpretation on Kant's Aesthetics is fascinating and inspiring, I would argue in this paper that her interpretation is based on her understanding of aesthetic judgment by analogy with political judgment, and which is somehow inappropriate. However, at the same time I would point out that her interpretation in certain sense paved the way for constructing a political aesthetics or an aesthetic politics.

2. A Sketch of the "Two Models" of Theory of Judgment

Formulating a theory for a philosopher is not an easy task at all times. It is particularly hard in the case of Arendt because she did not intend to write in typical academic format, which are always required to stick on a clear and profound thesis. She likes to construct her arguments by using other philosopher's concepts freely in respect of the topic she wants to elaborate. It also happens in the case of interpreting Kant's philosophy. Ronald Beiner comments, "It is undeniable that she is very free in her handling of Kant's work, making use of his writings in accordance with her own purposes."² Although it may not an easy task to formulate a unified theory of judgment for Arendt, Beiner, the editor of Arendt's *Lectures*, and Maurizio Passerin d'Entreves, the contributor for *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, also think that we are able to differentiate her thoughts on judgment into two phases in order to set up the "two models".

Beiner divides her writings on the theme of judgment into two "more or less distinct" phases – early and later, practical and contemplative – by a

². Beiner, "Hannah Arendt on Judging", 142.

somehow vague and unclear standard.³ He himself certainly aware of the vagueness of his division but he thinks that “it would be unreasonable to expect any neat division into distinct periods, and to single out a particular date as making a clear break between “early” and “late” will obviously appear in some respects arbitrary”.⁴ I have no objection to his statement but I doubt that, if we draw the distinction by the impression instead of by certain guiding concept or principle, the division has less cognitive meaning for the reader to understand the change of Arendt’s thoughts on related topic.

D’Entreves, on the other hand, gives a clearer “two models” distinction as a demarcation line by using Arendt’s own conceptions on *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa* in order. In the first phase, namely the early, practical period, Arendt put her focus on *vita activa*, which is about the activities and condition of human in modern time in comparison with the ancient Greek. She is in this phase concerned only with judging as a feature of political life instead of treating judgment as a distinct mental activity. In the second phase, Arendt focuses on how judgment as a component in the life of the mind, which concerns with the features of the individual who posits himself or herself as a spectator instead of an actor for the political events. The main difference between the actor and the spectator, according to d’Entreves, lies on the aim of the judging activity. Actor aims at the reason of an action, during the deliberation process we need the power of judgment to guide and determine our action. Therefore we can say that the judgment is the determining base of an action; Spectator, on the other side, processes a kind of pure, disinterested reflection on the past events with distance. The aim of the judging is to cull the meaning from the past, which is by nature a reflective and heuristic one. In short, the actor’s judgment can be conceived as an action-guiding and future-oriented judgment and the spectator’s judgment can be comprehended as a meaning-endowing and past-oriented judgment.⁵

³. Ibid., 92.

⁴. Ibid.

⁵. Maurizio Passerin d’Entreves, *The political philosophy of Hannah Arendt*, (New York: Routledge, 1994), 104.

3. Reorientation of the *Critique of Judgment* and Interpretation of the Theory of Judgment

Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy should be counted as the most important work to reveal Arendt's thought on Kant's philosophy. She gave these lectures first at the New School for Social Research in 1970. In the lectures, she constructs a political philosophy of Kant based upon his aesthetics, and she claims the first part of the third *Critique* included the most important theoretical elements of it. She conceives that two main questions were left in Kant's late ages. The first is the "sociability [*Geselligkeit*] of man" and the second is "the purpose of man". She admits, "The links between its two parts are weak, but, such as they are – i.e., as they can be assumed to have existed in Kant's own mind – they are more closely connected with the political than with anything in the other *Critique*."⁶

How did she justify the existence of this apparently weak linkage between the problem of sociability and the purpose – about the "why-questions" – of man? Her justification lies mainly on her reading and reorientation of the role of the *Critiques*. She claims "the topics of the *Critique of Judgment* – the particular, whether a fact of nature or an event in history;" and "the faculty of judgment as the faculty of man's mind to deal with it; sociability of men as the condition of the functioning of this faculty, [...] that is, important for the political – were concerns of Kant long before he finally, after finishing the critical business (*das kritische Geschäft*), turned to them when he was old."⁷

In her eyes, there is three very different perspectives of considering the affairs of men: 1) human species and its progress; 2) man as a moral being and an end in himself; 3) men in the plural, sociability of men. All the above correspond to different parts of the *Critiques*. The first topic is directly connected to the second part of the third *Critique*; the second topic, which is closely related to the laws of practical reason, autonomous, and realm of intelligible beings, can be conceived as the labour of the second and the first *Critique*; the last topic, treating man as the "earthbound creatures, living in a communities, endowed with common sense, *sensus communis*, a community sense," is the main theme of the first part of the *Critique of*

⁶. Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's political philosophy*, 13.

⁷. *Ibid.*, 14.

Judgment: aesthetic judgment.⁸

4. Judgment as Critical Thinking, as Enlargement of Mind and as Evaluation

Based on the mentioned interpretation, she starts to reconstruct Kant's theory of judgment using the texts mainly from the first part of the third *Critique*. Her reconstruction can be summarized in three aspects: Judgment as *critical thinking*, as *the enlargement of the mind* and as *evaluation*.

a) Judgment as Critical Thinking

In the early session (§ 5-7) of the lectures, she sets the tone for the discussion by analyzing the meaning of "critique" and "critical thinking". She introduces the meaning of "critique" by comparing with the concept of enlightenment and of criticism, these concepts are indeed not separated from each other in the age of enlightenment; "Enlightenment means, in this context, liberation from prejudices, from authorities, a purifying event."⁹ She further quotes a note from the preface of *Critique of Pure Reason*:

[...] Our age is properly the age of critique, and to critique everything must submit. *Religion* and *legislation* commonly seek to exempt themselves from critique, religion through its *sanctity* and legislation through its *majesty*. But in doing so they arouse well-deserved suspicion and cannot lay claim to unfeigned respect; such respect is accorded by reason only to what has been able to withstand reason's free and open examination.¹⁰

It is clear for Kant that most of the human's practices, especially those in respect of religion and legislation, can be and should be examined openly by reason for the sake of getting its "unfeigned respect". This "open examination" should be done in public sphere (*in der Öffentlichkeit*), which implies

⁸. Ibid., 26-27.

⁹. Ibid., 31.

¹⁰. Immanuel Kant, *Krtik der reinen Vernunft* (KrV), translated by Werner S. Pluhar, (Indiana: Hackett Publishing Company, 1996), A xii.

that all the people, the plurality of reason, should have equal right and freedom to reflect upon certain believes, no matter those believes are assigned by religion or by constitution. And what is more, they should have chances to utter their opinion in order to facilitate the public discussion.

However, these statements are in fact rested on an assumption that human being is able to think independently and autonomously. Such independence, in Arendt's eyes, is the result of the criticism: "The result of such criticism is *Selbstdenken*, to 'use your own mind,'"¹¹ Here we may see that she intends to connect the spirit of criticism with the spirit of enlightenment. For Arendt, criticism and enlightenment are thus two sides of the same coin, which serves the purpose of promoting critical thinking or, in other words, judging critically.

To illustrate this point further, Arendt indicates that critical thinking is not something that stands between dogmatic metaphysics and skepticism. "It is actually the way to leave these alternatives behind."¹² The aim of the critical thinking is for her not "to criticize", but "to discover reason's sources and limits". It is not a duty for a critical judger to lay down any kind of "doctrine" as the results. Critical thinking is a kind of regressive and reflexive thinking instead of progressive thinking, which primarily aims at constructing or destructing theory. It concerns only if the thinking subject can deliberate freely, independently. The theory can be conceived as the byproduct instead of the end of the activity. To put it in other words, what critique thinking can "construct" is only the standard for judging, namely to judge *impartially*.

b) Judgment as the Enlargement of the Mind

How one can judge thing impartially? Although a critical thinker should be free from any prejudice or external pressure in order to judge impartially, every subject is constrained to judge by one's own limited perspective. Therefore, for the sake of overcoming this barrier, the power to enlarge one's mind is essential for promoting critical thinking. Arendt calls it the "enlargement of the mind".

Arendt believes that "the 'enlargement of the mind' plays a crucial role

¹¹. Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's political philosophy*, 32.

¹². *Ibid.*

in the *Critique of Judgment*" and she claims "the faculty that makes this possible is called imagination."¹³ It is actually a mistake since Kant has indeed ascribed this faculty to *sensus communis* in the chapter she quoted (§40) and, furthermore, it is truly doubtful that if the power of imagination serves this function in the context of Kant's philosophy. However, what she really wants to address here is the function of the "enlarged mentality" that relates to the possibility of taking others' thoughts into account and, more importantly, it is essential for critical thinking:

Critical thinking is possible only where the standpoints of all others are open to inspection. Hence, critical thinking, while still a solitary business, does not cut itself off from "all others." To be sure, it still goes on in isolation, but by the force of imagination it makes the others present and thus moves in a space that is potentially public, open to all sides; in other words, it adopts the position of Kant's world citizen. To think with an enlarged mentality means that one trains one's imagination to go visiting.¹⁴

Here we can see that the function of imagination is for Arendt not limited to the power of reproducing representation, it is also able to 'make the others present' and to lead us to the public sphere (*die Öffentlichkeit*), a world presupposed the existence of the others.¹⁵ Moreover, since we are able to enlarge our mentality by the power of judgment, we can not only be the actor, whose judgment through the action may affect the others, but also be the spectator, who can judge the past events in a distance and give opinion in public sphere, in the world. No matter whether we judge a case practically or reflectively, we do need the power of enlarging one's mentality to meet the requirement of being impartial.

¹³. Ibid., 43.

¹⁴. Ibid.

¹⁵. Arendt has elaborated her views on the power of imagination not only in the lectures but also in a seminar on *Kant's Critique of Judgment*, given at the same school at 1970. The note under the title "Imagination" can be found also in *Lectures on Kant's political philosophy*, 79-85. For Arendt, one of the main function of imagination is that this faculty could provide the representation of an object which is absent. It is a kind of mental faculty that serves the purpose of reproducing the possible representation in our mind so as to prepare the object for judgment.

c) Judgment as Evaluation

The third meaning of judgment is closely related to the characters of judgment of taste by Kant. Throughout the lectures, Arendt indeed talks about judgment in general instead of aesthetics judgment or political judgment. However, she has not emphasized the difference between determinative and reflective judgment, which are clearly distinguished by Kant in the third *Critique*. Aesthetics judgment as a reflective judgment has its own characters which are very different to the theoretical and practical one. It is disinterested, subjectively universal, and takes the member of the sociality into consideration. All of the above characters are just fit for Arendt's theory of judgment and thus she takes for granted that the characters of reflective judgment are the same as the characters of judgment in general. and future, she fits her understanding of judgment to her "two models" of judgment.

She believes there are two kind of theory in Kant that can be conceived as the principle of reflection (theory) and the principle of action (practice). The judging subject as a spectator, who reflects upon the events with distance, occupies 1) "a position of the onlooker" and 2) "the idea of progress, the hope for future, where one judges the event according to the promise it holds for the generations to come."¹⁶ The judging subject is able to hold these "interconnected" but "by no means otherwise" position because the subject, as the spectator, stands on a position that allows him or her to judge the events with distance, which "enables him to see the whole", and therefore he is "impartial by definition – no part is assigned him". On the contrary, "the actor, because he is part of the play, must enact his part – he is partial by definition."¹⁷ The actor, first, is partial by definition. Second, the actor concerns with *doxa* – the word means both "fame" and "opinion" of others – which makes him not autonomous.¹⁸

Since the action of the actor is dependent on the opinion of the spectator, the actor is not a truly free subject to judge. The spectator is truly free subject because he is the provider of the standard, he can give opinion autonomously and independently with distance. His deliberation should

¹⁶. Ibid., 54.

¹⁷. Ibid., 55.

¹⁸. Ibid.

be remote, uninvolved and disinterested. All of the above matches the characters of reflective judgment and it is the presupposition of giving genuine evaluation. For Arendt, it is “requisite for approbation and disapprobation for evaluating something at its proper worth.”¹⁹ Judgment as evaluation is not restricted by taste, we can reflect on the object (or event) and make a disinterested judgment with different values such as “right or wrong, important or irrelevant, beautiful or ugly, or something in between”.²⁰ Judgment is more than to judge aesthetically, it corresponds to very diverse, vast and abundant worlds of value.

5. The Presuppositions of Judgment: Imagination and *Sensus Communis*

Judgment for Arendt, as we mentioned, can be viewed in three aspects. Now, after the summary of her views on judgment, the following question arises: How is this kind of judgment in Kant's philosophy possible? Arendt claims that it depends on the “two other faculties” or “two mental operations in judgment”: *imagination* and *common sense (sensus communis)*. As we mentioned before, in early sessions of the lectures, Arendt claims the faculty that makes judgment as critical thinking and as enlargement of mind possible is imagination. At the later sessions (§10-12), she adds *sensus communis* as another presupposition of judgment.

Imagination could provide the representation of an object which is absent. It is a kind of mental faculty that serves the purpose of producing a possible representation in our mind so as to prepare the object for judging. *Sensus communis*, on the other hand, provides the ground of judgment through which we are able to judge something *as if* we have the consensus from everyone in the community. In fact, these two mental operations are an interconnected two-step operation in judgment. She claims, “This twofold operation establishes the most important condition for all judgments, the condition of impartiality, of ‘disinterested delight.’”²¹ Through this twofold mental operation, we could think out of the box,

¹⁹. Ibid., 67.

²⁰. Ibid.

²¹. Ibid., 68.

consider from others' perspective, and enlarge our mentality by true communication.

Sensus communis, as the idea of a communal sense, guarantees the communicability of the sense. Kant elaborates his idea about *sensus communis* mainly in chapter 19 to 22 and chapter 40 of third *Critique*. Kant claims that judgment of taste is subjectively universal, which means that the universality of the judgment is claimed by the one who judges. Arendt, on the other hand, interprets this kind of universality as "generality". She translates "*allgemein*" into "general" instead of the standard academic translation, "universal". Beiner explains, Arendt is intended to make this change in relation to her reading of Kant. She thinks that "judgment is endowed with a certain specific validity but is never *universally* valid". The universality of judgment is endowed by the judging person and it only corresponds to the application of the judgment. It is not valid for those who do not judge or for those who are not members of the public realm. Therefore, it is never truly universally valid for all.²²

The enlargement of the mind is actually the result of the twofold mental operation by imagination and *sensus communis*. Imagination first prepares the object for reflection and *sensus communis* then gives the standard for judging. The operation of imagination provides the representation for us to reflect, and this kind of representation is not a value-neutral representation. It is actually "discriminatory by nature: it says it-pleases or it-displeases."²³ She thinks that this operation "like taste, it *chooses*." In other terms, this operation is a kind of pre-selection or primaries. Imagination is not an unconditional and unoriented mental operation because it involves the taste of an individual, which is obviously not the same to everyone. Moreover, she thinks this "choice" is itself subject to another choice that one can approve or disapprove of this pre-selected feeling. To this feeling, we can approve or disapprove of it, hence we may have an additional pleasure or displeasure from it, a kind of contemplative pleasure. Therefore she said "all this approbation or disapprobation are afterthoughts"²⁴, namely

²². Note 155 written by Ronald Beiner. *Ibid.*, 163. Quotation from Arendt's essay "The Crisis in Culture" (in *Between Past and Future*, enl. Ed. [New York: Viking Press, 1968]), 221.

²³. *Ibid.*, 69.

²⁴. *Ibid.*, 69.

a discursive feeling by reflection.

6. The Relation between Judgment and *Sensus Communis*

Based on her twofold-mental-operation interpretation of judgment which involved twofold of choosing, she further asks what is the criterion and standard of this choice. Her answer is quite direct: The criterion is communicability, and the standard is *sensus communis*.²⁵

The English translation of *sensus communis* as “common sense” is sometimes misleading. For the reason that the German expression “*gemeiner Menschenverstand*” and “*Gemeinsinn*” can also be translated to “common sense” in the different context. Arendt suggested to translate *sensus communis* as “community sense” so as to distinguish it from common sense. It is indeed a brilliant interpretative understanding of the word that can not only avoid the ambiguity of the translation but also echo with her whole interpretation of Kant’s judgment. Although there is an obvious problem that the primary meaning of the Latin word “*communis*” is generally to be understood as common, general or ordinary; Of or for the community can only be conceived as the derivative meaning, this translation is yet in certain sense closer to the original meaning raised by Kant.

In Chapter 40, Kant concludes the relations between *sensus communis* and power of judgment as follow:

[...] I maintain that taste can be called a *sensus communis* more legitimately than can sound understanding, and that the aesthetic power of judgment deserves to be called a shared sense more than does the intellectual one, if indeed we wish to use the word *sense* to stand for an effect that mere reflection has on the mind, even though we then mean by sense the feeling of pleasure. We could even define taste as the ability to judge something that makes our feeling in a given presentation *universally communicable* without mediation by a concept.²⁶

²⁵. Ibid.

²⁶. Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der Urteilkraft* (KU), translated by Werner S. Pluhar, (Indiana: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987), 296.

By the quotation we can see, for Kant, the judgment of taste actually can be conceived as a kind of judgment of *sensus communis*, which is an aesthetic power for reflection that presupposed a pre-established consensus or attunement of taste in the community. Arendt elaborates in detail: “By using the Latin term, Kant indicates that here he means something different: an extra sense – like an extra mental capability (German: *Menschenverstand*) – that fits us into a community.” Also, “It is the capability by which men are distinguished from animals and from gods. It is the very humanity of man that is manifest in this sense.”²⁷ It is clear that for Arendt, the mainly point of judgment of taste lies on the community aspect. She concerns mainly the interaction between judgment and community in addition to the manifestation of humanity by our aesthetics power of judgment. With this above interpretation of the power of judgment, she extends the meaning and application of judgment of taste. Judgment of taste is no more restricted to the realm of aesthetics, it is also valid for critical thinking, for enlarged mentality, and for evaluation, which are not only valid for aesthetics but also valid for politics.

7. Critical Question on Arendt's Interpretation of Judgment, Aesthetics Judgment and Political Judgment

In the last secession, I will point out the weaknesses of Arendt's interpretation and suggest some possible amendments. The first point would be about her understanding of the nature of judgment.

i) A Muddle: Judgment, Determinative Judgment and Reflective Judgment

Throughout the lectures, Arendt seldom mentions the concept of reflective judgment. In most of the case, she use judgment directly in replacement for this concept. It should be strange for many Kantian scholar that to ignore this conceptual distinction because it is extremely important to distinguish the meaning of the judgment in the third *Critique* from the first and the second *Critique*.²⁸ Not surprisingly, she knows the different between the reflective and determinative judgment, we may find the

²⁷. Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's political philosophy*, 70.

²⁸. Cf. Session 1 to 3 of the second introduction of KU, 171-179.

evidence from a seminar note:

The *Critique of Judgment* deals with reflective judgments as distinguished from determinative ones. Determinative judgments subsume the particular under a general rule; reflective judgments, on the contrary, “derive” the rule from the particular. In the schema, one actually “perceives” some “universal” in the particular. [...] Kant hints at this distinction between determinative and reflective judgment in the *Critique of Pure Reason* by drawing a distinction between “subsuming under a concept” and “bringing to a concept.”²⁹

This note shows that she knows precisely the difference between determinative and reflective judgment, but why did she not bring this issue up in her lectures? One of the possible reason is that she wants to maintain the righteousness of the concept “judgment in general” instead of using a specific concept “reflective judgment”, which is by nature different to the moral judgment, a “determinative judgment”. I suppose, Arendt’s theory of judgment mainly serves for the purpose of her political theory and it is interesting that her political theory seldom deals with the principle of justice, moral correctness, etc. directly. I would say, she is interested in the origin of things instead of constructing a normative theory. For example, through the case of Eichmann, she proposes the concept of banality of evil in order to explain why one who was living under totalitarianism would do certain action and judgment. The concept of banality of evil can be conceived as the cause of an action or of a judgment, but it is not a guiding principle which serves as a determinative base for an action. Arendt concerns about human condition, but she did not propose a straight answer for how should we live. Instead, she tries to unfold the possibility of a discussion and to understand the origin of certain political actions. It is reflective rather than determinative.

However, back to the very beginning, although she has less interest in constructing theory, is it a sufficient reason to muddle up the difference between reflective and determinative judgment? Certainly not. Right from the start of *Critique of Judgment*, Kant introduces the difference between determinative and reflective judgment in order to answer the question: how can the two different legislative concepts, namely concept of

²⁹. Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's political philosophy*, 83.

nature and freedom, work together “in a same territory of experience.” Kant states that there is an “immense gulf” between the domain of nature, the sensible, and the domain of the concept of freedom, the supersensible.³⁰ Reflective judgment serves here a special role to bridge these two disjunctive fields and regulate the representation within our mind. It “is obliged to ascend from the particular in nature to the universal”³¹, and is in force in respect of “a special a priori concept that has its origin solely in reflective judgment”, which is purposiveness.³² Kant is intended to do so in order to complete his critical system, it should not be overlooked easily.

Additionally, we must notice that the reflective and determinative judgment are not two different faculties, which are subordinated to (power of) judgment in general. We should categorize them as two faces of the same coin, Kant said:

Judgment in general is the ability to think the particular as contained under the universal. If the universal (the rule, principle, law) is given, then judgment, which subsumes the particular under it, is *determinative* [...]. But if only the particular is given and judgment has to find the universal for it, then this power is merely *reflective*.³³

According to Kant, they have totally different functions to our mind and has different roles in constituting human experience. However, although Arendt knows the difference between reflective and determinative judgment, she still muddle them up with judgment in general. Indeed, she has the responsibility to make it clear, otherwise it would lead to the problem that we are going to discuss.

ii) Political Judgment is by Nature Different from Aesthetic Judgment

First, disregarding the above conceptual distinction may vacillate her cardinal claim: *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment* contains the core of Kant's political philosophy, which is mainly combined with the discourse on sociabil-

³⁰. Kant, KU, 175-176.

³¹. Ibid., 180.

³². Ibid., 181.

³³. Ibid., 179.

ity of man, concept of progress and history, communicability and publicity of judgment, etc.

This claim is certainly at first sight difficult since Kant himself established his moral and political philosophy on practical reason instead of human aesthetic faculties. However, by the reconstruction of her theory of judgment and her interpretation on Kant's judgment, we may agree that some of the concepts are really involved certain political implication. Then, to what extent should we accept Arendt's interpretation of Kant's political philosophy?

To answer this question, we have to clarify the relation between aesthetic judgment and political judgment. A political philosophy is possible, for a Kantian, only if there is a kind of faculty which grounds the possibility of corresponding experience. Therefore, although Kant has never name anything as political (power of) judgment, we are eligible to name the faculty which grounds political action or deliberation as political judgment. What then follows, if there is a political judgment, would it possess the same principle with aesthetic (power of) judgment?

Based on Arendt's interpretation, it is reasonable to infer that, if there is a kind of political judgment, it has to be based on aesthetic judgment as well. For the reason that all the characters which fits to describe a political judgment are extracted from the description of aesthetic judgment. It is justified to say that in Arendt's mind the character of aesthetic and political judgment should be the same. However, I suppose this assumption is incorrect. Political judgment should not be conceived as the same to aesthetic judgment for the reason that they are by nature different. The crucial point is that Arendt fails to see the meaning of the concept of purposiveness.

