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FILOZOFSKI VESTNIK je glasilo Filozofskega inštituta Znanstvenoraziskovalnega centra Slovenske akademije znanosti in umetnosti. Filozofski vestnik je znanstveni časopis za filozofijo z interdisciplinarno in mednarodno usmeritvijo in je forum za diskusijo o širokem spektru vprašanj s področja sodobne filozofije, etike, estetike, politične, pravne filozofije, filozofije jezika, filozofije zgodovine in zgodovine politične misli, epistemologije in filozofije znanosti, zgodovine filozofije in teoretske psihoanalize. Odprt je za različne filozofske usmeritve, stile in šole ter spodbuja teoretski dialog med njimi.
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Aims and Scope

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The journal is published three times annually. Two issues are published in Slovenian, with abstracts in Slovenian and English. One issue a year is a special international issue that brings together articles in English, French or German by experts on a topic chosen by the editorial board.

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THE REVIVAL OF AESTHETICS: IN A FEW WORDS

Aleš Erjavec

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The immediate reason for choosing the theme of this international issue of *Filozofski vestnik* was the forthcoming XVII International Congress of Aesthetics (Ankara, July 2007). The other motive was to discern some of the issues in contemporary aesthetics.

Where do we stand in aesthetics today? What does aesthetics denote and connote? Should it be concerned with cognition, beauty, or art? Is it – or should it be – artistics, the philosophy or theory of the aesthetic, of art and/or culture, should it be relegated to oblivion or resurrected? Did the advent of Duchamp's ready-made signal the demise of traditional art and has art, with the emergence of postindustrial society and the decline of modernism, lost its previous "overvaluation"? Why is it that so often, when referring to aesthetics, we speak only about art? May we thus agree that, "aesthetics refers to a special regime for identifying and reflecting on the arts?"[1]

Would it be proper to say that with great or fundamental changes in our societies and their internal relations, art and culture are transformed too, and that each time anew a novel "essence" of art emerges, thereby fundamentally changing the notions and the phenomena designated as art? Do we thus need different aesthetic theories to grasp these different facets of the entity called art or is art a convention and not something whose essence can be legitimately sought? And, on the other hand, is there art that transgresses the historical and cultural confines and is factually universal, with this universality being erected upon a common human condition and/or the common biological foundations of our species? Is a prerequisite of art its autonomy? Furthermore, are the two other continuous topics of aesthetics – cognition

[1] Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics* (London: Continuum, 2004), p. 10.

and beauty – still objects of aesthetic scrutiny or have they been relegated to the archive of past knowledge, culture, and psychology? And finally, if the question of meaning has replaced the classical question of truth,[2] what consequences does this have for art and cognition and, thereby, for aesthetics?

The title "The Revival of Aesthetics" was intended partly as a stimulus for discussion, with pro and contra expected in about equal quantity or number among the contributions. Surprisingly this did not happen: for the most part, the contributors implicitly or explicitly hold the view that aesthetics is alive and well – with the question of whether this is a consequence of a revival, stubbornness, or inertia, remaining an open one. Still, the quest for the answer to the question – aesthetics: transformed, revived and renewed, or obsolete and passéist? – lingers on and is being posed and asked over and over again. Also in this volume.

What may be deemed surprising is the plethora of answers to the question as to the contents and the *enjeu* of aesthetics. A glance at the history of the discipline (if today it remains a discipline at all, instead of being a separate realm of knowledge, a theory of the aesthetic, or it exists under some other designation) reveals that it has, as a term and notion arising from the European enlightenment and romanticism, spread from the western cultural centers across the globe, in this respect following a similar globalization[3] as that undergone by philosophy and culture. In spite of some authors remaining skeptical about the universal and the global value of aesthetics, in recent decades the latter appears to have mostly lost its previous predominantly and sometimes exclusively Eurocentric signification and has been transformed into an increasingly polysemic notion and term, in this respect following the practice of some other areas of the humanities and the social sciences – and especially of philosophy understood in its present-day plenitude of meanings and designations.

At first glance a discussion about the contemporary relevance of aesthetics, whether we designate the latter as great or small, and a matter of revival, continuous import, or decline, appears to be related primarily to this theoretical and philosophical activity proper. While this holds true, it remains crucial for aesthetics to continue to develop notions and concepts, and to theorize about our experiences, be they artistic or aesthetic, and to establish links between the theoretical knowledge of which it mostly consists, and the

[2] See Alain Badiou, *Infinite Thought* (London: Continuum, 2005), p. 35.

[3] See Aleš Erjavec (ed.), *Globalization as/and Aesthetics. Yearbook of the International Association for Aesthetics*, Vol. 8 (Ljubljana: ZRC Publishing, 2004).

artistic and quotidian reality. Thus, aesthetics, its import or lack thereof, often carries consequences for the object(s) of its inquiry, with this being so also vice versa and in spite of numerous examples to the contrary. These prove that aesthetics can exist quite well without entanglements in immediate and concrete artistic, curatorial, and cultural practices and issues and questions arising from social, political, and creative frameworks and demands addressed at the philosophy of art and culture, requesting it to take sides. On the other hand, aesthetics also often finds itself within a certain tension, be it in relation to philosophy, to art, or both. (This tension today appears of lesser importance when aesthetics refers to beauty or cognition.) In this respect the continental tradition is different from the analytic; that of smaller cultures or those more distant, from what today still remain world cultural centers; and the situation in countries and cultures which have become thoroughly globalized and postindustrialized, from environments where this did not yet occur. In postindustrial environments life has for the most part become aestheticized, industry has been transformed or eliminated in the form in which we knew it in modernism, and art has ceased to represent an ideal form of creativity when compared to manual labor under the not too distant predominantly industrial conditions. In such environments the dominant art has changed accordingly: it no longer strives to express the "truth," but represents facets of reality that it creates itself. The avant-garde gesture of provoking the public still persists, but it rarely carries the impact it did a century ago. "It does not matter any longer what you do, which is what pluralism means. When one direction is as good as another direction, there is no concept of direction any longer to apply."[4]

The situation is not as dismal as Danto claimed; art lives on, although perhaps not equally visibly and devoid of the import it possessed in the European past. It thrives in new locations, where in the more recent past it was either absent as an autonomous realm or it existed as a sheer copy of its European relative: in China, India, and Latin America. The same therefore goes for aesthetics.

We should all take a hint from those western countries where aesthetics is primarily an academic discipline and has been such for a long time. Is this our future too and if so, is it a future that we want to share or not? In small cultures or those that have not yet thoroughly crossed into the postindustrial age, art and reflections upon it still carry a social, theoretical, cultural, and existential import that would often be hard to find in the economically

[4] Arthur C. Danto, "The End of Art," in Berel Lang (ed.), *The Death of Art* (New York, N.Y.: Haven Publications Inc., 1984), pp. 34–5.

most developed parts of the globe. All this is also true of aesthetics, which in the above mentioned parts of the world is interpreted predominantly as a philosophy of art.

Whether aesthetics is to art what ornithology is to the birds or whether it sets the stage for more profound artistic and cultural effects, varies from one cultural situation to another. In this volume we find arguments supporting the former and the latter views, with the latter by coincidence or by actual relevance outweighing the former. This choice may have to do with the fact that many contributors to this volume share a globalized approach to aesthetics and are intimately familiar with various national, international, and transnational traditions. Although cultural and philosophical empires persist and develop further (losing on the way some of their rough edges and becoming more porous), this does not prevent a plethora of local and global approaches and those taking into consideration cultural, artistic and theoretic variety from becoming increasingly common. Both the trends and the tension they produce are productive and desirable as long as within them the desire for universality is retained. What this means is described well by what Richard Shusterman wrote about philosophy as well as aesthetics more than a decade ago:

> Philosophy, conceived as an inquiry into the most basic features and meanings of experience, seems at once to transcend national borders and to maintain certain national characteristics. It claims to deal with universal truths, yet it obviously emerges from particular social contexts and national traditions. Aesthetics, as a branch of philosophy, reflects this tension between the international and the national.[5]

Today it also has to reflect the tension between the local and the global and the infinite variety of particularities that are only partly articulated through the distinction national/international.

The purpose of this volume of *Filozofski vestnik* is thus also to offer a reflection of such tension in "theoretical practice," to use an almost forgotten Althusserian phrase, and to lay down before its readers the prisms or facets of a mirror which reflect, transform, embellish, and at the same time reveal in a new light this field of theoretic inquiry which is simultaneously part of a long academic and international tradition, a personal endeavor, and a form of personal belonging.

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[5] Richard Shusterman, "Aesthetics Between Nationalism and Internationalism," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 51:2 (Spring 1993), p. 157.

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In the first section, devoted to *The Philosophy of Beauty, Art, Culture, and Nature*, some of the central philosophical issues of aesthetics are addressed. Wolfgang Welsch (some of whose ideas are also discussed in Lev Kreft's essay) reactualizes one of the essential aesthetic notions, namely beauty. In his view, in modernism beauty has remained a crucial, albeit often conceptually transmogrified phenomenon. He opts for beauty as an essentially universal entity, the import of which should be reappraised – especially in its form of breathtaking beauty. In the essay "The Post-Duchamp Deal" Thierry de Duve discusses art in the circumstances (which have been with us for some time) wherein it is both possible and legitimate to make art from absolutely anything whatever. De Duve's theory of art, thoroughly and forcefully presented also in this essay, represents a persuasive attempt at erecting an aesthetic theory on the basis of Kant's philosophy, with the help of which, argues de Duve, we can explain also contemporary art and its significance.

Mario Perniola discusses the relationship between art and culture in relation to aesthetics and anti-aesthetics, taking as his starting point Michael Kelly's *Encyclopaedia of Aesthetics*. Yrjö Sepänmaa, on the other hand, offers a glimpse into environmental aesthetics and presents arguments for its practical relevance. This aesthetics, essentially related, or belonging to applied aesthetics, is an example of the way in which aesthetics can be employed for practical social purposes, with these extending far beyond environmental art and reaching into landscape aesthetics, forestry, or nature conservation issues, with these achieving greatest results when theoreticians and practitioners work together.

In the second set of essays, devoted to the past history and the present role of aesthetics in different settings, some views on the past, on the present issues of aesthetics, and on the ways in which aesthetics should be developed in the future if it is to retain significance for our understanding of contemporary art and other themes it scrutinizes, are offered. In the first contribution, by Curtis L. Carter, the history of the development of the American Society for Aesthetics since the 1940s is presented, although topics appertaining to the development of aesthetics in other parts of the world are discussed as well.

In his article devoted to naturalist aesthetics and the "second modernity" Lev Kreft critically discusses some current attempts to explain aesthetic preferences and pleasure in terms of evolution. He believes that most of the arguments in favor of such views are in fact construed on hypotheses arising from contemporary social settings and practices. Ernest Ženko begins his essay by offering a critique of contemporary aesthetics, and suggests that

it should be replaced by what he calls "Mode-2 Aesthetics", thereby applying theories arising from the "hard" sciences onto aesthetics, all with the aim of developing an aesthetic theory that would be capable of persuasively explaining and theorizing upon contemporary artistic practices. Eva K. W. Man starts her article by discussing the notion of aesthetic experience, using as her basic reference the aesthetic theory of Richard Shusterman. Recalling also the views of John Dewey, she argues that aesthetic experience is crucial for aesthetics. She ends her contribution by claiming that neo-Confucian aesthetic models could provide assistance in understanding this key notion.

The next series of articles focuses on the "revival of aesthetics" in a direct sense. The first is that by Richard Shusterman, who presents the key issues of his aesthetic and philosophical theory of "somaesthetics" and also offers an overview of the decade long process of its development as it arose from his work on pragmatist aesthetics. Shusterman regards his somaesthetics as one of the venues for the revival of aesthetics. The second article is by Arnold Berleant. Like Eva K. W. Man, Berleant too focuses upon the notion of experience, which he considers to be a crucial concept in any aesthetic theory, whether its object is natural or artistic beauty. Anthony J. Cascardi points in his article to the extraordinary role of visuality and hence images in our contemporaneity and argues that they represent a key factor in our culture. He suggests that images have ceased to be only a part of the world that is produced, and instead themselves play a key role in production, for production too, has undergone a transformation. Devin Zane Shaw discusses a debate between two key contemporary philosophers, namely Alain Badiou and Jacques Rancière. He starts with a presentation of Badiou's notion of inaesthetics and defends it against Rancière's criticism. He furthermore analyzes and presents Badiou's statements and comments on art and questions his explanation of the relation between art and truth.

The last group of essays contains four articles devoted to what may appear to be specific issues of aesthetics understood as philosophy of art and culture, but which are frequently revealed as instances of theoretical and practical cultural situations found in many different environments.

In the first article Gao Jianping follows the history of four terms in recent Chinese cultural history, revealing the way in which the change in the translation of these terms and phrases relate to the domains of art, aesthetics, and philosophy, and effected crucial changes in the realms of aesthetics and national cultural politics. He demonstrates that what appear at first glance to be but neutral theoretical terms purportedly of only academic interest, may under specific social, historical, and political conditions, have enormous theoretical and cultural repercussions. Gao furthermore reveals

how in China also events and processes of semantic transfiguration have led to the establishment of an increased autonomy of art.

Ken'ichi Iwaki bases his arguments on the philosophical views of Kyoshi Miki and claims that some interpretations of western painting have been uncritically accepted in Japan, thereby ignoring or disregarding visual representational practices that did not arise from the European renaissance perspectival tradition. Patrick Flores offers an intricate and elaborate presentation of the genealogy of aesthetics in the postcolonial setting of the Philippines, taking as his starting point a painting by Juan Luna, and, from a postcolonial perspective, also criticizing the universalizing function of the aesthetic.

In the closing article Tyrus Miller discusses the notion of time as artistically conceived by the "retro-avant-garde" movements that exist in the post-socialist contexts of Eastern and Central Europe. Employing Deleuze's distinction between "movement images" and "time images," Miller claims that the retro-avant-garde symptomatically shows the import of movement in the classical avant-gardes and its desire to artistically shape time within the framework of modernity.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF BEAUTY, ART, CULTURE, AND NATURE

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THE RETURN OF BEAUTY?

Wolfgang Welsch

In the aesthetic discourse of recent years it has become the fashion to propagate a "return of beauty". Dave Hickey announced in 1993 that beauty would be the dominant issue of the next decade.[1] In 2005 an international festival "On Beauty" took place in Berlin's *Haus der Kulturen der Welt*, culminating in a conference at which experts were invited to discuss "The Re-Turn of Beauty".

I am surprised at such talk of a return of beauty. Did beauty ever go away? Was it ever in exile such that it could, should or would need to return today? Wasn't beauty there all the time? The beauty of nature was, to be sure – in all its splendor. And the beauty accumulated in the course of human history, the beauty of works of art, has for decades been more present than ever before – in museums, or exhibitions, and various other media. And what about the beauty of human beings? I find it hard to believe that there was ever a time of decreased human beauty or a time when beautiful human beings were in short supply.

If anything, what we had less of in the past decades was the talk about beauty. That is all that has changed: After a long time during which aestheticians spoke little of beauty, they have now started talking about it again. That's the whole difference. It is not that the phenomenon of beauty has returned, but rather that a discourse on beauty is being produced on the intellectual stage. We should not, therefore, speak of a return of beauty as such, but only of a return of the *topic* "beauty". Mistakenly, however, the return of the item of discourse is taken for that of the phenomenon itself. Discourse is obviously being made to serve as the measure for whether something (in this case, beauty) exists or not. To me, that seems rather arrogant and foolish.

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[1] Dave Hickey, "Enter the Dragon: On the Vernacular of Beauty", in *The Invisible Dragon: Four Essays on Beauty* (Los Angeles: Art Issues Press, 1993), pp. 11–25, here quoted from p. 11.

In what follows, I will put forward three claims. 1. The opposition to beauty that we find in art theory from mid-nineteenth century onward and especially in the twentieth century was not directed against beauty in general, but against specific conceptions of beauty whilst being in favor of others. 2. Contemporary pleas in favor of beauty have dubious reasons and effects. 3. Today there is much cause to talk about the attractiveness of the beautiful regardless of the many traditional and largely accepted theories, or: about the sublime, breath-taking beauty and its universality – yet talk of such beauty is conspicuously absent from current discourse.

1. The rejection of the beautiful often serves the appeal to another type of beauty

To come to my first claim: We must not overlook the fact that opponents of beauty have in their own turn often made positive use of the term "beauty". They did not intend to put an end to beauty, but rather to proclaim a *new* beauty in place of the established ideal.

Three examples. When Baudelaire proclaimed the figure of Satan as an ideal, he was treating Satan as a type of beauty: he spoke of Satan as "the most perfect type of manly beauty"[2] and "the most beautiful of Angels";[3] and when he praised "fugitive beauty",[4] he intended to recommend it as the specifically *modern* type of beauty uniting "mode" and "éternité".[5] When Marinetti pronounced a race car with its roaring motor to be superior to the classical ideal of beauty embodied in the Nike of Samothrace, it was in order to extol a new and specifically modern type of beauty: "We declare that the splendor of the world has been enriched by a new beauty: the beauty of speed."[6] The surrealist ideal, finally, was predicated on the new beauty of contingency and incendiary juxtaposition, whose model the surrealists described with Lautréamont as "the fortuitous encounter on a dissecting table

[2] Charles Baudelaire, "Squibs" [1887], in *Intimate Journals* (Boston: Beacon, 1957), pp. 3–23, here p. 12 [XVI].

[3] Baudelaire, "The Litanies to Satan", in *The Flowers of Evil* [1857], no. CXX.

[4] Baudelaire, "To a Woman Passing By", in *The Flowers of Evil* [1857], no. XCIII.

[5] Cp. the key passage on Baudelaire's concept of "modernité": "Il [le peintre de la vie moderne = Constantin Guys] cherche ce quelque chose qu'on nous permettra d'appeler la *modernité*, car il ne se présente pas de meilleur mot pour exprimer l'idée en question. Il s'agit, pour lui, de dégager de la mode ce qu'elle peut contenir de poétique dans l'historique, de tirer l'éternel du transitoire" (Baudelaire, "Le peintre de la vie moderne" [1863], in *Œuvres Complètes* (Paris: Seuil, 1968), pp. 546–565, here p. 553).

[6] Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, "Manifesto of Futurisme", *Le Figaro* (February 20, 1909), p. 1.

of a sewing machine and an umbrella".[7] – Those are three instances showing that beauty was not dismissed but redefined; that in place of the established, bourgeois, stale ideal a different, new, more captivating beauty was being sought – and how often mustn't just that already have happened in the history of beauty! While specific ideals of beauty age, the desire for beauty remains.

To be sure: Around the middle of the last century those seeking to set art on a completely different path from that of beauty became more energetic in their protests. In 1948, Barnett Newman defined "the impulse of modern art" as the "desire to destroy beauty".[8] A few years later, Dubuffet stated, "Beauty does not enter into the picture for me."[9] And yet Newman painted exceptionally beautiful pictures,[10] and Dubuffet, too, created wonderful paintings and lithographs of almost celestial, cosmic beauty (titles such as *Cosmographie* or *Sol céleste* bespeak the fascination with which their beauty strikes the viewer).

The rhetoric of beauty's dismissal is therefore, to put it mildly, exaggerated. In reality, what we find are either arguments for a beauty other than the established one, or wholesale rejections of the popular rhetoric of beauty in favor of devotion to a higher beauty.

When you come down to it, such changes in ideals is the most normal thing in the world. Beauty ages, ideals of beauty are replaced by others. Nor must we forget that it only took a hundred years for what critics of the time castigated for having "declared war on beauty",[11] to become the very epitome of the beautiful – even for mass tastes. The impressionists are the best example.[12]

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[7] Lautréamont, *The Lay of Maldoror* [1868–69] (London: The Casanova Society, 1924), p. 279 resp. André Breton, *Les Vases communicants* [1932], in *Œuvres complètes*, vol. 2 (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), pp. 101–209, here p. 140.

[8] Barnett Newman, "The Sublime Is Now" [1948], in *Barnett Newman: Selected Writings and Interviews* (New York: Knopf, 1990), pp. 170–173, here p. 172.

[9] Jean Dubuffet, "Anticultural Positions", in Richard Roth and Susan King Roth (eds.), *Beauty is nowhere: ethical issues in art and design* (Amsterdam: G+B Arts International, 1998), pp. 9–15, here p. 12.

[10] One could speak of sublimity in this context – but that is just another, the larger than life version of the beautiful.

[11] After seeing the Impressionists' first exhibit in 1874, the Parisian art critic J. Claretie wrote, "Monet [...], Pissarro, Miss Morisot and the others seem to have declared war on beauty" (cp. John Rewald, *Die Geschichte des Impressionismus*, Cologne: DuMont, [7]2001, p. 195).

[12] In the meantime, of course, one might suspect that Monet's poppy fields, too, have been somewhat tainted by this universal applause.

2. Dubious aspects in current demands for beauty

Or am I making things too easy for myself? Were there not more violent objections in the twentieth century than those I've mentioned: artistic strategies which not merely rejected the rhetoric of beauty but from which in fact nothing of beauty emerged – where the new quality of the works was only to be had at the price of beauty? So that we would be missing the whole point of such works and even perverting them if we tried to put them back on the leash of beauty?

a. Danto, The abuse of beauty – *against Dave Hickey*

Before I go on to discuss some examples in more detail, I would like to draw attention to Arthur Danto's book, *The abuse of beauty.* Danto wrote this book in response to Dave Hickey's claim that the coming decade would be a decade of beauty. Danto, by contrast, reminds us that it has always been a fatal error of aestheticians to believe that art is essentially about beauty: "It is not and it never was the destiny of all art ultimately to be seen as beautiful."[13] "Most of the world's art is not beautiful, nor was the production of beauty part of its purpose."[14] Artistic quality, Danto argues, can go along with beauty, but by no means must it be bound up with beauty in every case: "it is extremely important to distinguish between *aesthetic* beauty and a wider sense of artistic excellence where aesthetic beauty may not be relevant at all".[15]

Taken generally, the common stipulation attacked by Danto that art must be beautiful is indeed misguided. It is a product of the eighteenth century. The Greek concept *kalon* could refer to all sorts of things – for instance, to actions, to science, to a way of life. By no means did it apply exclusively to art. Even in 1750 when Baumgarten was founding aesthetics as a discipline, art was still far from being the center of interest. Baumgarten defined aesthetics as the *ars pulchre cogitandi*. Although the terms "art" and "beautiful" both occur in that definition, Baumgarten was not at all concerned with a theory of art, but rather with an epistemological revision and with the novel task of *thinking beautifully*[16]. That is something very different from what later

[13] Arthur C. Danto, *The abuse of beauty: aesthetics and the concept of art* (Peru, Ill.: Open Court, 2003), p. 36.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 88.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 107.

[16] Baumgarten's foil was the modern definition of logic as the "art de penser" set out in the Port Royal Logic. It was this project that was to be superseded by the "art of thinking beautifully".

generations made of it.[17] Nobody in his right mind would limit beauty to art and normatively constrain art to be beautiful – that Danto is right about. Just think of how scandalously that would restrict the concept of art. Talk of beauty might at best cover a fair portion of the fine arts, but what about literature? Would anyone seriously want to argue that tragedy is about beauty? That would just be grotesque. And it would be equally ridiculous to think that beauty is decisive in music.

b. Duchamp – contingency instead of beauty

The twentieth century's paradigm example for the disjoining of art and beauty Danto talks about are the works of Duchamp. Their *raison d'être* is not aesthetic, but anaesthetic. Duchamp said of his ready-mades "that the choice of these 'readymades' was never dictated by an esthetic delectation", but rather "was based on a reaction of visual indifference with at the same time a total absence of good or bad taste […] in fact a complete anesthesia."[18] And if you are nevertheless inclined to think that there is still plenty to find beautiful in Duchamp's works, the story of his *Large Glass* is evidence that, in his own thinking, Duchamp definitively surpassed that horizon by recognizing "perfection" in a contingency destructive of beauty. In 1923 Duchamp had proclaimed that the *Large Glass* was "definitively unfinished". Yet four years later, when the work was accidentally broken during transportation, Duchamp called this contingent event "the happy completion of the piece". When the damaged work was repaired, he did not seal the cracks, welcoming them instead as wholly valid compositional elements. – The art world, by contrast, has often preferred uncracked replicas of the work. One plays at modernity while in fact adhering to the traditional ideals of beauty and /of the purity of the artwork thus perverting Duchamp's embrace of contingency.

c. Aleatory – and its perversion by the dictate of beauty

Contingency, when taken seriously, is the motif that definitively leads beyond aspirations to beauty. It was especially in mid-twentieth century music that this motif entered the scene. I will now consider the dire effects of recent partiality to beauty on the performance of such works today.

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[17] For a critique of this development in philosophical aesthetics see my "Philosophie und Kunst – eine wechselhafte Beziehung", in Krystyna Wilkoszewska (ed.), *Estetyka poza estetyka*, (Kraków: Universitas, 2005), pp. 1–29.

[18] Marcel Duchamp, "Apropos of 'Readymades'", *Art and Artists*, vol. 1, no. 4 (July 1966), p. 47. The scene in Buñuel's *Andalusian Dog* (1928) in which a razor cuts through an eyeball is the well-known counterpart to this tendency. On the relationship between aesthetic and anaesthetic in general see my *Ästhetisches Denken* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1990; 6th, expanded edition 2003).

