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Edited by Vítor Moura and Connell Vaughan



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The Aesthetics of Gesture

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ABSTRACT. Each historical era assigns a different function and meaning to the gesture, just as its meaning varies from culture to culture. When we consider the gesture of art, it is also clear that we mean different things by gesture in different artistic fields. Therefore, we can only talk about the aesthetics of gesture in relation to various specific examples, so is necessary to limit the scope of the investigation. In this approach two basic examples will be used, the concepts of Giorgio Agamben and Ludwig Wittgenstein. Firstly, we will discuss the main ideas of the two philosophers on gesture, and then we will turn to the question of contemporary aesthetics. To illustrate our thesis, we will present a cinematic example: an experimental film (*Four Bagatelles*) by Gábor Bódy. Finally, we will ask what the aesthetics of gesture means in the 21st century and what are its ethical implications.

1. Introduction

What is a gesture? Or to be more precise, what do we mean by gestures? Do we mean an expressive movement, especially a hand gesture (as the word ‘gesticulation’ suggests)? A certain technique of the body or a body language? A facial expression? An extra layer of meaning behind spoken words? A kind of archaic language that allows understanding without knowing any existing languages? Are gestures a tool of argumentation and persuasion, which is perhaps the most important elements in the orator’s or actor’s speech? Or is it an offering, a gift, a display of nobility, which is the most important passion among the Cartesian “passions of the soul”?

We have to admit that the notion of gesture is ambiguous. The fundamental ambivalence of gesture lies in the fact that it can be seen as both the most natural and instinctive form of

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expression and as a controlled and formalized sign language (Flusser, 2014). It is at the same time precisely legible for those who know the codes and indecipherable for outsiders. We can speak of gesture as imitated or quoted, as Brecht did in his epic theatre (Pavis, 1985) or defined as an infinite process as it manifests in Antonin Artaud's concept of theatre, known as *Theatre of Cruelty*, which states that "we must first break theatre's subjugation to the text and rediscover the idea of a kind of unique language somewhere in between gesture and thought" (Artaud, 2010, p. 63).

Each historical era assigned a different function and meaning to gesture, so there were periods, such as the 17th century, when everything became a gesture. Furthermore, its meaning varies from culture to culture (e.g., the use of gestures is completely different in Eastern and Western theatre).

Also, when we talk about the gesture in art, it is clear that we mean different things by the gesture in literature, painting, sculpture, drawing, photography, film, dance, etc. Therefore, we can only talk about the aesthetics of gesture in relation to various specific examples, like gesturalism in painting, mimetic gestures used in pantomime, poetic gestures etc., in other words it is necessary to limit the scope of the investigation.

In this lecture two basic examples will be used, the concepts of Giorgio Agamben and Ludwig Wittgenstein. In the first part I will discuss the ideas of the two philosophers on gesture, and then turn to the question of contemporary aesthetics. What does the aesthetics of gesture mean in the 21st century and what are its ethical implications?

2. Agamben's notes on gesture

In his famous essay entitled *Notes on Gesture*, Agamben speaks of the loss of gesture during the fin de siècle. He affirms: "by the end of the XIXth century the gestures of the Western bourgeoisie were irretrievably lost" (Agamben, 2007a, p. 149).

But what exactly we mean by the loss of gesture? Agamben gives the example of gait and movement disorders. More precisely, he speaks about a generalized catastrophe of the gestural sphere, which is manifested in the fact that as psychiatrists of the time observed, the patients were incapable of either beginning or fully enacting the simplest gestures, as this was evidenced by the disorders in the sphere of walking. This was underscored by doctors such as Gilles de la Tourette, who noticed that the walker can get stuck between individual steps, and

the process of walking could become disjointed and uncertain. Irregularities of movement were also emphasized in Jean-Martin Charcot's famous Tuesday Presentations, which were public demonstrations of hysteria. Agamben considers the loss of gesture a symptomatic of a civilizational malaise, and he compares this decomposition of movement with the way a camera records motion: as a sequence of separate images.

Nevertheless, we can doubt that walking would be "the most common human gesture", as Agamben states. Why not the movement of the hand for example? And what if the observed movement disorders exist only for the clinical eye?