Aesthetic judgment as a reflective judgment, which is ruled by purposiveness, merely corresponds to the immanent harmony of the subject. It is a kind of immanent action, a free play of faculties (*freies Spiel der Kräfte*). It has no interest in the actuality of the reflected object or, we may say, the object of aesthetic judgment serves only as a mean for our aesthetic meditation. However, it is hard to conceive that the political judgment do not concern about the actuality of the object. It has to connect with the object (or event) and deliberate on it. For a *vita activa*, he has to make judgment for a particular event. It has to be in certain context, no mat-

ter if it is happening or will happen in the future; for a *vita contemplativa*, although he deliberates the political event by imagination, the object has to be actual too. No matter he reflects on the things past, or deliberates on a possible future, it must be “in context”. Additionally, the political deliberation does not necessary leads to a feeling of pleasure or displeasure, but for Kant, the aesthetic judgment does! Hence it should not be hard to conclude that political judgment is by nature different from aesthetic judgment.

iii) First Amendment: Replace 'Sensus Communis Aestheticus' with 'Sensus Communis'

Although political judgment should not be considered as another form of aesthetic judgment, I believe that Arendt's interpretation is still amendable by introducing a very subtle conceptual demarcation in a footnote of third *Critique*.

In the footnote, Kant names taste as a *sensus communis aestheticus* and common understanding as *sensus communis logicus*.³⁴ I suppose this conceptual demarcation has an unrealized importance for Arendt's interpretation of aesthetic judgment as the basis of political judgment. For the reason is that a *sensus communis aestheticus* as “taste” is by nature not determined by concepts but by feeling. Judgment of taste is not a kind of judgment which is determined by pure or empirical concepts, it is just a kind of indeterminate activity of soul, a free play of the imagination and understand in the aesthetic contemplation. *Sensus communis* as a subjective principle of judgment of taste provides a necessary condition for supposing the sense is communicable, and it grounds the subjective necessity of the judgment of taste. However, it is still hard to say that *sensus communis* is “the standard” of judging things aesthetically. We can only say that it is the ground, the presupposition or the faculty of the judgment of taste. For the reason is that standard means certain objective ground for comparison. Like ruler, which provides the ‘standard’ out of one's subjective feeling or disposition. A standard should be determinative and constitutive.

If we really want to talk about the standard of judgment for political concepts or events, we need empirical concepts that serve as exemplar.

³⁴. A footnote from KU under the page 294.

Common understanding as *sensus communis logicus* in certain sense may fit for this purpose more than *sensus communis aestheticus*. It is because the former one is at least in connected with concepts, although those concepts from Kant's perspective may be just too 'vulgar'.³⁵

Nevertheless, the point I would like to address here is not about which kind of *sensus communis* fits more with Arendt's interpretation. My point is that the conceptual demarcation by Kant shows that there is a kind of *sensus commiunis* does relate to concepts, by which one can still obtain the standard for judging. Therefore, Arendt's interpretation of *sensus communis* as the standard of approbation or disapprobation to the feeling is not totally unsound. Once we point out that there is still a kind of *sensus communis* in relation to concepts instead of feelings, Arendt's interpretation is still in certain sense valid.

iv) Second Amendment: Take Teleological Judgment into Consideration

In order to formulate a kind of political philosophy by Kant, I suggest, Arendt should take teleological judgment into consideration as an additional amendment. I agree the political judgment can be regarded as a reflective one, but it belongs not necessary *only* to aesthetic judgment. Since the transcendental principle of aesthetic judgment is subjected to the subjective purposiveness (purposiveness without purpose) instead of objective purposiveness, it is basically not related to the purpose or the existential status of human beings. Under the consideration of the relevance of the topics like history, culture, progress, etc., the part of *Critique of Teleological Judgment*, I suppose, should not be excluded from her project.

Teleological Judgment plays a very important role for bridging the gap of Kant's critical philosophy and his later doctrines, which are mostly related to political issues. In chapter 83 and 84 of third *Critique*, Kant claims that the ultimate purpose (*der letzte Zweck*) of nature as if a teleological system is man and the final purpose of the existence of a world (*Endzweck des Daseins einer Welt*) is man as a moral being. All of these passages are important to his later project on theology, politics and the development of human morality. If we want to construct a kind of political judgment by Kant, these passages are not neglectable. Arendt wants to establish a

³⁵. Cf. KU, 293.

united theory of judgment related to actor and spectator, or even to human condition in general, it is correct to pick *Critique of Judgment* as the main philosophical text to elucidate the character of political judgment. However, she put her focus only on *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment* instead of the whole book. I would say, it is a regrettable mistake.

8. Conclusion

Although Arendt's interpretation that Kant's political philosophy can be based on his aesthetics is seemingly rough, her interpretation is still in many ways insightful and in certain sense acceptable. Arendt seizes correctly the spirit of the third *Critique* that the power of judgment as reflective judgment concerns the particular. It is true that the *Critique of Judgment* in certain sense has strengthened the rights of the particular and the individual.³⁶ We may say, her contemporary reading does pave the way for the latecomers to consider a kind of political aesthetics or aesthetic politics. It is in certain sense a successful modernization of Kant's thoughts.

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³⁶ Cf. "In other words, the topics of the *Critique of Judgment* – the particular, whether a fact of nature or an event in history; the faculty of judgment as the faculty of man's mind to deal with it; sociability of men as the condition or the functioning of the faculty, [...] that is, important for the political – were concerns of Kant long before he finally, after finishing the critical business (*das kritische Geschäft*), turned to them when he was old." See *Lectures on Kant's political philosophy*, 14.

Giacometti's 'Point to the Eye' and Merleau-Ponty's Painter

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ABSTRACT. In this essay I argue that the *realization* of the visible through painting, suggested by Merleau-Ponty in *Eye and Mind* (painting “gives visible existence to what profane vision thinks is invisible”), finds in Alberto Giacometti’s works and writings a support of peculiar interest to illuminate the double-bind operation of both recording and expressing how reality touches and questions the viewer. Moreover, beyond any simply ‘chiasmatic’ realization of being, Giacometti’s *poietic* response to the ‘impact’ with reality and the descriptions of visual ‘truth’ offered in his *Écrits* make clear, by means of two ‘pictorial’ and ‘plastic’ ideas, “likeness” and “depth”, both the necessity to overcome the presence of generally unnoticed images or acquired knowledge (that prevent vision to reach, in as unprejudiced way as possible, the experience of a vision), and the possibility to extend the access of seeing to a differentiation of the visible which implies – not far from Merleau-Ponty’s late views on Nature – the ontological presupposition of an instable and ‘relational’ Being.

I. To See Directly

Alberto Giacometti’s *Pointe à l’œil* (1932) is a wood and metal sculpture, made up of a plane on which a long pointed spear hits a small globe in a hollow. The sculpture dates back to his Surrealist period. This work is one of those “Objects of Symbolic Function” described by Salvador Dalí in his pioneering article on Surrealist objects published in 1931 in Andre Breton’s journal “Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution”: objects able to reference the sublimated impulses and desires elicited in the viewer – like Giacometti’s famous *Suspended Ball* (1930).

No doubt that in *Point to the Eye* the dreamlike matter-of-factness of the link between ocular and death drives and the sadistic image of a pointed

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stick aiming at an eye globe still reminds of Surrealist production of sexual fetishes, easily recognizable in Giacometti's "disagreeable objects" too.

Joining the Surrealist group in Paris in the Thirties, Giacometti learns how to de-realize the object, how to free vision from the frames set up by its familiarity, as well as a reluctance to adapt to patterns of division – subject-object, conscious-unconscious, near-far.

In this respect Giacometti's *Point to the Eye* actually heralds a collapse of vision against a putatively fixed visual order, it points to the problem the Swiss artist struggled with through all the different phases of his artistic development: how to render a figure within a space. It announces, losing touch with (and reliance in) 'objective' proportions of things, Giacometti's "crises" of perception, and ultimately his phenomenological approach to vision.

Giacometti seems to agree with Merleau-Ponty when the latter in his *Phenomenology of Perception* admits that nothing is more difficult than 'knowing exactly' what we are seeing. Various elements of Giacometti's theory and practice of vision agree with Merleau-Ponty's theories, which to a certain extent can be also ascribed to the popularity of phenomenology in the French philosophic environment of the 1930s and 1940s in Paris, the city Giacometti lived in from 1922 on. The philosopher and the artist met actually in Paris several times and Giacometti drew a philosopher's head, *Heraclit*, for the frontispiece of Merleau-Ponty's edited anthology *Les Philosophes célèbres* (1956).

Even if we could say that Giacometti traces an entirely personal phenomenological path, the conditions for a non-casual encounter between the philosopher's and the artist's positions about the "style of perception" carried on by painting are somehow strengthened by the fact that in the 1940s Merleau-Ponty has already discovered the specific philosophical dimension of "painting".

With Cézanne, like with Braque, Juan Gris and Picasso, "painting brings us back to the vision of things themselves", which means that its objects "do not flow under our gaze like known objects", but "force it to stop, they question it, oddly communicate their secreta substance, their very material nature".

On the basis of this phenomenological import, painting is able to exhibit the same "style of perceptive experience" that, according to Merleau-

Ponty, philosophy as phenomenology should reach as well. But what kind of style is it?

The issue is not a minor one. Merleau-Ponty's seems to suggest that "it's the style of the gaze's reversibility, what I could call the other side of the collapse of vision", a style which enables the painter to "recover and show the very birth of a landscape" or of any other vision, without this having to pay a tribute to the law of geometric perspective for it. In this respect the 'Cézanne's doubt' is turned into a strategy and into a style. If, as stated by classical teaching, Cézanne does not distinguish drawing from colour and states that "when you paint, you draw", it is because "he wants to generate the outline and the shape of objects in the same way as nature generates them under our eyes, that is through the composition of colours". Different points of view are now co-existing in the various sections of the painting, giving the impression of a "perspective error" which vanishes if, at a close look, we are able to catch the span existing between one part of the painting and the other: the being "appears and shows through across time".

What about Giacometti? Can we state that 'the style of perception' mentioned by Merleau-Ponty concerns Giacometti's painting and sculpture as well? Questioned by Parinaud on the sense of his artistic venture, Giacometti answers in a way that deserves attention. After remarking that "voir, comprendre le monde, le sentir intensément" (Seeing, understanding, feeling the world intensely) is the one single reason that urges one to undertake art, he confirms that in almost all painting "au fond la vision se rapporte surtout aux couleurs" (after all, vision is especially related to colours). It is as if Giacometti subscribed to Merleau-Ponty's idea whereby the way in which painting experiences the world may be described as a 'perceptive style'.

First of all however, it's the 'pointing of the eye' which conveys the same idea of an intensive contact or an "impact" with the world that Merleau-Ponty will mention in his *Eye and Mind*, when describing the affection of being hurt by reality, which for him, however, paradoxically also means to "have at a distance". The eye "is that which has been moved by some impact of the world, which it then restores to the visible through the traces of a hand".

Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology and ontology of painting from "Céz-

anne's Doubt" to "Eye and Mind" and Alberto Giacometti's work are engaged, so to say, in the same struggle for 'vision', starting from Cézanne's "doubt" about a prejudiced true naturalness of perception. The whole question however is not simply based on the primacy of perception and the living body: this insight in fact maintains a dichotomy between consciousness and objects, the dualism mind-body that Merleau-Ponty's flesh-ontology aims to overcome *through painting*.

In addressing our relationship to things, Merleau-Ponty emphasizes incompleteness, process, failure – rather than wholeness or mastery. In *L'Œil et l'esprit* Merleau-Ponty quotes twice Giacometti's remarks (on likeness and on depth) to point out how his work can be considered as paradigmatic for discussion about the way reality 'perform' as appearance, engaging the viewer in somatic and constructive participation. What is here at stake is the artist's attempt to "make the vision", to configure perception in the interplay of sensual materiality with the body and imagination of the viewer, through a 'poietic' response to the experience of being 'stung in the eye' by reality.

In Giacometti's *Point to the Eye* the object, thing or body, acting as a point and actually striking on the eye, involves it in a response that includes the responsive concern to recognise the object – which means to grasp its display as a figure in space, *in relation to* both the artist's eye and the positioning of bodies, revealing itself at first as something being unknown, non-familiar and therefore as a somehow threatening object.

This points to the elemental and crucial problem how to "see directly" (Giacometti), to prevent vision to be influenced by all possible 'mediations'.

Merleau-Ponty speaks of a "pre-logic" connection underlying our perception and expression, able to mine all our conceptualizations of the observable world: a "primordial order of signification". But the question for us is: how is this primary order intertwined with the discipline of art-making and how does it eventually find expression in it?

In Giacometti, because it entails the possibility to receive the real that 'awakens' the eye, the gaze inevitably clashes with knowledge, with anything trying to "mentally correct" the image. Giacometti tries to portray what he sees (for example, the head before him) without having recourse to what he "knows": this is where the labour of Sisyphus begins, the uneven

and always, at least partly, vain fight. The clash between seeing and knowing leads Giacometti to *question the totality* of vision. In the experience of perception there is an element of the image that is seen as “fundamental thing” and that makes up its focus. This is why he defines the Roman bust as ‘cold’: it is as if it rejected attention, as if it refused any concrete support to it; “Cézanne is right instead, adds Giacometti, when he draws a longer arm to his *Man (Boy) in the red waistcoat*, because in this case he saw the arm as a fundamental thing. The same goes (...) for the sculptors of New Guinea, who enhance in man what they have seen rather than what they know already”.

From *Pointe à l'oeil* to Giacometti's artistic production in the 1950s, his concern for a ‘rough’ contact of the sensory with the world grows into the explicit need to see the external world *directly*, and not through the lens of any acquired knowledge. Which actually didn't mean to deprive perception of the knowledge component (of the eye and of the hand), but rather to open it up to a certain freedom from conventions and to permeability to sensory data. To satisfy this need of vision, however, requires first of all to deactivate precisely that knowledge which suggests to the mind the image of an object in its “objective dimension”, thus preventing an experience of vision as exploration, excavation, novelty, discovery of a head or a figure, on this side of its ‘full size’. Which brings Giacometti to an endless positioning, measuring and working on the proportions of the figure and its parts, to a steady balancing of distances, together with to the sensory experience of both the light strokes and the digging in the yielding mass of clay, the crossed lines on a sheet of paper, a lasting contact established with any surface while marking or carving it. According to Giacometti, to see “directly” means to see by drawing, painting, modelling.

2. Likeness

Uncertainty, the doubt concerning the final choice of formal solutions to the problem of representing what the artist “sees”, steady coupled Giacometti's efforts. “I just try to construct a head, nothing more” he used to say, though “I don't know exactly what I see”. Giacometti's idea of a residual vision that the artist displays in a collapsing space through accumulation of *taches* of colour or graphic signs corresponds to his effort to

take apart seeing from given knowledge: an 'art of doubting' proving very near to Cézanne's "perceptive style", as Merleau-Ponty calls it.

Throughout his career Giacometti emphasizes the long lasting effort to manipulate a living thing into existence out of a lifeless material, canvas, colours, clay. To him as an artist the problem of the relationship of man's eye and object asked again and again for a 'poiètic' and not only visual response. The seemingly unbearable difficulty is overcome by Giacometti through a peculiar strategy: the seeking for "likeness".

While returning to the same figures and the same models, he interestingly claims that his work consists in searching for "absolute likeness". But he actually describes likeness as a tool, an instrument, even as a sort of weapon, rather than a *telos*: for the simple reason that truth interested him much more than art: "what interests me in all paintings is likeness – that is what likeness is for me: something that makes me uncover the external world a little".

What is remarkable here is that we find the same passage, taken from Giacometti's *Écrits*, quoted by Merleau-Ponty in his *Eye and Mind*.

Merleau-Ponty's assumption, which he already expressed in *Phenomenology of Perception*, is that perception is required to get "access to truth", and is not adapted thought or apodictic consciousness: it rather provides the foundation of being as a world. On this basis, according to Merleau-Ponty, philosophy, just like art, has to perform as a "realization of a truth" rather than as the reflection of a preliminary truth. In this respect Giacometti's "thinking through vision" can be related to Merleau-Ponty's idea of perception as a "primordial operation", though Giacometti's vision remains *residual*, while Merleau-Ponty's primordial perception is supposed to imbue the sensory with sense, that is to say, to capture an immanent sense in the sensory before any judgment, while "true philosophy consists in learning again to see the world". Which means here "to enter a universe of beings *showing themselves*" as such. As far as I can see them, says Merleau-Ponty, these things remain "homes" open to my gaze. (...) I can see an object since the objects make up a system or a world, and each of them arranges other objects around itself as spectators of its hidden aspects and guarantee of their permanence. A step aside however is set down by the painter, who "interrogates" the object of his painting "with his gaze", so that his vision is "an ongoing birth".

Particularly eloquent about the individualization related to such a 'birth' is the title chosen by Merleau-Ponty for the sixth of the seven radio lectures transmitted by French national Radio Broadcasting Company in autumn 1948, in the programme "*Heure de culture française*". The conversation was entitled "Art and the Perceived World". Merleau-Ponty's main purpose was to reassert that "in this world it's impossible to separate things from the way they appear". That's why the experience of a work of art is perception just like the experience of a table. Therefore, if I "put myself in the hands of the school of perception, I'll be able to understand a work of art, because it too is a fleshy whole whose meaning is not free – so to say – but tied to, prisoner of all the marks, of all the details which make it manifest to me". If I perceive a table, I'm not in search of a 'definition' that would make me "draw to the essence of the table" only to lose interest in the "way the table looks and the way in which it performs its specific function". According to Merleau-Ponty the way which is accessible to perception instead – the way in which a certain table "supports its plane", as "the single movement from the legs to the top which opposes heaviness" and which makes every table different from any other.

As far as art is concerned, the key to have access to a work of art and its power is "that the form and the content, what is said and the way in which it is said, cannot be separated"; thus it means "to perceive a painting following the unspoken indications of all its parts which the traces of paint on the canvas show me, until all of them, with no words or reasoning, come together in a rigorous arrangement in which you feel nothing is arbitrary". This is true for poetry, or for the cinema, each work being a "sensory thing" with its own overall pace to be captured through perception and with its only indirect relation to ideas or natural things. In this respect painting issues a challenge. The challenge (and the enigma) concerns vision's being immersed in the texture of cross-references and bonds that keep us close to things but also being hit and awakened by the real, urged to respond.

3. Depth

Alongside 'likeness', the second topic that Merleau-Ponty's explicitly derives from Giacometti and quotes in his *Eye and Mind* is 'depth'. In the

same interview (with Charbonnier), Giacometti talks about Cézanne's painting in these terms: "I believe Cézanne was seeking depth all his life". What does it mean? Responding to the artist's gaze which challenges the familiar appearance, doesn't recognise it, and keeps on trying to see, what appears moves away, Giacometti says, in the "direction of depth".. And what about the case that a 'wall of images' materialise between the artist's eye and a genuine experience of seeing? How can the obstacle be removed? Giacometti says: "the more I looked at the model, the thicker the screen between me and reality became. You start seeing the person posing, but little by little all possible sculptures come to you (...) – reach and hit your mind – I didn't know who or what I was seeing any more".

In Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception the object is already without contours: an object is an organism of colours, of smells, of sounds, of touch appearances. In Merleau-Ponty's *Eye and Mind* the concern about vision and painting deepens its critical explorations related to the world now inscribed in an ontological underlying search. Now the world, the world filtered by the painter, can't be viewed as a system any more: the world has *to scatter* to show itself, it has to renounce to geometrical perspective and to a proper field of perception.

Following Giacometti's remark about Cézanne's lifelong seeking for 'depth' Merleau-Ponty's suggests that in pursuing "depth" Cézanne was looking for a "deflagration of Being", the form taking shape, in Cézanne's paintings, from an unprecedented crossing of volumes and colours.

The point, I think, is here the question of what appearance is, of what becomes apparent to a subject if the sensory opens itself to a situated and impermanent being. Giacometti's feelings in relation to what once was apparent to him were unlike any he had had before. In his mature works he never stopped struggling with the permutations of being, dislocating and locating again each figure a thousand times. In his conversation with André Parinaud, Giacometti claims that in portraying someone or something "l'aventure, la grande aventure, c'est de voir surgir quelque chose d'inconnu chaque jour, dans le même visage". He insists on this topic in his conversation with Isaku Yanaihara: "plus on voit le visage avec densité, plus l'espace qui l'entoure devient immense".

In *Eye and Mind* 'depth' describes the experience of Merleau-Ponty's painter, insofar the attempt to translate experience of the perceived world

into the artistic work shows “that is impossible, in this world, to separate things from their way of appearing”. In this respect, it sounds rather strange for depth to be still understood as “the experience of the reversibility of dimensions”. I see things, Merleau-Ponty maintains, “in their exteriority, known through their envelopment, and their mutual dependence in their autonomy”.

As we know, according to late Merleau-Ponty, the exteriority of a thing that envelops another thing, or “of the visible on the seeing body” is “flesh”. Not mere matter, but rather the matrix of sensory relationships and of shifting, sliding or revolving that may bring about metamorphoses or revolutions in the visible and sensory. Nevertheless, however, if applied to the painter’s world, the categories of reversibility, fold and ‘chiasm’ prove to be still too mechanical and static: sliding and shifting don’t seem to be able to describe depth as ontological device. To legitimate something like a “deflagration of being” it’s necessary, I believe, to stress (as Giacometti does) its being first related to a preliminary clash or “impact” with the object of vision, affecting the gaze with blindness, and then related to the presence of invisibility as impulse, energy produced by work of art as a *relational-being*.

In Merleau-Ponty’s theory on *The Visible and the Invisible*, ‘depth’ refers to the latency of being, it has to be understood as another name for ‘*chair*’ (‘flesh’). Its remaining concealed or its non-being-expressed doesn’t simply depend on the fact that the visible of the moment cannot clearly exhaust the visible as such, but on the circumstance that the Visible (and touchable) doesn’t restrict itself to concealing or presupposing the Invisible, but paradoxically *presents* the Invisible as an absence. The visible lets the ‘agency’ of the invisible become visible through bodies and things looking for individuation through relationship.

Therefore, when Merleau-Ponty calls the sensory “in-visible”, he doesn’t primarily mean what is ordinarily concealed from view, but what is inaccessible to scientific or “operational” thinking, as it is the case of the Cartesian framework of the description and explanation of the world. Thus latency or depth, the being-concealed of something, offering itself as the experience of a non-geometrical depth, must be not only the invisible implied in the visible, the inaccessible “wrapped” in the accessible, but the overlapping of being as exposure of an interplay of multiple beings and

images.

We know that according to Merleau-Ponty painting can throw a pre-human look onto things, provided that it does not take on a representative or illusionistic, a banally mimetic, or 'allusive', analogic attitude.

Looking at things in this horizon, however, we still don't have sufficient elements to understand how painting can be realised as a search for depth, that is as "dimension giving the object to us (...) as full of reserves and as inexhaustible reality". With respect to this, we are supported by the cases of this "presence of the invisible in the visible" when it is Cézanne who "outlines" "*several* contours" and not just one contour of the apple he is painting, but also when Giacometti puts into action an inexhaustible sign filling with graphics the figure to be drawn.

In this regard, Cézanne and Giacometti 'see' in the same way, that way that leads depth to "deflagrate", with an 'inexhaustible sign' responding to invisibility raising the visible. To some extent, Merleau-Ponty's recourse to painting and to the notion of 'depth' drives him to explain an enigma by means of another enigma; to hint to the enigma of an "ontology of the flesh" through the enigma of visibility, without actually explaining what could've been raised by painting in terms of individuation of a being.