Contingency is the elixir of aleatoric compositions. Their scores are written in such a way that the combination of musicians, the sequence of the parts, the duration of the pieces and the sounds produced are to a large extent left to chance, determined by contingent parameters. This renunciation of the western ideal of the *opus perfectum* in favor of open forms was a thoroughly radical move.

One of the most important aleatoric compositions is Stockhausen's *Piano Piece XI*, composed in 1956 and first performed in Darmstadt in 1957. On one of the oversized pages of the score (they are 50 x 100 cm), fourteen groups of notes are irregularly distributed in such a way as to avoid having any one group stand out more than any other. Here is the beginning of Stockhausen's "Performing Directions":

> The performer looks at random at the sheet of music and begins with any group, the first that catches his eye; this he plays, choosing for himself tempo [...], dynamic level and type of attack. At the end of the first group, he reads the tempo, dynamic and attack indications that follow, and looks at random to any other group, which he then plays in accordance with the latter indications.

Further details follow, as well as the rule that a given realization of the piece concludes as soon as one of the groups has been reached for the third time. Thus the various performances will contain very different numbers and sequences of parts and differ in length depending on where the musician begins and how he chooses to go on. Stockhausen concludes with the recommendation: "This Piano Piece should if possible be performed twice or more in the course of a programme."[19]

How is this piece performed today? In Autumn of 2004 Stockhausen's complete piano works, among them No. XI, were presented over the course of several evenings in Berlin. The pianist played impressively. It was music fit to be charmed by. Afterwards, a colleague came over to me in a state of some excitement: "Was he cheating?" Evidently, my colleague suspected that, contrary to Stockhausen's instructions, the pianist had chosen a particularly affecting sequence prior to performing it. In our uncertainty we turned to a prominent music critic especially familiar with the period. "Of course he worked out his plan in advance", he answered; "that's what everybody does today." And the critic considered that quite alright.

[19] Karlheinz Stockhausen, *Nr. 7, Klavierstück XI* [1957] (London: Universal Edition, [8]1998).

But if it can be said to be alright at all, then at best only on today's false premises. However, it utterly contradicts the principle and the sense of this music. Nothing could be more against the spirit of a piece of aleatoric music than to pick out an affecting, a beautiful version and then present it as the work. It is essential that the work be performed not once, but *several* times in succession, as Stockhausen's instructions demand. For that is the key to experiencing what the music is about, namely how, owing to built-in random parameters, very different things can emerge from a predetermined matrix (the given notes).[20] There was a time when different successive realizations were presented as a matter of course. Today, even in the most highly cultivated venues, we are offered only one. Next to other pieces before and after it. Thus the work is surrendered over to the conventionalist logic of the closed work of art and the traditional logic of the concert as a sequence of such crystalline formations. Yet it was precisely this conventional idea of a work and its performance that Stockhausen was trying to combat when he introduced his aleatoric techniques.

In short, what we have is a perversion of the aleatoric type of art, its re-adaptation to the old schema. I can hardly think of a greater disproportion, a greater betrayal, one that is committed today in the name of the new idol of the marketplace called beauty. This is an extreme example of the dire consequences of thoughtless adherence to the perspective of beauty. Evidently, though, most people today are so drunken with beauty that instead of recognizing such a scandal for what it is, they applaud it.

d. More dubious things in the "Return of Beauty"

The reasons for the current rekindling of interest in beauty are for the

[20] This aleatoric procedure basically corresponds to a deeply evolutionary principle. It is likely that the transition to random composition was inspired not only by the encounter with compositional techniques and ways of thought from the Far East, as has so often been emphasized, but that the publicization of the synthetic theory of evolution (which united the classical theory of evolution with the new genetics) at the end of the 1940s also played a role. Presumably the first consistently aleatoric, and hence consistently evolutionary description of evolution was given by Stephen J. Gould. According to him, in order to understand evolution we have to play "life's tape" several times over, taking random effects into account. Then we see that life could have taken quite different courses than the one we are familiar with and which led to us. "I call this experiment 'replaying life's tape.' You press the rewind button and, making sure you thoroughly erase everything that actually happened, go back to any time and place in the past [...]. Then let the tape run again and see if the repetitions looks at all like the original" (Stephen Jay Gould, *Wonderful Life: The Burgess Shale and the Nature of History*, New York: Norton & Company, 1989, p. 48). This is the modern, aleatoric view of evolution, freed of teleological remnants. – Just as this evolutionary law only becomes manifest when we "re-play life's tape" several times over, so too we can perceive the effects of contingency in aleatoric music only when several versions of the piece are performed.

most part, it seems to me, superficial and external to art. It is really the aestheticization of the everyday world that is at the basis of this interest. One thinks that art has to keep up with this hyper-aestheticization or to compete with the easy palatability of the media. As though art had to be at least as attractive as these other beautiful realities of our life. In either case, art comes to be valued only for its animation value – useful for stimulating attention and for increasing the number of visitors.

I think this is false for a number of reasons. I cannot see that it is the task of art to chase after an aestheticization already in place and to duplicate it. That aestheticization cannot be outdone in any case. In advertising, fashion, everyday life and in the media, bellism has long since been celebrating its highly persuasive and sophisticated triumphs.

The task of art, however, is not to celebrate what is already in existence anyway. And therein lies its chance of survival. Incorporating the aestheticization of the everyday in an alienated, distanced form in order to provoke critical reflection might perhaps be one alternative for art, and many are pursuing it. At bottom, however, I think art should be a realm of alterity. Faced with the overly stimulated sensitivity of an aestheticized society, it is rather anaesthetic that we need.[21]

3. Sublime beauty – breathtaking and universal

In the end, though, I would like to change my tune. (I hope I don't have to be consistent. Today everybody talks about the inner plurality of modern subjects. And then they turn around and demand that they be consistent. How inconsistent of them! If it is right to enforce consistency, then talk of inner plurality was nothing but talk, indeed a lie.)

On the topic of beauty, we must not omit to speak of the phenomenon of sublime, breathtaking beauty. Time and again, such beauty has been a part of art, and with it is associated a fact that I believe is undeniable and worth thinking through. I mean the fascination that great art is capable of holding for human beings of all backgrounds and cultures. This fascination is not conditioned by membership in a particular culture nor is it restricted to any one culture. Undoubtedly, much of what we find beautiful, is culturally conditioned. Sublime, breathtaking beauty, however, is not. Its attractiveness arises from sources that are deeper than could be attributed to specific cul-

[21] On this point cp. Wolfgang Welsch, *Undoing Aesthetics* (London: Sage, 1997).

tures. That is why such beauty is able to speak to members of quite different cultural groups. – How is this fascination to be explained?[22]

a. Mea res agitur

We are all familiar with the sense of a *mea res agitur*. Although these works were obviously not made for us, they nevertheless seem to concern us. As distant as the origin of these works may be in space and time, we have the feeling that *it is we who are at stake*. As though these works held a promise or a challenge (and a potential) to widen and improve our sensibility, our understanding and perhaps also our life.

When we experience such works in this way, we do not lock them within their original cultural context. We take them as relevant to *our* orientation and as transculturally effective. As a phenomenon, I think, this is undeniable.

b. Transcultural effectiveness contradicts the modern dogma of complete contextual determination

Theoretical reflection tends to overlook this transcultural effectiveness. In the modern age we have grown accustomed to thinking that everything is strictly bound to its cultural context. We have come to believe that all experience, creation and cognition are determined by their cultural framework and hence also restricted to it. That is the modern axiom par excellence.[23] It lies at the root of all the varieties of relativism, contextualism and culturalism that dominate the contemporary scene in the human sciences and cultural studies.

Without doubt, *some* aspects are indeed context-dependent. But *not all* are. Yet the modern axiom blinds us to the culturally undetermined, transcultural potential of semantic formations, of which works of art are a prominent example. Instead of obeying the modern decree and burying this potential or making it vanish, we should try to give it adequate conceptual articulation. We need a theory that can do justice to the transcultural power of semantic formations. Such a theory, it seems to me, doesn't yet exist.

The fascination I am speaking of works independently of familiarity with

[22] I presented reflections of the following kind for the first time in my paper "Rethinking identity in the age of globalization – a transcultural perspective", in Hiroshi Okabayashi et al. (eds.), *Symposion of Beauty and Art. Festschrift für Tsunemichi Kambayashi* (Tokyo: Keiso, 2002), pp. 333–346. A revised version appeared in *International Yearbook of Aesthetics*, Vol. 8: "Aesthetics and/as Globalization" (2004), pp. 167–176. I will try to clarify the issue further in a paper to be presented at the XVII International Congress of Aesthetics in Ankara (July 2007).

[23] I have worked out a critical account of this axiom over the course of the past several years which I hope to publish in 2008 with the title *Jenseits des modernen Anthropozentrismus [Beyond Modern Anthropocentrism]*.

the respective culture. When you come to Japan for the first time and visit the Ginkakuji Temple in Kyoto, you are captivated by the magnetism of the place. You might know nothing of Japanese culture in the fifteenth century, much less about the specific conditions under which the Shogun Yoshimasa created the temple complex. Even so, you feel irresistibly drawn to it – and after a short time you might even sense how the place changes your gait, your demeanor, the way you think.

It is as though a hitherto unknown chord in our existence had been struck. A side of us about which we previously knew nothing and which now suddenly begins to resonate. In our culture, it had never been brought to bear; now it blossoms. As though up till now we had realized only part of our human potential. As if the possibilities were richer than what had been hitherto developed. – How is that to be explained?

c. Insufficiency of the hermeneutic explanation

The standard explanation, the hermeneutic one, will not do. According to it, all our understanding is ultimately determined by our specific cultural context. But that is highly implausible. Neither the initial fascination nor later, more elaborate interpretation is culturally dependent to such an extent. Someone who grew up in Paris and studied at Paris VIII St. Denis is not by virtue of that fact gifted with a deeper understanding of the St. Denis Cathedral. For this he must – like anyone else – acquire a lot of additional knowledge. Likewise, his Parisian childhood does not put him in any better position to gain that knowledge than someone who grew up in Boston or Nagoya. None of these childhoods either facilitates or rules out a thorough understanding. (Today it is American scholars who write the best books on European art.)

Clearly, the fascination is just as independent of membership in any particular culture. Visitors of *every* cultural background feel the magnetism of the Ginkakuji Temple. None of them, neither a visitor from "old Europe" nor a Japanese visitor, was alive when the temple complex was erected. Neither being an historical contemporary nor belonging to an "effective history" really plays any role here. Rather, there must be something in the human constitution as such that makes us receptive to the attraction of the place – something deeper than our culturally specific formation, something transcultural that is bound up with human potential as such.

d. The Underlying Transcultural Dimension

Even if it were true that we inevitably approach the unfamiliar through the filter of a culturally conditioned perspective (as hermeneuticians contend), that

would still not change the fact that we can only experience the transcultural force of works like the Ginkakuji Temple because there is a dimension immanent within our cultural formation that transcends the cultural framework. In the midst of our cultural molding paths open up to even the most "exotic" works of art.[24] Our cultural formation obviously contains something that opens the way to other cultures – and I do not mean just the dead-end of a self-modeled otherness that leaves us stuck within ourselves, but paths that really lead to the other.[25]

Put differently, culture seems to contain two layers, one cultural, one transcultural. The culture with which we are familiar is itself a particular shape taken by a more general structure. And because the latter still inheres in the specific shape of our culture, we as culturally molded beings are able to gain access to semantic formations that have no direct relation to the shape of our own culture. It is a bit like in Chomsky's theory, according to which every language one learns is a particular shape taken by universal grammar, so that we can go on to learn further languages by accessing that universal structure.

We should direct our attention to this attractiveness of exceptional cultural achievements – particularly those of exceptional beauty. That attractiveness is a fact. But it is also a conceptual challenge. It is still the case that nobody really knows how to explain it. To develop a theory that can would be a genuinely worthwhile task in the current discourse on beauty.

[24] Speaking somewhat emphatically of the "divine grace of cosmopolitanism", Baudelaire expressed this thought by saying that that grace is given only to few men in its entirety, but that "all can acquire it in different degrees" (Charles Baudelaire, "The Exposition Universelle, 1855" [1868], in *Art in Paris 1845–1862. Salons and Other Exhibitions* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1965), pp. 121–143, here p. 122 [from: "I. Critical Method – On the Modern Idea of Progress as Applied to the Fine Arts – On the Shift of Vitality"].

[25] Cp. Tugendhat: "I think the idea that our possibilities for understanding are primarily bound by the western tradition is a prejudice" (Ernst Tugendhat, *Egozentrismus und Mystik. Eine anthropologische Studie*, München: Beck, 2003, p. 135).

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THE POST-DUCHAMP DEAL.
REMARKS ON A FEW SPECIFICATIONS OF THE WORD 'ART'

Thierry de Duve

When people began to talk in the '60s of interdisciplinary trends in art, using terms such as 'mixed media', 'intermedia' and 'multimedia art', the primary focus was on finding a place for the new and quite diverse practices that could not be assigned to the traditional categories of painting and sculpture. Those new names, as well as the descriptive terms 'performance art' or 'installation art', which were also new at that time, had a merely journalistic character. However, a more serious theoretical debate was simultaneously taking shape around Pop, Minimal and Conceptual Art, a debate in which the growing influence of Marcel Duchamp on this generation of artists and the impact of the readymade on artistic theories were palpable. By the end of the decade, the debate had reached academia. Philosophers who rarely set foot inside a gallery began to question the very concept of art, exemplified by borderline cases that were either real, such as Duchamp's readymades and other 'found objects', or imaginary, such as the five red monochromes, identical but bearing different titles, which Arthur Danto (who does visit galleries more often than not) wittily proposed at the beginning of his book, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*.[1] During the '80s, my own work on the readymade has led me to study the relationship of painting, in particular, to art, in general, and then to develop an aesthetic theory of art as proper name, the result of a somewhat unexpected meeting of Duchamp with Immanuel Kant.[2] What motivated me at the time was the mixture of excitement and anxiety produced by a situation that was an obvious legacy of the readymade, namely, the radical openness of art (in the singular) resulting from

[1] Arthur Danto, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981).

[2] Thierry de Duve, *Pictorial Nominalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991); *Au nom de l'art* (Paris: Minuit, 1989); *Résonances du readymade* (Nîmes: Editions Jacqueline Chambon, 1989); *Kant after Duchamp* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996).

the blurring of the boundaries between the arts (in the plural). In today's paper, I would like to make a few terminological proposals, which, if adopted, might perhaps facilitate the debate, taking as my starting point what I wrote for the back cover of *Au nom de l'art*: "One should never cease to marvel at, or to worry about, the fact that it is nowadays considered perfectly legitimate for anyone to be an artist without being a painter, or a writer, a musician, a sculptor, a film maker, and so on. Would modernity have invented *art in general*?"

I propose to use the term *art in general*, or *art in the generic sense of the word*, to refer to the a priori possibility that anything can be art. *Art in general* is in a way an empty concept, for it contains only potential, not actual works of art; it is, however, a historical concept that can be dated and that describes the situation in which we consciously find ourselves following the legitimation of Duchamp's readymades by art history. It is, therefore, neither a medium, nor a genre, nor a style. *Art in general* doesn't get added to the traditional media such as painting and sculpture; it is not distinct from the traditional genres such as landscape or the nude; it doesn't represent a stylistic category identifiable by some common feature, like the "isms" that abounded in the twentieth century. On the contrary, painting and sculpture, the landscape and the nude, and all the "isms" of the twentieth century are part and parcel of *art in general*, since *art in general* excludes nothing. Indeed, the meaning of the expression is that it is now technically possible and institutionally legitimate to make art out of anything and everything. Of course, it doesn't follow that everything is art. *Art in general* merely registers the a priori possibility for anything to be art characterizing today's art world. *Art in general* is the name, one might say, for the new deal that has apparently become established in the 'post-Duchamp' era. It replaces the old generic term 'Fine Arts' (*Beaux-Arts*, *Schöne Künste*, *Bellas Artes*, etc.) which ruled over the art world before Duchamp.

The difference between the post-Duchamp deal and the old one is obvious. *Art in general* has absolutely no limits, whereas the concept of fine arts is limited by internal and external boundaries. Internal, by virtue of the fact that it includes and juxtaposes painting, sculpture, architecture, drawing, engraving, and so on, and keeps them separate from each other as well as from the other arts such as literature, music or the theatre; external, because it excludes all those things, which, being neither painting, nor literature, nor music, etc., cannot possibly belong to the category of 'art'. Incidentally, the category of 'art', in the singular, does not exist in the fine arts system. Though it is perfectly possible for a nineteen-century man, standing before a painting he considers successful, to declare "Ah! That is art!", his exclama-

tion simply expresses his aesthetic appreciation without, however, placing the picture in a category to which it did not belong prior to his favourable verdict. Clearly, objects such as a bicycle wheel, a snow shovel and a urinal are excluded a priori from the fine arts, because it is impossible to assign them to one of the arts in particular. They don't respect the conventions of any of them and, hence, cannot be compared with the products of any of them. On the other hand, the worst nineteen-century picture belongs a priori within the fine arts, because it respects a certain number of conventions according to which it may be established, without any further trial, that the picture is comparable with other painted pictures and thus belongs to the specific art of painting. The internal and external boundaries of the fine arts are coextensive: they set a multiplicity of well-defined artistic practices in opposition to the vast domain of what is not art. This is why, when the question arose of legitimating works initially judged impossible to include in any of the fine arts, the 'category' of *non-art* was invented. When first mention was made of the notion of 'art' in the singular – of art, period, or art, as such – it was with an appellation that negated it. Non-art was the paradoxical name given to the kind of works that proved incomparable with works belonging to any of the fine arts yet could not simply be dismissed.

I have just introduced a new term: *art as such*, or art, period. This is not at all the same thing as *art in general*. We have seen in the example of our nineteen-century man standing in front of a painting he considers successful and exclaiming "Ah! That is art!", that *art as such* expresses an aesthetic judgement, i.e., the *feeling* that the painting in question really deserves to be called a work of art. *Art as such* doesn't further describe or qualify the 'art feeling' it expresses. Definitely no feeling is expressed by *art in general*, which describes a situation – to repeat: the situation we find ourselves in at least since Duchamp's readymades have shown that art can be made from anything whatever. When the utterance of the man in our example, or the more sober phrase "This is art," is applied, precisely, to the historical example of the readymades rather than to a nineteen-century painting, a new element is introduced: in addition to expressing the appreciation resulting from an aesthetic experience, *art as such* reclassifies the designated object. Indeed, it is by means of the phrase "This is art" that the readymades became art. Not being comparable with works belonging to any of the fine arts, they could not be called good or bad art without being called art first or by the same token – *art*, period. When faced with a borderline case such as that of the readymades, it is no longer possible to make the distinction between art in the classificatory sense and art in the evaluative sense, to use George Dickie's

terminology.[3] The same holds true for all the things, including works in traditional media, which artists submit to our appreciation from within the conditions of *art in general*. It is simply clearer in the case of art authorized by the readymades or having otherwise broken its ties with painting, sculpture, or any other of the fine arts. The phrase "This is art," with which we express our feeling that *this* is art indeed, is a baptism; hence my theory that the word 'art' (*art as such*) is a proper name, not a concept. Proper names have no meaning, only referents. Or if they have meanings, designating rather than signifying is what they are used for. When an object – any object – is plucked from the great no-man's-land of *art in general* and yields an aesthetic judgement – especially the kind of judgement that attaches positive value to the object's negation of existing art, or, better said, the kind of judgement that recognizes artistic quality in the object's incomparability with existing art – this object gets called by a name which, like proper names, doesn't have any fixed or determinable meaning aside from the subjective aesthetic meaning attached to the experience, but only refers to something. When exclaiming, "This is art," you express yourself with a word that is not fit for expression but has referents. The feeling of dealing with art that you express in this way remains inaccessible to others, perhaps even to yourself as well, inasmuch as what you refer to with the word 'art' is equally inaccessible to others, and to some extent to yourself, too. You are neither fully in control of your feelings nor in conscious possession of the things the word 'art' designates. Like all proper names (and common nouns alike), the word 'art' acts as an index finger enabling you to point at something in its absence, in other words, without having to show it. And you don't show the art you refer to when saying "This is art," any more than you display the feeling of having to do with art that makes you utter the phrase in the first place. You don't fully visualize the referents of 'art' either. "This is art" in fact contains two index fingers: the word 'this', a mobile designator that refers to the work under discussion, displays it and moves from work to work; and the word 'art', a 'rigid designator' (following Saul Kripke's theory of proper names),[4] which doesn't display anything and which points toward … what? Toward art altogether.

Now we encounter another new expression, *art altogether*, by which I mean everything referred to by the word 'art' in the phrase "This is art" when used to express an aesthetic judgement. This might seem a little odd, for we don't consciously point a finger at things when uttering the word

[3] For a 'post-Duchamp' theory of art that rests on this distinction, see George Dickie, *Art and the Aesthetic, An Institutional Analysis* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974).

[4] Saul Kripke, *Naming and Necessity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980).

'art'. We think, rather, that we apply evaluative criteria to the 'this' we consider artistic. The fact is that aesthetic judgements are comparative (even when they compare incomparable things),[5] and that our 'criteria' have been forged by all the aesthetic experiences accumulated as a result of looking at works of art throughout our lives. Our artistic culture varies in richness and sophistication depending on the quantity, diversity and intensity of these experiences. Rather than criteria, what this accumulated culture generates in us are expectations – what classical aesthetics termed a taste. We make judgements according to these expectations, which means that when we are presented with a candidate for art, we compare this object spontaneously, even unconsciously, with the works of art we already know. More precisely, we compare our subjective experience of the object we are looking at with the memory of a large number of similar subjective experiences we have had in the past of the works of art we have learned to appreciate. If we then give expression to our aesthetic judgement by saying, "This is art," it is easy to see that the word 'this' designates the object under consideration while the word 'art' designates the collection of objects already labelled with the word 'art' in the layers of aesthetic experience deposited in our memories, and acting as standards of comparison. The content of *art altogether* thus varies from individual to individual, and is only defined extensionally, not intensionally; in other words, it is made of things and not of meanings.

Because it varies from individual to individual, from culture to culture, from epoch to epoch, *art altogether* does not really deserve its name. For this to be the case, one would have to imagine an ideal art lover, one whose taste and first-hand acquaintance with art have been shaped by contact with the entire artistic heritage of humankind, and would form the absolute (as opposed to relative) comparative benchmark for all aesthetic judgements. To judge that a given thing extracted from the a priori reservoir of *art in general* is art, indeed, is to pretend having compared that thing with *art altogether* and, on this basis, to lay a claim on the right of entering it into the common artistic patrimony. At this stage, I hope to have raised strong objections in your minds regarding any person's self-proclaimed right, on the basis of his or her personal culture and subjective experiences, to approve or refuse entry of a given thing into the common artistic patrimony. The question of authority – and the legitimacy of that authority – is at the core of the post-Duchamp deal, as we all know if we are familiar with today's art world and

[5] See Thierry de Duve, "Comparer les incomparables, ou : comment collectionne-t-on?", in Proceedings of the colloquium, *La place du goût dans la production philosophique des concepts et leur destin critique* (Rennes: Archives de la Critique d'art, 1992).

the institutional critique exerted on it by a great deal of the art practices born from conceptual art. As these issues of authority and legitimacy are far too complex to be seriously addressed here, I propose an imaginary scenario in which they are resolved in the following manner. Let's imagine that the ideal art lover does exist. This person would have shaped her taste in contact with the entirety of the human artistic patrimony. She alone would warrant its legitimacy because it is only for her that *art altogether* would deserve its name. Let's further imagine that it is empirically possible to gather *art altogether*, say, in Malraux's 'museum without walls' or in some other global Museum, with or without walls but with a capital M. Finally, let's suppose that humanity, following democratic consultation, has appointed our ideal art lover chief curator of this Museum, where all the things in the world she personally deems worthy of the name 'art' would have found their home. This single individual would implement humankind's supreme aesthetic tribunal and would be the only person with the legitimate authority to utter the liminal aesthetic judgement that enters any given thing into the common artistic patrimony. All artists in the world would come to lay down before her what they have created, and she would decide: "This is art" or "This is not art". She and she alone would perform the baptism that declares the comparability – in terms of quality – of *this* with the universal art collection that's entrusted to her, whether or not *this* is comparable with it in terms of medium or conventions. In each of this person's individual judgements, then, the aesthetic, i.e. affective, meaning of *art as such* would coincide with the purported globally human significance of *art altogether*. Each time she utters, "This is art," she would judge that the feeling elicited by *this* is congruent with all those yielded by *art altogether*, and she would thereby express the comparability both of the works of art among each other (formally) and of the feelings among each other (subjectively). The term I use for this universal comparability among works of art, in other words, for the universal mapping of art *felt*, (intensionally: *art as such*) onto art *referred to* (extensionally: *art altogether*) is: *art itself*.