Agamben also argues, and for us this is one of his most important theses, that "an era that has lost its gestures is, for that very reason, obsessed with them" (Agamben, 2007a, p. 151). Again, the main example is cinema, since "in the cinema, a society that has lost its gestures, seeks to reappropriate what has lost while simultaneously recording that loss" (Agamben, 2007a, p. 154). In this respect, we can quote silent films, like the classics of Charlie Chaplin or Buster Keaton.

One of the most captivating examples is an experimental film of Samuel Beckett's, entitled *Nacht und Träume*, which Agamben describes as "the dream of a gesture." Beckett himself called this brief piece, written and directed for television in 1982, a *Nachtstück*, as its theme is a dream. In the 10-minute black and white short film we see a man sitting at a table in the classic pose of exhaustion or melancholy (Deleuze, 1992). Schubert's music *Nacht und Träume*, which gives the film its title, plays in the background, initiating the dream sequence, during which the human figure undergoes a doubling: we see both the dreamer and his dream-self. The experience of dreaming fragments the body: the spectral, dreamed hands gently touch the dreamer, while the gestures (drinking, wiping the forehead) refer to the New Testament. Another classic gesture is when the dreamed and dreaming hands touch each other, in the pose of a prayer, evoking one of Dürer's drawings. The dream is followed by awakening; but the same dream starts again immediately, however, this time the dream sequence is seen magnified and slowed down, as if we were entering into the dream. During the second awakening, the dreamed and dreaming selves both disappear. The dream is over. But the question remains: is the end of the dream identical to death?

Of course, we could also take examples from other works of art to emphasise the obsessive search for gestures. It is no accident that the new art forms that are born in this period

(photography, film, modern dance and ballet) deliberately use a strong language of gestures. What can better represent the continuity of movement, or the expressivity of gesture than dance? At the same time, philosophy also imitates dance. Agamben argues that *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is “the ballet of a humanity bereft of its gestures” (Agamben, 2007a, p. 152). Or even in the field of art history, the final and unfinished masterpiece of Aby Warburg, the *Atlas Mnemosyne*, is not a fixed collection of images, but a virtually “moving representation of the gestures of Western humankind from classical Greece up to Fascism” (Idem).

It’s only after these radically different examples that Agamben attempts to give a new definition of gesture. Following the Ancient Roman philosopher Marcus Terentius Varro, who distinguishes between practice (praxis) and creation (poiesis), Agamben proposes a third concept: endurance. For Agamben this term is synonymous with gesture, which is a “purposiveness without purpose” (using a Kantian formula), or a „being-in-a-medium.” As Agamben writes:

Gesture breaks the false alternative between ends and means that paralyses morality and presents means which, as such, are removed from the sphere of mediation without thereby becoming ends.
(Agamben, 2007a, p. 155)

In other words, gesture is the exhibition of mediation: it is pure mediation that is devoid of an end goal. Therefore, gesture plays an ambivalent role in art as it is always going beyond itself without representing anything except its own process. Perhaps not surprisingly, Agamben argues that gesture is not a language, but rather a silent expressivity. From this point of view gesture is akin to a gag.

At this point we shall return to the realm of silent films. Let us remember that the original meaning of the word ‘gag’ is “to choke, strangle” or “to stop a person’s mouth by thrusting something into it.” Therefore, it can be said that the gag denotes an inability to speak. In silent movies the gag substitutes a linguistic expression by a gesture. The gag becomes a self-presentation or a testimony (witnessing) for oneself. In conclusion, Agamben draws parallels between film and philosophy and declares: “The essential ‘mutisme’ of cinema (...) is like the mutisme of philosophy, the exposition of the human being’s being-in-language: pure gestuality” (Agamben, 2007a, p. 156).

3. Gestures of art

Agamben also treats the problem of gesture in his other works; therefore, this is one of the main themes that can be observed throughout his oeuvre. In particular, the problem of gesture emerges in several essays of his book *Profanazioni*.

To give a few examples, in the essay entitled *The Author as Gesture*, the gesture signifies the author's absence from the text and, at the same time, the author's indelible presence (what Michel Foucault called "author function"). According to Agamben, this gesture enables reading and makes the relationship between the text and its reader possible. Similarly, to the author, the reader also enters into play with/in the text, and, at the same time, remains absent from it.