On the basis of all the elements gathered and for the purposes of the present paper we can highlight three main points: 1) the interrogation of the gaze; 2) the modulation of instability; 3) the overlapping.

Let's start from the 1st point: it is the gaze that asks the thing how it has access to visibility, how it becomes a thing. The painter who is able to realize this request captures this 'how' in the structure of a thing, in the way it gets tangled up, bends and stretches. It is necessary however to understand if the "interrogations" that Merleau-Ponty sees "spreading" through the world because of continuous gazes are nothing, in painting, but a way to get perceptively and operationally prepared to the surfacing of a module, of a form of instability, of a self-affection that finds an expression: construction from the inside. Which brings us to the 2nd point mentioned, the possible modulation of instability through painting, which to Giacometti means a modulation of likeness. Surprisingly, Giacometti has no doubts that "the bust wishes to be resembling", that the creation of a face, of a life figure or the drawing of an object always wishes to be a

portrait, that is to say demands to “resemble to someone” or something. What is to be found, then, is nothing but a determined, and therefore technical, answer to what a lightly marked canvas, or a rough-hewn sculpture ask again and again, raising new problems at every working session (“plus je travaille, plus je vois autrement”). In other words, Giacometti’s search for likeness proves to be in itself an osmotic exchange between the artist’s eye (and hand) and reality, in order to satisfy, from both sides, the impelling need to have access to an object asking it to go through ‘depth’, the latency of being, and *appear*.

Cézanne had already drawn attention to the fact that even the most ordinary objects have their own features, which are ever-changing and such as to interact with the other objects and the observer actively. Therefore, even and precisely a glass, a chair, a lamp or a room ask to be portrayed, rather than simply pictured or represented on paper or on canvas. Hence the need to enter their inner animation, to catch them at the very moment when they dialogue with the other objects appearing or hiding themselves and with the eye of the observer.

Thus ‘likeness’, as related to the interrogation of the gaze, is not meant as correspondence (of the drawing with the model); rather, it is viewed as the acquisition, by means of the line drawn on the sheet of paper or the fingerprint on the clay mass, of a measure of proximity to a certain perceptive truth, to the knowledge that has become part of the vision, to the living contact with the object. A measure of seeing to be constructed with lines, planes, surfaces.

4. The Cage

In his attempt to find a solution to the problem of proportions, a real priority to him, Giacometti comes across Egyptian art and Byzantine icons. In both there is a stylisation of the real that appears to him as extraordinarily ‘realistic’ because of its ability to formalise the abbreviations or partial focuses that perception opposes to the enormousness and inaccessibility of the real, and that it captures, delivering them to a vision regulated by style.

“If I would made (*si je faisais*) thoroughly the perception I have of you” he once said to David Sylvester “I would make a very flat, barely modu-

lated sculpture, which would be much closer to a sculpture of the Cyclades, that has a stylised look, than to one of Rodin's or Houdon's sculptures, which look real (...). In any case, when I look at it, it looks more like a byzantine or one of Cézanne's heads than to a Titian". Giacometti was firmly persuaded that ancient art, or pre-Renaissance art (Greek, Egyptian, Sumerian, Byzantine art) had produced a "closeness to truth" which is impossible for modern artists to achieve.

Referring to *La Cage* in 1950, Giacometti told Pierre Matisse that the sculpture was meant to portray a room, a naked woman and a male bust inside, as well as something else: "it is the wish to abolish the base, the attempt to have a limited space to better realise a head and a figure". All the figures are *resserré* – in Giacometti's words – in the artificial space of the cage. In a wider sense, he never stopped having recourse to the cage of style, to a geometric, formalised space, like Egyptian or Byzantine artists did, though Giacometti, as a modern artist, couldn't create one on his own. His sculptures remain "in a fixed, arbitrary form", like a Sumerian head or a Fayum mummy portrait, with the eyes "on the horizon, the curve of the eyes, the separation of the ears" clearly marked by style, which can later create, through the material used in painting or in sculpture, those "approaches", *rapprochements* to the subject, which bring us again to 'likeness'.

It is no coincidence, then, that the figurative art Giacometti often states is farthest from his idea of *rassemblance* remains Renaissance art, while the art which is closest to 'real' vision is the most stylised art – "Egyptian or Byzantine painting, which keep enthraling me, or the Fayum mummy portraits or the Roman painting of Pompeii".

Giacometti somehow brings together the typically 20th century impulse to destroy the figure and all canons and the need to set up a cage, or at least a spatial reference grid for the framing of faces or figures. And, at the same time, he shows an unwillingness to restore the life and animation provided, in different ways, by Medieval fixed images and the physiognomic painting of Pompeii and of el Fayum.

Questioned by the interviewer (David Sylvester) on the reason for such greater resemblance in byzantine art, Giacometti gives the example of the "byzantine head", clearly an icon, where the "base of the nose" and the "construction of the eye" are more similar to the way in which he actually 'sees' them.

This means to “provide sculptures with a gaze» «without imitating the eye”, warns Giacometti. Thus the truth of life seems to lie in a gaze whose truth does not appear thanks to the eye’s construction, but somehow despite the fact that the eye is constructed.

Following what I have said on the proportions of the face and of the figures in Giacometti’s portraits, speaking of “naïveté” of vision is questionable. Admittedly, Giacometti’s doubts on how to create a head seem to have quite annoyed André Breton, who is reported to have replied: “everybody knows what a head looks like”. As Arthur Danto remarked, in fact the issue concerns not so much what a head looks like, but rather “the way it looks when its owner is looking at an object”. However, I contend with Danto’s hypothesis that Giacometti’s way to represent life ‘directly’ consists in exhibiting “not what things look like, but how they show themselves in their awareness of the world”. This is only one side of the coin. The other side implies the *dimensioning* of what appears. I don’t think we can comprehend the issue raised by the living character of the subject without putting into account at the same time the issue raised by style: both of which are constantly considered by Giacometti. The two issues – the life to be captured and the cage to hold it, that is to say the geometry deriving from style – must be imagined within the process of constructing a *field of vision* which is not quite naïve or ‘brute’ in Merleau-Ponty’s sense. In fact, the field of vision in which Giacometti’s figures and busts finally find a placement, a proportion, a scale, a solution for the plastic problem of gaze, cannot only be the result of a permeability of the gaze to the flesh of the world, of a communication of equivalents. To this extent, Merleau-Ponty views the artist’s freedom as nothing but tuning in with nature’s freedom, which is creativity of expression, “a power to invent the visible” and “self-production of meaning”. However, while we may consider Giacometti’s artistic and theoretical universe as responding to Merleau-Ponty’s ideas of “opening” and “dispossessing” that make the visibility of the invisible possible, whereby vision happens within ourselves as a continuous birth, a problem arises for the “system of equivalents” by which Merleau-Ponty actually arranges the “flesh of the world” into a bodily schema.

5. Ontology of an Instable Being

Let's reach at last the 3rd point, the question of overlapping as the internal differentiation of being, relationship as osmotic exchange.

In contrast with Merleau-Ponty's descriptions concerning this schematizing outcome of the seer-seen reversible relationship, Giacometti's works and thinking seem to correspond more deeply to Merleau-Ponty's late Nature ontology than to flesh-ontology. While the latter remains tied to an imaginary of fluidity and reversibility in being, Nature, overwhelming the living beings, produces new gatherings and new individuals, while new images can be grasped, joining the very nature of painting. Which has not very much to do with a reversibility of being, but rather with the same "instable balance or movement" that let nature open and dispossess itself.

From here, it seems to me, originates the understanding of what Merleau-Ponty means by "new reversibility" in *Eye and Mind*: it is neither a mere reciprocal relationship between the seer and the seen, intertwined in a chiasm-like relation, nor a simple enveloping piling up latent contents which alternatively turn into 'folds', or cavities, where a visible thing would surface from over and over again.

Merleau-Ponty claims that painting provides the substance of the world, the flesh, with a peculiar vision capability deriving from the interposition of the painter's "body". The painter "interrogates" the object of his painting "with his gaze". "Une sculpture n'est pas un objet, elle est une interrogation, une question, une réponse" echos Giacometti.

We would say, nowadays, that the painter's body works as an 'interface' between different screens, or 'gazes'. Compared to simple vision, the painter contributes not only the hand supporting the eye, which is an operational act supporting perception: s/he adds movement through her/his own moving body. This enables her/his to create around a moving density, a simultaneous overlapping of objects, gazes and vectors. In this respect, the recourse to vision in Cézanne or Giacometti stem from the same rejection not only of the ordered vision in terms of perspective, but of the allusive function of the trait, line or mark of colour. What takes shape in painting here is not a reference to objects (recognisable 'despite' they were only an image alluding to things), but an experience of listening and, we

may say, of “active waiting” for things to find an expression *in the materials* and the forms the painter makes available for their appearance as visual and sensory phenomena.

In his final course (1959-1960) about the idea of nature Merleau-Ponty explains it in the following terms: “there is only the multiple, and this totality that surges from it is not a totality in potential, but the establishment of a certain dimension”. The philosophical import of Giacometti’s work and thinking communicates precisely with Merleau-Ponty’s ontological theory of Nature, phenomenologically described as “overlapping”.

Giacometti’s dimensional crises inheres this issue as a capacity to give account of the genesis of form in a way that “escapes from the dilemma of being and nonbeing”, like in nature the organism. In his placements and displacements of figures, a positive emptiness is inseparable from the determination of a place *because of* the enveloping of the body subject with the natural world.

In Giacometti’s words, this means that “les signes, même les signes du passé, ne se stabilisent jamais. Ils surgissent. Ils disparaissent”. It also means, however, that listening is not enough for the painter: s/he must capture the essence of the being, make depth easily seen through. To do so, Giacometti explains, cages must be set up.

Giacometti teaches that a perceptive style supported by the framework of the reversibility of gazes is not enough to a painter. He also needs dimensional boxes, devices capturing the expression of being. Only in the way indicated painting can become the interface enabling the appearing of forces to be expressed as an explosion of visions provided with their own structure. “L’espace n’existe pas, il faut le créer”.

Through painting, says Merleau-Ponty, we catch “the voluminosity” of a thing, the enigma of its being-there in its autonomy and at the same time in its mutual dependence with other things: I see things that “eclipse one another”. A dimensionality of Being comes forward as a depth that takes up the structure of an overlapping, actually the only concrete pattern that Merleau-Ponty inserts to describe phenomenologically the “new reversibility” announced by painting. Where spatiality is not only tied to one’s own body and motility, but to impossible views: it becomes organ of an ontology of an instable being.

Les têtes. Les personnages, ne sont que mouvement continu du dedans, du dehors, ils se refont sans arrêt, ils n'ont pas une vraie consistance, leur côté transparent. (...) Elles sont ni cube, ni cylindre, ni sphère, ni triangle. Elles sont une masse en mouvement, forme changeante et jamais tout à fait saisissable (...) une réalité sans mesure, dans une espace sans limites.

On one hand Giacometti seems actually to embody, in Cézanne's footprints, the role of the Painter as described in *Eye and Mind*, but on the other, with his drawings, paintings, sculptures and also his statements about vision, he illuminates, even beyond the philosopher's explanations dedicated to this issue, Merleau-Ponty's idea of the "new reversibility" of painting. Displacements and placements of Giacometti's figures realizing we may say, the ontological idea of a relational-space where the construction of likeness and the construction of depth come together in the density of a space saturated by interpenetration of visible and invisible signs and agencies.

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Transcending Equality: Jacques Rancière and the Sublime in Politics

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ABSTRACT. This paper analyses the relation between Jacques Rancière's idea of 'politics as aesthetics' and the Kantian sublime. For Rancière, politics and aesthetics are not simply analogical; they share a common mechanism. Yet despite this virtual amalgamation, Rancière repeatedly rejects both the sublime itself and the Kantian subdivision of the aesthetic into the beautiful and the sublime. I claim that Rancière's explicit rejection of the sublime and his reduction of the aesthetic to the beautiful diminish the relevance of his conception of politics to contemporary political issues and subjectivities and undermine its own logic. In order to establish a feasible link between Rancière and Kantian aesthetics, I trace Rancière's idea of politics back to Hannah Arendt's late political interpretation of Kant's *Critique of Judgement*. While Arendt's idea of politics is usually associated with the Kantian analytic of the beautiful, I demonstrate that Rancière's more dissensual idea can be linked to the analytic of the sublime and that, despite his explicit rejection, it implicitly incorporates some of its aspects. I then link this discrepancy to the conflict Kant identifies between political action and moral judgement in the face of dramatic political events. Arendt's solution of making a distinction between political actors and observers is incompatible with Rancière's fundamentally participatory idea of politics. Neither can he accept Jean-François Lyotard's 'ethical reductionism of politics', the critique of which invariably accompanies Rancière's references to the sublime. His shifting of the political realm from real to symbolical violence intended to free politics from the residual Kantian moralism is justifiable. However, it also needlessly shakes off the sublime. Hence, finally, I argue for an explicit reintegration of the sublime into Rancière's idea of politics, based on his postulate of equality.

i. Introduction

Jacques Rancière's *Disagreement*, is considered by many to be his central work.¹ In it, he cites the following tale by Herodotus about the Scythian

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¹Rancière, 1999.

slave revolt:

The Scythians [...] customarily put out the eyes of those [whom] they reduced to slavery to restrict them to their task, which was to milk the livestock. This normal order of things was disturbed by the Scythians' great expeditions. Having left to conquer Media, the Scythian warriors plunged deep into Asia and were held up there for a whole generation. Over the same period, a generation of sons was born to the slaves and raised with their eyes open. Looking around at the world, they reached the conclusion that there was no particular reason why they should be slaves, being born the same way their distant masters were and with the same attributes. Since the women who remained behind permanently took it upon themselves to confirm this natural similarity, the slaves decided that, until proved wrong, they were the equal of the warriors. They consequently [...] armed themselves, ready to hold their ground when the conquerors should return. When the latter finally showed up with their lances and bows, they thought they could easily clean up this little cowherds' revolt. The assault was a failure. One of the sharper warriors took the measure of the situation and summed it up for his brothers in arms: 'Take my advice, lay spear and bow aside, and let each man fetch his horsewhip, and go boldly up to them. So long as they see us with arms in our hands, they imagine themselves our equals in birth and bravery; but let them behold us with no other weapon but the whip, and they will feel that they are our slaves, and flee before us.' And so it was done, with great success: struck by the spectacle, the slaves took to their heels without a fight.²

My work on this paper began with a certain irritation about the peculiar relation between Rancière's idea of politics and the Kantian sublime. On the one hand, I was attracted by Rancière's very promising approach to politics. He calls it 'politics as aesthetics' and defines it as an appearance on the political stage of social groups which were until then invisible and inaudible. On the other hand, I was confused by his repeated and quite blunt rejection of the sublime—one of the two pillars of the Kantian aesthetics.

²Ibid., 12.

In this paper, I attempt to shed more light on this strange relation, as I suspect that Rancière's rejection of the sublime results in an deficient conception of politics. I do not intend to discredit Rancière's idea of politics by pointing out its theoretical inconsistencies; in fact, the opposite is true. Ultimately, I would like to strengthen it 1) by analysing the possible reasons for his rejection of the sublime, and 2) by discerning and explicating the implicit role it might nevertheless play in his theory.

In my opinion, Rancière's 'politics as aesthetics' is an attempt to walk the middle way between two other attempts to link Kant's aesthetics with politics: Hannah Arendt's and Jean-François Lyotard's. Admittedly, Arendt's and Lyotard's own positions cannot be addressed in a satisfactory manner by this short paper. Instead, I limit myself to analysing the two thinkers only in relation to Rancière, i.e. only insofar as it helps me to elucidate his stance.

I proceed as following. The following section is dedicated to tracing Rancière's idea of politics back to Arendt's political interpretation of Kant's aesthetics. This section will simultaneously serve as an introduction to Rancière's terminology. I then address Rancière's critique of Lyotard's 'aesthetics of the sublime' as an 'ethical turn' of aesthetics and politics. Finally, in the last section, I propose a more positive Rancièrian relation to the sublime based on his own examples of politics.

2. Rancière and Arendt

Rancière offers no direct dedicated analysis of the sublime. His references to this aesthetic category are indirect and accompany in most—when not all—cases his critique of Lyotard. Thus, I was confronted with a question: How to start? How to establish a link between Rancière and the Kantian aesthetics?

Eventually, I decided to trace back Rancière's 'politics as aesthetics' to Arendt's political interpretation of Kant's *Critique of Judgement* in her late writings—primarily to her *Lectures on Kant*.³ There are good reasons to do just that. After all, Arendt and Rancière share a critique of (traditional) political philosophy. They agree that the so-called political philo-

³Arendt 1992.

sophy should rather be described as a conflictual relationship between philosophy and politics or, perhaps, even a form of a philosophical repression of politics.⁴

Kant's political philosophy—if he ever wrote one—represents for Arendt a rare exception in this regard.⁵ Here too, Rancière seems to agree with Arendt on granting Kant this special status. Notably, Kant does not appear in Rancière's "blacklist" of thinkers that stand for the three repressive forms of political philosophy: archipolitics, parapolitics, and metapolitics.

For Rancière, to repress politics is to ground it in an essentially apolitical realm. For example, an attempt to base politics on notions of knowledge and truth threatens to reduce it to the pure calculations of means and ends.⁶ Furthermore, Rancière and Arendt are both opposed to grounding politics in and subordinating its practices to ethics, as it reduces a political dispute to a mere ethical confrontation of good and evil. Rancière rejects the view that 'disasters and horrors would happen when you forget to ground politics in ethics. [...] In the age of George Bush and Osama bin Laden, it appears that the ethical conflict is much more violent, much more radical than the political one.'⁷

Consequently, Arendt and Rancière demand an alternative, more autonomous idea of politics. Arendt elaborates such an idea based on Kant's aesthetics and, in my opinion, this is also Rancière's point of departure. After all, as argued by Oliver Marchart, Rancière stresses 'the necessity to split the notion of politics from within' as an attempt to release 'something essential' in order to overcome philosophy's legacy to repress politics.⁸ I believe this 'something' to be precisely what Arendt called 'a pure concept of the political [which] the occidental philosophy has never had.'⁹

In fact, Rancière shares this feeling of necessity with a wide array of theorists within the French so called post-foundational political thought who attempt to restore politics' specificity, essentiality, and autonomy by

⁴Cf. *Ibid.*, 61 and Arendt 1992, 22.

⁵Cf. Arendt 1992, 25.

⁶Cf. Dikeç 2012, 263.

⁷Rancière 2011, 4.

⁸Cf. Marchart 2007, 7.

⁹Quoted after Marchart 2007, 39.

forging the so-called ‘political difference’, which is often expressed as the difference between politics and the political.

Rancière, however, does not utilise the term ‘the political’. Instead, he sticks to the term ‘politics’ where others have used ‘the political’, while, at the same time, proposing a new term ‘to mark the other side of the political difference.’¹⁰ Rancière writes:

Politics is generally seen as a set of procedures whereby the aggregation and consent of collectivities is achieved, the organization of powers, the distribution of places and roles, and the systems for legitimizing this distribution. I propose to give this system of distribution another name. I propose to call it the police.¹¹

In other words, police is based on an idea of society with no remainders, in which everybody and everything has a proper place. His ‘politics,’ on the other hand, ‘arises from a count of community “parts”, which is and always ever be a false count, a double count, or a miscount.’¹²

Furthermore, he defines politics as a reaction to any given social organisation by those who were left out, those who have ‘no part’ in it. This implies that he sees no possibility for a perfect social organisation, i.e. one without exclusion. One could say that there is no way to politically represent “the whole of society.” Instead, politics is precisely that which resists representation. Furthermore, this unrepresentability of Rancière’s politics can be interpreted as a move from Arendt in the direction of the Kantian sublime.

Rancière is often labelled as ‘the thinker of equality.’ Indeed, his body of work shows an unusual consistency of remaining true to one central idea—his radical presupposition of equality. Indeed, it is, perhaps, the only positive notion he offers. According to Rancière, equality is

simply the equality of anyone at all with everyone else: in other words, [...] the sheer contingency of any social order. Politics exists simply because no social order is based on nature, no divine law regulates human society.¹³

¹⁰Marchart 2011, 131.

¹¹Rancière 1999, 28 (my emphasis).

¹²Ibid., 6.

¹³Rancière 1999, 15.

Accordingly, Rancière locates the primary principle of politics not in organization or representation but in aesthetic ambiguity. Politics challenges what Rancière calls the ‘distribution of the sensible’. It challenges the very mode of visibility and invisibility of political subjects. For him, the problem of inclusion is a more fundamental one. The voices of the excluded are not simply disregarded; often, they are not even perceived as carrying any meaning. This makes it a problem of aesthetics. Politics occurs when the excluded and invisible under the given ‘distribution of the sensible’ claim their belonging to the community on equal basis and demonstrate that their voice too carries a meaning—a meaning that was hitherto deemed mere nonsense. Hence, politics is the appearance of the ‘part of no part’ against the consensual police order which accepts no excess. In Rancière’s own words:

Politics is aesthetics in that it makes visible what had been excluded from a perceptual field, and in that it makes audible what used to be inaudible.¹⁴

Moreover, Rancière admits—and this is another affinity with Kant—to using the term aesthetics in a sense close the Kantian idea of “a priori forms of sensibility.” According to it, aesthetics is primarily ‘not a matter of art and taste: it is, first of all, a matter of time and space.’¹⁵ And for Rancière, these are also and above all our social, common time and space. That is to say, Rancière’s politics is aesthetic insofar as the way we perceive (political) reality is grounded most fundamentally in the a priori forms of our sensibility. Moreover, Rancière’s aesthetics becomes political insofar as it has the potential to change these a priori sensible assumptions.

Arendt and Rancière would agree that politics is about the inclusion into the political sphere of the hitherto excluded from it. However, here we arrive at a first important difference between them. This difference can be demonstrated by focusing on the notions of political community and analysing Rancière’s critique of Arendt’s use of rights in general and human rights in particular.

Arendt stresses the absolute importance of ‘the right to have rights’, i.e. the right to belong to a political community. What she has in mind

¹⁴Rancière 2003, 226.

¹⁵Rancière 2005, 13.

is the so-called ‘naked life’. Contrastingly, by a way of a pun, Rancière remarks that ‘politics is not based on right, but on wrong.’¹⁶ Or, as Andrew Schaap puts it, his ‘politics is fundamentally about politicization, a process of “denaturalizing” oppressive social relations to reveal them as the contingent effect of social organization.’¹⁷ This too confirms my initial intuition that the Kantian sublime is as crucial to Rancière’s idea of politics as the Kantian beautiful is for Arendt’s.

Arendt underlines the political importance of consensual or associative use of aesthetic judgement. She bases it on ‘sensus communis’ and ‘universal communicability (universelle Mitteilbarkeit)’ in order to overcome both the repression by reason and social (and class) segregation. Rancière, on the other hand, seems to opt primarily for aesthetic judgement’s dissensual and dissociative use. He argues that

aesthetic common sense [...] is a dissensual common sense. It does not remain content with bringing distant classes together. It challenges the distribution of the sensible that enforces their distance.¹⁸

Hence, while Arendt’s method is associated primarily with the Kantian analytic of the beautiful, Rancière seems to link his to the analytic of the sublime. The problem is that he only does it implicitly and the question is why.