Please bear with me and keep your objections for the question period, if you would be so kind. The interest of my disingenuous imaginary scenario lies in its personification of the art institution as if it were one and unanimous – obviously something that is implied by the fantasy of the Museum with a capital M. How to conceive of this personification critically is a crucial matter, which I'm afraid goes beyond the scope of the present paper – hence my little conceit, as a shortcut. Each time the Museum collects a new piece, it acknowledges that "This is art" and proclaims it. Conversely, each time it considers that *this* deserves to be called art, it declares its view that

the candidate has crossed the threshold of admissibility into the world art collection. In other words, *this*, though perhaps not great art or even good art, is on a sufficiently high aesthetic level to be qualitatively comparable with (which does not mean qualitatively equal to) everything humanity has hitherto called art, and is thereby allowed to enter the world art collection. Once *this* is inside, the Museum's twofold task is to preserve and to exhibit it. When the Museum displays *this* to its visitors as art, it no longer declares, it quotes: "This is art." It shows the object on behalf of the comparative test it successfully passed, which is to say, on behalf of the affective coincidence of *art as such* with the purported common feeling yielded by *art altogether*. At that particular moment, the Museum is legitimately acting in the name of *art itself*. Legitimately? More objections, I'm sure. Scandalously, is a more likely verdict. "You bet your ideal art lover is a fiction; it's covering up the Museum's real abuse of power. And what, for Pete's sake, is *art itself*? The true metaphysical essence of art? Nonsense. Sheer ideology, that's what it is!" Those objections are welcome. They are also fragile, because in demystifying the Museum with a capital M, they leave no other alternative than radically delegitimating the museums with a small m, as they actually exist. In fact, *art itself* is an idea, and nothing more. It is the idea of art, or art as idea, either way. Indeed, the mapping of *art as such* (feelings) onto *art altogether* (things) can only be an idea. I would add for the benefit of the philosophers that it is an idea in the Kantian sense, not in the Platonic or, much more important for the fate of aesthetics today, in the Hegelian sense. Such an idea supposes, postulates, demands, that in each of the objects that have successfully passed the test there exists a quality that it shares with all the others, albeit a quality that can neither be conceptualized nor demonstrated. It is not even, properly speaking, a quality in the sense of an objective or objectal property. It is a quality only inasmuch as the Museum claims to attach to all the works composing *art altogether* the affective content expressed case by case by *art as such*, as if, conversely, the affects attached to each of the cases it collects as art (*as such*) were expressing a quality shared universally by all the works of art in the world. Many thinkers in the field of art, eminent ones at that, have lost their way as a result of confusing *art itself* with the *essence of art*. This confusion leads to idealism, drawing all manner of objections from the materialist thinkers aimed at denouncing *art itself* as sheer essentialist ideology. They make the same confusion. But art itself is not the mysterious essential quality that all works of art in the world have in common; it is merely the *idea* that all works of art in the world must have something in common, ought to have something in common. *Art itself* names the idea, the mere idea, of universal comparability among works of art, in the absence of demonstrably common

'aesthetic predicates'. The idea that all works of art in the world *must* have something in common has been regulating aesthetic judgements on art all along, and it is the cornerstone of every humanist view of art and culture. But the idea that all works of art in the world *ought* to have something in common – i.e. the idea that *must* translates as *ought* – is new, modern, and made mandatory by the switch from the fine arts system to the *art in general* system and the radical doubt this switch cast on the humanist view. Indeed, the scandal in Duchamp's readymades, which signalled the switch, is that they were definitely not comparable to anything hitherto encompassed by *art altogether*. They performed a sort of thought experiment replacing the uncertainty of universal comparability among works of art with the certainty of their incomparability. One exception is enough: if *Fountain* is to be admitted into the world art collection, then it is not true that all works of art have something in common. The theoretical necessity of supposing, postulating, demanding that they do is now verging on ethical obligation. To the art-historical switch from the fine arts system to the *art in general* system, there corresponds a switch in aesthetics from a confident and pre-critical to a sceptical and post-Duchampian idea of *art itself*. Whether it is anti-humanist, post-humanist or humanist in a new sense is an open question.

All that remains to bring the above remarks full circle is to link the post-Duchampian (quasi-ethical) idea of *art itself* to the apparently post-Duchampian (theoretical) concept of *art in general*. You will agree that my disingenuous imaginary scenario is at once exciting and worrying, which brings me back to the mixed feelings I had at the time of writing the back cover for *Au nom de l'art*. It is easy to see why it is worrying. Since the ideal is not of this world and since desire for power is what it is, it is better not to invest the monopoly of aesthetic judgement, or of anything else for that matter, in a single individual. Put yourself in the artists' shoes. Who would voluntarily submit his or her work to such a dictator of taste, regardless of whether she has been democratically elected? But for the same reasons – because the ideal is not of this world and because of the nature of the desire for power – I don't believe that we need fear my scenario becoming reality, despite the recurring fantasy in some people's minds of the Museum with a capital M, and despite it being true that the art institution has annoying monopolistic tendencies. It is the exciting aspect of the conceit that deserves reflection. One can only marvel at such a spontaneous agreement of humankind, resulting in the democratic election of the chief curator of the Museum with a capital M. There is only one explanation to her having won the election: humanity as a whole must have perceived that this person not only possessed an exhaustive, encyclopaedic, first-hand knowledge of the global artistic heritage,

but also had an astonishing degree of empathy with human beings in all the diversity of their subjectivities, their aesthetic experiences, their tastes, cultures, levels of education, national, linguistic, ethnic and gender identities, and social backgrounds. Such is the way she earned her unbelievable power position in the art world: her authority is legitimate because it is grounded in her representativity vis-à-vis the human species. She got elected because she was capable of representing all human beings individually in terms of their most intimate features. If this person existed, it would not occur to her to reject an artist's offering without submitting it to a universal comparative test, a test that, given the catholicity of her taste, would be both ideally open and ideally severe. Our ideal art lover would examine the totality of the things proposed to her without the slightest prejudice, yet would allow only those things into the Museum that incarnate that totality, i.e. things that express our common humanity. And her judgements would be just, because her prodigious power of empathy would enable her to slip by turns into the shoes of every human on the planet, espouse their taste and comprehend their culture from within, in all their diversity, while identifying with what all humans the world over have in common.

But this is not all. In order to imagine the democratic election by the whole of humankind of such an exceptional individual, we would have to imagine a humankind as exceptional as that individual: a humankind totally impervious to demagogy and unbelievably sensitive to the properly human qualities of the candidates. If my little conceit were to be possible in this world, everyone would have the same empathy for his fellow men as the chief curator of the global Museum. Heaven on earth, no less. But then, why her rather than me? She is no better delegate of the human species than I am. Representativity would no longer be the seat of legitimacy. Anyone and everyone would be chief curator, or, what in the post-Duchamp era amounts to strictly the same thing, anyone and everyone would be an artist. Not that Duchamp has realized Joseph Beuys' utopian "*Jeder Mensch ist ein Künstler*," not at all. It's just that when confronted with a readymade, the chief curator, the artist and the man or woman on the street are on an equal footing *technically*. None of them has made the object with his or her own hands; the three of them can only say, "This is art" or "This is not art," period. *Art as such*. In short, if my fictional scenario were of this world, anything and everything would have the potential to be art because anyone and everyone would be free to so decide and would decide in full consciousness of the human implications at stake. With this we return to the new deal, for in our post-Duchamp art world, anything and everything *is* potentially art, indeed.

Not only technically, but also institutionally, at least in principle. This, may I remind you, is precisely the definition I gave of *art in general*.

Obviously there is a gulf between principles and reality, a gulf that is the terrain for all the power struggles that exist in the art world as in the rest of the world, for commercial competition in the art market, for every possible ideological dispute about art, and for a wide variety of tastes and artistic institutions. All of this is part of the healthy life of democracy, and should not result in our preference for the ideal over the real. What is crucial to recognize is that the difference between principles and reality, and hence between *art itself* and *art in general*, is not the difference between the ideal and the real, but rather, the difference between the transcendental and the empirical. See Kant on this subject. It is because of this difference that the coincidence of *art as such* with *art altogether* is an idea and nothing else – I mean, ought to remain an idea, ought to be thought of as being no more than what Kant called a regulative idea: the idea in the name of which real art museums with a small m present their collections. Museum directors being appointed experts in public institutions, they are indirectly elected to be delegates of an ideally cultivated humanity, with the pedagogical mission of educating the real humanity (or so the humanist view has it). But museum visitors don't need any such mandate. And the museum's legitimacy is ultimately in their hands.[6] They are free to judge: "This is art," and "That is not." Lastly, it is the same difference between the transcendental and the empirical that ensures that *art itself* not be conflated with *art in general*. If this were the case, anything and everything would indeed be art, and art would collapse into the "anything whatever," as some reactionary opponents of contemporary art contend.

I realize that in opening the Kantian can of worms, I'm also opening Pandora's box. In my book, *Kant after Duchamp*, I have argued extensively in favour of the continued, if on some points amended, validity of Kant's *Critique of Judgement* for aesthetics today. I cannot take this up here again. But as a footnote to my paper and a way to launch the discussion, let me share with you the strategic reasons for my choice of words when I decided after some hesitation to call the congruence of *art as such* with *art altogether* by the name of *art itself* – in French, *l'art en soi*, and in German, *Kunst an sich*. There is no trace of *Kunst an sich*, or of *Schönheit an sich*, in Kant's third *Critique*, and I want to tell the Kantians among you, if there are any, that I

[6] This is the gist of Broodthaers' "The artist as Museum director" in response to Beuys' "Everyone an artist". Inquisitive (and Dutch-speaking) readers can refer in this connection to my article, "Museumethiek na Broodthaers: een naïve theorie", *De Witte Raaf*, no. 91 (May–June 2001).

am aware of assigning the *Ding an sich* from the first *Critique* the reflexive function of a regulative idea that has become clear in Kant's mind only with the third. A discussion might ensue for those interested as to how to conceive faithfulness to Kant. Meanwhile, what is strategic in this choice of words is its deliberate anti-Hegelianism. If it were not for its Kantian overtones, *Kunst an sich*, especially in view of my little conceit involving the concentration of all aesthetic judgements in the hands of one super-curator of the Museum with a capital M, could be read as heralding the typically Hegelian moment when the phrase "This is art" is uttered by the Spirit of the World become absolute. This moment is that of the end of art. Now, as we have seen, *Kunst an sich* is the idea of the congruence of *art as such* with *art altogether*. *Art as such* expresses the subjective, affective content of the word 'art' in the sentence "This is art," and *art altogether* designates the universal gathering of the objective referents of the same word. Kantianism sees the congruence of both as the mapping of *feelings* onto an empirical set of *things* via the *idea* of a communality of feelings (*sensus communis*) that respects the heterogeneity of both domains. Defining art in its material existence as "*das sinnliche Scheinen der Idee*," Hegelianism assumes a dialectical passageway between these heterogeneous domains. It considers the referents of *art altogether* as an 'embodiment of aboutness' (to rephrase Hegel's formula in Arthur Danto's terms), and aligns them according to a historical *telos* inexorably leading to the realization of *art itself* by way of the progressive *Aufhebung* of *art altogether's* objective spirit by the Absolute Spirit. According to both the Kantian and the Hegelian views, *art altogether* refers to everything humankind has called art in the course of its history, and keeps calling art. But from the Hegelian point of view of this Absolute Spirit, it would be a closed set, to which nothing new can be added, conceptually. Artists may well continue to produce works; the concept of art has reached its completeness. This is what is implied by Hegel's notion of the end of art and, I suspect, by Arthur Danto's 'art beyond the pale of history' or by Hans Belting's 'end of art history' as well.[7] My remarks are meant to offer an alternative to their views, one that both acknowledges that art is inevitably appreciated by comparison with previous art and yet leaves room for true artistic innovation. As a regulative idea, art (*art itself*) is neither an accomplished concept nor a thing of the past. As a collection of things, art (*art altogether*) is neither a closed set nor a basis for comparison having become an absolute benchmark. As the expression of

[7] See Arthur Danto, *After the End of Art* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997); Hans Belting, *Das Ende der Kunstgeschichte, Eine Revision nach zehn Jahren* (München: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1995).

aesthetic judgements claiming universal validity, art (*art as such*), is not immune to contamination by the most idiosyncratic preferences coming from all cultures and all niches of society. Quite to the contrary, that's what it's made of. And as the condition our present-day culture finds itself in, art (*art in general*), is the widest open situation imaginable, from which there is or should be no retreat in the foreseeable future.

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CULTURAL TURNS IN AESTHETICS AND ANTI-AESTHETICS

Mario Perniola

1. The cultural turn of aesthetics

As is well known, aesthetics understood as a philosophical discipline, followed an independent road from the theories of art developed by artists and critics that accompanied the history of art. When in the eighteenth century aesthetics became an independent discipline, it held throughout the nineteenth century an independent status vis-à-vis poetics and art criticism, thus confirming its own affiliation with philosophy.

Only recently this exclusive dominion of philosophy over aesthetics has been put into question, especially in the English-speaking world where the need to widen the boundaries of the discipline and to understand it as a much larger field, within which philosophy is only a part, is particularly felt. This tendency has already found a major expression in the monumental *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, directed by Michael Kelly and published in four big volumes, to which more than five hundred scholars from various disciplines have contributed (Kelly, 1998). This enterprise was inspired by a methodology that regards aesthetic as a "meeting place" of many disciplines and various cultural traditions. This project foreshadows a *cultural turn* in aesthetics that intends to bridge the existing gap between aesthetic knowledge and contemporary society. In fact, what characterizes the latter is the encounter and mixing of codes belonging to different fields, and developed by means of a continuous interaction of signs and an incessant sliding of meanings. What is inadequate, with respect to contemporary society, is not so much traditional aesthetics as the structure that presides over its articulation, its self-enclosed character, that makes its knowledge seem obsolete. It seems that aesthetics can bear fruit only if it succeeds in opening up an epistemological horizon characterized by flexibility. After all, at the basis of the methodology of *Cultural Studies* there is the Baroque principle of wit that consists in

making the distant appear near and the near distant. This principle is even more important when applied to research, which is generally more original, and innovative, the more it explores the margins and the boundaries of canonical knowledge.

These orientations seem to inspire Kelly's work, which is characterized by three main aspects. In the first place, we should stress his non-conformist approach to the problematic of contemporary aesthetics. Ample space is given to alternative phenomena, generally considered marginal by traditional aesthetics such as "obscenity", "situationist aesthetics", or "iconoclasm and iconophobia". This non-conformist choice is confirmed by the introduction into the aesthetic canon of phenomena that do not belong to "high culture" such as "comics", "popular culture", "fashion", "rock music", "jazz", or phenomena that belong to the more transgressive artistic avant-garde such as "anti-art", "performance art" or "installation art".

In the second place, the cultural turn imposed on aesthetics by Kelly is clear in the attention to non European and non Western cultures. This is the most striking and exciting aspect of aesthetics' cultural turn which appears to open very wide horizons to a discipline too often considered to be, and not entirely unjustifiably, stale. Thus, African, Black, Caribbean, Chinese, Japanese, Indian, Islamic, Latin American and pre-Colombian aesthetics appear on the scene, to which many more could be added.

The third aspect that characterizes many of the contributions of this encyclopedia is the influence exercised by post-structuralism and the theories of deconstruction. While traditional aesthetics remains anchored to a philological methodology that often verges on pedantry and on erudition for its own sake, the deconstructive analysis is attentive to what deviates from the norm and from custom. It gives birth to an aesthetics of submerged experience that through the study of secondary aspects of artistic production reveals emotions and affects often not yet codified in definite cultural forms. For example, the entries of the encyclopedia devoted to "outsider art" and to "art of the insane" delve on phenomena bordering on art and non-art. But the deconstructive method is also and above all applied to canonical works, in making explicit what in them is left unsaid.

Nevertheless, all that glitters is not gold! Regarded closely, the encounter between aesthetics and the problematic connected with the notion of culture does not constitute a great novelty! I wonder if aesthetics has not always been, ever since its origins, a "meeting place" of numerous disciplines and cultural traditions. The cultural turn that an always greater number of researchers considers a characteristic of the present development of aesthetics, is perhaps a trait that was always at the origins of aesthetics, and is connect-

ed with the complex events that in the West have accompanied the thinking on the beautiful and on art. As is well-known, these two aesthetic objects coincide only in the eighteenth century, entertaining extremely controversial relations with a third philosophical question, strictly connected with the autonomous constitution of the discipline that hinges on the possibility and the characters of sensible knowledge.

In fact the three traditional objects of aesthetics, so to speak, the beautiful, art, and sensible knowledge, are in their turn the meeting point of many and disparate issues. Just to realize how many-sided and multi-layered this discipline is, consider that the same notion of art (called in antiquity with two words that have little to do with one another, namely *téchne* and *ars*) in the Renaissance alone becomes a unique concept with which the various arts are comprehended.

But the beautiful, art, and sensible knowledge are not the only objects of traditional aesthetic thought. One also needs to add culture understood as the formation of a discursive public sphere where everyone can take part. It is not by chance that the word for aesthetics employed in England in the eighteenth century is *criticism*. Therefore, from the beginning, the Anglo-Saxon aesthetic approach to society and to the arts is distinctly non conformist. With the word *criticism,* in fact*,* it is understood the right of everyone to express an evaluation and an appreciation independent of official canons and conventional hierarchies.

As to the second aspect of the cultural turn promoted by Kelly, namely the widening of research to extra-European aesthetics, it reveals itself as a very problematic one. Not only because of the well-known difficulties inherent to the comparative approach (for instance the fact that Western thought tends to attribute to aesthetic experience an autonomy with respect to ethics and to religion that other cultures do not recognize), but also because European aesthetics tends to assign to the subjectivity and singularity of the artist a greater importance than other cultures. These differences lead to question the very notion of culture that can be formulated in these terms: to what extent is this notion exportable outside the West? Is the category of culture applicable to societies that don't think of themselves as cultures? In other words, in the aesthetic project of a non-Western culture, what is at issue is not only the notion of aesthetics but of culture too.

After all, from the moment we attribute a decisive importance to the self-reflection of societies, even the presumed unity of the Western point of view breaks down in a multiplicity of different perspectives. For instance, *Kultur* in German sounds very differently from *culture* in English. In the German word there is an allusion to what is authentic, true and profound as opposed

to *Zivilisation*, the superficial good manners of the civilizing process. The Russian words *kul'tura, ku'lturnyi* and *kul'turnost* are strictly connected to Russia's political and social events. As to Italy, I wonder whether one can overlook the connection between the notion of culture and classical heritage, for what it contains of the ancient and the pagan, moderate and extreme, rational and delirious. In short, the cultural turn ends up by deconstructing not only the presumed unity of Western or European culture, but also that of the single national cultures. As a result, there is a revival of many of the secular trends of feeling and thinking that the processes of nationalization at work in every country in the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century hid or removed.

Post-structuralism and deconstructionism have alerted us to the totalizing claims of philosophy and the human sciences. Therefore, it is somewhat puzzling that these same claims return under the banner of the encounter between aesthetics and *Cultural Studies*. The very idea of an *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics* appears to be evidence of a systematic ambition. Michael Kelly defends himself from this objection distinguishing the *comprehensive*, that is, unilateral, non sectarian point of view, from the systematic and totalizing one. Actually, only a small number of the contributors are philosophers and, without doubt, it is within the interests of aesthetics to appear to be relatively autonomous from philosophy, just as it is in the interest of philosophy to take its distances from those who want to reduce it to a history of philosophy.

However, the questionable aspect is another and it emerges clearly in the entry by Ian Hunter on *Cultural Studies* (Kelly, 1998: I, 480–3), who sees a continuity between Schiller's ideal of an aesthetic life proposed at the end of the eighteenth century and the program of *Cultural Studies* put forward by the *Birmingham Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies*, and chiefly by Raymond Williams in the Sixties. What Schiller's aesthetics and Cultural Studies seem to have in common is an organic idea of society viewed as a totality endowed with completeness and immediacy. The aesthetic project of a harmonic life would condition the Cultural Studies program whose basic intention would be the naively humanist search for an existence that removes every conflict and every difference. Williams' advocacy of "the whole way of life" reveals itself as the replica of the eighteenth century's "beautiful soul", the famous figure of a spirit entirely reconciled with himself and the world that was ridiculed by Hegel and Nietzsche. Not even the "subcultural" developments of this orientation in social studies would succeed in fulfilling the premises of humanist aesthetics. The lifestyles of the youth subcultures would be an incorporation of the aesthetic dimension in the lived and spontaneous experience of the new generations. Thus, *Cultural Studies* would be

reduced to importing sociological themes in aesthetics or to exporting aesthetic themes in the fields of anthropology, sociology and history.

If this were the case, aesthetics' presumed cultural turn would not be a turn at all, but only a further re-statement of something already entirely found in the Enlightenment and in pre-Romanticism. Philosophy, however, has intervened to disturb this idyllic scene first with German thinkers of conflict such as Marx, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Freud and Wittgenstein, and later with the French theorists of structuralism and post-structuralism who have radically put into question the conciliatory, harmonizing and humanistic pretenses of eighteenth century aesthetics. For those who have been through the tormented paths that they have opened, there is no going back to vitalistic and organicistic naiveties. If a new phase of *European Cultural Studies* is indeed being opened, in which the aesthetic dimension plays an essential role, they will be able to say something adequate to the complexity of the contemporary world only by freeing themselves from cultural as well as from aesthetic ideology.

2. The cultural turn of the anti-aesthetics

A reflection on the aesthetic culture of the modern world is not to be found in the eighteenth century but a century later in the work of Charles Baudelaire who expands and develops the anti-aesthetic orientation inherent in the intuitions of Edgar Allan Poe, De Quincey, Stendhal and Heine. In fact, in his prose works, important phenomena of modernity such as fashion, the city, material life, drugs, prostitution, conflict, and exoticism find a sharp and profound treatment that still constitutes today a fundamental theoretical reference point. Thus it would seem that aesthetics' cultural turn will have to be postponed a century and that it occurs paradoxically in polemics with eighteenth century aesthetics, and it takes on the form of an *anti-aesthetics*.

The origins, however, of this anti-aesthetics can be traced already to the end of the eighteenth century to the criticism that poets and writers moved to academic aesthetics reproaching it of shutting art and beauty in an ivory tower (Ritter, 1971: I, 555–79). While thinkers were promoting the ideal of an aesthetic society where all the conflicts are reconciled in a higher harmony, the writers of the *Sturm und Drang* were starting a poetic revolt against academic aesthetics that has continued to this day. The target of this polemic has been, ever since its beginnings, the concept of aesthetic disinterestedness, that is the idea, common almost to every thinker of the eighteenth cen-

tury, that the judgment of taste is independent of any cognitive and practical interest: in fact, according to Kant, an interest ruins a judgment of taste and deprives it of its impartiality. According to some writers, instead, the beautiful has to create the greatest interest because, it is none other than the promise of happiness. Heine and Baudelaire have sarcastic words for the modern professors of aesthetics, who pretend to make the beautiful disappear from earth by confusing all the types, all the ideas, all the sensations "*dans une vaste unite, monotone et impersonelle, immense comme l'ennui et le néant*" (in a vast unity, monotonous and anonymous, immense as boredom and nothingness) (Baudelaire [1855], 1961: 956).

Anti-aesthetics replaces aesthetic disinterestedness with a relation to the world characterized by a type of "over-interest". In one of his tales, Poe describes the power of the imagination as capable of covering the entire external world with an intensity of interest. On the basis of this observation, Baudelaire establishes a veritable theory of *surnaturalisme*. Nature as a whole can be perceived with an "*intérêt surnaturel qui donne à chaque objet un sens plus profond, plus volontaire, plus despotique*" (supernatural interest that confers to every object a more profound, more voluntary and more despotic sense) (Baudelaire, [1855], 1961: 974). The emphasis is no longer placed, as in eighteenth century aesthetics, on detachment and extraneity to any desire, but on the intensity of feeling and on the splendor of what presents itself to the imagination.

Surnaturalisme rejects both subjectivism and naturalism. It has nothing to do with an arbitrary imagination that, deprived of every relation with the world, is lost in the fog of transcendence: "L'imagination est la reine du vrai et le *possible* est une province du vrai" (imagination is the queen of truth and the *possible* is a domain of truth) (Baudelaire, [1855], 1961: 1038). That is why Baudelaire's most important prose piece is entitled the *Painter of Modern Life* where the image of the artist that he proposes is that of "*homme du monde*", "*c'est à dire homme du monde entière, homme qui comprend le monde et les raisons mysterieuses et légitimes de tous ses usages*" (that is of the whole world, which includes the world and the mysterious and legitimate reasons of all its customs) (Baudelaire, [1855], 1961: 1158) *Surnaturalisme* revolves around this notion of the "scene of external life". The landscapes of the big city, the pomp of civilian and military life, the alternation of gravity and coquetry, the varied images of shady beauty, the challenge of dandyism, the seductions of the artificial, the *charme* of the horror, are precisely the elements of a new sensibility miles away from the disinterested contemplation of academic aesthetics. One accesses this type of sensibility through a worldly asceticism that finds in the dandy its highest expression. The dandy represents a synthesis

of three cultural types that, according to Baudelaire, exercise the greatest attraction: the warrior, the monk and the courtesan. Of the warrior the dandy possesses the heroic spirit and the readiness to die at any instant. Of the monk, the mastery over oneself and the indifference toward money, of the courtesan the cult of appearance and provocation. In short, all three do not identify intimately with their bodies that they consider a dress, and they are a strange mix of placidity and boldness, coldness and ardor, self-control and ease. *Surnaturalisme*, therefore, is far from the colorless subjectivism of eighteenth century aesthetics. As Baudelaire writes: "*C'est un* moi *insatiable du* non-moi*, qui à chaque instant, le rend et l'exprime en images plus vivantes que la vie meme, toujours insatiable et fugitive*" (it is an *I* insatiable for the *not-I* that at every instant renders it and expresses it in images more alive than life itself, always unstable and fugitive) (Baudelaire, [1855], 1961: 1161). It implies that permanent duality, the power of being at the same time itself and other, that is the essence of laughter, of the *comique absolu*, distinct from the meaningful one which, since it targets other human beings, appears to Baudelaire naive and devoid of the vertigo of the double.