It is worth noting that Agamben cites an unusual example here, a late project of Foucault's, known under the title *Lives of Infamous Men*. It consists of archival materials of 19th century crimes (prison records, unpublished official documents, protocols, testimonies etc.), and the collected documents aim to present the otherwise forgotten (hi)story of criminals. In the case of these texts we cannot really speak of an authentic author, yet we can see these documents as portraits that bear witness to secret lives. Quoting Agamben:

Still, as in those photographs from which the distant but excessively close face of a stranger stares out at us, something in this infamy demands its proper name, testifying to itself beyond any expression and beyond any memory. (Agamben, 2007a, p. 94).

Photography as testimony appears also in the essay *Judgement Day*, where Agamben analyses the first photograph in which a human figure appears (the daguerreotype *Boulevard du Temple*). The photo shows him (by chance, due to the long exposure time) in a completely banal and profane situation: having his shoes polished. Yet, it is this everyday gesture that will be immortalised for eternity. As Agamben says, "thanks to the photographic lens, the gesture is now charged with the weight of an entire life" (Agamben, 2007b, p. 35).

Furthermore, the philosopher adds that not only this one but innumerable photographs can be seen as a kind of last judgment, since "a good photographer knows how to grasp the eschatological nature of the gesture" (Agamben, 2007b, p. 36).

Lastly, to close this short overview of the importance of gesture in Agamben's work I'd

like to highlight the importance of the gesture of dance in his oeuvre. It is no exaggeration to say that from *Notes on Gesture* on, in which dance was already referenced by the founding figures of modern dance and ballet, Isadora Duncan and Serge Diaghilev, the connection between dance and gesture is a constant preoccupation of Agamben's. More precisely, he is most interested in the potential for action in dance. In his philosophical approach, dance is conceptualized as the most suitable mode of expression for the pure potentiality of the human body. Dance emancipates the human body from conventional movements and gives new modes of using bodies.⁸⁷ For this reason, dance is not only one art form among many others, but as Agamben argues in his book *Karman*, it is the paradigm of the unworking body and free life.⁸⁸

To sum up, we see that for Agamben a gesture is first and foremost a silent expression, a self-revelation and a testimony, and therefore always has ethical implications, considering that Agamben's ethics is an ethics of testimony.⁸⁹ We could even say that for Agamben gestures belong to the field of ethics rather than aesthetics.

4. Between ethics and aesthetics

This ethical aspect links Agamben to Wittgenstein's ideas on aesthetics. In his writings, Agamben makes several references to Wittgenstein, and *Notes on Gesture* ends by quoting him:

The Wittgensteinian definition of mysticism as the showing of what cannot be spoken is a literal definition of the gag. And every great philosophical text is the gag that displays language itself, being-in-language itself, as a giant memory lapse, as an incurable speech defect. (Agamben, 2007a, p. 156)

While it may seem provocative to compare one of the most quoted passages in the history of philosophy to a silent film gag, Agamben's aim is to emphasise the imperfection and inadequacy of linguistic expression.

Before moving on to the second part of the presentation, which is a discussion of

⁸⁷ "It is an activity or a potential that consists in deactivating human works and rendering them inoperative, and in this way, it opens them to a new, possible use" (Agamben, 2018, p. 84).

⁸⁸ "Dance is the perfect exhibition of the pure potential of the human body" (Agamben, 2018, p. 82).

⁸⁹ On Agamben's ethics of testimony or bearing witness see *Homo Sacer III (Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive)*.

Wittgenstein's ideas, there is one more important point to be made. In the context of the aesthetics of gesture we have talked about the aesthetics of Agamben, but the question has to be asked whether a real aesthetic theory can be attributed to this author.

As I tried to show in several of my writing as well as in my book *Enigmas: Giorgio Agamben's Aesthetics* (Darida, 2021) the question of aesthetics and aesthetic experience never disappears from Agamben's theoretical horizon from his first book *The Man Without Content*, which speaks of the destruction and refoundation of aesthetics to his latest works like *Studiolo*, *Hölderlin's Madness*, or *Pinocchio*, which are commentaries of paintings, poems and tales. However, as we have already seen, in his view aesthetics rather belongs to the silent realm of presentation, testimony and expression beyond words, and therefore has no theory. According to Agamben our attitude towards art is not so much aesthetic as ethical provided that by ethics we do not understand a set of dogma or morality, but rather a certain form of a happy and good life. Consequently, aesthetics as an experience of art is inherently part of a broader form of life.