Evidently, the sublime also poses a problem to Arendt’s aesthetic approaches to politics. Several authors attest to Arendt’s own circumvention of the sublime, her recoiling from it, or even disregarding of it almost entirely.¹⁹ In her Lectures, she puts the emphasis above all on the beautiful and the Kantian judgement of taste.²⁰ Arendt’s brief dealing with the Kantian sublime only comes up in connection with the aporia between political action and moral judgement in dramatic political events such as e.g. war and revolution. As a result, she seems to opt for a separation between spectators and actors in those circumstances.²¹ This tactics, however, would

¹⁶Rancière 1999, 78.

¹⁷Schaap 2012, 159.

¹⁸Rancière 2009a, 98 (emphasis added).

¹⁹Cf. Cascardi 1997, III; Battersby 2007, 202; Dikeç 2012, 267-8.

²⁰Cf. Castardi 1997, III.

²¹Cf. Arendt 1992, 51-8; Arendt 1978, 92-8.

be incompatible with Rancière's fundamentally participatory idea of politics. Besides, as Rancière's characteristic examples of politics will show in the closing section, war and revolution are not the only ways to link the sublime and politics.

3. Rancière and Lyotard

This is a good moment to finally move on to Lyotard. His 'aesthetics of the sublime' is indispensable for approaching the question as to why Rancière takes Arendt's aesthetico-political project further in the direction of the sublime but seems to stop short of dealing with it explicitly and most efficiently for his own purposes.

There is some evident similarity between Lyotard's and Rancière's aesthetic ideas of politics. Both deal with a certain gap in representation—the one is based on the *différend* and the other on disagreement (*mésentente*). However, Rancière's politics is based on disagreement and constituted by attempts to overcome the divisive symbolic violence of police order. On the other hand, Lyotard comes to the conclusion—among others in his book *The Inhuman*—that it is only possible to 'testify' to the gap of the *différend*.²² According to him, any attempt to overcome this gap results in violence, if not in 'disaster'. The testimony is the (only) political role of the sublime for Lyotard.

For Rancière, this is a 'radical re-reading of Kant's *Critique of Judgment*' by Lyotard, in which Rancière claims to identify 'a way of blocking the originary path from aesthetics to politics, of imposing at the same crossroad a one-way detour leading from aesthetics to ethics.'²³ He convincingly argues that this constitutes an 'ethical turn' of Lyotard's 'aesthetics of the sublime,' a turn that altogether disables politics.²⁴

As it seems, the *aporia* between political action and moral judgement proves to have a decisive and limiting effect on both Arendt's and Lyotard's interpretation of the sublime. Arendt opts for a separation of political actors from political spectators. In turn, Lyotard's approach is aptly

²²Cf. Williams 2000, 119; Lyotard 1991, 101.

²³Rancière 2010, 68.

²⁴Cf. Rancière 2009a, 107.

described by Christine Battersby as ‘the beginning of a move that renders the subject either otiose or no more than a set of reactive responses to affects and ideas.’²⁵

Rancière’s politics, however, is able to avoid the limitations of the above-mentioned aporia by a shift it makes from real violence to a symbolic one. For Rancière, the wrong no longer lies in the potentially violent act on the part of the political militant (revolutionary or soldier). Also, in contrast to the wrong that always looms in the meta-narratives of politics and philosophy according to Lyotard’s warnings, Rancière’s wrong is not as absolute and as extraneous; in a sense, it is always already there. It is the wrong of the domination by the order of police, the wrong inscribed by the given ‘distribution of the sensible.’

This move by Rancière justifies political dissension. Political violence thus becomes primarily an aesthetic one—a violence staged on ‘the political scene.’²⁶ Politics is an active assertion of equality to resolve individual cases of its being wronged by the consensual police order. Therefore, political struggle takes place before real violence and, perhaps, precisely in order to prevent it. Real violence no longer belongs, for Rancière, to the realm of political conflict but of an ethical one. In other words, by making this shift, Rancière is able to free political actors from the conflict or incompatibility of morality and politics which troubled Kant, which caused Arendt to recoil from the sublime and opt for the tactics of separation, and which still menaces on the horizon in Lyotard’s conservative ‘aesthetics of the sublime’.

While sharing with Lyotard the suspicion towards the idea of a totalizing consensus, Rancière locates politics precisely in the local attempts to resolve a ‘wrong’. Rancière agrees that it would be impossible to politically overcome the gap altogether (e.g. by creating a perfect society without a miscount of parts), as this would necessarily constitute nothing else but another form of a police-like attempt to distribute the sensible. However, in my opinion, Rancière fails to see that his local attempts to approach the gaps of inequality are inherently characterised by the Kantian sublime.

²⁵Battersby 2007, 193.

²⁶Rancière 1997, 35.

4. Rancière and the Sublime

The distance to the sublime taken by Arendt is, at the very least, comprehensible. After all, she has good reasons to avoid its disruptive elements, as they would be potentially detrimental for her political reading of *sensus communis*. The same, however, cannot be said about Rancière, as his idea of politics lays emphasis on dissensus and disagreement as a radical disruption of the sensual order—a striking resemblance to the Kantian sublime.

This even brings several authors to equate Rancière's politics with the sublime. For Mustafa Dikeç, Rancière's politics simply is sublime.²⁷ Similarly, Davide Panagia claims that 'Rancière treats the sublime as the *sine qua non* of political action', 'the *sine qua non* of democracy.'²⁸ In my opinion, however, such strong claims do injustice to Rancière's clearly reserved—if not utterly rejective—attitude towards the sublime. Nevertheless, they also make it seem all the more startling that he chooses a path similar to Arendt's recoil. Hence, the arguments of Dikeç and Panagia will help me claim instead that Rancière simply fails to explicitly account for an incorporation of the Kantian sublime into his idea of politics thus missing the opportunity to use it in a more constructive manner.

Davide Panagia convincingly argues that Rancière's above-mentioned idea of 'miscount'—so central to his conception of politics—has a direct formal relation to sublime unrepresentability:

The 'miscount' of democracy stands as a condition of unrepresentability constitutive of democratic equality. Democratic politics, in short, is a temporality that prevails if, and only if, there is a failure of representation.²⁹

Again, Rancière's politics has a close relation to the sublime because it is fundamentally dissensual, divisive, and resisting any given representation, any given synthesis, any bringing into agreement of sensible parts with a form, as it would be the case with the beautiful. In the case of both the sublime and Rancière's politics, the parts cannot be counted and a form cannot be constructed.³⁰

²⁷Cf. Dikeç 2012, 262.

²⁸Panagia 2006, 88 and 93 respectively.

²⁹Ibid., 88.

³⁰Cf. Wolfe 2006.

Dikeç too convincingly associates the sublime with the dissensual interventionism of Rancière's politics due to their 'disruption of routinised perception and response.'³¹ There are negative and potentially violent aspects both in the 'wrong' of Rancière's politics, and in pain, displeasure, and anxiety of Kant's sublime. In my opinion, these are not just a few superficial similarities between the two thinkers but essential formal and structural elements of the very same idea.

The overwhelming power or, even, violence that the sublime feeling inflicts upon imagination was interpreted by Kant as an appeal for reason which 'takes us from the domain of aesthetics to that of morality.'³² As mentioned above, this association of the sublime with morality in Kant has been posing problems for its political interpretations. Arendt and Rancière are by all means justified in their reluctance to follow Kant into the domain of morality. But this reluctance also seems to be—and, I claim, unnecessarily so—among the reasons that prevented them from an exhaustive political interpretation of Kant's aesthetics with its both categories—the beautiful and the sublime. It is less critical in Arendt but crucial for Rancière's conception of politics.

As I demonstrated above, Rancière was successful in relieving the political 'wrong' from the burdens of morality by shifting real violence to symbolic one, but his result is, in my opinion, not entirely satisfactory. This shift should leave the sublime behind; it should, as it were, also be transformed accordingly. However, securing the autonomy of his conception of politics from Kant's residual moralism, Rancière seems to also purge it from all the essential positive moments, which morality provided in the Kantian sublime.

I do not argue for a necessity of reintroduction of morality into Rancière's politics. Instead, I claim that the aesthetic transformation of politics remains incomplete as long as the place of its positive moments remains empty. Basing politics exclusively on the 'wrong', as Rancière seems to do, might prove as otiose and lethargic as Lyotard's 'aesthetics of the sublime.'

Furthermore, in his attempt to dispose of the sublime, Rancière seems to conflate the beautiful with the sublime. He claims that 'it is not ne-

³¹Dikeç 2012, 268.

³²Rancière 2009a, 89.

cessary to go looking in the sublime experience of size, power or fear to discern a disagreement between thought and the sensible.³³ Instead, he claims that ‘the experience of beauty [...] is already a double-bind, an experience of attraction and repulsion.’³⁴ Hence, he seems to suggest that beauty itself sufficiently entails the political dynamics of aesthetics—the necessary mixture of ‘agreement and disagreement.’³⁵ His conflation seeks support from Friedrich Schiller. Though, in my opinion, Schiller would be a wrong ally here. After all, he explicitly underlines the necessity of the sublime alongside the beautiful:

Without the beautiful there would be an eternal strife between our natural and rational destiny. [...] Without the sublime, beauty would make us forget our dignity. Enervated – wedded to this transient state, we should lose sight of our true country.³⁶

The terms with which Schiller argues for the necessity of the sublime—‘rational destiny’, ‘dignity’, ‘our true country’—are undoubtedly moralistic. However, it does not necessarily mean that Rancière’s contemporary interpretation must reject these terms completely; it could, instead, transform them. Even Kant himself seems to suggest a possibility of reinterpretation of the transcendent sphere which is pointed at here.

For Kant, in the experience of the sublime, ‘the humanity in our person remains undemeaned.’³⁷ Hence, for him, the experience of the limitation of our bodily or imaginative powers is transformed into a positive gain—the feeling of humanity in ourselves. This sublime discovery is irreplaceable by the beautiful. Can Rancière’s politics not be based on a sublime experience of equality at the face of the inequality of police order?

I side with Rancière’s critique of Lyotard. A mere possibility of violence paralyzes politics and undermines the aesthetic disagreement as a third way between the two disasters, between domination and violence.³⁸ I only doubt that an aesthetic disagreement modelled essentially on the

³³Rancière 2009a, 97.

³⁴Rancière 2004, 12.

³⁵Rancière 2009a, 98.

³⁶Schiller 1895, 148.

³⁷Kant 2000, 145.

³⁸Cf. Rancière 2004, 14.

beautiful—on a double-bind of attraction and repulsion, of ‘agreement and disagreement’—can indeed be a viable alternative for a successful Rancièrean politicization. I agree with Rancière that ‘the sublime disquiet is entailed in the aesthetic rest.’³⁹ I only doubt that this disquiet can be sufficiently described by the double-bind of the beautiful alone, that one can ever avoid sublime aspects of ‘size, power, or fear’ in a politically charged situation. In fact, I believe that Rancière’s examples themselves point to this conclusion.

The tale about the Scythian slaves is intended to demonstrate that their attempt to achieve equality solely by means of a violent armed resistance was doomed to fail from the very beginning. However, Rancière seems to overlook that another aesthetic act had prevailed—namely their masters’ staging of inequality. Would that be profoundly un-Rancièrean for the slaves to hold on to their positions by also dropping their weapons or adopting another, symbolic weapon comparable to their masters’ whips? And wouldn’t that insistence on equality be a sublime insistence? Could the slaves not win the conflict aesthetically, politically, and, perhaps, even without it turning bloody? And would that not be an essentially Rancièrean political victory?

In another example, Rancière recounts the renowned incident involving Rosa Parks.⁴⁰ Parks’ decision to occupy a seat reserved for whites on a segregated bus in Montgomery of 1955 was a private, singular act of disobeying the racist ‘distribution of the sensible,’ the distribution of places based on skin colour. Her act was successful, as it triggered further, momentous protests. I agree with Rancière that Parks’ act entailed a transgression of aesthetic distribution of roles and places. But I also insist that her act was, at the same time, also an act of disobedience that had to overcome a fear of possible consequences to her person and that overcoming that fear needed to be assisted by the awareness of a cause or an idea “higher” than herself.

Rancière claims that the political act of emancipation is ‘the always singular act by which an individual declared him- or herself capable, and declared any other capable, of exercising a capacity belonging to all.’⁴¹ How-

³⁹Ibid., 12.

⁴⁰Cf. Rancière 2009b.

⁴¹Rancière 2012, 211.

ever, he also seems to fail to recognize the true status of Parks' own 'declaration of capability' or of the failure to maintain that declaration on the part of the Scythian slaves in Herodotus's tale. Such declaration—whether actual or potential—is an audacious act of self-transcendence in the name of an idea—the idea of equality between blacks and whites or between the Scythian slaves and their masters—and an act that seems to be informed by nothing else than a feeling of the sublime.

Hence, Rancière's own examples lead one to conclude that his political subjectivation cannot be suitably described in terms of a reduced aesthetics which over-prioritises the beautiful. Instead, it seems plausible that his postulated equality might be a suitable candidate to replace morality in a Rancièrian political act. The sublime, thus modified, would not jeopardize the freedom of his conception of politics, as it would not subordinate it to an ethical dimension. It would, however, contain all the positive moments that morality provided in Kant's sublime and without which Rancière's own political sublime would remain—both conceptually and practically—incomplete.

5. Conclusion

Rancière's rejective attitude to the sublime in aesthetics and politics is inherited from Arendt and a reaction to similar basic difficulties. Lyotard's own interpretation of the sublime as an ethical requirement seems to transfix politics altogether. Accordingly, its critique by Rancière is thus entirely appropriate. However, I argue that this critique seems to prevent Rancière from settling his own relation to the Kantian moralist legacy. Subsequently, Rancière's unnecessarily throws out the sublime with the bathwater of his critique of Lyotard.

Rancière shifts the idea of violence in politics from real violence to symbolic one. This itself provides a tangible solution for keeping the Kantian moralism at bay. Nevertheless, Rancière seems to adopt Lyotard's reduced interpretation of the Kantian sublime—perhaps, precisely in order to be able to reject it more easily. This prevents him, in my opinion, from realising to which extent the sublime is already in use in his own conception of politics and, consequently, from fully utilising its potential there.

Rancière's examples of political acts demonstrate that there is more to them than a simple double-bind of attraction and repulsion, more than a simple disagreement between thought and sensibility. All that would indeed be covered by the beautiful. However, more often than not, a truly Rancièrian politics is always also a transcending subversion of the established representational and often menacing police order. In other words, Rancière's politics is always also about staging equality as a sublime act. Finally, equality seems a suitable candidate to replace Kant's morality as a structurally essential positive component of the sublime. This substitution would guarantee that Rancière's politics remains free from a subordination to ethics.

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Authorised Defacement: Lessons from Pasquino

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ABSTRACT. The advent of Social Practice in Art, under names such as New Genre Public Art, Relational Aesthetics, Socially-Engaged Art etc., marks a move toward a consideration of the productive and receptive terms on which art in the public sphere occurs. In this approach public art is no longer conceived as something to be delivered to the public. For theorists such as Phillips, Lacy, Gablik, Bourriaud etc., the concern for public art is social engagement, collaboration and participation under the motto 'Art in the public interest.' Where Social Practice emphasises the local; for fear of not having a clear focus, the temporal; for fear of being commercially co-opted, collaboration; for fear of losing control, and didacticism; for fear of not having a social and political impact, it delimits the potential of publicness. Such a limited account of public authorship is present where the public only get to participate in the curators work. Public is here conceived as simply that element which activates the work, and is not generative of the work, or new possibilities of publicness.

The concept and practice of public art and authorship is understood and contested in a variety of related ways, these include; ownership, access, usage, scale, authenticity, normativity, tradition etc. A long established example of public art that enables a public space of radicalism is the ambiguously authorised defacement of the "talking statues of Rome." Since 1501 citizens of Rome have used statues such as *Pasquino* as a forum for anonymous and critical discourse. The statues "talk" through the rhyming prose, often critical of church and state, that is routinely attached to them. These mute monuments enable the unspeakable to be spoken. *Pasquino*, I venture is a model (albeit, a limited one) for public art to enable a criticality (somewhat) free from the restrictions imposed by the curation often envisioned in social practice.

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1. Introduction: The Terms of Engagement for Public Art

Until I see love in statues [...] (Manic Street Preachers, 1991)

Under names such as New Genre Public Art, Relational Aesthetics, Socially-Engaged Art etc., recent theorists such as Phillips, Lacy, Gablik, Bourriaud etc., have conceived of public art in terms of social engagement, collaboration and participation under the motto ‘Art in the public interest.’ Bourriaud, for example, defined relational aesthetics as existing in works where “the realm of human interactions and its social context, rather than the assertion of an independent and *private* symbolic space” (Bourriaud, 2002, p. 14) is central to its theoretical operation. Similarly Suzi Gablik (1991) sees the possibilities for a revitalisation of community in contemporary art practice while Terry Smith conceives of curators as the potential brokers of political activism and spectatorship (2012).

Defined by Suzanne Lacy as art with “a developed sensibility about audience, social strategy, and effectiveness...” (Lacy, 1995, p. 20), New Genre Public Art marked an explicit recognition, by the academy and the artworld, of increased consideration of the terms on which public art occurs. In these recent approaches, public art is rightly no longer conceived as something to simply be delivered to the public¹, rather it is increasingly understood in a much more discursive fashion.

The terms of this discourse, however, are still routinely restricted by curatorial oversight. Where Social Practice emphasises the local; for fear of not having a clear focus, the temporal; for fear of being commercially co-opted, collaboration; for fear of losing control, and didacticism; for fear of not having a social and political impact, it delimits the potential of publicness. Such a limited account of publicness is present where the public only get to participate in the curators work. Public is here conceived as simply that element which activates the work and is not generative of the work or new possibilities of publicness. Unsurprisingly the impact of socially engaged public art is often hollow. A truly radical and democratic

¹ New Genre Public Art is thus a term that describes a practice, disenchanted with artworld conventions, explicitly engaged in a process of social criticism. It is “...process-based, frequently ephemeral, often related to local rather than global narratives, and politicised.” (Miles, 1997, p. 164)

public is where curatorial activity (authorship) is entirely divested in the public as opposed to a conducting curator.



FIGURE 1. *Pasquino*, Connell Vaughan, January 2014.

The discursive terms of public art are varied and they include the temporal², the spatial³, authorship etc. In this paper I focus on the terms of

² O'Neill and Doherty for example argue that "[D]urational approaches to public art involve a process of being together for a period of time with some common objectives, to constitute a new mode of relational, conversational and participatory practice." (O'Neill and Doherty, 2011, p. 10) Likewise, Phillips argues for a "commitment to the temporal" (Phillips, 1992, p. 297) in public art. The temporal in public art is undoubtedly valuable due to its ability to respond to, reflect, and explore the context which it inhabits.

³ This paper has developed from an earlier book chapter: 'Contemporary Curatorial

authorship at play in public art. A critical commitment to the notion of authorship (in addition to the temporal and the spatial) is required I argue to realise the goals of socially engaged practice. Axes on which to understand and contest public authorship include but are not limited to; ownership, access, usage, scale, authenticity, normativity, memory etc. (Other potential terms to measure the publicness of art, which I will not consider for reasons of brevity could include; autonomy, penetration and participation.)

2. Pasquino: Ambiguous Authorised Defacement

A long established and undeniably institutional from its outset, example of public art that enables and engages radical public authorship is the “talking statues of Rome.” Since the 15th century citizens of Rome have engaged six statues; *Pasquino* (or “*Pasquillo*”, in Latin), *Marforio*, *Il Babuino*, *Abbot Luigi*, *Il Facchino*, and *Madama Lucrezia* as a forum for pseudonymous comic and critical discourse. The statues, collectively known as the “congress of wits”, talk through the epigrams of rhyming prose (“pasquinades”), often satiric and critical of church⁴ and state, which is routinely attached to them. These mute monuments enable what is unspeakable to be spoken. An (unverifiable) early classic attacking Pope Urban VIII says: “*Quod non fecerunt Barbari, fecerunt Barberini.*”⁵

The most famous of this congress is *Pasquino*. *Pasquino* is a mutilated ancient statue, considered to be a Roman copy of a Greek original (See Reynolds, 1985), discovered in Rome in the late 15th century. Its Renaissance (as opposed to its ancient) patron, Cardinal Oliviero Carafa (1430–1511) had it placed on a pedestal, outside his palace, in 1501. It moved to its current location nearby in 1791. Under Cardinal Carafa’s patronage, an an-

Practice and the Politics of Public Space’ in *Radical Space: Exploring Politics & Practice* (Forthcoming, April 2016). In this chapter I argued that in addition to notions of temporality, public art raises issues such as pluralism of interpretation, interactivity and the conditions of labour. In sum the space of public art challenges us to consider the experiential environment of the work and the defined public. *Pasquino* is exemplary of public art that challenges inherited norms of public space offering a forum of agonistic *dissensus*.

⁴ Reynolds (1985, 1987) argues that pasquinades parody votive offering on church altars.

⁵ ‘What the Barbarians did not do, the Barberini did.’

nual celebration of *Pasquino* (Saint Mark's day, April 25th) was inaugurated. This initial act of authorisation in the sense of being sanctioned permitted further ambiguous acts of authorisation. The decoration of *Pasquino* while conferring prestige on its patron also opened a space of critical and civic engagement.

Reynolds has argued that the sixteenth century festival of *Pasquino* was a deliberate satiric absorbing of the Classical Roman ritual of Robigalia in early Renaissance Rome by the "humanists of the generation of Cardinal Oliviero Carafa" (see Reynolds, 1987, p. 289). Robigalia, which was maintained in the Christian tradition of Rogation Days, sought to secure harvests from wheat rust via the sacrifice of a dog. Robigalia was also celebrated on April 25th. Reynolds further connects the "literal connotation of mildew [...] of the word <<robigo>>, [...] to rust on metal, ulcerations on the skin and, further, to the general potential for decay and decline in the temporal world, a tendency towards imperfection which has obvious roots in the Fall" (*Ibid*, p. 293). From this perspective, the connection of the defaced statue with the tradition of *Pasquino* can be seen as Renaissance satire of the decay in agricultural broadcasts and harvests via the decaying broadcasts of pasquinades.

The ceremony of the Renaissance festival *unambiguously authorised* the *defacement* of the statue in dress (usually of ancient Gods) and with witticisms. This custom of transgression is thus one that has been institutionalised from its outset. It is important to avoid seeing pasquinades, at this stage at least, as some authentic voice of the public. They were a pursuit of an educated elite; literary subversion. Nonetheless, from this moment *Pasquino* ceased to be a public statue in a traditional sense. This activity transformed the statue into a "living public sculpture." As long as the tradition of pasquinades persists *Pasquino* will not be a dead remnant from the past. Instead *Pasquino* is active and not bound to a final dimension. *Pasquino's* dimension is the public space it continues to sculpt. While discrete and modest, *Pasquino* is nonetheless a concrete 'vocal Memnon.' In Roman times it was a statue valuable only for memetic reflection, but since 1501 it has been a "public sculpture."⁶ *Pasquino's* puzzling material consti-

⁶ In making this distinction between statue and sculpture I am following the lead of Rosalind Krauss. Krauss (1979) argues that in postmodern practice the field of sculpture

tution is derived from this tradition. The stone may constitute the statue but the defacing pasquinades constitute the artwork and the accompanying authored public space. *Pasquino's* material constitution derives not from the clay, but from this practice. Pasquinades, in short are *Pasquino's* conditions of persistence. *Pasquino's* integrity is now derived, through publicly authored defacement.