But *surnaturalisme* is equally distant from any naturalism or realism that reduce art to imitation of things beautiful. In themselves things are neither beautiful nor ugly, and there is no natural hierarchy between them. Baudelaire combats neoclassical poetics according to which only what is solemn, pompous and ancient is beautiful. He vindicates the poetic character of modern life: Parisian life is fertile with wonderful poetic subjects. The marvelous envelops and surrounds us like the atmosphere, but we do not see it, if we have no imagination. In fact, the entire visible universe is only a deposit of images and signs to which the imagination must attribute a place and a relative value. It is a type of nourishment that the imagination must "assimilate and transform". Poetic and artistic experience loses its self-respect if it prostrates before external reality, seen in its brute immediacy. Only by passing through the filter of memory and poetic imagination the "fantastic real of life" becomes able of generating interest and astonishment. It is as if any aspect of the world could be subject to a *legendary translation* that renders it enchanting.

Baudelaire's anti-aesthetic *surnaturalisme* could represent, therefore, the real cultural turn capable of giving intensity and liveliness to any thing. After all, the three characteristic of *Cultural Studies* appear in it even more self-evident than in academic aesthetics, namely rejection of conventionality, openness to extra-European cultures and attention to alternative and even pathological experiences of drug addiction and psychosis.

As we said, aesthetic disinterestedness found its rigorous formulation

in Kant. Anti-aesthetic over-interest, even if it has created some interest among philosophers, for instance Wittgenstein, has not been the object of an equally theoretical treatment. Perhaps in Freud's notion of *Überbesetzung*, *over-cathexis, over-investment*, it is possible to find important elements for a more precise characterization. In Freud's concept of *investment,* what is striking is its quantitative and not qualitative aspect. It points to the fact that a quantity of psychic activity can occupy a certain representation, but it can also detach itself from it and move on to another. For Freud the functioning of the entire psychic apparatus can be described in economic terms as a play of investments, un-investments, counter-investments and over-investments. One can conclude that it is not possible to establish whether an external object of the real world is more or less worthy of interest on the basis of its quality. Anything can become greatly "interesting" even if one arrives at it only through an associative chain of representations.

If anything can be an object of affective investment, everything is liable of culturalization. This way, psychoanalysis seems to provide *Cultural Studies* with a legitimacy equally solid as the idea of aesthetic disinterestedness promoted by Kant. Now the notions of aesthetic *disinterestedness* and of psychoanalytical *investment* have one thing in common, the fact that in their origin they are both formal and non-content oriented. The connection between aesthetic disinterestedness and the fine arts is a subsequent step that was historically accomplished only in the second half of the eighteenth century (Sasaki, 1985). The aesthetic attitude of disinterestedness does not imply that there are objects that are necessarily "disinterested", in which the cognitive and practical dimensions are thought to be irrelevant. In other words, aesthetic disinterestedness is a much more a general attitude than the appreciation of a work of art and its evaluation.

Similar considerations can be made on psychoanalytical investment with respect to any representation. *Over-investment*, however, is something more. It implies an intensification, a supplementary amount of psychic energy. Even though Freud did not examine this notion closely, it is symptomatic that it should appear in *Totem and Taboo* with reference not only to the magical primitive world, but also to that of art (Freud, [1912], 1940–52, VIII, 3, 3). The omnipotence of thoughts, Freud writes, has been preserved in our society only in one context, that of art. Only in art, it still happens that a man consumed by tormenting desires creates something similar to their realization, and that this fiction, thanks to artistic illusion, has the power of evoking the same affective reactions as reality. That is why one speaks of the magic of art and one compares the artist to a magician.

3. New Age and the culture of performance

What is left of Kant's disinterestedness and of Baudelaire's over-interestedness? Where can we find in the experience of today manifestations of these two great cultural turns that have characterized the experience of modernity? To be sure, a return to their origins is always possible. Aesthetic disinterestedness can rediscover the religious origins from which it derived. In fact, the movements of the so-called Protestant awakening (Pietism in German speaking countries, and Methodism in England) have provided the model of spirituality on which aesthetic experience was founded. Analogously, anti-aesthetic over-interestedness can find in the descriptions of drug addiction and psychosis provided by de Quincey and Poe their own archetype.

The cultural movement of today that can be considered the heir of the eighteenth century seems to me to be the so-called *New Age*. In this trend we find the three characteristics that we have singled out as the essential aspects of aesthetic cultural turns: rejection of conventions, openness on extra-European cultures and attention to alternative experience. It has been rightly observed that it is impossible to describe *New Age* as the sum of simple elements. In it flow tendencies that have nothing to do with one another, so that the movement in its complexity is varied and indefinite. In fact, New Age originates from a mixture of elements that come from esotericism, from youth counter-cultures, from different forms of Oriental spirituality, and from the world of alternative therapies. It, furthermore, is characterized by a low theoretical and intellectual profile and by the absence of a rigid normative ethic, all factors that naturally facilitate its social circulation.

At first sight, there seems to be an incongruence between aesthetic disinterestedness, which by definition leaves out of consideration any utilitarian and functional point of view, and New Age that has been interpreted as the introduction of a pragmatic point of view in religion. However, in my view, the affinity between aesthetic disinterestedness and New Age resides in the special emphasis on the subjective experience of harmony and conciliation, which is common to both. Both aesthetic disinterestedness and New Age escape the perception of opposition and conflict tending to present the image of a world where contrasts can be overcome in the individual experience of reconciliation and quietness. In New Age, this rejection of conflict ends up by escaping from any determination. Since "omnis determinatio est negatio", any determination is a negation, to the spirit of *New Age* is proper the avoidance of identification, the escape from any type of definition. Also striking is the affinity between the aesthetic figure of the eighteenth century "beautiful

soul", that was the object of Hegel's sarcasm, and the trans-personal way of being outlined by the psychology of New Age. For Hegel, it is a divine and noble soul that rejects everything as unworthy of her, as it moves in its very personal religious and moral lucubrations.

In actual fact the objective of trans-personal psychology does not consist in a stabilization of a personal identity but, on the contrary, on the overcoming of all identities and in the attainment of a "depth of the soul", a subterranean region of the mind" that brings along a feeling of profound tranquillity and superiority over everything (Dobroczynski, 1997). Thus New Age would be the present manifestation of what Umberto Eco has defined "hermetic semiosis" (whose origins are in Platonism), which by rejecting any determination as inadequate takes away from language any communicative power, at the same time conferring on its adept the presumption of possessing the secret of the world and of happiness (Eco, 1990).

New Age constitutes the present version of aesthetic experience. The present heir of anti-aesthetics, instead, is that social phenomenon contemporary to New Age that we could call the "culture of performance". Differently from New Age that corresponds to a type of sensibility that privileges peace and relaxation, emotional over-investment finds its own model in sport performance. The energetic aspect is emphasized to the highest level. A living style is elaborated whose dynamic is characterized by the attainment of always new records or by overcoming handicaps. An acute observer of the phenomenon observes: "Sport has by now taken the place of school becoming one of the major referents of social excellence and fair competition" (Ehrenberg, 1999, 18). This dimension, however, does not entail a discovery of subjectivity, singularity, or individual creativity. It does not come into conflict with the so-called "egalitarian common sense" because it constitutes "a perfectly impersonal process", a way of feeling that falls within the category of the "già sentito" (*already felt*) (Perniola, 2002). In other words, the cult of performance is not the invention of a personal destiny but the taking on of a "ready made" type of sensibility, *prêt à porter*, so to speak.

The basic tonality of the culture of performance is not directed toward the fulfillment of pleasure but toward the preservation of excitement. As the sociologist Anthony Giddens asserts, the gratification connected to it cannot be described in hedonistic terms. It is rather the slang term *high* that characterizes this type of experience, which is a type of euphoric state closer to an "artificial feeling", to an *addiction,* than to a feeling of intimacy (Giddens, 1993).

What is striking is the enormous cultural pervasiveness of the *addiction*. This notion, originally tied almost exclusively to the consumption of alcohol

and drugs has acquired in the last few years an unlimited extension until becoming a general form of feeling that can pertain to any context. One can be addicted to smoking, food, sex but also to work, exercise, love! These contexts are interchangeable. As Giddens remarks, often an individual fights to escape one addiction only to fall prey to another. At the basis of this functioning there is naturally the plasticity of psychic processes, their mobility.

The culture of performance can also acquire a violent aspect. However, this violence is qualitatively different from functional violence understood as a mean of obtaining something that one cannot have peacefully: "this 'traditional' violence is a 'practical' sort of violence: chosen as one means over others [...] for such ends as money, career, power, revenge, or jealousy" (Kupfer, 1983, 42). Even political violence is still a type of traditional violence because directed to the fulfillment of a certain purpose. Here, instead, we have to do with a type of behavior that is an alternative to traditional logic and belongs rather to the society of the spectacle. It has no other purpose than "to insert the self into one's image of the world. The violent act forces the individual into the 'public view', perhaps with the aid of the media" (Kupfer, 1983, 50).

Sporting events in the last few decades of the twentieth century also provide the most adequate instruments for the understanding of violence. As Ehrenberg remarks, soccer is not only a sport but also a way of life (Ehrenberg, 1999, 18). In this respect, the last generation of *ultras* provides elements of particular interest. In fact, they are different not only from traditional fans but also from the hooligans of the sixties and seventies who were held together by a kind of community solidarity, however distorted. The new hooligans, that Ehrenberg rightly considers the heir of the *dandies,* do not constitute a crowd, but are individuals that temporarily gather together to act *in the crowd*. In other words, they do not constitute an universe of formless and dangerous mass, but they "exhibit a will of making only themselves visible." (Ehrenberg, 1999, 173.) Sociologists define them as "casual hooligans" also because they often have a social and cultural position much higher than the "hooligans" belonging to the working class. Violence for them is not an outlet, but a cultural sign where appearance counts more than substance. The English word "*aggro*" (in French "*accro*") renders very well this dimension that combines "aggravation" and "aggression".

4. Conclusion

New Age and the culture of performance, even if presenting opposite traits, have one thing in common. They translate at the empirical and factual

level experiences that originally belonged to another sphere, the spiritual and the symbolic. In the shift from aesthetic experience to New Age there is compressing of profound experiences into a narrow and one-dimensional reality. Disinterestedness is transformed in physical well-being. The same occurs in the shift from over-interestedness to the culture of performance. What counts is precisely the performance, the result. Translated in the language of toxico-dependents, the first is a "*pot*" experience, which is tied to the consumption of substances that bring about relaxation, the second is a "*speed*" experience, tied to the consumption of amphetamines and cocaine.

By introducing in capitalist society, types of logic that are opposed to utilitarian interest, New Age and the culture of performance both place themselves as an alternative to present society. In fact, they seem to come together in the movement against globalization, representing, respectively, the pacifist and the violent side. Aesthetics and anti-aesthetics become in this way immediately political, in a sense that has nothing to do with political ideology, which constitutes the mediation between ideas and actions. Thus they escape the traditional political characterization and cannot be classified under the label of right or left. They constitute a global alternative that, however, is not programmatic but factual.

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HOME TEAM AND VISITING TEAM IN APPLIED ENVIRONMENTAL AESTHETICS

Yrjö Sepänmaa

1.

In his critique of Arnold Berleant's book *Living in the Landscape,* Jay Appleton sees two scientific worlds that deal with questions of environmental aesthetics, and thus also two traditions. One line starts from the classics of philosophical aesthetics, from within the field's own tradition, the other from outside, from the sphere of other disciplines and institutions. In this way, one part seeks support from Aristotle, Kant and Merleau-Ponty, the other from Darwin, psychology, and forestry. In line with this division, Appleton speaks of a home team and a visiting team, emphasizing that they *must* meet.[1] However, this need not take place as a struggle, but in co-operation and the uniting of forces!

Appleton's criticism is an exceptionally clear description of the present state of development of environmental aesthetics. During the early winter, I can compare the situation with the river I see freezing before my eyes, with the edges of the ice approaching one another. The first thin crusts of ice already extend over the river, but even so, when the open water has apparently frozen solid, it would be foolhardy to try to cross – there being a great danger of falling into a bridgeless no-man's land.

Applied Aesthetics – A Short History

Research differs from the forces of nature in that boundaries vanish the more rapidly the more determination is put into eliminating them – and the

[1] Jay Appleton, Untitled Book Review on Arnold Berleant's *Living in the Landscape: Toward an Aesthetics of Environment* (University Press of Kansas, 1997, 200 pp.), *The British Journal of Aesthetics,* Vol. 38, No. 1 (1998), pp. 104–105, ref. p. 105.

very first step is to see the opposing party as an interesting partner in co-operation.

Of course, in aesthetics, too, one can always continue to live separately, but that would mean that on one side a passive, theoretical and typically classics-dominated scholarship continues, while on the other, dangerously rapid moves are made towards very practical results serving everyday decision-making. The need for unification and contacts has been realized at the University of Minnesota, where a period of study to be arranged in applied aesthetics in 1996–1999 (Phil 5504) was described as follows: "Application of concepts and theories in philosophy of art and aesthetics to practical problems in contemporary society, e.g. assessment of environmental values, artists' responsibilities, censorship."[2]

If there are two aesthetics, there are also two environmental aesthetics, the theoretical and the practical. Both do scholarly justified work, but rather half-heartedly if one of them is lacking.

The first person to cross the gulf at an international level was Marcia Muelder Eaton, Professor of Philosophy at the aforementioned University of Minnesota, who, as a philosophical aesthetician, has sought opportunities for co-operation, for example, with architects, landscape planners and designers.[3] A corresponding enterprise that produced results in Finland was a project that began from the other side, from architecture, as research into CAD (Computer Aided Design) carried out at the Technical Research Centre of Finland in 1988–1990. Its purpose was to develop visualization techniques in order to permit public discussion and the prior criticism of building projects.

On a theoretical level, an attempt was made to promote the idea of applied aesthetics at the XIII International Congress of Aesthetics at Lahti, Finland, in 1995, the theme of which was *Aesthetics in Practice*.[4] The intention

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[2] 1996–1999 University of Minnesota Graduate School Catalog. Philosophy (Phil): Phil 5504. Applied Aesthetics, p. 387.

[3] See Marcia Muelder Eaton, *Aesthetics and the Good Life* (London and Toronto: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, Rutherford-Madison-Teaneck / Associated University Presses, 1989), especially Chapter 4, "Applied Aesthetics", pp. 66–93. *Cf.* my article "Applied Aesthetics" in Ossi Naukkarinen and Olli Immonen (eds.), *Art and Beyond: Finnish Approaches to Aesthetics* (Lahti: Finnish Society for Aesthetics & International Institute of Applied Aesthetics, 1995), pp. 226–248. The possibilities and limits of applied *philosophy* are discussed by Winston Nesbitt in his article "Should Philosophy be Applied?", *Philosophy in Context, An Examination of Applied Philosophy*, No. 20 (1990), pp. 22–36.

[4] A selection of the papers was published in the four-part Congress publication, *Proceedings of the XIIIth International Congress of Aesthetics, Lahti, Finland, August 1-5, 1995;* volumes I–III by the University of Helsinki, Lahti Research and Training Centre, Lahti

was to bring the two sides referred to by Appleton (N.B., in 1998) together, but the final result was incomplete, in that the invitation mainly reached aestheticians, and only they – except for a few random outsiders – responded.

One significant project is the series of international environmental aesthetics conferences, which commenced in the summer of 1994 on the subject of the landscape. It then continued in 1996 with a forest theme and in 1998 with bogs and peatlands; the series then continued with water and water landscape theme in 2000, and with agricultural landscapes in 2003; future conferences will deal with stone and rock (2007) and the last one with the sky and heaven (2009). The goal is to create contacts and interaction between researchers and those involved in practical work. This series, compared to the Lahti Congress, seems to be more successful in bringing together both sides – researchers and professionals. The idea is a meeting between those with theoretical knowledge and those with practical skills. The process of education will then move in both directions.

On the side of traditional philosophical aesthetics, the point of departure can certainly be the classics dealing with the philosophy of beauty. The birth and growth of ecology-based environmental aesthetics in the '60s has brought forward important representatives of environmental aesthetics. The classics can be in the background. Arnold Berleant's mentors are Maurice Merleau-Ponty and the American pragmatists, particularly John Dewey. The Scot Ronald Hepburn also appeals to the classics, but the writings of the Canadian Allen Carlson rely little on authorities.

Theoreticians vs. Practitioners

The side committed to practice is divided interestingly into two – there are researchers outside of aesthetics and there are professionals of varying degrees of everyday work. Sociologists, psychologists, and jurists talk fluently about aesthetics and the values of beauty in the environment, but seldom refer to that group of writers whose home field is specialist journals like *The British Journal of Aesthetics*, *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, or *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*.

Even further in the direction of practice is that group of advisers, educators, planners, and politicians, which utilizes research. There are those who work in advisory, educational, and supervisory tasks in the area of environ-

(1997), volume IV as a special issue of the *Dialogue and Universalism,* Vol. 7, Nos. 3–4 (1997).

ment; and there are those who carry out the real, practical grass-roots work. They also speak of beauty and ugliness, they issue instructions about what to do and how – and they can do it themselves. I refer to them as hidden aestheticians. The field of aesthetics is alien, or at least distant, to them as a philosophy, but is familiar as a practice. Doug Arrell speaks of a similar situation in art, when talking of teaching aesthetics to art students.[5]

A paradoxical bipartite system has developed from this all-encompassing activation: on the one hand, there are those who investigate, speak, and write, without doing anything more concrete, and on the other are those who do, concretely, without talking very much about it. Ludwig Wittgenstein speaks illuminatingly of the tailor or cabinetmaker, whose activities and results – professional skills – show aesthetic thought.[6] This is a kind of aesthetics of lifestyle. The ideals and goals, the programme or tacit, or silent knowledge can, in principle, be written down, as when talking of the aesthetics of some artist. This is then an answer to the question of what makes this or that artist personal, that is, what their artistic identity is based on. Just as an individual artist has an identity and an artistic image, the individual style, so may a group. Traditionally, however, aesthetics has been located on the theoreticians' side, yielding speech and writing; the other side, where the concrete work goes on, has been the world of practitioners'.

Crossbreeding?

This is the basic dilemma of theory and practice: to work in the same areas and with the same questions, but like the related animals in Franz Kafka's short story "Eine Kreuzung" ['Crossbreeding'] who do not react to each other's glance.[7] Theory withdraws into its passive role, practice changes the world, but often neither sees or is conscious of the alternatives. Of course, there are many bridges over the gulf. One of them is that theory takes prevailing practice as the object of its metacritical research. Then it is easiest if documentary material or interviews are available, from which to investigate the strategies and logic of the argumentation, as in analytical aesthetics. The

[5] Doug Arrell, "Teaching Aesthetics to Artists", *Aesthetics – American Society for Aesthetics Newsletter,* Vol. 17, No. 2 (1997), pp. 1–4.

[6] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief.* Compiled from Notes taken by Yorick Smythies, Rush Rhees and James Taylor. Edited by Cyril Barrett (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966).

[7] Franz Kafka, "Eine Kreuzung" ("Crossbreeding"), in Paul Raabe (ed.), *Sämtliche Erzählungen* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1983), pp. 302–303.

object of the research can be 'art talk's' partner, 'environmental talk', which can in turn develop from conscious practice. The development of this kind of aesthetic rhetoric can be seen as one practical goal.

Naturally, not everyone needs to master the entire range from chamber philosophy to the use of axe and saw, or a timber harvester – expertise, potential and actual skills are specialized, and even in society there is a division of labour! As such, even the smallest contact with someone else's work may be illuminating. John Fisher has emphasized the benefit to art researchers and aestheticians of personal contact with the medium in use – you learn to see the chosen medium's restrictions and possibilities more clearly, as well as the skill required by its practice.[8]

The operating instructions for a computer, video recorder, or mobile phone may seem formidable to the ordinary consumer, though a professional thinks they are simple. In part, operations can be learnt through trial and error. Some can master an activity and its norms without using written standards – usually, we are not conscious of the rules of grammar when we speak, even though our speech has an inbuilt grammar. On both sides, we only have to see the connection to give an activity a wider framework. Thus, these connections and the consideration of them work in both directions.

What Does Practice Include?

One way to build bridges between theory and practice is to problematize what doing actually is. Doing takes place clearly at least when someone fells a forest, digs ditches in a marsh, clears a field, builds a road, demolishes buildings, or builds new ones. But behind every such act there is – at least nowadays and at least in developed countries – a great deal of paperwork: building designs, application for permits, loan arrangements, building contracts. Behind all of this there is in turn legislation, research, education, and training. Design and various preparations often take place far from the site of doing: the performer becoming a kind of human machine, which only works, without taking or being given responsibility. The division between passive and active operations is thus very fluid. A mechanical doer is, despite all the busyness, passive, while the planner cogitating at the desk is active.

Aesthetic expertise is also the art of argumentation, the justification of doing, and not simply mechanical doing. Argumentation includes the depic-

[8] John Fisher, "Editorial", *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism,* Vol. 34, No. 1 (1975), pp. 3–6.

tion of the object, its interpretation and evaluation; a field in which especially those who depict nature, as well as other environmental critics, are at their best. This may develop into a contradiction between being an expert and being a lay person: the expert makes justified solutions that will stand in a broader context, the lay person acts narrowly in a confined sphere. Listening to justifications means giving weight to argumentation; sociological investigations of taste may offer verdict-like results concerning questions of good and bad, without showing how the results were arrived at and how durable their base is.

Though we cannot limit doing only to physical work, there is good reason to honour this aspect of doing as such. No drawings, instructions, or supervision can replace a worker's diligence and developed skill. However, as J. L. Austin states in his classic essay "How to do Things with Words" (1962), many acts are carried out with language.[9] We order, forbid, incite, recommend, threaten, thank, apologise – with words. Some are even connected to legal sanctions – if you write a libel, you will be held responsible. There is also doing on a more abstract level and in a social sphere: legislation and its application, the preparation of a curriculum, and teaching itself. Doing should not be considered too narrowly, nor should it be monopolised by any group; the matter is rather one of layers of doing than of performance being the final link in a chain.

Aesthetics belongs to all stages; at each one decisions and acts relevant to beauty are made. The spectrum from aesthetics as research to aesthetics as activity and a way of life is thus flexible and the connection in principle – if not, unfortunately, in practice – is unbroken. On the one hand are the skills and mental work based on thought, on the other are the skills based on technical expertise and physical performance. Manual labour is increasingly abstract to become the supervision of machines; the machine does the heavy work – but of course cannot be saddled with aesthetic or other responsibility – or should we write rules into a computer program to prevent solutions unsuitable to a style?

When we speak of applied aesthetics in general, and applied environmental aesthetics in particular, there is a hint of a one-way movement: of general theoretical aesthetics being the point of departure, on which all application is based. (This idea is visible through the course at the University of Minnesota.) The idea would then be to bring aesthetics closer to practice,

[9] J. L. Austin, "How to Do Things With Words", in J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things With Words*, ed. by J. O. Urmson and Marina Sbisà (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975; Second edition [1st ed. 1962, based on lectures given in 1955]).

so that everyday needs would begin to influence, for example, what is investigated and why. Objects and goals would be determined from the point of view of benefit. People are needed who respond, as well as the interaction arising from meeting: applied aesthetics is reflected in the making of philosophical aesthetics. Traffic is in both directions, and ideally the route is open both ways, with quite as many moving one way as the other.

Emergent, and Vanishing Aesthetics

If we consider the two aesthetics outlined by Appleton, which have not, but which should encounter each other, there is also traffic in another direction, or the creation of an emergent aesthetics: the aestheticization of such specialized sciences as forestry, a becoming sensitive to questions of the experiencing of a forest and the experiences produced by a forest.

One must then consider one's own actions from the point of view of how they affect the value goals: whether they promote or prevent. In precisely this way – separate from the currents of academic aesthetics – a relatively widespread quantitative form of research has arisen: for example, sociological measurements are made of how people experience different types of forest felling, with recommendations formed on this basis, naturally including such aspects as species protection. Applied aesthetics – without the term being spoken about or used as such – has arisen from practical demands, but across the river from the viewpoint of academic aesthetics.

If aestheticians like myself – who normally work in a university and most often in a department of philosophy within it – seek applications, they begin to move more or less outwards from their own field, towards the margin – and become marginalized in the view of the field. The basis of growth is the field's research and discussion tradition, the formation of a school of thought. To progress concretely, they should – depending on the questions – be able to connect their own philosophical expertise to an area of science that is sensible in terms of the task: they must themselves be familiar with another field, or else find another party, with whom to create the necessary synergy. Thus, the tasks of applied aesthetics are normally group work, in which different participants and experts meet, but can also accept one another on a personal level, to acquaint themselves with fields foreign to them. Proceeding from two directions leads to a meeting – and to a strengthening through meeting. This also includes alliances and co-operation with the specialists who are relevant then. Theory and practice meet at a personal level.