5. Wittgenstein on ethics

Speaking of Wittgenstein's aesthetics, we are also talking about his ethics if we take seriously the only aesthetic thesis of his first major work, *Tractatus logico-philosophicus* (1922), which states that "ethics and aesthetics are one and the same" (6. 421). This does not mean that they have the same subject matter, but that both are beyond the limits of language ("It is clear that ethics cannot be put into words. Ethics is transcendental", 6.421). In other words, both ethics and aesthetics belong to the realm of the inexpressible.

Nevertheless, during his years at Cambridge as a guest professor Wittgenstein gave lectures on ethics (c. 1929-30) and aesthetics (1938). He did not treat these as separate disciplines rather investigated their basic concepts, the good and the beautiful, which can be applied to multiple subjects and therefore could lead to misunderstandings.

In the following I will try to outline some of the main theses of these two lectures. The rather brief *Lecture on Ethics* begins with a statement affirming the link between ethics and aesthetics: "Now I am going to use the term ethics in a slightly wider sense, in a sense in fact which includes what I believe to be the most essential part of what is generally called aesthetics" (Wittgenstein, 2014, p. 84).

Next, instead of “an enquiry into what is good”⁹⁰, Wittgenstein defines ethics as an inquiry into the meaning of life. He shows that we attribute several meanings to the same expressions: for example, relative (trivial) and absolute (ethical) meaning. This is how we can talk about a “good” chair (in the everyday sense, in which it serves a certain purpose) and a “good” life (in an ethical sense). However, while on the one hand every judgement of relative value is a mere statement of facts, on the other hand, there is no statement of facts which can imply a judgement of absolute value. Consequently, our expressions to which we attribute an ethical sense or value are based on a misuse of language.

According to Wittgenstein, the real ethical experience consists of the astonishment of “how extraordinary [it is] that the world should exist” (Wittgenstein, 2014, p. 90), whereas the linguistic expression of this is meaningless or nonsensical, since it violates the limits of language. Quoting his argument:

To say ‘I wonder at such and such being the case’ has only sense if I can imagine it not to be the case. But it is nonsense to say that I wonder at the existence of the world, because I cannot imagine it not existing. (Wittgenstein, 2014, p. 91).

He also emphasizes that this kind of “misuse of language” characterises all ethical and religious expressions. Nevertheless, at the end of his lecture he gives them a particular defence or apology. This passage is worth quoting at length:

That is to say: I see now that these nonsensical expressions were not nonsensical because I had not yet found the correct expressions, but that their nonsensicality was their very essence. For all I wanted to do with them was just to go beyond the world and that is to say beyond significant language. My whole tendency and, I believe, the tendency of all men who ever tried to write or talk ethics or religion was to run against the boundaries of language. This running against the walls of our cage is perfectly, absolutely hopeless. Ethics so far as it springs from the desire to say something about the ultimate meaning of life, the absolute good, the absolute valuable, can be no science. What it says does not add to our knowledge in any sense. But it is a document of a tendency in the human mind which I personally cannot help respecting deeply and I would not for my life ridicule it. (Wittgenstein, 2014, p. 96-97).

⁹⁰ As Moore defines ethics in his *Principia Ethica* (1903), and Wittgenstein’s lecture mainly argues with this.

This quotation clearly shows the importance that Wittgenstein attaches to ethics in human life, which cannot be expressed in words.

6. Wittgenstein on aesthetics

Few years later, in his *Lectures on Aesthetics*, the philosopher does not touch on the traditional basic problems of aesthetics either, like the question of aesthetic judgement, or the question of taste. Instead he emphasises the situation in which we learn to use aesthetic expressions like “good” or “beautiful”. He underlines that “one thing that is immensely important in teaching is exaggerated gestures and facial expressions” (Wittgenstein, 1967, p. 2).

Therefore, aesthetic judgement is partly a matter of following rules, and the value of art is not independent of the given environment and culture. Quoting Wittgenstein:

The words we call expressions of aesthetic judgement play a very complicated role, but a very definite role, in what we call a culture of a period. To describe their use or to describe what you mean by a cultural taste, you have to describe a culture. (Wittgenstein, 1967, p. 8).

This also shows that aesthetic judgement is always part of a language game, and “an entirely different game is played in different ages” (Wittgenstein, 1967, p. 8).