Pasquino is a composite. It comprises mutilated portions of two figures, a head and torso and a section of a second torso. At the time of Carafa it was thought to be Hercules, but it was later understood to represent the Mycenaean king Menelaus holding the body of Patroclus.⁷ In a city renowned for republican traditions the instrumentalising of a broken king, reworked as a local citizen, to criticise and protest has its own poignancy. The cartoon-like construction of *Pasquino* and the ambiguity over the monarch's identity is vital to permitting subversive ideas on a large scale.

In addition to the materiality and longevity of the statue, the name and the location are fundamental to the value of the icon. The ambiguity, Bakhtin would say "ambivalence," of *Pasquino* is reinforced in its name. Many competing myths and legends abound as to the origin of this name. Maestro Pasquino is thought to be a local who composed some of the earliest pasquinades. He is variously described as a local schoolmaster, a cobbler, an anti-establishment tailor etc. Crucially Maestro Pasquino is always described as a concerned citizen, and this adds to pasquinades authority. Pasquinades, despite their essential ambiguity, are presented *ex cathedra*.

Pasquino is a model for public art to enable critical public authorship partially free from the restrictions imposed by traditional notions of curation. Those who curate are seen to be those who care in keeping with the verb from which the term derives; *curare*. Traditionally this activity is understood in terms of the preservation, organisation and presentation of artworks. In Rome, perhaps the largest open-air museum in the world, the public authored by *Pasquino* resists the attempt to categorise the monument as only an artefact from the past. Although it is physically modest as an example of public art, the scale of the criticality of *Pasquino* is ambigu-

has expanded from monument to landscape and architecture.

⁷ This is a scene from *Iliad*, Book XVII. A more complete version stands in the Loggia dei Lanzi in Piazza della Signoria, Florence.

ously unrestricted⁸. Ideally the pseudonymous commentary of *Pasquino* is not limited to a specific public (practicalities such as competence in Italian aside). Its comments are from and for the public. The populist scale of the critical authorship opened up by *Pasquino* is potentially unrestricted.

In practice however numerous attempts have been made to silence, to unauthorise the defacement of *Pasquino*. Pope Adrian VI, for example, wished to have *Pasquino* thrown in the Tiber. Pope Sixtus V tried to pay to silence *Pasquino* (See Hughes, 2011, pp. 294-295). Pope Leo X banned the festival for a year in 1519. While the tradition of pasquinades persists, the festival inaugurated by Carafa cannot be said to have survived the Sixteenth Century. When we regard classical images of *Pasquino*, the statue is overwhelmingly depicted as another statue from the past; while pasquinades are often depicted the accompanying festival is not. Just as the Madman when faced with the death of god in Nietzsche's *The Gay Science* asks; "What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent?" (Nietzsche, 1882, § 125) we too, when faced with *Pasquino* must ask; what new traditions of public art shall we have to invent?

The five other talking statues developed as a result of attempts to restrict and monitor *Pasquino*. These are now in museums or subject to anti-graffiti paint. It is a work of art which was originally displayed for its artistic value and for the self-promotion of its patron, then used during an annual religious feast reviving the classical custom of pinning poems to statues; it went on to become the mouthpiece of Papal propaganda, and finally, it established itself as the place for expressing biting pseudonymous comments on the pope and his court.

As a space of authorial exception *Pasquino* enables public authenticity in a perverse, yet not unusual, way. Authenticity is achieved via a pseudonym. Authenticity here is broadly conceived. It can refer to the authenticity of the agent who is free to make any declaration he or she wishes. Be it pseudonymous graffiti or not. Equally, it refers to the validity of the democratic decision. In sum, pseudonymity is counterintuitively enabling of an authorship of public political engagement rather than a shirking from public life.

⁸ It could be countered that the scale of public issues to be addressed is so large that pasquinades can literally only scratch the surface.

Defacement by pasquinades is the *modus vivendi* of *Pasquino* emphasising the voice of the sculpture. Like preservation, commemoration in the context of *Pasquino* is flipped. Instead of a fixed dedication it is a permanent rededication. *Pasquino* demands preservation in terms of use instead of physical maintenance. *Pasquino's* power lies in its scars. Use, thus, is a type of preservation. Use in this case is defacement. Defacement disfigures but in this case disfigurement is not to be mourned in itself. Counterintuitively, restrictions to the defacement of *Pasquino* in the name of supposed restoration/preservation/regeneration are comparable to the cultural terrorism of iconoclastic vandalism.

Recent restoration and cleaning works (2010) have defaced the sculpture in this traditional sense. It has been cordoned. Its scars are regarded as stains to be erased. This curatorial vandalism under the name of conservation sought to reduce *Pasquino* to a community noticeboard. Pasquinades were to be placed on a separate wooden plank, though this no longer remains.⁹ This aesthetic sanitising of *Pasquino* undermines the *dissensus*¹⁰ of publicness as new pasquinades are the only route to *Pasquino's* regeneration. Presently the notion of preservation is swamped by the contemporary vogue for conservation which is, in the case of *Pasquino*, the latest manifestation of attempts to shut the sculpture up, fetishise its flaws, and pacify its radical edge. Sanitised conservation of *Pasquino* is nothing less than desecration of publicness as it seeks to remove sculpture from the space of everyday life.

Furthermore, since 2010 there is a website (<http://www.pasquinate.it/>) that aims to both document daily pasquinades and function as a digital network for lampoons, in verse or prose, in Italian or in Roman dialect. While this site does not edit or reveal the authors of pasquinades, this digital documentation marks a new era of control and selection. This website was initially proposed as a site for all new pasquinades.¹¹ Diverting the future scars of *Pasquino* to a digital realm effectively kills *Pasquino* as a living statue. Aesthetic fidelity in the case of *Pasquino* derives not from material preservation; it is located in the traditional act of defacing via pasquinades. *Pasquino* requires the pollution of the public's touch and with

⁹ Pasquinades, however, rarely go above the plinth any more.

¹⁰ See Rancière, 2010.

¹¹ See Lorenzi, 2009.

admirable persistence new pasquinades appear daily.

However, pasquinades will no longer be allowed to fade in the rain but they will remain archived online. The amnesia required for *Pasquino* to continue talking is regrettably being slowly eroded. Richard Shusterman, argued that “absence may be an essential structural principle of city aesthetics in general” (Shusterman, 1997, p. 742), noting that some marks are “[M]ore powerfully present, paradoxically, by their invisibility” (Shusterman, 1997, p. 741). These documented and preserved pasquinades are on life-support, never permitted death, and, as such, never really living. Following Shusterman, I regard amnesia as a vital component to the potent authorial ambiguity offered by pasquinades.



FIGURE 2. *Pasquino*, Antonio Lafreri, 1540.

3. Theorising ‘Living Statues’

You, too, as living stones, are building yourselves up into a spiritual house [...] (1 Peter, 2:5)

The term living statue commonly refers to a street artist who poses like a statue or mannequin, usually with realistic statue-like makeup, sometimes for hours at a time. *Pasquino*, while clearly not a living statue in this sense as a performance sculpture it has its own particular vivaciousness.

Unlike Schiller’s description of the ennobling “charm” and “dignity” of the statue *Juno Ludovici* (1795), *Pasquino* is not “self-contained” or dwelling in itself. *Pasquino*’s diligence springs from a public duty. Where *Juno Ludovici*, like other statues, is indifferent to the free play of potential ideas about it, free from its creator and its setting the same cannot be said for *Pasquino*. We do not revisit the ancient original narrative of the statue *Pasquino*, we rework it. Like the Renaissance Romans we rediscover it anew.

Juno Ludovici belongs for Jacques Rancière in the “aesthetic regime of art” (2009, p. 29); its idleness promoting an equality of represented subjects. Rancière also sees this aesthetic regime in Rousseau’s and Johann Joachim Winckelmann’s accounts of the *Torso* of the Belvedere.

...the statue as deprived of all that which, in representational logic, makes it possible to define bodily expressions and anticipate the effects of their viewing. The statue has no mouth enabling it to deliver messages, no face to express emotions, no limbs to command or carry out action. The statue of which Winckelmann and Schiller speak is no longer an element in a religious or civic ritual; no longer does it stand to depict belief, refer to a social distinction, imply moral improvement, or the mobilization of individual or collective bodies. No specific audience is addressed by it, instead the statue dwells before anonymous and indeterminate museum spectators... (2009, p. 138)

This description cannot be applied to *Pasquino*. *Pasquino* is not a “free appearance” as Rancière describes in his analysis of Schiller. *Pasquino* is not a promise of a politics. It is a practice of public authorship. By lacking “self-sufficiency” it does not eek out autonomy from its maker; instead the public is articulated through pasquinades defacing the sculpture. *Pasquino*

has a mouth enabling it to deliver determinate and pointed messages. This interactive and communicative ability of statues need not take the form of vandalistic defacement. It is, I believe, present in other cases such as Jeff Koons' *Gazing Ball (Belvedere Torso)*, 2013 which explicitly implicates the beholder.

Pasquino is better seen as a critique of what Rancière calls the "ethical regime of art" insofar as it restlessly picks at the supposed truth of the distributions of occupations in the community. In its graffiti we read words pointing toward an alternative pedagogy of public *authority*.

Pasquino offers a degree of resistance to the museumification of its surroundings. Rome may be a museum of ancient, classical and medieval ornament, yet amidst this collection *Pasquino* speaks as both an ambiguous subject and actor in the city. Pseudonymity comes not only from the messages but is enabled by the unclear identity of the figure of *Pasquino* itself. In this sense the perpetual defacing of the sculpture is its strongest resource.

Pasquino is nonetheless not immune from museumification. It too has a history of co-option for tourist lira dating back to at least 1540. For example, Antonio Lafreri's, *Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae* ("Mirror of Rome Magnificence"), a collection of prints of Rome, designed to appeal to the Renaissance craze for antiquities, included an engraving by Antonio Salamanca of *Pasquino*. It has been argued elsewhere (San Juan, 2001, pp. 1- 21) that the depiction of *Pasquino* in printed medieval guidebooks and printed collections (*Carmina*) of edited pasquinades¹² served to present the voice of the local in the eternal city.

Beyond tourism, *Pasquino* has always had to negotiate a relationship with more formal intuitions such as the church and the state. Its literary subversion is only possible where permitted by such institutions as a sort of pressure valve. From a cynical perspective the literati of the pasquinades are like idealists retreating into the academy when faced with the difficulty of enacting real change. But then usefulness is a limited measure of aesthetic value.

Pasquino can be an unenclosed commons. Its value does not come primarily from its age. Instead, its value comes from its continued de-

¹² The first known collection dates to 1509.

facement and I argue, from the ambiguous nature of this authorship. It is not simply a site of memorialisation or commemoration, its usage, while rich with centuries, if not millennia, of tradition, is always yet to be fully determined.¹³ Its value remains in flux centuries after its installation.

Ownership of the critical authorship opened up by *Pasquino* is unrestricted by formal curation. Its words are but graffiti, ready to be written over by ever more graffiti. Access to the critical words of *Pasquino* is unrestricted; it is not closed at night. On the contrary pasquinades are often products of the night. *Pasquino* is a rare sign of citizens, ancient or modern, possessing classical culture and authoring contemporary publicness.

Pasquino is close to being an example of what Bakhtin would describe as the Rabelaisian tropes of the carnivalesque and the grotesque body. Gilbert (2015), for example, argues that the pasquinade tradition is the rhetorical and transgressive performance of embodying disgust. Like the carnival and carnivalesque, *Pasquino* offers a transgressive authorship of brief, licenced liberation. Yet, where the grotesque is the satiric presentation of a “body in the act of becoming” (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 317), “cosmic and universal” (*Ibid*, p. 318) as a celebration of life, *Pasquino* is slightly different. It is not grotesque *per se* but rather damaged, defaced.

With *Pasquino* we can see a distinction between disfiguring and disablement. Pasquinades disfigure, without disabling. Pasquino disfigure and literally combat public disablement. Stone is an authentic material and where we ask certain statues, such as Marc Quinn’s *Alison Lapper Pregnant* (2007); to represent disability nobly we ask something different of *Pasquino*. We ask this statue to make a christlike bodily sacrifice. As such the tactility of *Pasquino* and the public are in tandem. *Pasquino* retains the best progressive qualities of public art precisely because of its continued defacement which publicly champions the power of the disabled and disenfranchised.

Pasquinades are not exactly celebrations of life. Rather, they mourn. In this sense *Pasquino* is better seen as a yet to be fully specified memorial. Where Maya Lin’s Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington DC, for example, has developed a tradition of a performance of rubbing and

¹³ For example, in recent times *Pasquino* has inspired a Turin satirical newspaper from 1856 until 1921, a collection of Filipino essays in 1993, at least two films (1969, 2003) and the tradition of Orthodox and Haredi Jews of postering public space with messages prescribing appropriate behaviour called the *pasbkvil*.

the Wailing Wall attracts prayer notes, *Pasquino* is ambiguous insofar as it is not so tied to particular events or beliefs. Equally the performance of defacing *Pasquino* is different to the experimental and mechanical performance sculptures characteristic of the work of Chris Burden. This ancient Roman/Christian sacrificial tradition remains productively unclear.

Pasquino's continued ritual; traditions and customs counter the Hegelian perspective of ancient statues as objects of past life: "The statues are now only stones from which the living soul has flown, just as the hymns are words from which belief has gone." (Hegel, 1977, p. 455) An example of this approach is maintained in Giorgio Agamben's articulation of *Homo Sacer* as a former "living statue" that made the journey from living to statue. But *Pasquino* is entirely a "living statue" in this sense. Its existence is not past; rather it made the opposite journey from statue to living sculpture. It is not outside society, it is never entirely stripped of citizenship, (*zoe*) as befalls *Homo Sacer*. Instead of being regarded as a state of exception (within *bios*), *Pasquino* is better seen as productive of society. Rather than a former "living statue," *Pasquino* is what I would call a "living ruin." It is a "living ruin" insofar as its fertility still commands a certain faith and this is achieved, in part, via its ruinous condition. However, *Pasquino*'s flaws are not to be fetishised for their own sake. Its fidelity derives not from these material marks but its commitment to the public; a commitment visible in its continued scaring.

4. Lessons from *Pasquino*

Scars became the lessons that we gave to our children after the war. (Adams, 2005)

In light of the contemporary curatorial rage for interactivity, the challenge when considering the curation of public authorship is to consider the conditions of freedom enhanced or restricted by aesthetic activity. "Public space is that which is ultimately within the ownership of and *care* of the people as defined in democratic politics" (Goulding, 1998, p. 19, *emphasis added*). It is only when the public assume the curators role of authorship that public art can provide a democratic space of exception. Johnathan Meades is correct when he says that "[A]ccessibility means nothing more than being comprehensible to morons" (Meades, 2013), but a challenge of

public art is to consider those morons to be fellow citizens for as Johnathan Herrera clarifies “inaccessibility is counter-revolutionary” (2015).

Thus a crucial question in this case is: Are the content of pasquinades the concerns of the poor and disenfranchised, aristocratic power struggles, academic nit-picking or something else? In short; the crucial question when determining the aesthetic value of *Pasquino's* speech is inseparable from an assessment of the politics produced by *Pasquino*. Even if pasquinades are concerned only with trivial matters they are of political and aesthetic importance. This importance derives from the fact that they do more than simply exist, they live, they mark and they author via defacement the political and aesthetic space.

There is in the anonymous authorship of *Pasquino* something revolutionary. Pasquinades offer scope for authorship in the space of politics. At its best, *Pasquino* challenges the citizen to reassess their authorship of the public realm. To author something in public space is to reshape the public sphere, its use and future. Habermas (1962), for example, articulates the deliberative public sphere as distinct from public space. For him the public sphere is a conceptual way of grasping and expressing responsible discursive practice. This sphere is present where the affairs of the public are openly debated and performed is a spirit aiming at consensus.

A potential challenge for contemporary curatorial practice is to foster the Habermasian public sphere of idealised consensus. While Hannah Arendt (1954) saw scope for the arts to enhance the consensual public sphere and nurture public space, Habermas is suspicious of the arts for potentially undermining and distorting rational engagement. *Pasquino's* ambiguous words certainly exclude it from meeting the Habermasian consensual ideal.

Consensus, *sua sponte*, is however a problematic goal. As Rancière (2010) and Mouffe (2006) argue, the singular goal of consensus serves to collapse the political. Both philosophers value the aesthetic for its capacity to resist the co-opting of public space and foster aesthetic and political pluralism. Thus, a different challenge for contemporary curatorial practice is to enable the conflict essential to publicness. The ambiguously authored words of *Pasquino* certainly enable and even foster this practice of *disensus*.

That pasquinades are written, instead of spoken, emphasises their pseudonymity. That *Pasquino* is in congress means it does not have to risk

speaking directly to power but rather other statues. “Despite their particular grievances, pasquinades grieve together. The statue [*Pasquino*] is quite literally a palimpsest, erasing any chance of hierarchical messaging through the bits of paper that appear and disappear, cover up and get covered up, and muddle the figural composition of the satire as much as they mar their subjects of abuse” (Gilbert, 2015 p. 97). *Pasquino* is thus in dialogue with the city.

Turning to an example of contemporary curatorial and social practice, *Pasquino* offers a revealing comparison to a 2014/2015 commission by Sing London called *Talking Statues*. Here we can hear some clear differences in the way different statues can talk. *Talking Statues* engaged famous actors and writers to “animate public statues in Chicago, London, Manchester and Berlin” (talkingstatues.co.uk/#about) claiming to “breathe new life into the statues” with the slogan “every statue tells a story.” This project works by scanning your phone on a tag and receiving a call supposedly from the statue.

These statues are not in congress with each other, nor are they in conversation with the existing spatial politics. Their words, like the lyrics in Gilbert and George’s *Singing Sculpture* (1970) are unlike *Pasquino*. They are curator determined, directed and reinforcing of official memory. Instead *Pasquino*’s slogan could be “the sculpture that tells many stories.” *Pasquino* is, after all, a pen name with a location. The closest the public can get to authorship in the case of *Talking Statues* is a shallow digital activation.

Like Rossi’s idea of the “urban artefact” *Pasquino* is a changeable fragment. Rossi defines an “urban artefact” as a “spatial” and “conditioning” “aspect” of the totality of the city which, like the city, develops over time yet retaining a certain stable individuality (Rossi, 1989, pp. 29-41). Its accretion of layers of rich historic meanings can stand for paradoxical experiences and memories, individual and collective. Unlike other artefacts *Pasquino* has successfully resisted the usual persistence that transforms “urban artefacts” into stiff monuments or souvenirs over time; it retains its catalysing ability to broadcast the unspeakable.

Furthermore, its composite and ambiguous nature enables *Pasquino* to represent the public authorship in a more authentic and inclusive way. *Pasquino* is conservative in the sense that it conserves public authority and not vice versa. Where most other statues literally “stand up” for clear

identifiable (religious, civic, imperial, commercial) institutions, *Pasquino* is only clearly identifiable as citizen. So far this year alone, statues of Cecil Rhodes at the University of Cape Town, South Africa (Laing, 2015) and Lenin *et al* in Ukraine (Shevchenko, 2015), have been deemed unacceptable for various reasons and have been removed. *Pasquino*, however, does not stand for any narrow identifiable ideal.

Instead, each new defacement is also a *refacement*. In continually re-facing *Pasquino*, new pasquinades are not remaking *Pasquino*. Pasquinades do not perpetuate what is finished. They do not constitute a remaking of the same. They are better understood as a creation of *Pasquino*. In a contemporary context *Pasquino* can be seen to stand as a vehicle for the right of free expression.¹⁴

Ambiguities free *Pasquino* from strict narratives of commemoration. Like the legends behind the name, former pasquinades occupy and foster unofficial memory. For example, when Hitler visited Rome for seven days in May 1938, Mussolini had the city transformed into a stage of sanitised ancient ruins from which the success of international Fascism was imagined to rise. In response to the spectacle of urban cleansing, disembowelment and Fascist corruption of classical culture an apocryphal pasquinade became legendary:

*Roma, de travertino
vestita de cartone,
saluta l'imbianchino
suo prossimo padrone!*

Rome, from marble
converted to paper,
greet the house-painter,
her future master!

*Povera Roma mia de travertino,
te sei vestita tutta de cartone
pe' fatte rimira' da 'n imbianchino
venuto da padrone!*

My poor Rome, made of travertine,
You've dressed up in cardboard,
To show off for a dauber,
Who thinks he owns you!

¹⁴ Article 19 of the Universal declaration of Human Rights: "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."

*Povera Roma mia de travertino!
T'hanno vestita tutta de cartone
pe' fatte rimirà da 'n'imbanchino.*

Oh my poor Rome made with
travertine marble!
They dressed you with cardboard
To let a painter admire you.

These various versions of unofficial memory demonstrate a commendable resistance to finality. The literal words of the *Pasquino* remain ambiguous. *Pasquino's* words are always still yet to be fully determined. Curators can set the terms of access and thus limit the possibility of any public aesthetic authorship yet access to the critical authorship of *Pasquino* remains unrestricted; unlike most museums, it is not closed at night. Here lies one of *Pasquino's* lessons: only public art lacking formal curation can challenge the way art is used to promote orthodoxy.

5. Conclusion

By investing this icon with a civic tradition of remarkable longevity pasquinades hold an authority and pseudonymity akin to graffiti. Graffiti, as I have argued elsewhere (2010, 2013), is loosely institutionalised as political commentary and firmly institutionalised in the global economy of the art world as street art, to such a degree that one is now suspicious of each graffiti 'tag' being anything more than a 'hashtag' for a viral marketing campaign. Pasquinades, while yet to offer an established route to contemporary¹⁵ artworld recognition, hold no special immunity from such a fate. Classical pasquinades and contemporary graffiti must be viewed within the same creative continuum.

Despite the revolutionary claims that can be made for *Pasquino*, it is nonetheless *authorised defacement*; a five century old designated graffiti wall. Like a comedy roast, pasquinades are framed satiric messages. Like a Socratic dialogue they are governed by rules of engagement. They are like

¹⁵ Writers and poets such as Pietro Aretino (1492-1556) have and Giambattista Marino (1569-1625) furthered their careers via "publishing" their work as pasquindes (see Waddington, 2004). Equally, pasquinades gained a certain credibility by copying the style of the satiric epigram of the Roman poet Martial (circa 38-41-circa 102-104) (see Spaeth, 1939).

the marquee outside the church in *The Simpsons*; ever-changing and ephemeral signs of truth. Yet the church remains. *Pasquino* can be reduced to a placid house pet, a court jester.

It is worth considering who authorises *Pasquino's* defacement. While Carafa can be seen to provide the initial permit and others can be seen to attempt to revoke this permission it is the public through each new pasquinade that continue to *authorise Pasquino's* defacement. The mythic confusion that comes with the passage of centuries has contributed to this ambiguously authorised defacement.

The challenge for contemporary social practice in art is to be sensitive to the spatial politics of public art. Only when issues such as ownership, access, usage, scale, authenticity, etc. are approached is radical public authorship possible. Our existing inherited notions of public authorship are thus ripe for analysis, critique and rejuvenation. At all times the curation of public art must ask: What kind of public authorship is possible?