If, on the other hand, the synergy is not found, what was a good inten-

tion may, in the worst case, result in a loss of one's own identity as a researcher through real marginalization: a voluntary relinquishing of expertise or a contempt for it, and a rapid attempt, ending in amateurishness, to acquire unfounded special expertise. The result is a pitiable state, in which the aesthetician destroys his or her specialty, without benefiting anyone, despite noble intentions.

At a theoretical level, the problem is that, because by definition aesthetics includes philosophicalness, in becoming concrete and specialized it loses its character and becomes something else. The more one goes into details, the less remains of actual aesthetics and the more there is in the share of special sciences and knowledge, which – if aesthetics does not take care – will swamp it.

When researchers work together in their own group, their scientific thought and attitude acts as a unifying factor, whatever their field and school of thought, even though their fields are far apart. In this situation, aesthetics as a branch of the humanities must co-operate with branches of the natural sciences, the social sciences, or even medical science. This is, however, a matter of a broad community of researchers, and in that sense it is an operating environment with familiar rules of the game.

Hidden Aesthetics and Normative Aesthetics

The most distant and, from the point of view of a traditional humanist, the most challenging situations arise when co-operation extends beyond the circle of researchers: to administration, organizations, politics, or to various professional groups, such as architects, teachers and their pupils, artists, and farmers. This journey leads to hidden aesthetics. Aesthetics can be said to be principles or rules expressed in actions.

Conceptions of beauty may be expressed as an artist's manifesto or as the guidelines of an advisory board, or in the form of law. Here, aesthetics is applied in the broad sense that action includes acts significant in terms of beauty. Action may result, for example, in a harmonic agricultural landscape, a varied forest, exciting cities, and individual good and bad achievements in these. We may praise or blame a maker or a community of makers.

When the two teams that have started from opposite sides are brought together, it is necessary to include both applied aesthetics developed from traditional aesthetics as well as research in a field that has grown from specialized sciences. Besides research, there is a need for the entire spectrum of the leisure activities and work, in which solutions are developed in everyday

life. This is the area of hidden aesthetics, which there have been some attempts to make visible in metacritical research. In this area can be seen the program declaration aesthetics and manifestoes that give norms to the makers themselves, to some grouping, or to making in general.

Stefan Morawski justifies his criticism of applied aesthetics with the idea that it would be purely a matter of giving norms, an aesthetics of norms.[10] However, this is only one aspect of applied aesthetics, one that is not even essential, and certainly one that has no need to lead to the provocative extreme examples provided by him: artists working as the vassals of Stalin or Hitler, forced to carry out an aesthetic programme decreed from above. Undoubtedly, it is good to be aware of this danger lurking behind effective influence. That it is real, can be seen, for example, in the power of centralized forestry instructions.

It is essential to see applicability and implementability in such a way that the question is of the conscious use of aesthetic expertise to solve real problems. The norms and regulations governing forestry, the extraction of minerals, restoration, and other treatment of the environment, as well as the legislation applying to them must be simultaneously open and subject to fundamental criticism. If necessary, they must be able to be amended and rescinded. This need may arise not only when values and evaluations change, but also when research in the fields brings new knowledge, or technical changes or change of the world of values alters ways of working and life. Thus normativity and change do not necessarily exclude one another; the question is of social strategies. What is needed above all is a culture of aesthetic discussion and argumentation.

The Ethicist – a Role Model for the Aestheticist

A philosophical consultation can be carried out discretely, simply, and clearly, with the ideal of reduction and succinctness. "Most writers waste the reader's time with works that are too long," said Samuel Beckett in a television interview. Taking his ideal to an extreme, and succeeding in this, he strove towards the blank page, resulting in texts that became increasingly

[10] Stefan Morawski, "My Critical Supplement to Lahti's Pious Illusion", in Göran Hermerén (ed.), *International Yearbook of Aesthetics* 1 (1966), Lund, 1966, pp. 87–93. See also a second opinion by Arnold Berleant, "Aesthetics in Practice and the Practice of Aesthetics", in the same volume, pp. 80–86. *Cf.* Philip Alperson's "Review of the *International Yearbook of Aesthetics* 1 (1966)" in the *American Society for Aesthetics Newsletter*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (1988), pp. 1–3.

terse as he aged, radio plays whittled down to monologues, plays reduced to pantomimes. The final aim appeared to be – but only appeared to be – the same as a blank sheet or a grey computer display in front of someone suffering from writer's block.

Besides everything else, an applied aesthetician cares for, and is a therapist of the human mind and social relations, e.g. of social environments and their aesthetics. One can show that a question bothering a customer is actually wrongly set, or is only an apparent question, or that some point of view has been left out, or that although the question itself is sensible it cannot be resolved with present knowledge. The philosophers' consulting rooms that have begun operations in recent years in different parts of the world have emphasized the caring aspect; the question may have had only a therapeutic nature, to satisfy the customer's need for discussion. Still, one should be careful not to think that being concerned with philosophical questions is an illness. It is the cause of the unpleasantness and unease and not a curious and questioning mind, or a person who reacts easily to aesthetic defects, that needs care.

An important anthology, *Puzzles about Art* (1989), deals with real and invented problems; it introduces a cavalcade of tens of different examples, such cases as: should a *Pietà* or *Last Supper,* damaged by vandals, be restored, or how should someone regard forged Vermeers?[11] Even an invented problem may be a pedagogically fruitful means of leading to the solution to a problem – but, of course, there are so many and varied real-life problems that there is no need to specially invent them. A solution to a problem is a matter of intelligence and skill. Some problems naturally recur, so that a solution to one can be transferred to be a solution elsewhere. Some vary or are unique, in which case that which perhaps changes, is the skill to see and recognise problems, to recognise choices that have been passed without being recognised as choices, and to dispute or question solutions that have become automatic.

The first task, when someone has a problem to which a solution is needed, is to attempt to decide what special expertise and experts are required to solve it. Problems may be at a very different level of abstraction. – And what about problems in which aesthetic values are supportive? Such a problem

[11] Margaret P. Battin, John Fisher, Ronald Moore, Anita Silvers (eds.), *Puzzles About Art: An Aesthetics Casebook* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989). In his introduction "Practical Aesthetics in Practice and in Theory" to the Lahti Congress publication *Vol. III: Practical Aesthetics,* pp. 7–10, the volume editor Martti Honkanen deals similarly with the environmental improvement projects in the city of Joensuu, Finland, in which local artists participated.

may be the connection between the environment and health. How aesthetic quality affects health and happiness; and how to design an environment that would be healthy as an ecosystem, as well as being healthy and pleasant to its inhabitants, i.e. in a certain way an instrument for producing health? In this model of thought, the aesthetic point of view is a kind of sub-plot, though properly integrated with everything else. Then the matter is no longer one of *question – answer* type of advisory or consultation service only, though that too is needed like consultation in questions of ethics, law and marital problems.

I would like to see an expert in aesthetics giving advice like Randy Cohen, The Ethicist at *The New York Times,* in his field of practical ethics. An individual question published and answered on the newspaper pages is trying simultaneously to give an answer to a lot of readers who have encountered a similar problem.[12] The imaginary aesthetician's shop, presented by E. Louis Lankford in his book *Aesthetics: Issues and Inquiry*[13] dealing with children's art education, can be an example of a practical aesthetician's mode of operation in the future: the aesthetician offers one's own expertise to solve the customer's problem. The researcher's task is to create a philosophically sound basis for advice and consultation. Others do the practical work: the intellectual (teaching, education, administration, legislation), and the physical (construction work, forest felling, farming).

Conclusion

Theoretical environmental aesthetics extends towards practice without merging into it and while retaining its philosophical nature. It becomes functional philosophy. Academic aesthetics meets the aesthetics hidden in people's lives and thought. The philosopher encounters the diversity and abundance of taste in everyday life. In it, one seeks and finds cultural regularities, at least some of which are more obvious to the outsider than to those who have lived in them all their lives.

The question of what is aesthetics, more limitedly applied aesthetics, and even more limitedly applied environmental aesthetics, closely follows the question of who is an aesthetician, more precisely an applied aestheti-

[12] Randy Cohen, "The Ethicist" from *The New York Times Magazine,* has also published a collection of questions and answers titled *The Good, The Bad & the Difference. How to Tell Right from Wrong in Everyday Situations* (New York: Doubleday, 2002).

[13] E. Louis Lankford, *Aesthetics: Issues and Inquiry* (Reston, VA: The National Art Education Association, 1992).

cian/aestheticist, and even more precisely an applied environmental aesthetician/aestheticist. The delimitation can be made on scholarly grounds according to the bipartite division I have presented: there are applied aestheticians 'descending' from the tradition of academic philosophical aesthetics, and there are applied aestheticians that 'rise' from the area of specialized sciences. In addition, there are hidden applied environmental aestheticians in the spheres of environmental administration and politics, and in various environmental professions.

And there are entrepreneurs, those who follow their own paths. Jean Giono's hero Elzéard Bouffier, 'The Man Who Planted Trees,' is exemplary: through his quiet lifelong activity he turned a barren landscape green, created his own monument, left a trace of himself.[14]

[14] Jean Giono, *The Man Who Planted Trees* (White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing Co., 1995). Original French *L'homme qui plantait des arbres* published by Gallimard, Paris, in 1980.

AESTHETICS: ITS PAST AND PRESENT

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AESTHETICS INTO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

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1.

The question posed for this issue of *Filozofski vestnik*, "The Revival of Aesthetics," concerns the reappearance of aesthetics as an important theoretical realm in the international and various national discussions. Major societal shifts of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries now require that aesthetics become more engaged in the world beyond the narrow corridors of the academy. In the past, philosopher aestheticians mainly have been drawn to aspects of art, or the experience of art, as seen through metaphysical, epistemological, linguistic, or phenomenological lenses. Metaphysics leads us to questions concerning the nature of art itself, and to the nature of aesthetic properties. Epistemology focuses on questions of interpretation and evaluation of art and the experiences that art provides. Linguistic studies focus on the arts as forms of symbolism with language-like features, yet distinct from other forms of symbolism. Phenomenology examines the inner experiences that an artist or a perceiver, respectively, might undergo in the processes of making or responding to a work of art. A lesser number of aestheticians, beginning with Plato and extending to the present, also have considered questions relating to the societal roles that art might play in a constructive re-shaping of, or in some instances, endangering the well being of society. There is still important work being done in all of these areas by philosophers throughout the Academy in the West, as well as throughout other parts of the world. In some cultures, philosophical reflections on art are closely tied to the religious traditions as, for example, Buddhism in China or India.

Theoretical issues extending beyond the concerns of Western philosophers with beauty and traditional art forms reinforce the need for this timely discussion. Increasingly, today, aesthetics is drawn to consider the roles of

art in society. What are its roles in reference to political, economic and other institutional considerations? Not the least of interest are the museums and other cultural institutions that are central to the dissemination of art to the people. There is a growing literature on the museum as well as on public art.[1] Additional factors concerning how we are to view aesthetics today include the emergence of popular arts and culture as well as environmental aesthetics, and gender issues as they bear on the production and interpretation of art. The changes in the popular arts and culture, the invention of new art forms in the media arts, the increasing politization of art as a means of social change, and hegemonic globalization of once remote and distinct cultures that threaten indigenous artistic forms are among the matters that require a rethinking of the current status of aesthetics.

Given these important cultural changes, the question is how do they affect our understanding of what constitutes the domain of aesthetics? An empirical survey worldwide would surely reveal a range of practices involving different objectives and different assumptions concerning the practice of aesthetics today. World Congresses of the International Association for Aesthetics offer a small sampling of the differences among Western and Eastern scholars who are at least marginally identified with the practice of aesthetics. Even a small selection of this sort reveals significant differences in how aesthetics is viewed. A sampling of papers from the meetings of a national society such as the American Society for Aesthetics or the Chinese Society for Aesthetics, for example, would perhaps narrow the field somewhat. However, the variety of topics on a typical meeting agenda at a national society, unless intentionally manipulated to exclude or hide the differences in practice, would support the claim that there is no common agreement on what constitutes the proper domain of aesthetics today.

Is this diversity a positive boon for aesthetics or a signal of its demise? I will argue that expansion of the concept of aesthetics to accommodate the diversity among the various viewpoints in aesthetics and cultural changes affecting the practice of the arts reflects a healthy state both for aesthetics and for the arts. To hang onto narrow or fixed definitions of aesthetics based merely on the history of the field, or the history of past art, would lead to a state of obsolescence for the field. The real danger for aesthetics is that it fails to keep in touch with the evolving developments in the arts and the expanding field

[1] Nelson Goodman, "The End of the Museum," in *Of Mind and other Matters* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1984), Hilde Hein, *Public Art: Thinking Museums Differently* (Lanham et al: Altamira Press, 2006) and Hugh H. Genoways, *Museum Philosophy for the Twenty-first Century* (Lanham et al: Altamira Press, 2006).

of interests attached to them. Of course, new development in aesthetics, or in the arts for that matter, do not bode well for those who hold to a narrow understanding of aesthetics based on traditional issues limited to the creation of art, the nature and identity of the aesthetic or art object, or the appreciation of art. Those philosophers who choose to define aesthetics narrowly in terms of the past historical views or twentieth century Analytic or Continental or Social Realist methodologies, for example, may find the current developments troubling, even threatening and may choose to ignore or exclude many important developments that might otherwise expand and enrich the field of aesthetics.

The new concerns facing aestheticians in the twentieth century require serious attention if the discipline is to maintain continued viability as an intellectual discipline. Just as art changes as cultures develop, so must aesthetics. In support of this view is a personal account of evolving engagement with aesthetics and the factors that led to embracing change and a plurality of practices as essential to the health of aesthetic today. A brief examination the state of aesthetics as it has evolved in the American Society for aesthetics since its inception in the 1940s will follow. These two lines of development, one idiosyncratic and personal, and the other focusing on the aims and outcomes of one prominent national society, will perhaps offer some useful background for understanding the current state of aesthetics and the problems confronting the discipline today. Following these considerations will be a look at some of the main concerns reflected the social and political aesthetics and the expansion of aesthetics to include the popular arts which again challenges aesthetics to move beyond its historic boundaries.[2]

2.

Classical views on art anchored mainly in the writings of Plato and Hegel formed the basis for my interest in aesthetics. Plato and Hegel saw the

[2] In the present context, I will treat aesthetics and the philosophy of art as interchangeable for reference to the revival of aesthetics today. I subscribe to the view that the reflections of philosophers' and other writers on the arts, whether ancient or more recent, can be considered under either the heading of philosophy of art or aesthetics without confusion or loss of meaning. Hence I reject the view that aesthetics is an invention of Eighteenth Century European philosophers based on a concept of art that may have emerged during that period. Such a view of art and aesthetics would seem to lack credibility in age of globalization where the arts and theories of art from many cultures ancient and modern must come together in pursuit of a deeper understanding of art and its cultural roles from many diverse cultures. See Stephen Davies, *The Philosophy of Art* (Malden, Mass., Oxford, England, 2006), pp. 52, 53, for a recent note on this matter.

importance of the arts as a core element of human experience. Even when viewing the arts with suspicion, whether literally or in jest, Plato does not fail to grasp their importance in developing the mind and body of the citizens. Hegel understands the arts as a key element in defining each stage of history, and values the arts as one of the highest modes of human understanding. Their broad visions for the arts in reference to society at large helped to establish the necessity for philosophers to address the arts as a central feature of a good society.

The originality, imagination and subtlety of argument brought to the subject by Kant warrants his place of high regard in aesthetics; yet his efforts to isolate the aesthetic from other dimensions of life remain troubling. Kant too recognized the importance of the arts, but chose to define narrowly the domain of aesthetics as a particular type of epistemic experience based on the interplay of the human imagination with the fine arts. In contrast to Kant's efforts in this direction, John Dewey's pragmatic insistence on linking the arts and the experience of the arts to the rest of human experience provided an important antidote to the Kantian lapse.

Among aestheticians working in the twentieth century, two have been most influential: Rudolf Arnheim, who approached aesthetics and the arts from a grounding his expressionist theory of artistic creation and communication in Gestalt psychology, and Nelson Goodman, whose theory of artistic symbols gave new life to late twentieth century aesthetics. Both of these writers provided insights into the importance of the arts as a rich source of human understanding. In addition to their theoretical contributions, Arnheim and Goodman shared a deep concern for examining the connections between their theories, the particular art forms, and the role of the arts in the cognitive and emotive development. Arnheim's studies on perceptual experience and visual thinking provided critical insight into how the arts function in human experience.[3] Beginning with his pioneering studies on film aesthetics in the 1930s, Arnheim's writings include important contributions on the aesthetics of virtually all of the arts including the visual arts, sculpture, dance, music, poetry, photography and architecture. Similarly, Arnheim's aesthetic theories helped shape the directions of childhood education in the arts in the twentieth century.

Goodman placed the arts alongside the sciences and other critical forms of human symbolism, including ordinary language and alternative

[3] Rudolf Arnheim, *Art and Visual Perception: A Psychology of the Creative Eye* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1954). See also, Rudolf Arnheim, *New Essays on the Psychology of Art* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1986).

formal languages, as equally viable means of human understanding.[4] Unlike most practicing philosophers-aestheticians, Goodman applied his theories and beliefs in the practical realms of performance and arts education. His pioneering efforts in arts education led to the founding of Project Zero at Harvard, a research project in arts education that developed a new model for arts education based on Goodman's theory of symbols in the various arts. Project Zero influenced leading theorists and practitioners of arts education to rethink their approach to this field. Goodman's ideas for activating art through the museum and the dance studio, demonstrated his commitment to applying aesthetic theory beyond the circle of academic readers. Goodman went even further in linking aesthetics to practice in his remarkable artistic collaboration in the creation of a multi-media performance work, *Hockey Seen: A Nightmare in Three Periods and Sudden Death*.[5] He provided the concept and artistic direction for this work in conjunction with a visual artist, choreographer, composer, videographer, mask maker and a national television system.

Apart from the influences from philosophers, active participation in arts projects involving curating exhibitions, art criticism, arts education, art and social change, performance art events, and as a museum director have contributed substantially to my approach to aesthetics. Experiences as a curator and critic provided access to living artists and resulted in insight into the creation and production of art in the various media. Of particular interest are painting and sculpture, photography, and video art, and related media arts. Involvement with dance and performance art as a critic and producer, as well as occasional performer in avant garde theater projects, facilitated understanding of aesthetics issues pertaining to dance, performance art, and media arts. Opportunities as a museum director resulted in insight into the societal roles of art as it functions in the art world of exhibitions, collectors, galleries, and the auctions. Together, these experiences offer a strong case

[4] Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols* (Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill Company Inc., 1968).

[5] Nelson Goodman conceived and produced *Hockey Seen: A Nightmare in Three Periods and Sudden Death*, performed in Boston, 1972, Philadelphia, 1973, and in Knoke-Heist, Belgium (1980) where it was also produced for Belgian National Television. Goodman provided the concept and directed the work. Visual artist Katharine Sturgis, choreographer Martha Armstrong Gray, composer John Adams, videographer Gerd Stern were collaborators in the project. The documentation for *Hockey Seen* including videos, concept statements and correspondence, masks, costumes, is in the collection of the Haggerty Museum of Art at Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin USA. See the catalogue, Curtis L. Carter, *Hockey Seen: A Nightmare in Three Periods and Sudden Death: A Tribute to Nelson Goodman* (Haggerty Museum of Art, Marquette University, Milwaukee, 2006).

for aesthetician to pay close attention to contemporary practice in the studio and in the major arts institutions of society as well as to art history.

3.

The history of aesthetics in the United States during the twentieth century and beyond is based more on disagreements than agreement on a common foundation or practice.[6] During the first half of the twentieth century, aesthetics moved gradually away from being grounded in the metaphysics and epistemology of the previous centuries. One principal area of disagreement concerns the place of aesthetics among the agreed upon branches of philosophy. Aesthetics' relation to philosophy remains a mater of "persistent disagreement" as noted by Thomas Munro, a founding organizer of the American Society for Aesthetics.[7] The establishment of the American Society for Aesthetics between 1939 and 1943 under the leadership of German born Felix Gatz, Thomas Munro, and others provided institutional standing for aesthetics independently of the main philosophical institutions. Munro, who was a student of John Dewey, consolidated the efforts and served as president during the formative years of the Society.

The Society's acquisition of the *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* in 1945 with Munro as editor provided a key vehicle for publications in aesthetics.

None of this was accomplished without struggle between the competing factions representing different ideas on the methodologies and subject matter of aesthetics. The mix of participants included philosophers (C. J. Ducasse), psychologists (Rudolf Arnheim), teachers of literature, practicing

[6] The main sources for this discussion of the American Society for Aesthetics are "Aesthetics Past and Present: A Commemorative Issue Celebrating 50 Years of *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* and the American Society for Aesthetics," guest editor Lydia Goehr, *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 51:2 (1993) and observations during my ten years as Secretary Treasurer of the ASA from 1995 to 2006. Also, editors' comments by John Fisher and Monroe Beardsley, editor and book editor of the *Journal* 38:5 (1980), pp. 235–237.

[7] Thomas Munro, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 4:3 (1946), pp. 180, 183. The ASA was initially founded in April, 1939 at the first American Congress for Aesthetics in Scranton, Pennsylvania and was modeled after European congresses in 1913 in Germany and in 1937 in Paris. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* was initially founded by Dagobert Runes in 1941 as an independent project and became the official journal of ASA in 1945. See Lydia Goehr, "Institutionalization of a Discipline: A Retrospective of The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism and the American Society for Aesthetics, 1939–1992," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 51:2 (Spring 1993), pp. 103–107.

artists in various fields points to the interdisciplinary character of the ASA in its formative years. Artists including the choreographer Martha Graham, composer Arnold Schoenberg, photographer Ansel Adams, painter Salvador Dali, conductor Leopold Stokowski, architect Erich Mendelsohn, and art historian E. H. Gombrich, attended meetings and gave papers at ASA meetings in the early days.[8]

As late as 1957, Munro characterized the scope of the *JAAC* as covering "an unusually broad field consisting of philosophic, scientific, and other theoretical studies of the arts" but also principles and problems in criticism.[9] Munro's presidential address of 1944 advocated an empirical-inductive approach to aesthetics calling for

> a clearheaded subject, not given over to vaporous rhapsodies about beauty, but based on detailed observation and analysis of specific works of art; making use of all relevant scientific techniques, but adapting them to the unique requirements of aesthetic phenomena.[10]

Munro thus affirmed the move away from metaphysical views of the philosophy of art and/or aesthetics to embrace alternative empirical methodologies.

Despite these interdisciplinary aims of the early founders of the American Society for Aesthetics, the practice of aesthetics in the United States subsequently became increasingly dependent upon philosophy. The main practitioners were based in university departments of philosophy, and the opportunities for publication were mainly available in publications related to philosophy. As Lydia Goehr wrote in 1993,

> Tracing the evolution of the ASA and the *JAAC* shows a movement away the original interdisciplinary ambitions [...] to aesthetics as a fully dependent part of the philosophical enterprise. [...] Not only did American aesthetics become increasingly the exclusive property of philosophers, but it found itself largely taken over in the mainstream by philosophers working within [...] the Anglo-American tradition.[11]

Aestheticians who preferred a more inclusive participation expressed

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[8] Goehr, pp. 103, 107, 108.

[9] *Ibid.,* p. 108.

[10] Quoted in John Fisher, "Editorial," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 37:3 (Spring 1980), p. 235.

[11] Goehr, p. 102.

their dissatisfaction to a field increasingly dominated by Anglo-American analytic aesthetics, whose approach to aesthetics consisted mainly of efforts to clarify the beliefs, concepts, terms, and logic used in discussing art through language analysis. Concerns over the domination of aesthetics by proponents of analytic aesthetics were to little avail as the conference programs and journal publications continued to reflect a preference for Anglo-American analytic aesthetics. Membership and interest in the ASA and *JAAC* subscriptions fluctuated in accordance with the degree of dissatisfaction of the members and others interested in aesthetics.