However, our real aesthetic judgments (likes or dislikes) or our artistic competences are usually not expressed in words. Wittgenstein reminds here that the correct interpretation of a Klopstock poem is expressed in finding its rhythm, as in reading aloud. As he describes it,

the important fact was that I read it again and again. When I read these poems I made gestures and facial expressions, which were what could be called gestures of approval. But thing was that I read the poems entirely differently, more intensely, and said to others: ‘Look! This is how they should be read.’ Aesthetic adjectives played hardly any role. (Wittgenstein, 1967, pp. 4-5).

It can be said that our real aesthetic reactions, such as the feelings of distress, confusion or even satisfaction that we feel upon seeing, reading or listening to a work of art, are hardly expressed in language, but rather in gestures (e.g., the feeling of ‘Oh, yes!’ or ‘Quite so!’ during the performance of a piece of music). The impact of art on us is indescribable, inexpressible in words, and can only be measured by our reactions, which can also be misinterpreted. That is

why art remains an enigma even for Wittgenstein.

7. Gestures of life

The concept of gesture can also be found in Wittgenstein's other writings, such as in the texts left behind in his legacy, later published as *Culture and Value*. In these notes, the question of gesture is primarily related to architecture and music. On architecture, Wittgenstein writes: "Remember the impression made by good architecture, that it expresses a thought. One would like to respond to it with a gesture" (Wittgenstein, 1998, p. 28). He also adds that "architecture is a gesture" (Wittgenstein, 1998, p. 28).

In relation to music, he confesses: "The musical phrase is a gesture to me. It creeps into my life. I make it my own" (Wittgenstein, 1998, p. 89). He illustrates this with an example:

And again to a piece of music that I know (completely) by heart; and it could even be played on a musical box. Its gestures will still remain gesture for me, although I know all the time what comes next. Indeed I may even be surprised afresh again and again. (Wittgenstein, 1998, p. 89).

It is worth underlining that he also uses a dance analogy in context of musical interpretation when he claims that "understanding and explaining a musical phrase – the simplest explanation is sometimes a gesture, another might be a dance style or word describing dance" (Idem). This analogy may remind us of the thoughts of Agamben, for whom dance was the gesture par excellence: the paradigm of all human action and of a happy life.

It is necessary to emphasize that although in Wittgenstein's view ethics or aesthetics are not disciplines, they still have a defining effect on our everyday practices, or represent a particular lifestyle. Many analyses underline the ethical content of Wittgenstein's entire oeuvre, where ethics is manifested in action (e.g., his volunteering to fight in the war, or to act as a public educator). Yet, art also played an important role in his life. Music in particular, since during his childhood several composers (Johannes Brahms, Clara Schumann, Gustave Mahler, Richard Strauss) visited his family home, and his brother Paul Wittgenstein was a famous pianist. Wittgenstein himself played the clarinet; so, it is no surprise that he mostly used musical examples in his writings. He was strongly interested in the parallels of musical, mathematical and architectural thinking, since each of them is characterised by constructions. On the practical level Wittgenstein also demonstrated his talent as an architect: he built a

country house for himself in Norway and a modernist house for his sister in Vienna. He also showed an interest in photography and experimented with sculpting. As a writer, his style was far from being mannered, instead it was characterised by simplicity, precision and a particular sense of rhythm (he often emphasises that his sentences should be read at the correct tempo, i.e., slowly). His literary taste was rather conservative (he was an avid reader of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky), but he used his inheritance to support contemporary poets (he offered scholarships to Rilke and Trakl). According to one of his most enigmatic notes, “really one should write philosophy only as one writes a poem” (Wittgenstein, 1998, p. 28).

These biographical data show how a philosopher can make ethics and aesthetics his own way of life.

8. Reflections

Towards the end of the presentation, it must be asked again why Wittgenstein’s and Agamben’s ideas on gesture are relevant from the perspective of contemporary aesthetics? What could an aesthetics of gesture mean based on Wittgenstein’s and Agamben’s ideas?

Nowadays, in the first third of the 21st century, we talk a lot about gestures in relation to a wide variety of artistic disciplines, but perhaps most of all in relation to postdramatic theatre and dance.⁹¹ Traditional aesthetic categories like ‘beauty’ or the ‘sublime’ have long ceased to describe these new performances, nor do aesthetic judgements apply to them, and we cannot expect everyone to like them “without interest”.