In short, what may be required in the act of curation is recognition that cartographers often find so difficult to make – namely recognition that there can be no definitive version of geo-cultures. The challenge is to resist a determined and pre-managed account and articulation of public authorship. With this, there must come a resistance to an account of the curator as a leader of public authorship. Public collaboration with curatorial interests ensures that the authorship of public art will not be a radical exception. Such art may still be desirable, yet it maintains a hierarchal curatorial practice or to use Lacy's terms "*carefully moderated*" (Lacy, 2008, p. 30 *emphasis added*). To contest such control and guidance and produce sculptural spaces of exception must be a goal of at least some public art. *Pasquino* is not an exemplar of freedom. I do not propose it as *the* model to follow. Rather, it is a lesson that even where a statue talks it remains "a potent symbol of the power of patronage to direct and control cultural activity" (Reynolds, 1985, p. 192). Each scar is a lesson.

Pasquino may be silent, the last pasquinades may be but a memory but as long as it is not simply an adornment to the city it will be productive of publicness. It may only be six minutes' walk from the Pantheon but still resists total absorption into the institution of the artworld and the heritage industry.

It has been a billboard for political campaigning and a stage for the

expression of dissent. It teaches us that true public authorship is subject to domination and appropriation. *Pasquino* is not a monument *per se*. It is a collective pen name whose strength comes from being belligerently and permanently out there in the real, unclean world. While the vogue for conservation threatens the power of *Pasquino* to co-produce publicness *Pasquino* is a surviving trans-historical work of dissent and co-option.

Pasquino does not defeat but it still combats shallow civic engagement. “Pasquinades do not so much topple and destroy as they vivify via defilement.” (Gilbert, 2015, p. 92) Like every other statue, *Pasquino* cannot say no to its defacement nor resist recruitment. But unlike other statues *Pasquino* defaced by fresh pasquinades can mourn its corruption, co-option and censorship. It demonstrates and actively mourns. The continued ritual of *Pasquino* as a Stakhanovite occupier of public space and time maintains a certain public and political faith in this mutilated sculpture. The key lesson is that a shortcut to aesthetic radicalism is available by cutting a Gordian knot and allowing the statues to speak via ambiguously authorised de/refacement. Contemporary practice can learn from this curious ritual of formal curatorial abdication that does not venerate the sacred but embraces the profane. But it can only do so where its scars remain to teach.

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Is Gaut's Cluster Account a Classificatory Account of Art?

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ABSTRACT. This paper wishes to advance a cluster account of art evaluation, using Gaut's cluster account of art and Dickie's institutional theory of art, with its latest developments. In the first part of the paper, I argue that Gaut is using an evaluative concept of art, not a classificatory one, throughout his whole demonstration. The second part of the paper will deal with the institutional theory of art as set forth by Dickie and Graves, explaining the systems and subsystems which inhabit the world of art. In the third part of the paper, I will explain how we will then evaluate the work, using different clusters of evaluative criteria for each artistic genres and subgenres. I set forth a practical formula in which a specific work of art can be evaluated. This formula must be rewritten for every specific work of art that needs evaluation. Thus, it has to be filled with the specific data; these are the evaluative criteria belonging to the working theories and the artistic movement, but actually there is no exclusiveness here, other criteria which are considered to be valuable can be taken into account as long as they do not come in contradiction with what the artist intended. The paper wishes to advocate that there is no universal principle to confer value on all works of art, and to advance a relative theory of evaluation in which the artistic object's evaluation is made not by using a strong principle, but by using a number of weak principles, which are not jointly necessary, but are disjunctively necessary for a work of art to have sufficient value as to be considered a good work of art.

i. Introduction

Almost all philosophers who thought about the evaluation of the work of art were limited by one condition: the specific value of an artwork had to be different from any other kind of value (historical, emotional, moral, etc.). If we look very closely at them, these theories of art evaluation are partly also theories of art definition. On the other hand, in the theories of

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art evaluation there is to be found a constant obsession for the discovery of some criteria in the evaluation that takes the form of universal positive sentences. In this paper I advance, explain and defend, using as a starting point Gaut's cluster account on the definition of art, a cluster account of art evaluation, developed as a relative theory of evaluation, in the sense that a specific work of art is evaluated according to the artistic context in which it has been created. This theory starts from the premise that when we evaluate a particular work of art we already know that object is an artwork and we evaluate it as such, and the artistic object's evaluation is made not by using a strong principle, but by using a number of weak principles, which are not jointly necessary, but are disjunctively necessary for a work of art to have sufficient value as to be considered a good work of art. This theory has a theoretical purpose – it wishes to explain how art evaluation is actually done and to answer some of the dilemmas that have arisen in connection to this subject, as well as a practical purpose – to act as a helpful formula in evaluating a specific work of art.

There are two opposite views about art evaluation: the essentialist and the non-essentialist one. To set forth these two options, I will use Robert Stecker's succinct and well-done description.¹ Essentialism in art evaluation takes art value as being: 1. A unitary kind of value; 2. It is unique to art. Nothing else provides this value; 3. It is shared by all artworks considered valuable as art across all art forms; 4. It is intrinsically valuable. Non-essentialism in art evaluation takes the contrary to be true: art value doesn't have to be unitary; there is no such thing as a single kind of value that we appreciate when we evaluate an artistic object, different works of art can be valuable for different reasons; we can find values which we traditionally associate with art in objects that are not works of art; art value can be intrinsic, but also extrinsic. Robert Stecker then provides arguments against every principle of the essentialist attitude on art evaluation.² I will offer myself some arguments against essentialism in art evaluation, arguments which will throw light on the cluster account of art evaluation and will defend it.

First, nobody managed to produce an art value essentialist theory, so

¹ Stecker, R. (2010). *Aesthetics and The Philosophy of Art. An Introduction*. Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Lanham, Boulder, New York, Toronto, Plymouth, p.222.

² Ibidem, pp. 221-246.

the possibility of finding such a theory is purely theoretical, whilst a practical theory of art evaluation is needed, and would be helpful for practitioners and non-practitioners alike. Supposing there would be an art value which is to be found in all works of art and only in works of art, nobody managed to identify it. Of course, there were many nominations, starting with Plato's famous art is imitation theory and going through almost every definition of art – art is significant form, art is expression, etc. All those essentialist theories of art paid the price of inadequacy to the actual artistic practice. If we think about art evaluation in essentialist terms, we notice that the endeavor of understanding why art is valuable is the same as understanding why art is art, and that one strong principle which makes a work of art a good work of art is the same principle which includes the object in the artistic object's class. Hence a variety of objects which are in fact works of art but are not recognized as such by some theories of art.

Secondly, when theorists tried to sustain a universal principle of art evaluation, they had to avoid specific artistic criteria as the ones mentioned above (imitation, expression) because the artistic practice had demonstrated that all those were not only not sufficient for a work of art being good, they were not even necessary, there were a bunch of works of art which were not representational nor expressive and which were considered to be good works of art nevertheless. The consequence was that, in searching for that unique kind of value which was to be found in all works of art no matter the time and the place and only in them, circular theories of art evaluation emerged, like: "A work of art is good if and only if the performance of the relevant action on that work by a particular person under appropriate conditions is worthwhile for its own sake"³; "X is a good aesthetic object if X is capable of producing good aesthetic experiences".⁴

It is interesting that many of these philosophers start with the hypothesis there are some critical principles which can be applied to works of art – Beardsley for example has that famous trio of criteria according to which a work of art can be judged as being good or bad: intensity, coher-

³ Ziff, P. "Reasons in Art Criticism", in Kennick, W. E. (ed.) (1979). *Art and Philosophy*. St. Martin's Press, New York, p.683, *apud* Dickie, G. (1988). *Evaluating Art*. Temple University Press, Philadelphia, p.40.

⁴ Beardsley, M. (1958). *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism*. Harcourt, Brace and World, New York, p. 528.

ence, complexity, but because he searches a strong principle in art evaluation, a principle which is to be found in all good works of art, he climbs up the generalization stairs until he ends up this the term good in the both sides of the definition. So no critical principle or principles which can be applied to all good works of art and only to them has yet been discovered.

2. Gaut's Cluster Account

Gaut developed his cluster account of art definition as an answer to the project of finding a definition of art which states necessary and sufficient conditions for a work to be a work of art. I shall make a description of Gaut's cluster account as it is developed in his *Art as a Cluster Concept*: a cluster account holds that there can be many criteria (Gaut proposes the term characteristics) for applying a concept, but none of these criteria are necessary. If an object fulfils all the characteristics, than it is part of that class of objects, so the criteria are sufficient for the concept to be applied; and if the object fulfils only some of the characteristics, this theory says this is also sufficient for applying the concept: "there are no properties that are individually necessary conditions for the object to fall under the concept: that is, there is no property which all objects falling under the concept must possess".⁵ Although there are no individually necessary conditions for applying the concept, there are disjunctively necessary conditions, so that the object has to meet some of the criteria to be included in that concept's class.

Gaut offers ten criteria which – disjunctively – are necessary for an object to be a work of art: "(1) possessing positive aesthetic properties, such as being beautiful, graceful, or elegant (properties which ground a capacity to give sensuous pleasure) ; (2) being expressive of emotion; (3) being intellectually challenging (i.e., questioning received views and ways of thinking); (4) being formally complex and coherent; (5) having a capacity to convey complex meanings; (6) exhibiting an individual point of view; (7) being an exercise of creative imagination (being original) ; (8) being an artifact or performance which is the product of a high degree of skill; (9)

⁵ Gaut, B. "Art as a Cluster Concept", in Carroll N.(ed.). (2000) *Theories of Art Today*. The University of Wisconsin Press p. 27.

belonging to an established artistic form (music, painting, film, etc.); and (10) being the product of an intention to make a work of art.”⁶

We notice that the first eight criteria listed by Gaut are in fact aesthetic positive predicates. These features, which are supposed to count for the artistic identity of an object, are also features which traditionally count for a great value of a work of art – a work of art which is beautiful, expressive, original, complex and coherent is most likely a work of art which is evaluated as being good. What happens then with the works of art which are not beautiful, expressive, original, complex, coherent or intellectually challenging? It appears that the theory has an answer to that question: a work of art doesn't need to have all the qualities listed by Gaut but needs to have only some of them. What happens then with the artworks which have none of the qualities listed? On the other hand, there are many objects which are beautiful, expressive, original, etc., but are not works of art – I will use Gaut's example of a philosophy paper. And still, the philosophy paper can meet the majority of the criteria given by Gaut! It appears that these qualities (the first eight of them) are artistic qualities only when applied to objects we already know they are works of art. It is true that we find these characteristics in the majority of the more traditional works of art, but there is no real argument that these characteristics were the ones which led to the object being considered an artwork. We could just as well assume that the artists embedded in their works all these qualities because they wanted to do good, valuable works of art.

The last two criteria, belonging to an established artistic form and being the product of an intention to make a work of art, are in fact institutional reasons for the inclusion of an object in the class of works of art. If there are works of art who meet only these two conditions (Gaut offers the example of a minimalist work), then what need do we have for the other eight conditions? Gaut's theory would then become an essentialist institutional theory. These two criteria are the only criteria which do not play a (direct) role in establishing the value of a work of art.

⁶ Gaut, *op.cit.*, p.28.

3. A Cluster Account of Art Evaluation

David Graves gives an account, in his *The New Institutional Theory of Art*, of the systems and subsystems which inhabit the world of art⁷ and according to which a proper classification is done. I will reduce his description to this sentence: Object A is a work of art, belongs to the artistic medium B, to the artistic big theory C and to the artistic working theory D. On the basis of this classification of the work of art we will then interpret and evaluate the work.

First, we will analyze the A factor of the sentence. Because it is a work of art, the object will be evaluated in the specific manner in which all works of art are evaluated – in the context of the artworld; in other words, when we focus our attention on that work, we have already classified it as a work of art. We will not do what others tend to do, first to evaluate the work and if the object proves to them to be valuable they conclude the object is art. The inclusion of the object in the art works class has to be finished when we want to artistically evaluate a work, or else we may not know how to look at it, how to interpret it, in fact it would mean we didn't understand it. If we try to evaluate Duchamp's Fountain before knowing that it is a work of art, we would find ourselves in front of a trivial urinal and we will miss the point.

The B factor deals with the medium in which the work is created, making us take into account the practical aspects of the object. B says what rules makes from an artistic object a painting, for example: it is a visual art work and it is bi-dimensional. This is an important thing to know when we evaluate the artistic object, because there are some constitutive rules⁸ which are important for a work of art to be a painting, and the criteria we use to evaluate a painting are very different from the criteria we use to evaluate a piece of music.

The C factor deals with the big theory in which the work has been created and offers another set of constitutive rules which count in its evaluation. To connect the B and C factors, let's think about how important is the bi-dimensionality of the medium when we analyze objects belonging to

⁷ Graves, D., (2010), *The New Institutional Theory of Art*, Common Ground, Illinois, pp.51-53.

⁸ See the discussion normative rules – constitutive rules in Graves, 2010, pp. 33-35.

different big theories like renaissance and cubism. While the renaissance wishes to recreate the three-dimensional reality on a flat surface using perspective, cubism presents a reality made from geometrical forms, and then from flat forms, in order to respect the original, bi-dimensional nature of the medium. Thus, the way we interpret and evaluate a renaissance painting should be very different from the way we analyze and evaluate a cubist painting, because these two are created in very different constitutive-rules systems, with different aesthetic and cognitive purposes.

The D factor, the working theory, offers the most detailed principles of evaluating a specific work of art.

The evaluation of a work of art goes backwards than its classification (see Graves). The evaluation of a specific work of art will take into account – in this order – artist's working theory's rules, big theory's rules and the rules of the medium in which the work has been created. The artist can create the rules of the working theory for himself, or he can borrow someone else's working theory (but if he is a good artist, he will at least contribute to the creation of the rules), but as we climb up to the more general systems of the artworld, the evaluative principles will be of a more general kind (very rarely the artist can create his own big theory, although some cases are known), and that leaves room for comparisons among different (but still not completely different) works of art.

The evaluation of a specific work of art can take the following form:

A is a work of art

1. A belongs to the working theory D, big theory C, medium B
 - 1.1 D's intentions are the following – they are the evaluative criteria
 - Criterion a₁
 - Criterion b₁
 -
 - Criterion n₁
 - 1.1.1 a₁ in the context of D is always a valuable criterion in the work of art
 - 1.1.2 b₁ in the context of D is always a valuable criterion in the work of art
 -
 - 1.1.3 n₁ in the context of D is always a valuable criterion in the work of art

- 1.2. C's intentions are the following – they are the evaluative criteria
 - Criterion a2
 - Criterion b2
 -
 - Criterion n2
- 1.1.1 a2 in the context of D is always a valuable criterion in the work of art
- 1.1.2 b2 in the context of D is always a valuable criterion in the work of art
 -
- 1.1.3 n2 in the context of D is always a valuable criterion in the work of art
- 2. A meets in some degree some of these criteria: a1, g1, ... , n1, h2, ... , n2
- 3. A has some artistic value.

The measure in which the work of art meets the criteria is essential. If originality is one of this evaluative criteria (and very often it is), it is not enough for the work to have some originality, it has to have a certain degree of originality. If 0 means no originality, and 10 means maximum of originality, we have to establish a way for us to realize if an artistic object has enough originality so that the originality of the work contributes to its positive evaluation. We can arrive to a convention: originality contributes to a work of art being good if it scores 7 or more.

The medium has no specific criteria which contribute to a work's value. B is mentioned in the formula because it obtains a role in art evaluation only in relation with the big theory and the working theory. If a work of art doesn't meet a constitutive rule of the medium, this does not mean the work is not good or that it loses part of its value, it means only that it belongs to another medium.

This formula must be rewritten for every specific work of art that needs evaluation. Thus, it has to be filled with the specific data: what is the working theory, the big theory, the medium, the evaluative criteria a1, b1, a2, b2, etc. To show how this formula works, we will take Carlo Carra's *Il Funerale dell'anarchico Galli* as an example. The first step is to correctly classify it, so we can then correctly evaluate it. It is easy to notice this is a picture

and that it belongs to Futurism, the working theory being Italian Futurist painting. The principles of Italian Futurism in painting will be the first evaluative principles that we take into account. This is quite an easy thing to do, because the futurists developed manifestos to explain their artistic view. The *Technical Manifesto of Futurist Painting*⁹ advances the following intentions: originality (a1), anti-representativity (b1), anti-harmony and anti-good taste (c1), themes from the present or the future – speed, steel, etc. (d1), innate complementarity in composition (e1), dynamism (f1), sincerity and purity (g1), anti-materiality (h1). We then take into consideration the more general principles of Futurism: the glorifying of the future – technological development, speed, objects like the car, the industrial city (a2), the feeling of youth (b2), courage, dare, rebellion, violence, aggressiveness (c2), the triumph of technology over nature (d2), originality (e2), freedom from the past (f2).

In his work, Carlo Carra depicts the funeral parade of Angelo Galli, a worker killed during a strike, a parade which eventually turns into a confrontation between the police and the anarchists. The subject meets criteria like c2, f2 – it is about an event from the recent past with great influence over present and future, a first step to demolish the status-quo (f2). The fact that it actually has an historical theme, along with the big dimension of the painting, makes the spectator think about a traditional historical painting; the composition also shows a classical source of inspiration, and this works against the declared intentions of futurism (f2, a1). At a stylistic level, attention is first drawn by Galli's red coffin, which is surrounded by a chaotic explosion of characters dressed in black (f1) – the anarchists, who are enlightened and rendered almost transparent – dematerialized – by the light which comes from the sun and from the coffin. The light emphasizes their aggressive movements (d1, h1, c2, f2). The spectator feels like he is at the centre of the painting (f2), and the fact that the perspective is fractured, although coming from a cubist source of inspiration, doesn't contradict the principles of futurism, on the contrary, it adds dynamism to the painting. On the basis of this analysis and following closely the measure in which the working theory and the big theory's principles are fulfilled, we can arrive at the conclusion that this work of art is a good

⁹ <http://www.unknown.nu/futurism/techpaint.html>

one, a work which succeeds in what it had intended to. It is important to notice that not all the criteria of the artistic subsystems must be fulfilled, it is sufficient that some of them be fulfilled in a good measure to make the work of art count as a good one, thus these conditions are disjunctively necessary for the artistic object to be valuable. The viewer's aesthetic experience when regarding this painting is closely linked with the principles in which the painting is created, he has to know what he is looking at, if not, he will not understand and thus he will not be able to interpret and evaluate. This kind of thing happens many times, when spectators of such a work, not knowing about modern art or about futurism, try to understand it by using principles from other artistic movements – especially traditional principles like harmony and imitation. Of course these people will reach the conclusion that it is a bad work of art (or not art at all).

As we have seen above, there are very different reasons which count for an artistic object being good. The cluster account of art evaluation explains not only how different the reasons for evaluating specific works of art can be, but also explains why we evaluate differently works of art quite similar or even belonging to the same artistic movement. Usually, the criteria in a working theory (a₁, b₁) are likely to be fulfilled in their majority by works of art belonging to that specific working theory, if not, the work would cease to belong to that theory, whilst the big theory's criteria (a₂, b₂) would be fulfilled in a lesser degree. Although there are some strong principles of evaluation inside a big theory and especially a working theory (and only there) – actually the constitutive rules as explained by Graves, not all the working theory's criteria are necessary for the work of art being valuable, and if we consider the big theory, except for the first work/works which established the movement, the works would fulfil only some of the initial rules. And of course, it is not only about the principles of evaluation, it is also very much about the measure in which these principles are fulfilled.

There is an infinite number of evaluative criteria, and they can be contradictory, self-denying, based on the big theory in which the work belongs, that's why there is no universal principle to confer value on all works of art. The cluster account of art evaluation finds its inspiration in Gaut's cluster account on definition of art, but while Gaut offers ten criteria (although he does not mention that these are the only ones) which are dis-

junctively necessary for a work to be a work of art, this theory cannot offer ten criteria which, disjunctively, find themselves in all or almost all the works of art that are good. The reason is that artistic objects are so different one from another, the artistic movements have so different intentions and purposes, that it is impossible to discover a set which, even disjunctively, matches all good works of art. Even if such a set would be discovered, there is nothing to guarantee that it would be suitable also for the art of the future.

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***Plot and Imagination Schemata,
Metaphor and Aesthetic Idea —
A Ricoeurian Interpretation of the
Kantian Concept of Imagination***

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ABSTRACT. The aim of the paper is to analyse connections between Kantian theory of productive imagination and Ricoeurian conception of linguistic imagination and expanding it with the concept of aesthetic idea. Paul Ricoeur uses Kant's concept of imagination which synthesizes and schematizing, the object of experience in his description of productive powers of language. Telling stories consists in generating content through appropriate alignment of events and creation of time configurations. Plot as schema of imagination creates the meaningful order of events according to rules of configuration. Metaphor is a special product of linguistic imagination, it creates new semantic pertinence through unconventional combinations of words in a sentence – it transgresses the conventional order of language. Metaphor is closer to the aesthetic idea, which transgresses any conceptualizations in free play of images, than to synthesis and schematization of imagination.

Construction of literary fiction, telling stories, creating narration or plot consists in generating content through appropriate alignment of events, creation of time configurations and establishing relations between the elements. In his description of productive powers of language Paul Ricoeur uses Kant's concept of imagination which synthesizes and systematizes the object of experience. Imagination not only makes images appear, but it is a rule for generating content through time alignment of images. In this way the French philosopher avoids contradictions caused by taking negative reference to reality as a point of departure. It entangles concepts

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that analyse images from the point of view of differences and similarities to perception. They do not focus on the dynamics of images, but analyse the ontological status of a single image. Ricoeur, on the other hand, proposes linguistic interpretation of imagination and seeks a productive rule for generating fiction. In this respect, Ricoeur goes back to Kant's findings on *modus operandi* of imagination and introduces Kantian productive imagination into the field of language. He finds similarities in synthetic and systematizing function of plot in a story. Metaphor takes a special place in his considerations, as it creates semantic innovation going against previous linguistic usage. Comparison with the aesthetic idea described in *Critique of Judgement* contributes to in-depth analysis of metaphor.

The goal of this paper is to analyse connections between Kantian theory of productive imagination and Ricoeurian linguistic imagination concept and expanding it with the concept of aesthetic idea. Synthetic and schematic aspect of productive imagination will be described first, and then a reference will be made to the role of plot in a story. Metaphor will be presented as a special product of linguistic imagination that is closer to the aesthetic idea than to synthesis of imagination.

I. Synthesizing Experience

In *Critique of Pure Reason*, imagination is necessary to create a meaningful experience. Imagination is in fact a rule of forming and synthesizing the variety of temporal and spatial connections which makes them meaningful. At the same time it prefigures form of object of possible experience. Forming and giving discursiveness intermingle in a single process of generating the content of experience. Rudolf Makkreel, a great interpreter of Kant's legacy, shows that imagination process of synthesizing experience takes the form of hermeneutic circle: a part is apprehended by the whole. There are three steps of synthesizing the object of experience: intuitive apprehension, imaginative reproduction and conceptual recognition. At first, variety is apprehended as a single representation of time and space in the process of running through and establishing relations between elements. This running through and organizing also means comparing and selection from a manifoldness as a prerequisite for correct uniting. In this

way a single image is borne.¹

However, this synthesis is preceded by reproduction of previously recorded images that become a context for currently formulated representation. Reconstruction ensures continuity of images, so it is only with it that any imagination becomes possible. If it is not so, in a series of subsequent momentary representations, the subject of experience would disintegrate. Continuity of the time itself also contributes to keeping past images as it emerges together with unity of the image: "But if I were always to lose the preceding representations from my thoughts and not reproduce when I proceed to following ones, then no whole representation and none of previously mentioned thoughts, not even the purest and most fundamental representations of space and time, could ever arise".² It is only in relation of succession and precedence that the subject of cognition emerges together with unity of the time itself. Keeping images allows for mutual references to representations, disambiguating them and setting relations.