In a joint editorial published in the Spring 1980 issue of the *JAAC*, John Fisher, editor and Monroe Beardsley, book editor, attempted to address the dissent in a series of editorials and to explain their view of aesthetics as reflected in the choice of articles published in the *JAAC*. Fisher and Beardsley wrote: Aesthetics "is a theoretical activity, seeking general, systematic, fundamental truths."[12] "Aesthetics must seek and maintain the most intimate relations with artists, critics, teachers, psychologists, sociologists and the rest; but aesthetics is not art creation, not criticism, not teaching, not psychology, not sociology…"[13]

Despite the efforts of the editors of *JAAC* to define what constitutes aesthetics as theory based on generalization, the patterns have continued to shift. Earlier, in 1959, J. A. Passmore's essay, "The Dreariness of Aesthetics," had sounded a warning that all was not well with respect to aesthetic theorizing. As an alternative to grand-style theory-making, Passmore recommended "an intensive special study of the separate arts."[14] (In support of this investigation of the particular arts, Nelson Goodman developed his own aesthetics based on a close examination of similarities and differences the types of symbolism that distinguished one art from another.)[15]

A statement of Peter Kivy in the fiftieth anniversary volume of the *JAAC* in 1993 echoes Passmore's views. "We can no longer hover above our subject matter like Gods from machines, bestowing theory upon a practice in sublime and sometimes even boastful ignorance of what takes place in the dirt and mess of the workshop."[16] Rather, "progress in aesthetics is to be made not by theorizing in the grand manner, but by careful and imaginative philo-

[12] Fisher and Beardsley, p. 236.
[13] *Ibid*.
[14] J. A. Passmore, "The Dreariness of Aesthetics," in William Elton (ed.), *Aesthetics and Language*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1959), p. 55.
[15] Goodman, *Languages of Art*.
[16] Peter Kivy, "Differences," *JAAC* 51:2 (Spring 1993), p. 131.

sophical scrutiny of the individual arts and their individual problems..."[17] The direction cited by Passmore and revisited by Kivy in 1993 is indicative of yet another refocusing of interests among American aestheticians in the 1990s and beyond. Kivy chose music to develop his own investigations while Noel Carroll chose film and others pursued architecture, dance, or photography.

Even the debate over possible dreariness of aesthetics has generated further controversy. Joseph Margolis, a leading American aesthetician, expressed sympathy with Passmore's general observation concerning the dreariness of aesthetics. Yet he challenges Passmore's – and also Kivy's – solution to the problem, which was to focus on the investigation of the particular arts. Margolis argued, "I suggest that Passmore was ultimately wrong about the cause of the dreariness of aesthetics. It is *not* due to generalizations made over all the arts at once, as opposed to generalizations made over literature or music or sculpture."[18] According to Margolis, the alleged dreariness in aesthetics results from a failure to recognize that aesthetic thinking is contingent on its historical context. Failure to recognize the historical nature of theorizing and the changing conditions under which the creation of art and our reflections on it take place is the reason for dreariness in aesthetics. According to Margolis, "The trick is to *say* what, at the present time the most promising lines of theorizing regarding the arts are, as well as how they connect aesthetics to the stronger currents of the day and against a tired canon."[19] The mistake, says Margolis, is to assume that the main themes of aesthetics or the philosophy of art have already been established and that the task for today is to follow in the path of one or another (for example, Plato, Aristotle, Kant, or Hegel) with minor adjustments in the already existing canon. Margolis's solution leaves open the field for constantly evolving and changing perspectives in aesthetics representing the best thinking of the age in the context of social, cultural and historical changes.

4.

Leaving the Anglo-American developments, it is useful to consider an alternative trend consisting of social and political aesthetics. The Anglo-American paradigm can be said to derive from a Kantian base that presumes

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 131.

[18] Joseph Margolis, "Exorcising the Dreariness of Aesthetics," *JAAC* 51:2 (Spring 1993), p. 134.

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 135.

the independence of art from political interference and that aesthetic values are more or less independent of moral, religious and political values.[20] In contrast, social-political aesthetics derives from roots in G.W.F. Hegel and Karl Marx. Hegel's views on art, both in his *Lectures on Aesthetics,* and in his philosophy of history, point to an aesthetics based on the role of the arts in culture and history. Marx, together with his followers including Theodore Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Herbert Marcuse and, more recently, Terry Eagleton, have approached the development of aesthetics from the perspective of the social and political implications of art in culture and history.

In contrast to the assumptions of a Kantian paradigm, where art is considered an intrinsically worthy enterprise and is valued for the pleasure and understanding that it provides, a social-political view of art links the art to changing social and political conditions. Ideology, political action, and social value replace appreciation of the formal and expressive qualities of art as the core of aesthetics.[21] In extreme cases, social-political understanding of aesthetics has led to the view that the state may, or even should, regulate practices in the arts and corresponding aesthetic theory. Counter to a totalitarian understanding of the social and political role of art, Herbert Marcuse advances the notion that art may function as a symbol of resistance or revolt against the tyrannies of a totalitarian state.[22] Marcuse understands the aesthetic as "the quality of the productive-creative process in an environment of freedom."[23]

An environment where freedom and material and intellectual resources are joined, is necessary for the formation of a free society. Hence, art can no longer be thought of merely as an end in itself apart from political and social aims. Similarly, aesthetics must address the role of art beyond the narrow

[20] The division between aesthetics and politics, especially in the United States, has been increasingly encroached as academic aestheticians come to terms with the real world questions raised by government challenges to artistic expression with respect to depictions of sexuality, obscenity and public decency and the challenges of feminist theorists to the canons of aesthetics. See Mary Devereaux, "Protected Space: Politics, Censorship, and the Arts," *JAAC* 51:2 (Spring 1993), pp. 207–215.

[21] The art critic Robert Pincus-Witten has noted that "The values promoted by Abstract Expressionism, the most formative of modern American aesthetic values, perceived social concerns as deleterious to the creation of an abstract visual art." Robert Pincus-Witten, "Keith R Us," in Elizabeth Sussman, *Keith Haring* (New York: Whitney Museum of Art, 1997), p. 258. The dominant role of Abstract Expressionism in art coincides with the ascendancy of Anglo-American analytic aesthetics during the same period.

[22] Herbert Marcuse, *Counter-Revolution and Revolt* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972), p. 81. See also Herbert Marcuse, *An Essay on Liberation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), pp. 24–28.

[23] Marcuse, *An Essay on Liberation*, p. 24.

spheres of art production and interpretation that pays attention only to its formal and expressive features.

Not all writers on social-political aesthetics agree that art can be viewed simply as a means for economic or political ends. Writing in the 1920s, Georg Lukács criticizes both burgeois capitalist society and the Soviet Union for their debasement of the conditions necessary for the production of art. He argues, for example, that in a society where cultural production (including art) functions as mere commodity, or as reinforcement for state policies, the possibility of culture ceases.

> Just as a man's independence from the worries of substance, that is the free use of his powers as an end in itself, is the human and social precondition for cultures, so all that culture produces can possess real cultural value only *when it is valuable for itself.*[24]

Here Lukács appears to invoke Kant's notion that art possesses intrinsic value. Yet he repudiates the "art for art's sake" approach to aesthetics as an "aesthetic expression of the desperation of the bourgeoisie."[25] Art's intrinsic value is the result of the artist's labor and is conditioned by the artist's individual qualities. Accordingly, art's social and political usefulness is thus grounded in the individual creativity action of the artist producer.

The role of art in the postsocialist societies of Russia, Eastern Europe, and China during the 1980s and 1990s has given rise to a particular national-regional development in social-political aesthetics. This movement centers on the place of art in socialist and post-socialist countries during this period. Aleš Erjavec has used the term postsocialism to refer to the heirs of nations emerging from Socialist and Communist nations.[26] The resulting art and aesthetics embraces themes from the Western *Avant Garde* of the early twentieth century and also postmodernism of the late twentieth century. In this context, *Avant Garde* embraces social and political changes as well as changes in the arts. In contrast to social and political concerns of aesthetics in the early twentieth century, where the main effort was to free art and aesthetics from the effects of capitalism, the postsocialist movement of the late

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[24] Georg Lukács, "The Old Culture and the New Culture," *Telos*, No. 5 (Spring 1970), pp. 22, 23. "The Old Culture and the New Culture" was first published in *Kommunismus* I:43 (November 7, 1920), pp. 1538–49. See also Georg Lukács, "L'Art pour l'art und proletarische Dichtung," *Die Tat* 18:3 (June 1926).

[25] Paul Breines, "Notes on Georg Lukacs' 'The Old Culture and the New Culture,'" *Telos*, No. 5 (Spring 1970), p. 17.

[26] Aleš Erjavec (ed.), *Postmodernism and the Postsocialist Condition: Politicized Art Under Late Socialism* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2003).

twentieth century reflects a shift from communist and socialist ideologies toward capitalism. Postmodern influences from exposure to Western artists allowed for syncretization of elements of international art practices together with arts of the respective national cultures.

In the Soviet Union, for example, the relation between power and art became the main theme of art and aesthetics with the result that aesthetics is closely linked to political power. In a politicized context such as that of the Soviet state, where Socialist Realist aesthetics prevailed, an official artist's destiny was to give visible form to the aesthetic sensibilities intended to represent the state's vision for the people as a whole. Unofficial artists cut off from the museums, exhibitions, and publications, and with limited access to developments in Western art, developed their own aesthetics of resistance parallel to official Social Realist art. Their aim was to create their own version of politicized critical art known as "Sots Art." This art was intended to examine every day life and expose the hidden reality behind the façade of the Soviet state ideology.[27] In contrast to the romantic notion of art based on the inner life of the artist, unofficial artists focused on external societal concerns. Their aim was to generate sufficient political impact to challenge official art and perhaps alter existing social and political life.

In Slovenia especially, the postsocialist artists already had extensive contact with Western modern and postmodern aesthetics.[28] There, artists' groups used postmodern eclecticism to advance democratization of their society. By adopting Postmodern strategies incorporating folk, popular and high art, the artists transformed art into a secondary discourse that served as a political means to critique static socialist culture.

Underlying these developments are assumptions taken from Marxist theory that art functions in tandem with politics in the structure of socialist and communist states prior to, and during their transformation into postsocialist societies. The social and political role of aesthetics and attending art practices that transpired in the Communist and socialist cultures, and in their postsocialist successors, is unparalleled in the Western nations of Europe and the Americas.[29] Here, aesthetics and the attending arts shifted

[27] Boris Groys, "The Other Gaze: Russian Unofficial Art's View of the Soviet World," in Erjavec (ed.), *Postmodernism and the Postsocialist Condition: Politicized Art Under Late Socialism*, translated from the German by Paul Reitter, pp. 55–89.

[28] Aleš Erjavec, "Neue Slowenische Kunst – New Slovenian Art: Slovenia, Yugoslavia, Self-Management, and the 1980s," in Erjavec (ed.), *Postmodernism and the Postsocialist Condition: Politicized Art Under Late Socialism*, pp. 135–174.

[29] It can be argued, of course, that the official arts in Western nations function to reinforce the dominant social and political values, but there is no parallel to the place given the arts in the postsocialist cultures of the late twentieth century. Unparalleled is

from an agent subservient to the prevailing political ideology and its attending values to an instrument of revolution intended to hasten the demise of totalitarian political practices.

5.

With the emergence of postmodern art practices and aesthetics, the lines dividing fine art and popular culture tend to dissolve, and popular culture has become an increasingly important topic for aesthetics. Prior to this development, the popular arts were largely neglected by aestheticians. In recent times, however, the popular arts, where transitoriness and reproducibility takes precedence over uniqueness and permanence in cultural production, have increasingly attracted the attention of major aestheticians. The Americans Noel Carroll, Richard Shusterman, and Ted Cohen are among those who have given serious attention to the aesthetics of popular culture.

In taking on popular arts and culture, aesthetics extends its range to include rock and rap music, popular media arts including television soap operas and the Simpsons, comic books, food, glamour, and the architecture of Las Vegas. Common to all of these enterprises is the characteristic of being market driven commodities, and mainly indifferent to social divisions based on class, gender, or race. In contrast to the aesthetics of traditional fine arts, which can be "aesthetically aloof" from everyday life, the aesthetics of popular arts and culture must address themes that appeal to the broad range of interests and knowledge represented in the common interests of the population as a whole.

Aesthetics of popular arts invites a number of question for its development. At the core of the discussion of popular arts is understanding how the term popular art is being used. Noel Carroll argues that popular art is an historical term that refers to the art of the common people. Folk art enjoyed by large numbers of common people is one type of popular art found in many previous societies. Carroll introduces the term mass art to refer to the historically specific arts accessible only after the invention of mass media technologies. Mass art is intended for mass consumption and embraces much of contemporary popular arts, including movies, photography, television, rock and roll recordings, video, the internet.[30]

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the direct involvement of artists and the arts in the struggle for political change evident in the postsocialist nations.

[30] Noel Carroll, *A Philosophy of Mass Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 184 ff. See also Herbert J. Gans, *Popular Culture and High Culture: An Analysis and Evaluation of Taste*

Attention to the popular arts has generated a range of questions of interest to aestheticians. For example, in his essay, "Liking What's Good: Why Should We?" philosopher Ted Cohen asks whether there are sustainable reasons for preferring fine arts to popular arts, or for establishing a means to rank one as preferable to the other.[31] Cohen's answer is that no explanation or argument can explain differences or agreement in aesthetic preferences. Hence, it is not possible to show why one should prefer the fine arts over the popular arts apart from the fact that differences in the objects and the persons attending them generate different interest groups. Addressing a related issue, Carroll attempts show that the popularity of art is grounded in its ability to engage the emotions.[32] According to Carroll,

> This is particularly obvious with popular fictions – whether literary or visual; whether novels, short stories, plays, films, comic books, or graphic novels; whether a song or an entire musical; or whether still photos, sculptural ensembles, radio broadcasts, or TV shows.[33]

Carroll examines the claims of emotional involvement with the popular arts with reference to the concepts of identification, simulation, sympathy, and mirror reflexes.

Perhaps the most vigorous account of aesthetics of the popular arts is found in the writings of Richard Shusterman. Shusterman notes that popular art remains very unpopular with aestheticians who often presume its aesthetic worthlessness. He challenges the arguments against the worthlessness of popular art. These might include, "allegations of its spurious satisfactions, its corrupt passivity, its mindless shallowness, its lack of creativity, autonomy and form."[34] Shusterman develops his pragmatist arguments to show that there is no clear distinction between popular art and high art by arguing that "a given work can function either as popular or as high art depending on how it is interpreted and appropriated by the public."[35] He develops his case with full chapters devoted to "The Fine Art of Rap," "Affect and Authenticity in

(New York: Basic Books, 1974), p. 10, and William Irwin and Jorge J. E. Gracia, *Philosophy and the Interpretation of Pop Culture* (Lanham et al: Rowan and Littlefield, 2007).

[31] Ted Cohen, "Liking What is Good: Why Should We?" in Irwin and Gracia, pp. 117–130.

[32] Noel Carroll, "On the Ties That Bind: Characters, the Emotions, and Popular Fictions," in Irwin and Gracia, pp. 89–116.

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 89.

[34] Richard Shusterman, *Performing Live: Aesthetic Alternatives for the Ends of Art* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2000), p. 7 ff.

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 35.

Country Musicals," and "Reflections in Berlin," recounting his experiences of popular culture in the urban setting of contemporary Berlin.

6.

The list of possibilities for practicing aestheticians cited here is not inclusive, but only illustrative of some major approaches to aesthetics. Other worthy approaches would include studies in phenomenological aesthetics, feminist aesthetics and aesthetics based on the cognitive sciences. This diversity only supports the conclusion that the terms aesthetics and philosophy of art must remain open and inclusive. This conclusion should not come as a surprise to anyone familiar with the history of aesthetics and the philosophy of art. In the American Society for Aesthetics, for example, it was the differences among practicing aestheticians that generated the energy to create the Society and the *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*. It is only when a single interest group attempts to employ hegemonic tactics to dominate and exclude differing views that divisiveness occurs and threatens the well-being of the profession. Similar problems arise when proponents of a particular social-political ideology attempt to exclude opposing views.

In concluding I offer these points:

1. From the previous discussion, there is no indication of the possibility of a single understanding of aesthetics and the philosophy of art. It is essential thus for the well-being of aesthetics and philosophy of art that the practitioners are free to pursue their interests in harmony with differing views.
2. Any effort to limit aesthetics to a particular time period (e.g. beginning only in Europe in the eighteenth century) marginalizes and unnecessarily limits the field by excluding the contributions of other ancient and contemporary cultures.
3. Differences in the practice of aesthetics expands the range of interest in aesthetics as an academic discipline and expands the range of issues and the means of addressing these issues.
4. Aesthetics is enriched by its connections to other academic disciplines such as philosophy, art history, literature, psychology, anthropology and others.
5. Knowledge of the historical and contemporary arts provides essential information for developing understanding in aesthetics.

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THE SECOND MODERNITY OF NATURALIST AESTHETICS

Lev Kreft

1.

In the historical development of aesthetics there existed two separate intentions within naturalist approaches. The first was to establish a naturalist explanation of aesthetic phenomena and the second the "scientification" of aesthetics following the model of the natural sciences and their experimental methods. Although intertwined, their purpose was different. The naturalist explanation insisted on a continuity between nature and culture, whereas scientification started to sever aesthetics' ties with philosophy and aimed at a systematic and complete scientific understanding of aesthetic phenomena. Both of them were important during the nineteenth century, but were strongly criticised afterwards and have almost disappeared from philosophical aesthetics.

The idea that everything in existence, including the human being and his or her abilities, can be explained and understood from natural causes only, without any use of metaphysical forces or religious presumptions, belongs to modernity and modernism no less than the idea that the human being, especially its Christian white male race, exceeds anything natural in principle. Postmodernism with its second "cultural turn" did not bring about a change in direction, but it brought a new accent. In Scott Lash's *Sociology of Postmodernism* the distinction between modernism and postmodernism is that *modernism conceives of representations as being problematic, whereas postmodernism problematizes reality.*[1]

[1] Scott Lash, *Sociology of Postmodernism*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 13. In Stuart Hall's interpretation, we get a very similar account of "cultural turn": "The conventional view used to be that 'things' exist in the material and natural world; that their material or natural characteristics are what determines or constitutes them; and that they have a perfectly clear meaning *outside* of how they are represented. Representation,

What remains of "reality" is a cultural pluralism of games with different rules, not a realm of necessity with strict laws of nature. From this aspect, postmodernism announced a triumph of culture over nature, which means that the project of modernism was successfully carried out. Nature does not count any more. In the new edition of his *Culture as Praxis*, Zygmunt Bauman puts things in perspective. At first, he argues, culture was what humans were able to do, and nature was what humans were subordinated to. The nineteenth century experienced the naturalisation of culture: culture functions as something natural, a fact with a necessity of its own. In the second half of the twentieth century, we witnessed a culturisation of nature: what used to be nature two centuries ago is reduced to the invisible.[2]

Today, the situation of aesthetics may be summarised by juxtaposing two recent books on its relation with art, those of Donald Kuspit (*The End of Art*) and Michael Kelly (*Iconoclasm in Aesthetics*). The thesis of Kuspit's book is that contemporary art is an art of the end of art, which means that within contemporary art, called postart following Allan Kaprow, art's end ceased to exist: "Postart is completely banal art – unmistakably everyday art, neither kitsch nor high art, but an in-between art that glamorizes everyday reality while pretending to analyse it."[3]

When Kuspit discusses whether masterpieces of art can be created within contemporary art, his discussion proceeds in a direction similar to that of Erich Fromm on the possibility of love in the capitalist cosmos of money: yes, in principle, but only where artists are free of financial pressure, free of their own interest in success and popular glory, and free of the entertainment industry and mass taste.[4] Before he wrote *Iconoclasm in Aesthetics,* Michael Kelly was editor of the *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*.[5] When collecting papers for the *Encyclopedia*, he was astonished to discover how many contem-

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in this view, is a process of secondary importance, which enters into the field only after things have been fully formed and their meaning constructed. But since the 'cultural turn' in the human and social sciences, meaning is thought to be *produced* – constructed – rather than simply 'found'. Consequently, in what has come to be called a 'social constructionist approach', representation is conceived as entering into the very constitution of things; and thus culture is conceptualized as a primary or 'constitutive' process, as important as the economic or material 'base' in shaping social subjects and historical events – not merely a reflection of the world after the event." (Stuart Hall (ed.), *Representations. Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices*, London: Sage, 1997, pp. 5–6.

[2] Zygmunt Bauman, "Introduction", in Zygmunt Bauman, *Culture as Praxis – New Edition* (London: Sage, 1999).

[3] Donald Kuspit, *The End of Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 91.

[4] Donald Kuspit, "Postscript: Abandoning and Rebuilding the Studio", *op. cit.*, pp. 175–192.

[5] Michael Kelly (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, 4 Vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 5.

porary scholars declined his invitation. Puzzled, he asked himself: "What is it that you don't do when you don't do aesthetics?" and "What is it that you do do when you don't do aesthetics?"[6] The answers, which mentioned mostly the insistence of aesthetics on universalism and the ahistoricism of art and beauty, led him to analyse the aesthetic theories of Heidegger, Adorno, Derrida, and Danto. When he determined they did not succeed in touching art at all, he sought deeper reasons and found "*iconoclasm*, by which I mean a combination of *disinterest and distrust in art* that stems from a tendency to inscribe a deficiency into the very conception (or ontology) of art."[7]

On one hand, in Kuspit, we have this disinterest and distrust in contemporary art, clearly expressed, and on the other, in Kelly, we are given a possible cause for such a deplorable philosophical image of art. These are extreme positions, of course, but not uncommon, strange, or just a curiosity. What, however, seems to be uncommon, strange, and just a curiosity is the second modernity of naturalist aesthetics. By calling its developments in our own time the "second modernity", I intend to locate it in the context of the disillusionment with art and aesthetics.

To explain my case, I will first explain what I have in mind by "second modernity". Second, I will discuss the naturalist aesthetics of the past and the present, and analyse different conditions and features of past and present naturalist aesthetics. Finally, I will conclude with an explanation of why Kelly's "iconoclasm" fits contemporary naturalist aesthetics so well.

2.

In the year 1940, when the Second World War was in its initial phase, it was evidently France's turn to become the next target of the *Blitzkrieg*, and Walter Benjamin composed his last, very short thesis on the notion of history. One of his central tenets is that the state of exception has become a regular state of history. In order to go against the grain of the progressivist notion of history, Benjamin pleaded for a new notion. "Amazement that the things we are experiencing are 'still' possible in the twentieth century is not philosophical. This amazement is not the beginning of knowledge – unless it is the knowledge that the view of history which gives rise to it is untenable."[8]

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[6] Michael Kelly, *Iconoclasm in Aesthetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 5.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. xi.

[8] Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History", in Hannah Arendt (ed.), *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), p. 259.

As far as we know, the last versions of this short text were written in the spring of that year, and left with a friend in Paris. Benjamin, a German Jew in France, went with a group of refugees to the French-Spanish border. There they had to wait one night. The following day they crossed the border – without Benjamin. He committed suicide, which we may understand as his last thesis on history.

At a time when, according to Benjamin, this permanent state of exception had historically begun, René Descartes left Holland, where he mostly studied physics and mathematics, to become a soldier and take part in the final European chaos of the Thirty Years' War. Due to a snow storm, he lost his way, and spent several days and nights in a hut alone in the middle of white nowhere. There, a French soldier in Germany, he had a dream, and this dream answered his most fundamental dilemmas. Now he had a mission, and he followed this mission with unshaken determination ever after.

In two similar and not uncommon situations for modernity, at its beginning and at its end, we find two very different reactions. Descartes arrived at a certainty, Benjamin at a state of exception. Benjamin was widely used by postmodernists to prove that modernism is over.

Is modernism over? Should we speak of its *end*, instead of its *crisis*? After approximately thirty years of debate we have to change the manner of discourse if we want to get out of the labyrinth. The need for change is felt in aesthetics as well. In fact, aesthetics was one of the philosophical pillars of modernity, and, initially, its own product. Many products of aesthetic progressism, including its image of Art, perished together with progressism. What to do now with aesthetics? We have already mentioned two options. One is to go beyond postart, another is to go beyond aesthetics. There is yet another: to naturalize aesthetics, and to understand the stable foundations of art in terms of evolutionary genetic impulses and the structural conditioning of human cognition. To put these kinds of proposals in perspective, I intend to use the concept of second modernity. It seems handy: at first we had the naturalization of aesthetics during the pioneer times of the first modernity, and now we have the second wave of naturalization. "The second modernity" was a name given to our epoch by Ulrich Beck, following his previous attempts at designations such as "the risk society" and "the reflexive modernity". His notion of the risk society addresses a social response: in different parts of society, there has been a mobilisation against the risks, hazards, and insecurities brought about by victorious modernism. Reflexive modernization is distrust and disillusionment with the mechanisms and institutions of modernization which traditionally (should) take care of our safety, security, and certainty: The State, Science, Police, Art, Church, Army, Academia, and

Progress itself. According to Ulrich Beck and Christoph Lau,[9] the post-modern presumption that modernity is over, is wrong. What we have, in fact, is a transition from the first to the second modernity. The first modernity, with the nation-state, social relations, networks, and communities, was a territorial regime – a successful one, because reflexivity is not a result of its crisis but its victory. Victorious modernity brings about new kinds of problems, such as "the very idea of controllability, certainty, or security – so fundamental to first modernity – collapses."[10] The strategies of the first modernity are the marginalisation of deviations, temporal deferment (transferring certainty to the future), ontologisation (social facts represented as natural), and monopolisation (a state monopoly on the use of violence, etc.). During the second modernity all these strategies still function, but without the previous efficiency. The new structural logic of the second modernity steps in with the principle of inclusive differentiation: the development of pluralism specific for a particular sphere, plural compromise without clearly cut and exclusive solutions, hierarchically organised pluralism, unstructured plurality, the intermeshing of alternatives, the dissolution and synthesis of boundaries, and similar practices. All of these add to ambiguities, a lack of clarity, and the erosion of boundaries – a situation unthinkable during first modernity's clear differentiation.

The state of art and the state of aesthetics confirm this diagnosis.

3.