From the Kantian criteria of universality, necessity, disinterestedness and purposelessness, gesture as we have seen with Agamben can be identified with a “purposiveness without purpose”. Every real work of art is a self-revelation, and as aesthetes we can only convey this. However, we cannot expect that our aesthetic judgement, or rather our free choice will correspond to the taste of others. We cannot expect that the audience will like or dislike a work of art in the same way either, or we cannot be sure that we all have a similar aesthetic experience. Still, I believe that presentation and transmission are important tasks, a kind of testimonies or witnesses to the works of art. Here we return to the two

⁹¹ As Hans-Thies Lehmann declares in his *Postdramatic Theatre*: “In dance we find most radically expressed what is true for postdramatic theatre in general: it articulates not meaning but energy, it represents not illustrations but actions. Everything here is gesture.” (Lehmann, 2006, p. 163).

philosophers, who claim that aesthetics and ethics are one and the same (Wittgenstein), or a genuine artistic gesture is an ethical gesture (Agamben).

I am convinced that aesthetics as a way of life characterises everyone, it is just that we aesthetes are perhaps more reflexively aware of it. In one of his last books, *Studiolo*, Agamben writes about the time spent ('dwelling') with works of art as the authentic form of a happy life. Therefore, one must imagine the aesthete happy, who performs the process of presenting and transmitting works of art as an infinite gesture.

9. A “bagatelle” ending

I thought a lot about what example I could use to illustrate and conclude my presentation, and finally I have chosen not some contemporary work, but an experimental film or a series of etudes, the *Four Bagatelles* (BBS, 1972-75) by Gábor Bódy.

These film-studies were made within the framework of a “Film Language Series” organised in 1973, in which the participants came from various fields of Hungarian avant-garde, including fine arts, music and film. Among the film’s creators we can find Ilona Keserű, László Vidovszky, or Krisztina Chatel.

The main theme of the four more or less independent film etudes is the “meaning-modification” resulting from the framing of a picture, hence the subtitle “Removings”. All of these etudes raise both the issue of film language and the more general question of what we mean by language. At the same time, the problem of language is linked to gesture, since Bódy identifies the gesture as the origin of language. Furthermore, the theme of dance is present in most of the etudes. To quote the director:

The motifs of the first 3 etudes are a kind of dance as a basis – like human manifestation. Dance is a border case when, with his or her body/movement, articulation brings oneself into a state which is at the border of existence and expression, and which reflects both sides. According to Vico, gesture is the beginning of language. (Bódy, 1987, p. 91).

In *Four Bagatelle* we can see a folkloristic dance, an artistic rehearsal and a very specific and

weird dance (the dance of a drunk⁹²), all in front of an electronic image reflection created by cameras and monitors, in which we can also see a kind of nonhuman dance, and which was the model of Bódy's study "Infinite Image and Reflexion". It is important to point out that the four etudes do not form a complete work of art. As Bódy sees it,

The etude-series of the *Four Bagatelles* are irregularly disrupted by or connected with empty frames and numbers indicating that the film-maker does not regard the possibilities as closed, completed.

This quotation shows exactly the gestural nature of the film.

In this presentation, we moved from one film (Beckett's silent film) to another (Bódy's film study). In the Beckett film, we underlined the indecisive ending: we do not know whether the protagonist has fallen into a new, deeper or a final sleep, while Bódy also emphasises the unfinished nature of his work. This is not by coincidence, as one of the most important theses of the aesthetics of gesture is the essential indeterminacy of works of art.

In several works, Agamben argues that a work or art is never finished, but is only interrupted at a certain point by its creator. This incompleteness, however, is not a mistake, but a gesture that addresses the interpreter and invites him to reflect further. At the same time, and this is another important feature of the aesthetics of gesture, no interpretation can ever be finished or completed. As we know from Wittgenstein, it is always possible to look at a work of art from a different perspective, and it is precisely this infinity that makes aesthetics a form of life, which is as open and full of possibilities as a gesture.

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⁹² "The third study consists of only two shots: we can see the dance of a drunken man in the first one and a sociologist's lecture on drug addiction in the second one and with the extension of the frame we realise that the lecture is being listened to by the drunk (...) the basically serious performance gives a completely different effect when the object of the references – the alcoholic – as well appears on the picture." (Idem) It is obvious from the short synopsis that Bódy's film is also a gag.

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