Reconstruction, subordinated to cognitive goals, needs to keep appropriate relations between representations i.e. according to rules of association. These relations function as constant connections of associations thanks to which cinnabar will always be represented as red.³ It means that it will be neither blue nor white. Only appropriate definition of differences and capturing repetitive sequences of representations allow for creation of meaning compound and intelligible content. These are not random connections, but appropriate, selected and constant reference connections:

Since, however, if representations reproduced one another without distinction, just as they fell together, there would in turn be no determinate connection but merely unruly heaps of them, no cognition at all would arise, their reproduction must have a rule in accordance which a representation enters into combination in the imagination with one representation rather than with any others.⁴

¹ I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, translated by P. Guyer and A. W. Wood, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge and New York, 1998, p.229

² Ibidem, p. 230.

³ See, ibidem, p. 230 "If cinnabar were now red, now black, now light, now heavy (...) then my empirical imagination would never even get the opportunity to think of heavy cinnabar on occasion of representation of the color red".

⁴ Ibidem, p. 239.

It is important to stress that apart from linking compatible elements there is also an element of distinction and selection in the way imagination works. Each act of setting a form is connected with limiting and differentiating. Synthesis of reconstruction and association, together with the whole wealth of relations between representations points to imagination as an array of their possible comparisons and differentiations, as well as connections and selections. Only imagination understood in this way allows for specific combinations of images and generating appropriate sets of images, thus also intelligible content.

Description of the third synthesis, the moment of recognition, points to two significant aspects of the process of cognition. First, the whole cognitive experience, gathering images, viewing and running through, must have formal unity of cognitive consciousness at its base. Second, and more important, this formal unity of experience is guaranteed by using categories in apprehending manifoldness.⁵ They are responsible for constant and confirming way of relating to the synthesized manifoldness.⁶ In other words, thanks to recognition, phenomena are understood as appropriate and always as the same object, in line with a given concept. This three syntheses together form a circle: apprehension which creates basic elements of experience needs reproduction to ensure continuity and possibility to apprehend subsequent elements. Representations are connected with each other in stable relations thanks to recognition, or even more, the recognition of phenomenon as an object (right and always the same) needs to commence the whole process.⁷

To sum up, synthesis of an experience generates content through building temporal continuity of an object and this showing constant relations of appropriate elements succeeding and accompanying each other. Such an object is apprehended through reference to an appropriate category that sets its limits for apparition.

⁵ See, *ibidem*, p. 241.

⁶ See, *ibidem*, p. 232.

⁷ R.I. Makkreel, *Imagination and interpretation in Kant*, The University of Chicago Press, US 1990, p. 28.

2. Imagination Schemata

Imagination schemata, and to be more precise schemata of pure intellectual concepts, intermediate between particularity of sensual cognition and generality of category. Applying the schemata introduces unity and comprehensibility of experience. Categories are formal determinants of possibility of discursive meaning. Phenomena are put into categories through their temporal depiction in schemata.

Schemata are therefore nothing but a priori time-determinations in accordance with rules, concern, according to the of the categories, time-series, the content of time, the order of time, and finally the sum total of time in regard to all possible objects.⁸

Schemata organize experiences and thus generate their temporal meaning. This meaning ensures unity in temporal sequence of a given phenomenon or a series of phenomena that become apprehensible through this alignment. In other words, temporal meaning is the coherence and discursivity of phenomena obtained as an effect of connecting them in an appropriate manner. For example, causality scheme introduces a rule of apprehending time sequence as necessary, which makes succession of representations be perceived as influence of one event on another and gives it a status of appropriateness. Other schemata define, among others, the possibility of temporal co-occurrence of phenomena, methods of fillings time and their relations to time as such. Temporal sequence in a form of discursive depiction of the possible subject.

Makkreel compares the way schemata operate to grammar rules that organize words within sentences, define relations between them and thus give them coherence and condition their intelligibility. This procedure highlights meaning generation role of ordering phenomena in line with appropriate category. In brief: schemata organize representation into content according to appropriate rules and thus allow for apprehending it. They generate content. This allows us to take a look at configurational role of schemata regardless of epistemological functions of imagination e.g. in the art of telling stories. This very function is needed anywhere where a given configuration of phenomena is represented. Schemata turn

⁸ I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, op. cit., p. 276.

out to be a rule for generating sequence of events in a story or a movie. Generative Kantian imagination is the major basis, apart from *Poetics* of Aristotle, of Ricoeur's theory of story narration and plot. According to the French philosopher what is most important is that imagination is treated as a scheme for generating temporal sequence and it is the factor generating its meaning.⁹

3. Plot and Imagination Scheme

In his definition of plot the French philosopher stresses the dynamic aspect of creating organized set of events.¹⁰ This is the major axis of a story on which temporarily complex representation is based. It is exactly plot building that is the process that allows for representation of a story as it requires productive imagination.¹¹ This synthetic, configurational act: "consists of 'grasping together' the detailed actions or what I have called the story's incidents. It draws from this manifold of events the unity of one temporal whole".¹² The sense of a story materializes itself in teleologically directed whole and, as an effect, it generates immanent time of a story. The French philosopher calls this effect of arranging events within-time-ness.¹³ It is realized in the requirement of wholeness of the story in line with guidelines included in Aristotle's *Poetics*: with the beginning, the middle and the end. The beginning is defined by lack of necessity of succeeding something, the middle already requires such succession relations on both ends. The end appears according to rule of necessity as an effect of earlier events. Story composition is not, however, characterized by necessity in its strong sense, but allows for being followed, it is probable, and from the point of view of end, even necessary.

"To follow a story is to move forward in the midst of contingencies
and peripeteia under the guidance of an expectation that finds its

⁹ P. Ricoeur, *The Rule of metaphor*, translated by R. Czerny, K. McLaughlin, J. Costello, Routledge, London, 1977, p. 199.

¹⁰ P. Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, translated by K. McLaughlin, D. Pellauer, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1983, p. 55.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 56.

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 66.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 61.

fulfillment in the "conclusion" of the story. This conclusion is not logically implied by some previous premises. It gives the story an "end point," which, in turn, furnishes the point of view from which the story can be perceived as forming a whole".¹⁴

The story allows for being followed and the end becomes a conclusion of successive episodes which are brought together as a story. It is in connection of events e.g. by cause-and-effect relationships that Ricoeur sees the necessary and universal character of a story.

In Kantian terminology plot corresponds to imagination scheme: in a specific case it uses appropriate rules for temporal apparition, interdependency, co-existence and succession of events and realizes them thanks to sequential links. These rules regulating the course of events (to which appropriate regulations connected with speeding up, suspending, repeating etc. can be added) correspond to Kantian categories. The plot also perform complex synthesis: such heterogeneous elements "as agents, motives and circumstances are rendered compatible and work together in actual temporal wholes".¹⁵ Plot connects separate events with the general dimension of the story systematizing sequence of events aligned into a given story. Thanks to it the story is no longer an enumeration of events, but it forms an apprehensible whole: "emplotment is the operation that draws a configuration out of a simple succession".¹⁶

Configuration consists of building various temporal experiences (non-chronological) that connect in a synthetic plot with chronological time, manifesting itself in subsequent episodes. Thanks to fictional cuts and detachment from cognitive requirement within-time-ness of the story is free from linear representation of events with linearity of the course of time. In this sense time in a story is configurable: moments different in time build up a greater whole.

Ricoeur defines a term of concordant discordance that underlines the synthetic but not uniform character of the plot even more.¹⁷ Concordance relates to the comprehensive form of the story in which temporarily

¹⁴ Ibidem, p. 66.

¹⁵ Ibidem, p. 57.

¹⁶ Ibidem, p. 65.

¹⁷ See: ibidem, p. 66.

discordant elements appear. The plot must cope with various temporal dimensions connected with multi-plot character, different points of view, relations between narrator and characters and also between the characters themselves. The narrator can accompany his or her characters but he or she can also look ahead, look back or contemplate the presence from the point of view of its anticipation.¹⁸ Synthesized discordances also relate to various times of characters that form a temporal unity. Multiplicity of temporal experiences of various characters interlace in one another. It is exactly this network that, examined as a whole, constitutes time experience in *Mrs Dalloway*.¹⁹

The plot creates both the whole of a story and a very specific experience of time. Literature serves here as a laboratory for imagination. In Kantian understanding of imagination – as synthesis in reproduction (forming continuity of time) and method of giving meaning – also the intelligibility and necessity appears through temporal organization and schematization. Schemata mentioned by Ricoeur do not have a priori value. They are created as an effect of accumulation of writing practices during which relevant narration forms are created. They regulate the way plot is constructed and the possibilities of departures in such a way as to keep unity of the work. Then philosopher subsequently undertakes historical and literary studies and tracks changes in schemes: from the development of new forms and conventions that aimed at even more faithful representation of a real experience (e.g. epistolary prose), through introduction of deepened character psychology and stream of consciousness after the attempt at eliminating end in the 20th century. Rules for generating content, form of what is probable or scope and limits of semantic fields are thus well-established in tradition. Metaphor is thus placed at the other end of dynamics of linguistic creation, it transgresses this order and leads to semantic stress.

4. Metaphor

In classical Aristotelian definition, metaphor consists of noticing similarit-

¹⁸ See: P. Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 2, translated by K. McLaughlin, D. Pellauer, The University of Chicago, Chicago and London 1985, p. 94.

¹⁹ See: *Ibidem*, p. 112.

ies. Ricoeur stresses that constructing metaphor does not consist in associating what is like and substituting the name of one thing with the name of another thing, but in juxtaposing and seeing similarities in what is different. Ricoeur poses a rhetorical question: "But what is it to be perceptive of resemblance if not to inaugurate the similarity by bringing together terms that at first seem 'distant', then suddenly 'close'?"²⁰ In brief, metaphor is about proximity, comparison and establishing similarity. The work of imagination consists in changing distance, juxtaposing given elements in such a way that they could be compared and causing a tension between elements. Imagination is a comparative array thanks to which distant elements can be juxtaposed and can exhibit mutual relations; similarity becomes visible as an effect.²¹ Metaphor is thus unconventional combinations of words in a sentence (is broader metaphoric expression), not a type of verbal image. Combination is a metaphor: when we see resistance in words in their casual meaning and discordance in literal interpretation of a sentence. In other words, when we cannot find adequate representation in literal language for it, in a specific notion.

This new relation is shocking and causes a shift in meaning and produces new semantic pertinence. In this place we can talk about the moment of cognition, similarity or establishment of new semantic applicability. However, this will not be apprehension that is realized in synthesis through subsumption under a notion determining power of judgement, but it manifests itself as reflecting power of judgement. The question is, whether such recognition does not require actions of a genius who could grasp the free play of imagination and give it palpable form. His work does not mimic his predecessors and stays beyond representation rules accepted to date. Thus, it establishes a new rule. However, the power of vivid, poetic metaphor (i.e. a metaphor that is not part of phraseology of a given language) causes the multitude of senses that it suggest not be able to define themselves literary, be translated into non-figurative sentences. The French philosopher describes the differences between vivid, poetic metaphor and a trivial metaphor with possibility of paraphrasing: "The difference between trivial metaphor and poetic metaphor is not that one

²⁰ P. Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, op. cit., p. X.

²¹ See, P. Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, op. cit., p. 226.

can be paraphrased and the other not, but that the paraphrase of the later is without end. It is endless".²² In other words, poetic metaphor, thanks to its surprising and rule-breaking juxtapositions, recognizes a certain similarity and at the same time it opens richness of senses that will never be exhausted, and meaning-creation by connections is endless. It is thus a miracle of free imagination that works beyond the limits imposed by the rules of language, transgresses them and uses in free creation. Metaphor (metaphoric expression) corresponds to *modus operandi* of free imagination described in *Critique of Judgement*.

5. Aesthetic Idea

Modus operandi of imagination in an aesthetic experience does not consist in providing a series of representations, as it is the case in cognitive process. Imagination is free from empirical rules of association and linear representation of time. It is not limited with goal of any kind, effect to be achieved or end; its time-related mode of operation changes. This shift changes relation of cognitive powers and leads to redefining imagination and broadening its scope. Imagination plays freely with formats beyond any requirements, uses its powers of connecting and schematizing, allows for feeling beauty and once captured by a genius, it generates aesthetic idea that transgresses notions.

Aesthetic idea is a rule rendering work more lively. It gives a work of art *Geist*. In other words it makes it transgress symmetry, accuracy and canon. It appears as a result of a series of transformations and is striking (but not determined by concept) presentation. Idea assembles all the different images accompanying it, but it stays beyond any of the concepts. Because of that "occasions much thinking though without it being possible for any determinate thought or a concept, to be adequate to it, which, consequently, no language fully attains or can make intelligible".²³ In a series of imagination operations, the idea is an accurate, but indeterminate representation, encompassing references to manifoldness of other representations that not only cannot be encapsulated in a single notion, but they

²² Ibidem, p. 223.

²³ I. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, translated by P. Guyer, E. Matthews, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2000, p. 192.

expand it aesthetically. It animates the mind “by opening for it the prospect of an immeasurable field of related representations”.²⁴ A work that constitutes an aesthetic idea, suggests something more than the mere notion that was supposed to be included in it.

In this very different formation of representations imagination can freely use intellect schemata and while staying independent of its empirical application and right of association, it can also go beyond the intellect and reach for rules included in reason. Imagination appears here as an experimental space for all what is sensual; a genius, a poet aim at giving palpable form to what is not sensual i.e. to what goes beyond cognitive experience with the use of what is sensual. In this sense aesthetic ideas are close to the ideas of reason: they transgress experience. At the same time, by generating non-standard and unperceived representations, they give the intellect a new field for possible definition.

Kant does not explain exactly what this processing of palpable data consists of, nor in which manner imaginations implements anew the rules of intellect and reason. Description of normal idea constitutes a possible interpretation path. It is a type of intermediate image that appears during the process of appearing the ideal of perfection.²⁵

Ideal of perfection is a unitary representation that would constitute the pattern of taste. Its generation requires the idea of reasons (it is not the ideal of free beauty but dependent beauty) and aesthetic idea of norm that constitutes palpable image but with greater degree of generality. Imagination, by creating the idea of norm, shows its ability to reproduce even the most distant images, to compare them and let them glide one to another: “superimpose one image on another and by means of the congruence of several images of the same kind to arrive the model image”.²⁶ Repeated act of imagining a given phenomenon not only makes it generate intermediary image, but it shows complexity of relations between images where imagination can lead it. It mines it from linear structures of experience, compares and selects them as defining what is typical requires omission of deviating and keeping similar elements. The structure of imagination as array of comparison, selection and combination is confirmed. Imagin-

²⁴ Ibidem, p. 193.

²⁵ See: ibidem, p. 116 – 120.

²⁶ Ibidem, p. 118.

ation exhibits its flexibility, that means that imagination practically traverses the linear organisation of images from inner sense and compares representations beyond this order. This flexibility of imagination allows for comparing images in real time and allows for liberty in cutting, in any possible direction, linear representation of experience. In this way imagination can process images with a larger degree of generality that constitute a measure in assessing perfection. Aesthetic ideas of norm do not, however, go beyond notion of a given kind and do not guarantee achievement of the ideal of beauty, but only a certain canon. What transgresses the notions and stimulates thinking, through palpable image, is the aesthetic idea. Imagination in aesthetic idea is even more free and unpredictable. It reproduces images and shapes of objects out of an immense number of different representations and gives them new life.

Imagination must go beyond just superimposing images and selecting what is typical for a given species. It operates on an uncountable number of representations of various species and it connects them by selecting between them regardless of differences in rules of associating them in an experience. It connects freely all types of images, but in such a way that they take new meaning, or rather that they suggest a multitude of possible meanings. As Kant defines it: "the aesthetic idea is a representation of the imagination associated with a given concept, which is combined with such a manifold of partial representations in the free use of imagination that no designation of a determinate concept can be found for it, which therefore allows the addition to a concept of much that is unnamable".²⁷ This idea is thus a work that expands a given notion by a series of representations not visible in these very things that are revealed only by free operation of imagination.

Striking similarity and relations of a given thing with various images that break its limits become visible in an idea. Metaphors, as described by Ricoeur, stress selected aspects of things by linking them with other, distant meanings in such a way that they focus on multitude of associations and images. They evoke subsequent metaphors that escape literal, unambiguous depiction even further. Root metaphor puts subordinate images together and these very images taken together scatter and disperse the

²⁷ Ibidem, p. 194.

concept. It focuses on the whole group of images, creates structure and hierarchy and transgresses any conceptualizations.²⁸ In this way, they, this whole group of images, become open to the richness of sense that in Ricoeur takes the form of opening to symbolic experience of the world. This happens at the contact of the semantic and the non-semantic (connected with desire or experience of *sacrum*). Metaphor is implemented in language on the basis of which it works on meanings and it, in this way, distils relations mixed in what is symbolic, such as affinity, correspondence or difference.²⁹

It manipulates freely connections of various semantic fields and causes shifts in relation to well-established linguistic relations, it allows for noticing unexpected relations and thus opens itself to these that do not allow themselves to be finally encapsulated in senses of symbolic experience that Kant instils in the aesthetic. As an example, Kant gives Jupiter's eagle, who hold in its claws a lightning being attribute of the appropriate God. However, all this is not logically linked or univocal; it suggests a multitude of elements linked with majesty, loftiness, powers of nature etc. and it gives imagination momentum: it's an aesthetic link. The aesthetic idea resounds in the poem that Kant evoke and that is practically an extended metaphoric expression:

“Let us depart from life without grumbling and without regretting anything, leaving the world behind us replete with good deeds. Thus does the sun, after it has completed its daily course, still spread a gentle light across the heavens; and the last rays that it sends forth into the sky are its last sighs for the well-being of the world”.³⁰

The poem of Frederick William II of Prussia relates to the notion of end of life that is, however, extended and scattered in juxtaposition with sigh and rays of sun, death and sunset, it evokes the atmosphere of a summer night, expresses consent to death, but it is also filled with nostalgia and indicated the natural, circular organization of things. He thus links this notion with multiple intimate and distant images that confirm the metaphor and

²⁸ See: P. Ricoeur, *Metaphor and symbol*, in: *Interpretation Theory*, Texas Christian University Press, Texas, 1976, p. 64.

²⁹ See: *ibidem*, p. 69.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 193.

escape a single, adequate expression. Aesthetic ideas are formed in rhetoric, poetry and also in painting, sculpture or music that through appropriate sensual compilation transgress and expand the notion in question. This very comparison with the way metaphor works can facilitate understanding the way aesthetic idea works and broaden the scope of metaphor beyond purely linguistic dimension.

6. Summary

By establishing a link between Kantian thought and Ricoeurian concept we can understand aesthetic idea as metaphor and see the aesthetic idea in metaphor in more detail, as well as get closer to the idea by reading it through metaphor. Schemata of imagination as a plot combine events in temporal configurations and make them understandable and necessary. The configurations and relations of representation in aesthetic idea are free from linear course of experience and create unexpected combinations in metaphor: semantic innovations.

Metaphor and aesthetic idea are connected by the possibility of linking representations in a way independent of all association rules: incongruent semantic fields. Thanks to this aesthetic idea transgresses the framework of a given notion, just as metaphor transgresses language usage. Aesthetic idea only suggests a meaning, gives food for thought just as poetic metaphor allows for paraphrasing without loss of its semantic richness. This elusiveness of idea and metaphor provides an opening to new meaning, but on the other hand it does not allow for concrete, synthetic depiction. The play itself is endless. Additionally, the idea is not realized in a linear sequence but its multiple meanings appear through confrontation of many representations. As such, it relates to the idea of reason and not to the category of intellect. Comparison of idea and metaphor allows for familiarization with the way imagination works. It brings closer images that are distant and unrelated in cognitive experience, as metaphor juxtaposes distant semantic fields by comparing and shocking, establishing similarities. This surprising accuracy of aesthetic idea can consist in establishing relations between these images and showing similarity. In a way it extends the concept by opening the prospect of the immeasurable field of related

images and creates sensuality according to other, changeable and freely selected rules.

Juxtaposition of metaphor with idea pushes it, however, far from plot and temporal configurations understood in their synthetic function. Metaphor as semantic innovation differs significantly from construing plot understood as schematic construction of temporal experience. Novel construction that necessitates linking images together on the basis of appropriate associations based on linguistic and stylistic rules is something utterly different. What brings plot and imagination's scheme creation close is their synthetic function. Plot creates fictive experience of time through assigning images to appropriate categories. This assignment is not so restrictive as in cognitive process; in story telling experience and time can be freely configured by they cannot break some applicability rules. Creation of metaphor goes beyond schematic operation of imagination that configures content in line with traditional novel schemata and even as effect of violating rules, it opens the richness of sense in the situation of endless paraphrasing. There is, however, no way of completely separating influence of the innovative function of metaphor from the development of narrative schemata in the historical process of transformations of language and the art of story-telling. Schemata stabilize understanding and temporal experience and at the same time they prepare background for subsequent metaphors, and the creative power of language makes the process dynamic. The power of imagination to organize and stabilize content is also the power to transgress this order and opening new meanings.

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Artifactualism and Inadvertent Authorial Creation^{*}

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ABSTRACT. In a series of papers (two of them in previous *ESA Proceedings*), I have been defending a fictional artifactualist position according to which fictional characters (like Prince Bolkonsky in Tolstoy's *War and Peace* are non-concrete, human created objects (which are commonly labeled abstract artifacts). In this paper, I aim to bring together from my previous work two lines of defending fictional artifactualism: that (for the fictional artifactualist) making room for (i) authorial creation and for (ii) *inadvertent* authorial creation are tenable moves. Indeed, instances of authorial creation (intentional or inadvertent) are what we *expect* if we accept Saul Kripke's general view about what determines the reference of proper names, and this view's consequences for fictional names. Fictional artifactualism emerges as our best choice *if* we want to admit fictional characters in our ontology *and* are sympathetic to Kripke's general view about proper name reference. Fictional artifactualists having taken these two conditions on board need not worry about these features of their view: that authors sometimes create fictional characters and sometimes do so inadvertently.

1. Introduction

Last year, for the 2014 *Proceedings of the European Society for Aesthetics*, I wrote a paper entitled "Artifactualism and Authorial Creation" (Zvolenszky 2014). The close parallel between the title of that paper and this one is intentional and runs deep. My overarching aim in this paper is to highlight the central role played by Saul Kripke's (1972/1980) influential claims in *Naming and Necessity* about the reference of proper names when it comes to explaining why authorial creation as well as *inadvertent* authorial creation are consequences that a theory about fictional characters can readily

^{*} This paper gives a summary of Sections 3 and 4 of a much longer paper (Zvolenszky 2016). A precursor to those sections appeared in Zvolenszky (2015a).

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endorse. Indeed, *if* we accept Kripke's general arguments, *then* we *expect* to encounter cases of authorial creation, moreover, we *expect* to encounter cases of an even more mysterious sort: authors *inadvertently* creating fictional characters. So a position committed to there being cases of inadvertent authorial creation—like artifactualism about fictional characters (the view I have been defending in a series of papers)¹—is at no theoretical disadvantage compared to alternative accounts that don't make room for authors inadvertently creating fictional characters.