Darwin's evolutionary hypothesis is a still contested triumph of the scientific approach. He defined two intrinsic natural forces: the struggle for survival and sexual selection. The first is a universal law of nature, which turns market competition and Malthusian human population laws into natural facts. The second makes the evolution of sexually divided species dependent upon aesthetic sense, which belongs to the female side of this division, and adds to the first evolutionary principle a second one: a principle of taste. Darwin's guiding idea in *The Descent of Man* was to prove a case against racism,[11] but some of his followers and later evolutionists nonetheless defended racism with evolutionist arguments. Furthermore, Darwin's half

[9] Ulrich Beck and Christoph Lau, "Second modernity as a research agenda: theoretical and empirical explorations in the 'meta-change' of modern society", *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 56, No. 4 (December 2005), pp. 525–557.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 526.

[11] Karl Vogt, for instance, a well-known "vulgar materialist" who defended the in-

cousin, Francis Galton, a founder of eugenics, obviously distrusted female aesthetic taste in the human race, and proposed the scientific management of human breeding to prevent the decadence of species. During the first half of the twentieth century, eugenics was one of the most popular sciences. The influence of eugenics on politics and state legislations while most visible in Germany, extended all over the world.[12] Herbert Spencer turned the laws of nature into social laws again, and the expression "survival of the fittest" was in fact coined by this liberal philosopher, turning liberal competitive society into a natural phenomenon.

Darwin's ideas were quite popular among German philosophers, art historians, and scientists. Moritz Wagner developed his own kind of geographic evolutionary theory based on migrations and struggle for territory. The decisive moment of survival is isolation on a secure territory, and migrations influenced by the struggle among individuals of the same species.[13]

Under the influence of human activity, natural selection is losing ground and artificial selection is taking place. This includes human beings:

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dependent origin of different human races, suggested translating Darwin's book into German, but was turned down by the author because of his support for racism.

[12] In Germany, Erwin Baur and Eugen Fischer wrote a popular compendium of eugenics entitled *Human Heredity and Racial Hygiene*, first published in 1921, a combination of genetics, anthropology and racial hygiene. (See: Heiner M. Fangeran, "Making Eugenics a Public Issue: A Reception Study of the First German Compendium on Racial Hygiene, 1921–1940", *Science Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (2005).) After the Second World War, eugenics was a prohibited and invisible science, but it is again gaining in popularity. This brings out some extremely controversial situations, as that of Germany, where research in eugenics is legally restricted, seeking help from Israel, where there are no restrictions of such kind: "Isn't it a traumatic experience of the German past, the breeding fantasies of the Nazis, and the killing of six million Jews, which poses a particular load on Germany's shoulders in the (bio)ethical debate? And now it is Jewish reproductive medicine practitioners who evidently have no scruples with regard to delivering these controversial embryonic stem cells to the University of Bonn, thereby provoking the violation of a taboo." (U. Schnabel, "Ohne Mutter keine Menschenwürde", *Die Zeit*, No. 24 (2001), p. 32; translated in Barbara Prainsack and Ofer Firestine, "Genetically Modified Survival: Red and Green Biotechnology in Israel", *Science as Culture*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (2005), pp. 355–356.) If we put this in the context created by Peter Sloterdijk's lecture to Jewish intellectuals which developed into a great German scandal on eugenics and other issues, the traumatic meeting of German and Jewish genetics acquires the flavour of a comical controversy. (See Peter Sloterdijk, "Regeln für den Menschenpark. Eine Antwortschreiben zum Brief über den Humanismus," http://menschenpark.tripod.com.)

[13] Moritz Wagner, *The Darwinian Theory and the Law of the Migration of Organisms* (London: Edward Stanford, 1873). ("In the continual struggle between individuals of the same species for food and reproduction, some must always be endeavouring to cross the limits of their respective stations. The extreme boundaries must therefore be continually changing, according as some individuals find means, either by voluntary or passive migration, to pass the station of their species." – *Ibid.*, p. 27.)

> New races of men will no longer arise, but only *bastard ones*, through the frequent intercourse of existing races. Perfect isolation of single stocks during a long series of generations is now no longer possible on account of the present state of universal intercourse and of the stream of emigration arising out of the overpopulation of the civilized countries of Europe and Asia; so that the fundamental condition for the formation of new races is lacking.[14]

His ideas attracted attention in art theory circles, and were instrumental in the rise of national art histories and art theories.

Human geography (*Anthropogeographie*, *la géographie humaine*) found followers in art geography (*Kunstgeographie*). Friedrich Ratzel combined Darwinian survival-of-the-fittest with Wagner's occupation of the territory, and arrived at the concept of life-space, more ominous sounding in its German original: *Lebensraum*. Ethnic blood and virgin soil dictated the mapping of art, with its centre, periphery, and the boundaries of its influence. This became one of the most distinguished preoccupations of art history and art theory. It revealed the power and energy of particular cultures while they spread over territory, conquering weaker and annihilating decadent cultures. On their boundaries and limits exists a constant struggle over *Lebensraum*, creating border-space, divisions between inside and outside, and tensions between the central place of emanation with its borderline frontiers.[15]

During the first modernity there were two main streams in the interpretation of the relationship between nature and culture, both struggling with each other. One tendency wanted to explain culture and society as the result of natural laws; another tendency was oriented towards a strict demarcation between nature and culture. Beneath this visible conflict common and contradictory practices continued on both sides of the divide. Social and cultural models and ideas of the capitalist market, nation-state power, and imperialist colonization invaded the natural sciences. Yet another tendency was to use these natural scientific fundamentals as a re-confirmation of existing political, social, and cultural relations. Brutal and direct naturalism in aesthetics, art history, and art theory were just extreme cases. They were dismissed twice: the first time with a conceptual division between "soft" hu-

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[14] *Ibid.*, pp. 63–64.

[15] See Friedrich Ratzel, "Der Lebensraum. Eine biogeographische Studie", in *Fesstgaben für Albert Schäffle* (Tübingen: Verlag der Laupp'schen Buchhandlung, 1901); "Beim Kampf um Raum entsteht immer ein Gegensatz zwischen innen und aussen der Erbe, zwischen dem Kern des Gebietes und den Rand- oder Grenzgebieten." (*Ibid.*, p. 165.)

man and "hard" natural sciences during the *fin-de-siècle*, and the second time after the Second World War with the suppression of Nazi sciences.

4.

At the XVI International Congress of Aesthetics in Rio de Janeiro (2004), named "Changes in Aesthetics", the presence of naturalist aesthetics came as a surprise. Was this surprise really so unprecedented? The naturalist approach to political, social, and cultural sciences and philosophy reappeared before 2004, more or less at the same time as the "cultural turn" which opened, softened, and deconstructed traditional concepts in the humanities and aesthetics. Evolutionary psychology, for instance, is today already a well developed branch of psychology. Its general statement is simple: science succeeded in revealing how our body is organized and how it functions, and Darwinism can explain how and why it developed in that way. Why shouldn't we explain human psychology with the same instruments, those of evolution, adaptation, and the struggle for survival? The human psyche is not just a cultural product, and human brains are not an empty space or a dark room. Evolutionary ancestry is present therein at birth. In fact, brains are not an organ at all. Brains are a collection of adaptational psychic skills, like a Swiss army knife. Our psyche is a result of collected survival experiences, embedded in our genes, conditioning our brains with numerous emotions and instincts. Evolutionary psychology is just one substance in the cocktail called "cognitive science". Jerrold Levinson introduced cognitive science as an agenda of the project "Art, Mind, and Cognitive Science": "By cognitive science was understood all scientific disciplines seeking to explain the nature and workings of the human mind, including but not restricted to cognitive psychology, neuroscience, linguistics, and evolutionary biology."[16]

One of the backbones of these sciences, important for aesthetic dispositions and the artistic taste of humans, is the evolutionary formation of the genetically supported psychic condition, a process which lasted two million years, reaching its final natural state some 10,000 years ago, at the beginning of the Holocene period, when cities emerged, first agricultural activities developed, and when we can with certainty locate the use of metal tools and the first writings. From then on we can speak of the finalized process of the formation of the *Homo sapiens sapiens* species. Our mind and its inclina-

[16] Jerrold Levinson, "Introduction", *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 62, No. 2 (Spring 2004) – Special Issue: "Art, Mind, and Cognitive Science", p. 89.

tions reflect the conditions of adaptation from two million years before the Holocene period. Culture is significantly conditioned by natural adaptation and its genetic memory. This also includes art.

Another field of naturalization is sociobiology. The new wave of the biologisation of the social sciences began in the 1970s. The title of founding father may go to Edward O. Wilson, with his books *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis* (1975), and *On Human Nature* (1978).[17] Theories of war and violence have always attracted naturalistic explanations. Barbara Ehrenreich, for instance, in her *Blood Rites* (1997) explains the origins and history of the passions of war, obviously connected with men, from the same Pleistocene period of the formation of the human species. At that time men were not just proverbial hunters. Humans, still weak and incapable of sufficient defences, were prey for beasts. Sociality first emerged in order to satisfy defensive needs. Blood rites as well as wars were born from this situation.[18] Martin van Creveld agrees that culture is a continuation of nature: "So elemental is the human need to endow the shedding of blood with some great and even sublime significance that it renders the intellect almost entirely helpless."[19]

There were older contributions to the naturalization of aesthetics as well. One of most notorious is that of Camille Paglia's *Sexual Personae*, with her attack against the feminist assumption that everything connected with sex is actually gender, i.e. a social construction: "Sex cannot be understood because nature cannot be understood."[20] Art, consequently, is born of men's anxiety as an effective weapon against nature. "Art is form struggling to wake from the nightmare of nature."[21]

New forms of the naturalization of the human and social sciences, together with aesthetics, expressed criticism and the negation of the postmodern "cultural turn" which turned cultural reality into arbitrary construction, and installed unsurpassable fences between nature and culture.

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[17] More on this topic, together with a bibliography of sociobiology, in Dirk Richter, "Das Scheitern der Biologisierung der Soziologie. Zum Stand der Diskussion um die Soziobiologie und anderes evolutionstheoretischer Ansätze", *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*, Vol. 57, No. 3 (September 2005), pp. 523–542.

[18] Barbara Ehrenreich, *Blood Rites. Origins and History of the Passions of War* (New York: Metropolitan Books: Haenry Holt and Co., 1997).

[19] Martin van Creveld, *The Transformation of War* (New York: The Free Press, 1991), p. 166.

[20] Camille Paglia, *Sexual Personae. Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson* (London: Penguin Books, 1992), p. 5.

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 19.

5.

Denis Dutton published "Let's Naturalize Aesthetics" and "Aesthetics and Evolutionary Psychology" in 2003, presented a paper on "Darwinian Aesthetics" at the XVI International Congress of Aesthetics in 2004, and has posted these and some other articles ("The Pleasures of Fiction," a review of Joseph Carroll's book *Literary Darwinism,* and "Darwin and Political Theory," which develops his idea of social and political Darwinism) on his home page.[22] All these writings repeat the same argument. To the already mentioned evolutionary results of the Pleistocene period in the Holocene period, Dutton adds two additional ideas: that art forms are found universally (which strongly suggests that art is connected with ancient psychological adaptations) and that art provides people with pleasure and emotions, often of an intense kind (which therefore must have an adaptive relevance according to the postulate of evolutionary psychology). Aesthetically, the most important of Dutton's idea reaches beyond the limits of evolutionary psychology: "While evolutionary psychology may have a capacity to shed light on the existence of art and art's persistent qualities, it cannot pretend to explain everything we might want to know about art."[23]

What escapes evolutionary psychology is the Kantian distinction between the agreeable and the beautiful.

The agreeable are the straightforward subjective sensations of things that we like in direct experience: the taste of sweet, for example, of the colour blue. The pleasurable experience of such sensations, Kant held, contains no intellectual element: it is a brute feeling, often seeming to satisfy a desire (such as hunger), and as such must be carefully distinguished from the experience of the beautiful, in which the imagination combines with the rational understanding in the experience of imaginative object.[24]

Here, philosophical aesthetics demands its own right: the disinterest-

[22] Denis Dutton, "Let's Naturalize Aesthetics", *ASA Newsletter*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (Summer 2003), pp. 1–2; "Aesthetics and Evolutionary Psychology", in Jerrold Levinson (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook for Aesthetics*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); "Darwinian Aesthetics", paper presented in the XVI World Congress of Aesthetics, Rio de Janeiro, July 20, 2004; "The Pleasures of Fiction", *Philosophy and Literature,* No. 28 (2004), pp. 453–466; "Darwin and Political Theory", *Philosophy and Literature,* No. 27 (2004), pp. 241–254; all these texts are available also at http://denisdutton.com. For those with a further interest in the more general ideas on evolutionary aesthetics, see Eckhard Voland and Karl Graumer (eds.), *Evolutionary Aesthetics* (Heidelberg_ Springer Verlag, 2003).

[23] Denis Dutton, "Aesthetics and Evolutionary Psychology", http://www.densidutton.com.

[24] *Ibid.*

ed "pure" aesthetic judgement has to remain out of reach of evolutionary naturalist explanations. Strictly speaking, with this division Dutton denies the competences of evolutionism, as it can explain minor points of aesthetics only. By this he misses the target: any evolutionary theory of aesthetics should be able to explain the natural source of art as an activity which is not useful and perhaps not even pleasurable and desirable in any ordinary sense of these terms. It should be able to touch the evolutionary usefulness of the unuseful and disinterested "pureness of pure art".

Wolfgang Welsch approached evolutionary aesthetics on the basis of his previous project of transhuman aesthetics, in which he rejected most Western aesthetics as anthropocentric, and not just Eurocentric: "Instead, we ought to conceive of the human in a larger than human context, taking into account, for instance, our place in the cosmic and natural environment, or our primordial connectedness with the world, or the non-human layers of our existence."[25]

One of the possible consequences of the transhuman aesthetic orientation is to embrace the evolutionary approach. Admitting that there is a vast literature on evolutionary aesthetics already, Welsch also argues that all of it has serious shortcomings. First, Darwin advocated the existence of a genuinely aesthetic sense in most animals, while "most contemporary evolutionists reduce the aesthetic to mere survival value." Second, evolutionism addresses human, not animal aesthetics, demolishing the most important Darwinian idea of the continuity between the animal kingdom and the human species. Animal aesthetics challenges our belief that we are unique, and (from an understanding of pre-human aesthetics) opens a perspective on transhuman aesthetics.

To prove that there is an aesthetic attitude in the animal kingdom, Welsch would have to provide an insight into "aesthetic revolution" at a certain point in animal evolution. He points to some possible extensions of Darwin's approach which would be necessary for such an aesthetic turn in the animal kingdom, but what he comes up with are animal "standards of taste", which, not stimulated by mere survival, are initiated by desire and oriented towards pleasure. While it is possible to search here for a continuity with human taste and earthly pleasures, this can hardly figure as the aesthetic attitude, in particular of the kind that could point in the direction of art.

How the evolutionary aesthetic approach misses the point, when it treats

[25] This and the next quotation are from Wolfgang Welsch's "Animal Aesthetics", see his home page at http://www.2.uni-jena.de/welsch.

contemporary art, is evident in Dutton's interpretation of a project by two expatriate Russian artists, namely Komar and Melamid.

6.

In his writings on evolutionary or Darwinian aesthetics, Dutton presents Komar and Melamid's project "The Most Wanted Paintings" and "The Least Wanted Paintings"[26] as a proof for his case.

The idea of a pervasive Pleistocene taste in landscape received support from an unusual project undertaken by two Russian émigré artists, Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid, in 1993. They hired a professional polling organization to conduct a broad survey of the art preferences of people living in ten countries in Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas. Blue turned out to be the favourite colour worldwide, with green in second place. Respondents expressed a liking for realistic representative paintings. Preferred elements included water, trees and other plants, human beings (with a preference for women and children, and also for historic figures, such as Jomo Kenyatta or Sun Yat-sen), and animals, especially large mammals, both wild and domestic. Using the statistical preferences as a guide, Komar and Melamid then produced a favourite painting for each country. Their intent was clearly ironic, as the painting humorously mixed completely incompatible elements.[27]

There was also a serious side to the project; for the paintings, although created from the choices of different cultures, tended to share a remarkably similar set of preferences. They looked like ordinary European landscape calendar art, both photographic and painted. It is the calendar industry that has, by meeting market demands, discovered a Pleistocene taste in outdoor scenes. Being a result of evolution inscribed in our aesthetic sense, this taste prefers "savannah", as a safe and nutritious environment for proverbial hunters and gatherers.

Komar and Melamid, the well-known post-socialist artists,[28] certainly did not have in mind an experiment in Fechner's manner, to find universal features of human taste for the sake of evolutionary psychology. Their aim

[26] Their project is available on the web; see http://www.diacenter.org/km.

[27] Denis Dutton, "Aesthetics and Evolutionary Psychology", http://www.denisdutton.com. Published in Levinson, *The Oxford Handbook for Aesthetics*.

[28] Among other writings on their pre-emigrant work in the Soviet Union, see Boris Groys, "The Other Gaze. Russian Unofficial Art's View of the Soviet World", in Aleš Erjavec (ed.), *Postmodernism and the Postsocialist Condition. Politicized Art under Late Socialism* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2003), pp. 55–89.

– from Dutton's point of view, the more ironic side of the project – was not to mix incompatible elements. Their ironic idea was to search for people's art through the transition from a totalitarian concept of socialist realism – where the leader decided what people wanted, and addressed the people's demands to artists – to a democratic concept of people's art, which has to be executed as a new kind of populism. Komar and Melamid noticed that the difference between Stalinism and democracy in politics was that democratic leaders followed public opinion measured by the public opinion polls. They thus intended to submit their artistic practice to poll results regarding what people like and what they dislike in order to create a democratic art. Representative polls from different countries, and from the web poll, gave results which were taken by the artists as a commission, and paintings were made.[29] Figurative painting was preferred over abstract painting (not overall, but still in most countries), and basic ideas about beautiful colours and shapes did not differ very much. Additionally, and missed by Dutton, there were typical national(ist) differences in taste: the most wanted figures and persons were chosen according to national ideologies. On the other hand, it might come as a surprise that some prevailing national traditions were put aside in favour of a more global popular taste, as in the case of Turkey, where a typical Western style landscape was the most wanted, not the local tradition of ornamental painting. Obviously, there were many possible ways of interpretation,[30] not only that of evolutionism. But nearly all interpretations missed the irony of ascertaining the people's wishes by means of polls, as in democratic politics, and similarly ironic criticism of elite art. Erected on positions of elite art, these interpretations offered an explanation for "poor" popular taste, and found it in Pleistocene evolutionary aesthetic traditions.

Why is "kitsch figurality" globally the most popular kind of painting?! We can examine "popularity" as the people's choice through polls, as the method chosen by Komar and Melamid to express a social commission instead of the totalitarian Party, or an Elite Art commission. The method itself constructs popularity as a statistical result. While inclinations to see a "blue sky" or a "savannah environment" as beautiful may be interesting from an evolutionary aspect, this average and prevailing taste includes many other elements which belong to the popular painting which emerged during European and Western art production when new customers outside the elites began to buy art in the past few centuries and transferred its pat-

[29] All of these paintings are also available on the web at: http://www.diacenter.org/km/painting.html .

[30] Some of them can also be found in JoAnn Wypijevski (ed.), *Painting by Numbers. Komar and Melamid's Scientific Guide to Art* (New York: Ferrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1997).

terns and models to all other new media of image production, starting with photography. Of course, this kind of art is more popular than elite art: it was always meant to be on the market for popular taste. It was also there as Western taste against local taste. Why on earth would, for instance, the Chinese or Japanese masses prefer this kind of art to their traditional mass art? Surely not for Pleistocene reasons, because these Pleistocene reasons cannot explain why this is so, before colonization and globalization. Their own popular art was not of the Pleistocene kind. On the other hand, Dutton should take into account the oldest still living artistic tradition, that of the Australian Aborigines, which is very far from the paintings executed by Komar and Melamid's. Both in its more abstract and its more figural appearances, this art, some 45,000 years old and thus much nearer to evolutionary genetic origins, is completely different from the results of Komar and Melamid's project. Perhaps they adore similar "kitsch figurality" like everybody else today, but landscape watercolour painting was introduced to Aborigines by their white teachers and civilizers, to make them able to support themselves by selling paintings and other items, and make them thus appear as civilized as any other human being. From this, and from the proposal that they paint in an abstract and symbolic way as their ancestors had, two kinds of Aboriginal tourist kitsch developed, one which belongs to figurality and another which belongs to an amalgam of symbolic and abstract painting. Whoever has visited Australia has collected something from this visual menu. Which part of it is connected with Pleistocene taste, and its genetic consequences? To project contemporary popular taste to the beginnings of humanity is a gesture which cannot account for what is contemporary in popular taste. You cannot get "genetically conditioned" results from polls. What you get are results conditioned by historically produced taste in the arena of a cultural industry, with a prevalence of models of beauty taken from the average popular taste of the dominant cultures of the West. The taste shown through this project and its painted results is not "natural", even if some of its psychological elements may originate from much older layers. With the same reasoning as in evolutionary aesthetics, we could say that the emotional genres of the melodramatic or of the comical in our popular culture can be explained by the original hunters' and gatherers' situations in which these emotions were useful for survival.

All this put aside, we are still confronted with the artistic project of Komar and Melamid, which is completely misunderstood and misinterpreted by the evolutionary naturalist interpretation. In such an interpretation, it appears as if these paintings were painted by "the people" as a kind of ethnology of *Homo sapiens sapiens*, a proverbial collective creativity of folk art.

Quite the contrary, this is a typical contemporary art project with its special features, such as those connected with the Soviet politics of art, with the elitist ideology of the Artist, and with the public opinion management typical of democracy. To put its artistic existence completely aside and see in it an illustration of genetic taste is a mistake that is neither unique, nor typical of evolutionary aesthetics only. As Michael Kelly proves, it is something which bursts out even from the most sophisticated and seemingly "iconodulic" philosophies of art.

With all due respect for the aesthetic evolution of mankind, and as much respect for transhuman cosmic visions, there is no hope for aesthetics if it does not start to respect, and even before that, enjoy contemporary art, postart, or whatever art you wish to call it.

7.

The recent revival of naturalist aesthetics occurred at a time when the universal presence of art was challenged and criticized. To speak about the universal characteristics of different cultures became even politically incorrect, an act of intellectual colonialism and of insensitivity to differences. Marx's proverbial geologist was the universalist's ideal figure: he went from one rock to another proclaiming it to be – a mineral. With the help of Hegelian witchcraft, he might be able to show how minerals progressed from one existence to another, finally arriving from different existing minerals to its own essence – the Mineral. The methodology of contemporary human sciences is radically different. You have to go from one rock to another, deconstructing not rocks but the essentialist idea of the Rock, to arrive at the conclusion that "the rock itself", as an oppressive universalist idea, has no sense any longer. An authentic difference emerged through deep layers of universality, to claim its own rights. This satisfactory result of the liberation of the difference, alas, was able to last just a moment; thereafter we have been stuck with relativism, a monster no less harmful than universalism. This is the second modernity, stuck with similar ambiguities and controversies as the first one, but much less certain of its own power to surmount all obstacles. In aesthetics, as elsewhere, this situation cannot be healed with another "back to Antiquity" type of criticism because this gesture would be immediately interpreted as biased Eurocentric universalism. Support cannot be found in aesthetic utopias because all utopias are under suspicion, and the victory of beauty over ugliness has already happened, hasn't it? What else can be done about it other than returning to the only universal source of

the human race, that of "human nature", and perhaps even to use it as a platform for launching another utopian project of – transhuman nature? This, I believe, is the main reason for the renewal of naturalist aesthetics, and for naturalism in other social sciences and the humanities.

Otherwise, new naturalism does not deliver very much. Only the fact that we can identify something on the cusp from nature to culture (this cusp being itself a construction of modernity and its binaries), and interpret it as pre-historic, natural art. A century and a half after Darwin, it does not help much if we only repeat what he already claimed, namely, that we all belong to the same species with all our abilities born out of evolution. If we were not troubled by relativism, we would not go into discovering universality in the animal world, human nature, ancient Greece, or anywhere else. What we should ask ourselves is why universality is always so important for aesthetics, why it appears constantly in spite of all criticism, and why contemporary art is dismissed so easily in favour of any construction of it. For aesthetics, art is its only certainty.

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MODE-2 AESTHETICS

Ernest Ženko

You might think Aesthetics is a science telling us
what's beautiful – almost too ridiculous for words.
I suppose it ought to include also what sort of coffee tastes good.

Ludwig Wittgenstein

1. The Revival

The assumption that one can think today about aesthetics in terms of its revival apparently follows an observation (or merely an opinion) that aesthetics is no longer bursting with health. We do not hear or discuss much about the revival of biochemistry, computer science, visual media, consumerism, or even capitalism, but when we do – as for example in the former Socialist countries, where we talk about the revival of capitalism and democracy – then it is because such issues were for a certain period of time obscured, suppressed, outdated, or simply absent. However, when they return, they are never the same, there is always a difference between the first and the second occurrence, and the return is never unproblematic, as Jesus, Marx, and Freud have already taught us.