Artifactualism about fictional characters (fictional artifactualism, for short) is a form of *realism* about fictional characters: it maintains that the likes of Prince Andrei Bolkonsky in Tolstoy's *War and Peace* are part of an ontology we need in order to account for the semantics and metaphysics of fictional discourse. More specifically, according to *fictional artifactualism*, fictional characters are human-created objects (*artifacts*) brought into existence by the activities of authors writing novels, plays, and so on; further, these objects are *non-concrete* (they are not spatiotemporally located like chairs, trees and Saul Kripke are).² Fictional artifactualism is therefore committed to fictional characters being *created*, to taking authorial creation at face value. My aim in last year's *ESA Proceedings* paper was to respond to a challenge posed by several philosophers (for example, Brock 2010, Yagisawa 2001): what *argument* (beyond pretheoretic appeal) might be given (on behalf of the fictional artifactualist) to the effect that commitment to authorial creation is alright? In the present paper, my aim is to respond to a different but related challenge: what argument might be given (on behalf of the fictional artifactualist) to the effect that commitment to *inadvertent* authorial creation is alright?

To set the stage, in Section 2, I will outline Saul Kripke's (1972/1980) core claims about the reference of proper names that refer (or referred) to concrete individuals (like the names 'Tolstoy', 'Napoleon' and 'Saul Kripke'), and explore how these core claims can be straightforwardly extended to proper names (for example, 'Andrei Bolkonsky') that don't refer

¹ For the most recent versions, see Zvolenszky (2013, 2015a, 2016).

² Influential proponents of such a view include Kripke (1973/2013), van Inwagen (1977) and Thomasson (1999). Fictional characters according to them are *abstract* artifacts; it is worth bearing in mind, however, that no details are filled in at this point about what an abstract artifact might be: all that is settled is that these are *non-concrete* artifacts.

to concrete individuals. Kripke didn't spell out this connection between his claims about names that refer to concrete individuals and names that don't. My aim in last year's *ESA Proceedings* paper was to fill this lacuna, by, among other things, formulating what I called the *inverse-Sinatra principle for proper names*: any proper name (fictional or nonfictional) is such that *if it can't make it here, it won't make it anywhere*.³ If the name doesn't manage to refer to a concrete, spatiotemporal object here, in the actual world, it doesn't refer to such an object in other possible worlds either. In Section 3, I outline how a recently raised worry (voiced by Jeffrey Goodman 2014) about having to contend with instances of inadvertent authorial creation is supposed to stir trouble for fictional artifactualism, and will show why a commitment to inadvertent creation is, *pace* Goodman, a welcome result. Indeed, it's a result that we *expect* in the light of Kripke's arguments about error (and ignorance) among name users (Section 4). In Section 5, I will connect these Kripkean arguments with the core Kripkean claims in order to bring to the surface connections between the pair of conclusions I've been motivating: that fictional artifactualists need not worry about authorial creation, and that they need not worry about *inadvertent* authorial creation.

2. Kripke's Core Claims and Authorial Creation

The core of Kripke's position (from the second lecture of *Naming and Necessity* 1972/1980) about what does and doesn't determine the reference of proper names like 'Tolstoy' and 'Moscow' (which refer to concrete objects) can be summarized with the following two claims:

Qualitative fit is neither necessary nor sufficient for being the referent of a name. Suppose individual speakers who competently use a name *N* associate various descriptions with *N*. Kripke's claim: to be the referent of *N*, it is neither necessary nor sufficient that the referent

³ Frank Sinatra sang about New York City: "If I can make it there, I'll make it anywhere". In the inverse-Sinatra principle (to keep it parallel with the song), I use the modal auxiliary 'can', by which I mean (as the song's 'can' does) 'is able to'; I don't mean metaphysical possibility. Thanks to Nathan Wildman for discussion on this. I first formulated the inverse-Sinatra principle in Zvolenszky (2007).

be the unique individual fitting the associated descriptions (or fitting the weighted majority of the descriptions). Call this the *simple qualitative-fit claim*.

A causal-historical connection is necessary for reference. Competent *N* users refer to an object *o* by using *N* only if there is a causal-historical chain of uses of *N* in their linguistic community leading back to the introduction of *N* as a name for *o*. Call this the *simple historical connection requirement*.⁴

Recall the inverse-Sinatra principle (“if a name *N* can’t make it here, it won’t make it anywhere”). This principle, unlike the two core Kripkean claims, goes beyond imposing constraints on the referents of proper names in the actual world, constraining also their referents in merely possible worlds. So it is well to generalize, in the light of the inverse-Sinatra principle, the qualitative fit claim and the historical connection requirement to characterize the core tenets of a Kripkean stance:

In the case of concrete individuals (actual as well as merely possible) qualitative fit is neither necessary nor sufficient for being the referent of a name. Call this the *generalized qualitative-fit claim*.

A causal-historical connection is necessary for reference to a concrete object (actual as or merely possible). Call this the *generalized historical connection requirement*.⁵

⁴ I’m not including here the corresponding sufficiency claim: that a causal-historical chain of uses leading back to an object being given the name is *sufficient* for it to be the name’s bearer. In the light of considerations about ‘Santa Claus’, and ‘Napoleon’ introduced as a name for a pet (and later, on, also examples like ‘Madagascar’) indicate that much more elaboration and complexity lies ahead before we get a *sufficient* condition for being the referent of a name. And the fact that Kripke (1972/1980, 93, 96–97) was pointing out such examples makes it clear that he was aware of the additional complexity required while he was delivering the lectures, so Evans’ (1973) charge that Kripke’s sufficiency claim is unwarranted is itself unwarranted.

⁵ Kripke (1972/1980) did supply a further thesis that, together with the two original core claims, yields the generalized versions of the two core claims for proper names that refer to concrete objects. That thesis is a well known one, about proper names being rigid designators: according to one formulation, a rigid designator *r* is such that if it refers to

In what follows, I will omit the adjective ‘generalized’ and simply call the latter two claims the qualitative fit claim and the historical connection requirement.

In previous work,⁶ I argued that of the prominent forms of realism about fictional characters (Meinongianism, among others), fictional artifactualism is the only view that accords with the inverse-Sinatra principle and the two generalized core claims by Kripke. So if—quite independently of fictional names—we accept (as many philosophers do) that proper names obey the inverse-Sinatra principle and the generalized core claims, then (i) we have reason to favor fictional artifactualism over its realist rivals, and (ii) it is *because fictional artifactualism features authorial creation* that it can be in accord with the generalized core claims and the inverse-Sinatra principle, so (iii) the generalized core claims, if we accept them, make authorial creation a *welcome* feature of fictional artifactualism rather than a worrisome one.

In the present paper, I will argue for a counterpart of (iii) with respect to cases of authors inadvertently creating fictional characters: the generalized core claims, if we accept them, make *inadvertent* authorial creation a welcome feature of fictional artifactualism rather than a worrisome one. Before exploring why such a feature might be thought worrisome, let us consider motivations for and against realism about fictional characters.

Why take on the metaphysical burden of a realist position in the first place? Fictional artifactualists like Saul Kripke (1973/2011, 1973/2013), Peter van Inwagen (1977), and Amie Thomasson (1999) first identify a special

an object *o* in the actual world, then it refers to *o* in every world in which *o* exists, and in worlds in which *o* doesn’t exist, *r* doesn’t refer to an object other than *o*. But notice that the claim that proper names are rigid designators leaves open whether a proper name without an actual concrete referent does or doesn’t refer to a concrete object in a merely possible world. It is the inverse-Sinatra principle that supplies the needed constraint for names like ‘Andrei Bolkonsky’: no concrete object to refer to here (in the actual world) means no concrete object to refer to in other possible worlds either. In this way, the rigid designation thesis about proper names and the inverse-Sinatra principle are two facets of an overarching theory about the reference of proper names across possible worlds. But the succinctness, generality and focus of the inverse-Sinatra principle makes for a more vivid and revealing summary of Kripke’s claims than his own way of fitting together his various claims (the two original core claims plus the rigid designation thesis).

⁶ Zvolenszky (2015a), for an earlier, shorter version, see Zvolenszky (2014).

class of sentences in fictional discourse, which we might call *metatextual*⁷ discourse—for example, ‘Bolkonsky is a fictional character’, ‘Bolkonsky was created by Tolstoy’, ‘Bolkonsky is not the most tragic character created by Tolstoy, (Anna Karenina is)’. Second, these fictional artifactualists point out that such examples of metatextual discourse are true simpliciter (not just true in the world of the *War and Peace* fiction). Third, they argue that *analyzing these examples of metatextual discourse requires that we admit in our ontology entities that are fictional characters, best construed as non-concrete artifacts*.

The foregoing explains also how the generalized core claims, about the *reference* of proper names, can bear on views like fictional artifactualism, concerning the *metaphysics* of fictional characters. There is a crucial difference to be drawn here (see Braun 2005): even if one agrees with the artifactualist that Tolstoy created the abstract artifact that is Andrei Bolkonsky, from that it does not follow that *any* uses of the name ‘Andrei Bolkonski’ refer to that artifact. As we have seen, a common fictional artifactualist strategy is to home in on certain uses of proper names—metatextual uses like ‘Andrei Bolkonsky is a fictional character’—arguing that only in those uses do fictional names refer to the non-concrete artifact that had been created (plausibly, on other uses, the name doesn’t refer to anything).

The magnitude of the challenges associated with analyzing the full range of fictional discourse (including negative existential claims like the true ‘Prince Bolkonsky doesn’t exist’) vary. For example, for fictional artifactualists, analyzing metatextual discourse like ‘Bolkonsky is a fictional character’ is an easy task, analyzing negative existential claims is a complex one. For those who steer away from realism—*irrealists about fictional characters*—it’s the other way around. Also, most fictional artifactualists do not commit to the view that analyzing *every* type of fictional discourse involves appeal to the ontology of abstract artifacts posited: for example,

⁷ Bonomi (1999/2008)’s label, also favored by García-Carpintero 2014. Thomasson (2003) uses the label ‘external discourse’ Salmon’s (1998) label ‘meta-fictional discourse’ corresponds to a broader category that includes instances of metatextual discourse as well as examples like ‘According to the to the novel *War and Peace*, Andrei Bolkonsky fought against Napoleon’. Kroon–Voltolini (2011) label the former *external* metafictional discourse, and the latter, *internal* metafictional discourse.

analyzing *textual*⁸ discourse (sentences from works of fiction) does not, according to Thomasson (2003), van Inwagen, and Kripke.⁹ More generally, those philosophers are artifactualists who hold that analyzing *some* fictional discourse involves fictional characters as abstract artifacts. This existential formulation signifies a key feature of irrealist positions about fictional characters: according to them, *no* type of fictional discourse is such that its analysis requires an ontology that includes fictional characters.¹⁰ This signifies that the irrealist has a hefty task cut out for her. Beyond making this point, my arguments in this paper are not directed against irrealist positions.¹¹ I'm claiming that *if* we opt for realism about fictional characters, then there are several reasons for choosing fictional artifactualism (various worries about authorial creation and inadvertent authorial creation notwithstanding).

3. Goodman about Inadvertent Creation

A recent challenge by Jeffrey Goodman (2014), which I will call the *inadvertent creation challenge*, is originally posed for those who hold that fictional characters and mythical objects alike are abstract artifacts. The crux of the challenge is this: if we are *artifactualists about mythical objects (mythical artifactualists, for short)*¹² and think that astronomers like Le Verrier, in mistakenly hypothesizing the planet Vulcan, inadvertently created an

⁸ Thomasson (2003) labels this 'fictionalizing discourse'.

⁹ Salmon (1998), another fictional artifactualist, disagrees. Plausibly, his view is that in creating works of fiction authors are already using names of fictional characters to refer to the abstract artifacts being created (see Braun 2005; 615–620, note, however, 627–628, fn. 38, 40).

¹⁰ Indeed, Thomasson (2003, 208) characterizes one irrealist proposal, Kendall Walton's (1990) influential pretense-based account as one according to which "not just *some*, but *all* talk involving fictional names contains an element of pretense" (emphasis in the original).

¹¹ Elsewhere I formulated arguments aimed at unseating irrealist alternatives to fictional artifactualism (Zvolenszky 2013, 2016, Section 6).

¹² Considerations about the semantics and metaphysics of discourse about the posits of failed scientific theories (like Le Verrier's hypothesis about Vulcan), bring crucial considerations to the debate about the metaphysics and semantics of *fictional* discourse. I discuss these at length in two papers: Section 3 of Zvolenszky (2015a), and Sections 3 and 6 of Zvolenszky (2016).

abstract artifact, then the “inadvertent creation” element turns out to be inescapable yet theoretically unattractive.

In previous work,¹³ based on considerations about actually existing concrete objects being featured in fictional works (as plausibly Napoleon and Moscow are in Tolstoy’s *War and Peace*), I argued that regardless of where one stands on mythical objects, admitting fictional characters as abstract artifacts is enough to give rise to the inadvertent creation challenge; yet this very set of considerations serves to undermine the challenge, indicating that inadvertent creation is not nearly as worrisome after all as Goodman is suggesting. Indeed, the inadvertent creation of some objects that can serve as the referents of certain uses of proper names is a phenomenon that we *expect* if we accept Saul Kripke’s (1972/1980) influential arguments from error (and ignorance), which are based on the observation that competent users of a proper name *N* are often far more mistaken (and far more ignorant) about the referent of *N* than description theories of proper names allow. So inadvertent authorial creation is a welcome feature of fictional artifactualism rather than a worrisome one.

To sum up my points of disagreement with Goodman:

- (a) the inadvertent creation phenomenon is not specific to mythical artifactualism;
- (b) the phenomenon is already present if we assume fictional artifactualism;
- (c) moreover, the phenomenon is rather commonplace, due to mundane instances of error on the part of the creator of the work of fiction.

To motivate (a) and (b), I outlined the following (contrary to fact) Scenario *T*: while writing *War and Peace*, Tolstoy was under the mistaken impression that the protagonist, Prince Bolkonsky, like Napoleon (also featured in the novel), was a real person. Introducing the name ‘Andrei Bolkonsky’, Tolstoy intended to refer to a historical figure he thought existed quite independently of his novel. For fictional artifactualists, what follows from the fact that (in Scenario *T*) Tolstoy was wrong and his name ‘Andrei

¹³ See Sections 3 and 4 of Zvolenszky (2016); for a previous version, see Zvolenszky (2015b).

Bolkonsky' doesn't refer to any real person? It is overwhelmingly plausible to think that *in Scenario T*, Tolstoy created Bolkonsky as a non-concrete artifact, and did so inadvertently. And the reason why he did so is because of the non-cooperation of the world to provide the relevant entity. Further, as a result of Tolstoy's writing the novel, the range of *actual fictional characters* plausibly came to include Bolkonsky also.¹⁴

There is a crucial (plausible) assumption behind the way I just now described Scenario *T*: the mode of introducing proper names in the context of writing a work of fiction varies: Tolstoy actually introduced the name 'Andrei Bolkonsky' and 'Natasha Rostova' intending them to refer to fictional characters; by contrast, he introduced 'Napoleon' and 'Moscow' intending them to refer to an already existing individual and city, respectively. Scenario *T* involves a counterfactual scenario in which Tolstoy erroneously takes the name 'Andrei Bolkonsky' to pattern with his use of names like 'Moscow' and 'Napoleon' (rather than names for fictional characters like 'Natasha Rostova').¹⁵

To motivate (c), let us consider how Kripke's arguments about error (and ignorance) arise (Section 4), and how they fit together with the generalized core Kripkean claims (Section 5).

¹⁴ One potential alternative is to regard Bolkonsky of *T* as a created *mythical* artifact akin to Vulcan rather than a fictional character. I won't dwell on this alternative option as it will not make a significant difference to my dialectic: for example, a proponent of this alternative cannot then retain fictional artifactualism without mythical artifactualism because the two theories make a package deal (given that we want to leave room for the kind of error described in Scenario *T*), so the major points I have been making against Goodman, (a) and (b), would remain. Thanks to Guido Bacciagaluppi, David Braun and Stephan Torre for discussion on this point.

¹⁵ Someone might argue that proper names featured in fictional works never refer to actual objects: 'Napoleon' in *War and Peace* refers to a fictional surrogate of the historical figure, an abstract artifact (Voltolini 2013 proposes such a view). I won't explore such accounts here except for noting two points. First, such views are difficult to argue for as they are plausibly committed to fictional surrogates for the referents of all proper names even in the case of slightly fictionalized biographies or documentary genres (Voltolini is silent on this issue). Second, accepting such a view doesn't unseat my claim that inadvertent creation phenomena are commonplace. To the contrary: we'd have to contend with a far wider range of cases of *inadvertent creation of fictional surrogates*, like the referent of (the actual) Tolstoy's 'Napoleon' in *War and Peace*.

4. Kripke's Argument about Error and Inadvertent Authorial Creation

In the second of his *Naming and Necessity* lectures (1972/1980), Saul Kripke convinced an overwhelming majority of philosophers that a certain view doesn't work; to wit, a view according to which descriptions that an individual speaker associates with a proper name *N* determine the reference of *N* as used by the speaker. And Kripke's main objection to this view appealed to the problem of error (and the problem of ignorance). Individual speakers' associated descriptions with *N* are often inadequate in various ways: they can contain mistaken information (and may fail to contain enough information to identify a unique individual), yet these epistemic foibles of speakers are very often no obstacle to their successful reference using *N*. These epistemic limitations of competent *N*-users call for an alternative picture about causal-historical chains of uses (leading back to the introduction of *N*) within the speakers' linguistic community, chains that determine to whom they refer on given occasions of using *N*. (Kripke 1972/1980, 71–97.)

These Kripkean lessons are familiar. And they are just one step away from the recognition of two key points.

First, (potentially profound) error may afflict the *originators* of proper names also: just think of perfectly plausible scenarios like the ancient astronomers successfully introducing the name 'Hesperus' intending it to refer to a *star* (of the same kind as the other shiny inhabitants of the night sky) that they are observing and succeed in naming a *planet*.¹⁶

Second, as much authority as we might think authors of fictional works have over how they develop their creations, we must realize that this authority is limited in a crucial way. We may well think it is plausible to hold the following principle:¹⁷

Principle 1. "*Fictional intention makes it so*"

For an arbitrary fictional work *F* featuring a proper name *N*,

¹⁶ Salmon (1998, 305). But see Braun (2005, 618–619) criticizing Salmon's interpretation of the 'Hesperus' example. Crucially, even if we agree with Braun's take on the example, his criticism doesn't carry over to Scenario *T*.

¹⁷ "Fictional intention makes it so" is echoed by Goodman (2014, 39).

IF an author creating *F* introduces *N* intending that *N* name a fictional object in *F*, THEN *N* names a fictional object in *F*.

But Scenario *T* makes us realize a certain kind of limitation on authors' authority, namely, that *Principle 1's inverse is untenable*:

Principle 2. "*Nonfictional intention makes it so*" (the inverse of Principle 1)

For an arbitrary fictional work *F* featuring a proper name *N*,
IF NOT (an author creating *F* introduces *N* intending that *N* name a fictional object in *F*), THEN NOT (*N* names a fictional object in *F*)

That is to say, the rejection of Principle 2 makes it abundantly clear that Kripke's argument from error (and ignorance) afflicts even authors introducing names in the context of fiction-making. If we accept Principle 1, then there is *asymmetry* in authors' potential errors.¹⁸ On the one hand, if they believe *c* is a fictional character they are creating, then they have the last word on the matter, no room for error. Yet on the other hand, if authors believe *c* is a nonfictional character they are describing for the first time, theirs is not the last word on the matter: they can be in error with *c* being a fictional character after all, one that they created inadvertently. In the light of this, it is not at all surprising that such authors can be in the wrong about whether the name they are introducing is for a fictional character rather than (as they had intended) for a concrete object. And for fictional artifactualists, this means that authors can be in the wrong about having created a fictional object: their creation can be inadvertent.

5. Connecting the Dots

Now, consider an example of an author inadvertently creating a fictional character, as in Scenario *T*. How does the foregoing line of argument about the possibility of authors being in error (and in its wake, the untenability of Principle 2) connect with the generalized core Kripkean claims?

¹⁸ I'm granting Principle 1 for argument's sake but my major points about inadvertent creation, (a)–(c), do not hinge on the fate of either Principle 1 or Principle 2.

In fact, the possibility of authors being in error about whether they are describing in their novel (short story, and so on) an already existing object (like Napoleon or the city of Moscow) or a fictional character that they are conjuring up (and that didn't hitherto exist) follows straightforwardly from the first core Kripkean claim: about qualitative fit being neither necessary nor sufficient for reference. Given that Tolstoy of (the counterfactual) Scenario *T* is in error about the world around him, his intention to refer to a historical figure when using the name 'Andrei Bolkonsky' does not bear out. But crucially, qualitative fit is not necessary for reference to an object; so just because Tolstoy of *T* erroneously thinks Bolkonsky is a concrete, spatiotemporal individual, does not thwart his bringing into existence a non-concrete fictional character, one that he inadvertently created.

At this stage, enter the other core Kripkean claim: about a historical connection being required. If, as realists about fictional characters, we want to posit a referent for certain uses of the name 'Andrei Bolkonsky' (for example, metatextual uses like 'Andrei Bolkonsky is a fictional character'), then, in the light of the argument summarized in Section 2, the way to secure the needed historical connection is by (i) making fictional characters *human-created* (artifacts created by authors' activities of writing novels), and by (ii) making these fictional characters non-concrete; none of the other prominent realist contenders (like Meinongianism) can accord with the core Kripkean claim about a historical connection being required.

In the end then the upshot of both lines of argument (about authorial creation being alright and about inadvertent authorial creation being alright) is that *if* we choose realism about fictional characters, and *if* we accept the core Kripkean claims for proper names across the board, then our best option is fictional artifactualism. And authorial creation as well as inadvertent authorial creation are consequences we can embrace, given their intimate ties to the core Kripkean claims that we have already taken on board.¹⁹

¹⁹ I have received numerous insightful comments from participants at the conference *Modal Metaphysics: Issues on the (Im)Possible II, III* held at the Slovak Academy of Sciences (October 2014 and September 2015), at the *Work in Progress Seminar* at the Department of Philosophy, University of Aberdeen (March 2015), at the conference *PhiLang 2015* at the University of Łódź (May 2015), and at another talk given at the Czech Academy of Sci-

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ences Institute of Philosophy (September 2015). The paper has benefited from especially valuable discussion/correspondence with numerous colleagues: Brian Ball, Tibor Bárány, Gregory Bochner, David Braun, Thomas Brouwer, Tadeusz Ciecierski, Manuel Garcia-Carpintero, Michael De, Jeffrey Goodman, Juraj Hvorecký, Anthony Dardis, Nathaniel Jezi, Petr Kot'átko, Karen Lewis, Federico Lucci, Miklós Márton, Péter Márton, Daniel Nolan, Craige Roberts, Tuomas Tahko, Stephan Torre, Nathan Salmon, András Simonyi, Joshua T. Spencer, Ádám Tuboly, Zoltán Vecsey, Nathan Wildman and Marián Zouhar.

The present research has been supported by two grants received from the Hungarian Scientific Research Fund (OTKA): Grant No. K-109456 entitled "Integrative Argumentation Studies", and Grant No. K-109638 entitled "Connections Between Analytic Philosophy and Phenomenology Within the Philosophy of Mind."

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