It is difficult to claim, though, that aesthetics has been repressed in some psychoanalytical sense, or that its first appearance in the eighteenth century was a tragedy. If there is some tragic moment within the narrative of aesthetics, then it is most likely related to its present-day reputation. For some contemporary philosophers, or as some rather call themselves, theoreticians, who seem to hold artistic and cultural achievements in high esteem, such as Alain Badiou or Fredric Jameson, aesthetics is either dead (probably ever since Hegel's *Lectures*) or at least directed at the wrong end. Arthur Danto in

a more modest tone declared: "Aesthetics seems increasingly inadequate to deal with the art after the 1960s [...] a sign of which was an initial disposition to refuse to consider non- or anti-aesthetic art as art at all,"[1] and added: "it would be altogether wonderful if one could turn to aesthetics as a discipline for guidance out of the chaos."[2] If Jean-François Lyotard seems to be an exception that proves the rule, as probably the last proper aesthetician in the line that begins with Plato,[3] then one has to take into consideration the fact that in his works on art he focused mostly on traditional aesthetic concepts (the sublime, representation and the unrepresentable, and the image) and that even in his writings on the postmodern, he relied upon modernist authors (Marcel Duchamp, André Malraux, Barnett Newman, etc.).

For most authors engaged in cultural criticism, aesthetics is generally considered to be a discipline that is outdated, conservative, too formalist, and devoid of contact with real life. (Frequently in such cases, real life is related more or less to political life.) With the global expansion of cultural studies, which promotes itself as "a body of theory generated by thinkers who regard the production of theoretical knowledge as a political practice,"[4] aesthetics seems to be losing battle after battle.

But probably the situation is even worse, because in the eyes of younger generations of artists, curators, art critics, and even philosophers, aesthetics has lost its potential to say something essential, or at least meaningful, about contemporary art. It seems that after grasping the work of geniuses such as Shakespeare, Leonardo, and Bach, or eminent modernist (and some postmodernist) artists and authors, such as Cézanne, Le Corbuiser, Kafka, Godard, Duchamp, Schönberg, and Warhol, it lost contact with the living art. If the task of aesthetics is to reflect art, then many examples confirm that aesthetics today is not up to this task any more. Is it, therefore, useless? While according to the prevalent ideology of capitalism this is a very strong accusation, the question possesses also another dimension, for aesthetics as a discipline actually started its journey in the immediate vicinity of the concept of uselessness.

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[1] Arthur C. Danto, *After the End of Art: Contemporary Art and the Pale of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 85.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 94. In a certain sense it is better to follow the example of Terry Eagleton, who claimed that "[a]rt itself may thus be an increasingly marginal pursuit, but aesthetics is not." (Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1990, p. 368.)

[3] *Cf.* H. Gene Blocker & Jennifer M. Jeffers, *Contextualizing Aesthetics: From Plato to Lyotard* (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing, 1998).

[4] Chris Barker, *Cultural Studies. Theory and Practice* (London: Sage Publications, 2000), p. 5.

It is quite clear from a passage written by Arthur Schopenhauer that a proper aesthetic experience cannot be related to any practical utility:

> The work of genius may be music, philosophy, painting, or poetry; it is nothing for use or profit. To be useless and unprofitable is one of the characteristics of works of genius; it is their patent of nobility. All other human works exist only for the maintenance and relief of our existence; only those here discussed do not; they alone exist for their own sake, and are to be regarded in this sense as the flower [...] of existence.[5]

However, it was not Schopenhauer that can be blamed for this original sin, committed by the division between the aesthetic and the practical, which in a sense enabled art to set up its autonomy, and aesthetics to establish itself as a discipline. The full development of philosophical reflection on aesthetic experience and art did not begin to emerge until the widening of leisure activities in the eighteenth century, when thoughts by distinguished authors made their first steps onto this terrain. Among the most influential ideas have been those of Alexander Baumgarten, Joseph Addison, Edmund Burke, Francis Hutcheson, David Hume, Charles Batteux, but probably above all, those of Immanuel Kant.

The work of Kant, and in particular his *Critique of Judgment*, generated a tradition, which was, and probably still is, decisive for our understanding of aesthetics, and the field of its enquiry, which is still dominated by art. If British aestheticians, from Addison to Hume, had already succeeded to develop theories of taste and beauty that were the forebears of contemporary aesthetics, it was essentially Kant who made the decisive move towards aesthetics as we know it. Claiming that "taste is the faculty of judging an object or a method of representing it by an *entirely disinterested* satisfaction or dissatisfaction [and the] object of such satisfaction is called *beautiful*,"[6] since "every interest spoils the judgment of taste,"[7] he tied together notions which became the key concepts of aesthetics: disinterestedness, the beautiful, and aesthetic judgment (judgment of taste).

For Kant, there was still no fundamental distinction between artistic and natural beauty. With his followers,[8] however, this relation changed, and

[5] Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, Vol. 2 (New York: Hafner Publishing Company, 1958), p. 388.

[6] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment* (New York: Hafner Publishing Company, 1951), p. 45.

[7] *Ibid*., p. 58.

[8] The heritage of Kant's aesthetic thought is evident in the theories of Friedrich Schiller,

art (as *beautiful* art) became the foremost preoccupation of aesthetics. When art lost its connection with the beautiful during the first decades of the twentieth century, there were considerable efforts among aestheticians to replace the beautiful as a key concept in grasping the essence of art and aesthetics with some other comparable notion. Unfortunately the results were not satisfactory; sublime, form, expression, creativity, and other concepts have never achieved the importance of the beautiful. Nonetheless, a Kantian logic that related the beautiful to "an *entirely disinterested* satisfaction," survived in the autonomy of art, which was the essential condition of modernism in the arts, as well as of cultural modernity in general.

The strengths and weaknesses of aesthetics as a meta-discourse on art follow from the viewpoint that art forms an independent, autonomous field, which has its inherent logic, its history, authors, objects, and its own internal ways of determining the quality of its achievements, that is to say, which art is good. If aesthetics as an autonomous discipline was successful within this context of autonomous art, which it also helped to establish, serious problems occurred when art became a transgressive domain. Once seen as an autonomous space, itself the outcome of a struggle to win autonomy from market and political demands, art now became an integral part of both. It is actually by the way of the interpenetration of art and culture, politics and economy with the essential help of science and technology that this modification took place.

It seems that society has changed, but categorizations around which the world is organized are simply not following the pace of the change. It is believed that contemporary society on a general level is characterized by pluralism, diversity, transgressivity, volatility, and uncertainty, and the same characteristics describe sublevels, including the market economy, politics, science, and last but not least, culture and art.

Many still hold the (popular) view that "aesthetics may be defined narrowly as the theory of beauty, or more broadly as that together with the philosophy of art."[9] Let us, for a reason which will become manifest below, name it *Mode-1 aesthetics*. Mode-1 aesthetics is a traditional philosophical discipline, essentially related to bourgeoisie values, to modernist art production and cultural modernity, to the autonomy of art and culture, to concepts such as aesthetic judgment, aesthetic value, creativity, the artist, the artwork, form, and so on.

G. W. F. Hegel, Arthur Schopenhauer, Friedrich Nietzsche, as well as in the art criticism of Clement Greenberg.

[9] "Aesthetics," *The Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, http://www.iep.utm.edu/a/aestheti.htm.

All these concepts serve as a means of mediation between three ontologically hierarchical, but also permeated levels that in fact constitute aesthetics as a discipline. On the first level of object-discourse, one finds art (and cultural) production; this is the level of art's manipulation of the material world in its broader sense that includes conceptual art, body art, happenings, and all kinds of hi-tech and virtual arts. The second level, or the level of meta-discourse, is the level of theory of art production. The third level is then the level of the discourse on theory of art production (meta-discourse of the second order), which actually forms aesthetics in a narrower sense – aesthetics that follows the development of (aesthetic) concepts through history, authors, disciplines, artistic styles, media, and so on. It is obvious that problems arise when the second and the third level are not able to follow the lead set at the first level – that is, when the theory and philosophy of art lose their thread in the labyrinth of contemporary art and culture.

If "products" of art are no longer artworks (but *projects*), or, if "producers" are no longer artists (but, for instance, curators or disc and video jockeys), if art has no autonomy, and if it is commodified, and there is no difference between art and culture, then this should be read as a clear sign that aesthetics should move beyond its own disciplinary conditions in order to meet the new demands posited by art (and culture).

There exists no such aesthetics at the moment, at least as far as I know, even though there have been very good attempts to replace traditional aesthetics with an updated version of it. (These attempts include transcultural aesthetics, aesthetics focused on the aesthetization/artification of everyday life,[10] the philosophy of culture, environmental aesthetics, etc.) For the same reason as above, we shall label the new variation of aesthetics *Mode-2 aesthetics*, and turn to a close reading of the theory of *modes*.

The argument is simple. If society has changed, most notably after the Second World War, and especially during the last few decades, then not only art and aesthetics, but also other fields and disciplines have had to respond to this change. It seems that what has arisen is, above all, a situation in which there are only *hard cases* left to further investigation and treatment. In his pathbreaking work *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* Jean-François Lyotard already pointed to the core of the problem – to the production of knowledge: "Our working hypothesis is that the status of knowledge is altered as societies enter what is known as the postindustrial

[10] The most outstanding effort to deal with art and culture in such terms is probably related to Wolfgang Welsch. *Cf.* Wolfgang Welsch, "Aesthetics Beyond Aesthetics", in Martti Honkanen (ed.), *Proceedings of the XIIIth International Congress of Aesthetics: Practical Aesthetics in Practice and Theory*, Vol. III (Helsinki, 1997), pp. 18–37.

age and cultures enter what is known as the postmodern age."[11] It was obvious for Lyotard, and it is still recognizable for us, that for the most part the co-evolution of society and science is responsible for the change that we are witnessing. This is the reason why we focus on changes in contemporary knowledge production in order to understand this change, in the hope that it could be enlightening to aesthetics as well.

2. The New Mode of Knowledge Production

In 1994 an international group of researchers working in the field of social sciences published a book focused on changes in the mode of knowledge production in contemporary society. In this volume, entitled *The New Production of Knowledge: The Dynamics of Science and Research in Contemporary Societies*, Michael Gibbons, Camille Limoges, Helga Nowotny, Simon Schwartzman, Peter Scott, and Martin Trow put forth a new theory of knowledge production, and since they could not find a better name, they simply used the term *Mode-2*.[12] Although it has so far not yet been universally accepted, the concept of Mode-2 knowledge production has attracted considerable interest, and in 2001 Nowotny, Scott, and Gibbons published the sequel *Rethinking Science: Knowledge in an Age of Uncertainty,* in which they extended their analysis to the implications of Mode-2 knowledge production for society at large, and in which they also proposed the emergence of Mode-2 society.[13]

It should be added here that from the middle of the 1990s there have been several efforts to elucidate the differences between the "new" and the "old" ways of doing science. In his book *Real Science* John Ziman made a distinction between *academic science* and *post-academic science*,[14] and Camille Limoges claimed that we "now speak of 'context-driven' research, meaning research carried out in a context of application, arising from the very work of problem solving and not governed by the paradigms of traditional disciplines of knowledge."[15]

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[11] Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, [1979] (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 3.

[12] Michael Gibbons, Camille Limoges, Helga Nowotny, Simon Schwartzman, Peter Scott and Martin Trow, *The New Production of Knowledge: The Dynamics of Science and Research in Contemporary Societies* (London: Sage Publications, 1994).

[13] Helga Nowotny, Peter Scott and Michael Gibbons, *Rethinking Science: Knowledge in an Age of Uncertainty* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001).

[14] John Ziman, *Real Science. What it is, and what it means* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

[15] Camille Limoges, *L'université à la croisée des chemins : une mission à affirmer, une ges-*

Bruno Latour, who shares with Gibbons *et al* some common ground concerning the changes in the relation between science and society, wrote about the transition from *the culture of science* to the *culture of research*:

> Science is certainty; research is uncertainty. Science is supposed to be cold, straight and detached; research is warm, involving, and risky. Science puts an end to the vagaries of human disputes; research creates controversies. Science produces objectivity by escaping as much as possible from the shackles of ideology, passions and emotions; research feeds on all of those to render objects of inquiry familiar.[16]

It follows from Latour's observation that in traditional society science (Mode-1 science, as Gibbons *et al* would put it) was *external*, and that in contemporary society, by contrast, Mode-2 science, or in Latour's terms research, has become *internal*. Latour argues that science and society cannot be separated, and that what has changed is their relationship. If science in traditional society formed an autonomous sphere, which means that it is autonomist, reductive, and self-referential, it has now become more open, as well as populist and pluralist. This moment in Latour's exposition is important, because it sheds some light upon the difference between Mode-2 knowledge production (i.e. research) and postmodern science described by Lyotard. For the latter, "[t]he relation between knowledge and society [...] becomes one of mutual exteriority,"[17] indicating that he is actually still referring to traditional (i.e. modernist) science, and that there never was a postmodern science.

Gibbons *et al* argued that a new form of knowledge production started emerging in the mid-twentieth century, and that it should be distinguished from traditional or usual form, which they accordingly labeled *Mode-1*. In its primary meaning they related it to scientific and technological knowledge production, and in this sense the term Mode-1 refers to a complex of notions, methods, values, and norms, which have the task of managing the spread of the Newtonian scientific model to more and more fields of enquiry and ensure its conformity with what is considered sound scientific practice. Mode-1 therefore summarizes the cognitive and social norms that must be followed

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tion à reformer, Actes du colloque ACFAS.CSE.CST (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, 1996), pp. 14–15.

[16] Bruno Latour, "From the world of science to the world of research?", *Science*, vol. 280 (1998), pp. 208–209.

[17] Lyotard, p. 25.

in the production, as well as legitimation and distribution, of knowledge which is regularly identified with science itself.

> Its cognitive and social norms determine what shall count as significant problems, who shall be allowed to practice science and what constitutes good science. Forms of practice which adhere to these rules are by definition scientific while those that violate them are not.[18]

Science in this sense stands for a key notion that describes the practice of knowledge production; similarly the concept of the scientist represents a model for a subject that is actively engaged in this form of knowledge production. Nevertheless, while it is conventional and even legitimate to speak of science and scientists in Mode-1, it is necessary, according to Gibbons *et al*, to use more general terms such as knowledge and practitioners when describing Mode-2. The starting point for the analysis of the new mode of knowledge production was the conviction that there is already sufficient empirical evidence to indicate that a new form of practices has emerged not only in natural and social sciences, but also in the humanities, and that these practices (social and cognitive) are essentially different from those found in Mode-1. To specify and clarify the differences between the two modes, a set of analytical attributes has been used, and I will try to set out the most relevant among them below.

2.1. Copernican Turn: Context of application

Definitely the most important difference between Mode-1 and Mode-2 concerns the context in which problems are set and solved. If we claim that there is a "Copernican turn," in its metaphorical sense to be found in the theory of Gibbons *et al*, then this is the right place to search for it. The context of setting and solving problems in Mode-1 is governed largely by academic interest. This means that scientific work follows the rules and codes of practice which are relevant to a particular discipline. The context is "defined in relation to the cognitive and social norms that govern basic research or academic science. Latterly, this has tended to imply knowledge production carried out in the absence of some practical goal."[19] Knowledge produced under Mode-1 therefore implies the form of *pure* science, detached from all the needs, demands, and concerns in the world out there. To put it harshly, Mode-1 science is nothing but *science for science's sake*.

[18] Gibbons *et al*, pp. 2–3.
[19] Gibbons *et al*, p. 4.

By contrast, Mode-2 knowledge is carried out in the context of a particular application, and it is intended to be useful to someone. The most important contrast between Mode-1 and Mode-2 is that this imperative is present from the very beginning: "Knowledge is [in Mode-2 form of production] always produced under an aspect of continuous negotiation and it will not be produced unless and until the interests of the various actors are included. Such is the context of application."[20] This implies that science can no longer be regarded as an autonomous space, which is clearly demarcated from other spheres of society, e.g. from culture, and even (though more arguably, as Gibbons *et al* themselves admit) from economy. They claim that even though knowledge production in Mode-2 is the result of a process in which supply and demand factors are operative, this process includes much more than commercial considerations, and consequentially "it might be said that in Mode-2 science has gone beyond the market!"[21] This is not a self-evident claim, although it is beyond the scope of this paper to argue for or against it. In any case, Gibbons *et al* argue that the factors which play an active role in the process of Mode-2 production of knowledge, are complex and diverse. As a consequence, knowledge production becomes diffused throughout society, and knowledge itself becomes socially distributed. In this sense, it is crucial to point out one important characteristic of Mode-2 science in relation to Mode-1. If Mode-1 science is pure, this does not imply that Mode-2 science is applied. There isn't any knowledge, prepared and waiting, ready to be applied when and where needed. This logic of applied sciences still conforms to Mode-1.

Research carried out in the context of the application in fact characterizes a number of disciplines that mostly belong to the field of engineering and applied sciences, among them, for example, aeronautical engineering, chemical engineering, and also computer science. When they appeared for the first time, however, they were neither science nor applied, since they were – in the first place – the answer to a specific problem, to a lack of the relevant science, and they were genuinely new forms of knowledge. Therefore, even though these sciences became established in universities, in their formation there was a necessary condition for the Mode-2 production of knowledge. Nevertheless, after the new form of knowledge was established and the need for new knowledge fulfilled, these new applied sciences soon turned back to the disciplinary knowledge production in the style of Mode-1. For a brief period in their formation, applied sciences share some aspects of the attribute

[20] *Ibid.*
[21] *Ibid.*

of knowledge produced in the context of application, characteristic of Mode-2, but soon after that the process of regression into Mode-1 takes place, and knowledge production becomes again, as Latour would have put it, cold, straight and detached.

2.2. Transdisciplinarity

Gibbons *et al* derive all the other important attributes of Mode-2 from the premise that knowledge is produced in the context of application. While problems in Mode-1 were still set and solved within the field of a specific discipline, in Mode-2 this is no longer the case. Problems originate in a context so complex and heterogeneous that it exceeds the possibilities of any particular discipline to set, let alone solve, given problems. Apparently, an interdisciplinary approach based on a diverse range of specialists who work in teams on the problems, is the key to the proper solution; however, Gibbons *et al* argue that a still more radical step is needed.

Both modes of scientific knowledge production share an unambiguous demand, which is nonetheless decisive: "To qualify as a specific form of knowledge production it is essential that enquiry be guided by specifiable consensus as to appropriate cognitive and social practice."[22] Whereas in Mode-1, this consensus is derived from the appropriate discipline, in Mode-2

> the consensus is conditioned by the context of application and evolves with it. The determinants of a potential solution involve the integration of different skills in a framework of action, but the consensus may be only temporary, depending on how well it conforms to the requirements set by the specific context of application. In Mode 2 the shape of the final solution will normally be beyond that of any single contributing discipline. It will be transdisciplinary.[23]

There are several distinct features of transdisciplinarity, pointed out by Gibbons *et al*. At the beginning of a research project a framework to guide problem solving is developed. This framework is generated and sustained in the context of application, which means that it evolves within the context and it is not developed first and then applied to that context (this is the main difference between Mode-2 science and ordinary applied science). The knowledge produced is not necessarily disciplinary (or is usually not),

[22] *Ibid.*
[23] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

and therefore it may not be located on the prevailing disciplinary map. Nevertheless, transdisciplinary knowledge – despite the fact that it emerged from the context of application – has its own distinct theoretical structures, research methods and modes of practice.

Transdisciplinarity, however, is dynamic; it is a problem solving capability "on the move". Knowledge obtained during the process of problem solving within a specific context can became a starting point from which further advances can be made, but where this knowledge will be used and how it will develop is difficult or even impossible to predict:

> New knowledge produced in this way may not fit easily into any one of the disciplines that contributed to the solution. Nor may it be easily referred to particular disciplinary institutions or recorded as disciplinary contributions. In Mode-2, communications in ever new configurations are crucial.[24]

The transdisciplinary character of Mode-2 demands a different way of communicating results in comparison to Mode-1, which is manly disciplinary. While in Mode-1 communication flows through institutional channels (reporting results in professional journals or at conferences), in Mode-2 results are communicated to those who have participated in the process of knowledge production. Therefore, the diffusion of the results is accomplished in the process of their production.

2.3. Heterogeneity and organizational diversity

Mode-2 knowledge production is heterogeneous in terms of the skills and experience people bring to it. The framework of problem solving is without given boundaries, and it is evolving; the composition of researchers involved changes over time as well, in order to follow the requirements set by the context of application. This process is neither planned nor coordinated from above by any central body. Moreover, the number of potential sites where knowledge can be produced in Mode-2 has increased. These are no longer only universities, but also independent institutes, research centers, government agencies, industry, and think-tanks and consultancies that serve in their interaction as sites of knowledge production. These sites are linked together not only through networks of communication, but also organizationally. However, because of the differentiation of fields of study into subfields, and because of the constant reconfiguration of these subfields, the

[24] *Ibid.*

organization of research becomes diverse and in the last instance productivity moves from disciplinary activity into more societal contexts.

In Mode-2 research groups are not so firmly institutionalized as in Mode-1. People join certain projects and work on them for a certain time, they form various networks, but these work teams and networks dissolve when a problem is solved or redefined. Members of the former research group then reassemble in different groups, which involve different people, usually in different places, and also around different problems. As Gibbons *et al* claim,

> [the] experience gathered in this process creates a competence which becomes highly valued and which is transferred to new contexts. Though problems may be transient and groups short-lived, the organization and communication pattern persists as a matrix from which further groups and networks, dedicated to different problems, will be formed.[25]

It follows that knowledge within Mode-2 is produced in very different environments, from public and government institutions to research universities, laboratories, and institutes, and to network and hi-tech firms and multinational corporations. If Mode-1 is marked by homogeneity and hierarchical organization, by contrast, Mode-2 is marked by heterogeneity, and its organization is less hierarchical and more transient.

2.4. Reflexivity

Another attribute of Mode-2 knowledge production is related to the social accountability and reflexivity of the research. In recent years we have been witnessing strong public concern – nowadays mostly in relation to global warming and biotechnology – for the issues of science, technology, and knowledge production in general. More and more groups are interested in the process and outcome of the research, and some of them even want to influence the results. As Gibbons *et al* claim, in Mode-2 sensitivity to the impact of the research is built in from the start, because it forms a part of the context of application; "working in the context of application increases the sensitivity of scientists and technologists to the broader implications of what they are doing."[26] Operating in Mode-2 therefore makes all participants more reflexive.

This claim obviously goes contrary to public opinion and to what one usually thinks about contemporary science and technology (in relation, e.g.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 6.
[26] Gibbons *et al*, p. 7.

to human cloning, the military-industrial complex, etc.). However, the reason for a more reflexive stance is in the assumption that the issue which is being researched cannot be answered in scientific and technical terms alone. In Mode-2 there is no traditional boundary between inside (science and technology) and outside (individuals and groups with their own values and preferences) of the knowledge production. The research towards the resolution of such problems has to incorporate options that form a part of the context, but they are not necessarily related to traditional scientific or technological research. The aforementioned individuals or groups now become active agents in the definition and solution of problems, as well as in their evaluation, which means that their values and preferences have to be taken into an account. Trying to operate from the standpoint of all the actors, researchers have to include an understanding and reflection of all possible factors, including values, aspirations, pressures, anxieties, and so on.

Gibbons *et al* claim that a deepening of the understanding of all these factors has an effect on the structure of the research itself, since the reflexivity relates to the question of what is worth doing – what in the field of research makes sense, and what does not. In Mode-1 science such reflexivity was considered to be something coming from outside of knowledge production, and traditionally reflexivity was a concern of the humanities. In contemporary, that is Mode-2 knowledge production process, where reflexivity becomes a part of this process itself, and spreads within it, the humanities are experiencing an increase in demand for the knowledge they have to offer. But Gibbons *et al* give the impression that the humanities do not have much to offer:

> Traditionally, this [reflexivity] has been the function of the humanities, but over the years the supply side – departments of philosophy, anthropology, history – of such reflexivity has become disconnected from the demand siteside – that is from businesspeople, engineers, doctors, regulatory agencies and the larger public who need practical or ethical guidance on a vast range of issues (for example, pressures on the traditional humanities for culturally sensitive scenarios, and on legal studies for an empirically grounded ethics, the construction of ethnic histories, and the analysis of gender issues).[27]

2.5. Evaluation and quality control

In Mode-1 the quality of the research is mostly determined through peer

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

review evaluations of the contributions made by individuals. Since Mode-1 is essentially disciplinary, peer review operates so as to channel individuals to work on problems that are held to be central to the advance of the discipline, and these problems are usually defined in terms of criteria which reflect the preoccupations and interests of the discipline and its contributors. Quality in this mode is therefore maintained by a careful selection of those judged competent to act as peers, which is in part determined by their previous contributions to the discipline. In this sense evaluation begins and ends in the context of a discipline.

In Mode-2 knowledge production this is nevertheless not enough, and another criteria has to be added to the process of evaluation and quality control. The key is again the context of application, which includes a range of various interests, ranging from intellectual, social, economic, to political ones. For example, it is not enough that only intellectual or scientific interests are fulfilled when the solution to a certain problem is achieved; there are always further questions to be posed: "Will the solution be socially and ethically acceptable?" "Will it be competitive in the global market?" And so forth. Consequentially, an evaluation of the achieved knowledge becomes much more complex, heterogeneous, and above all, difficult. Nevertheless, it does not follow that the quality of work will be reduced because of the complexity. Even if it is more difficult to say what a "good science" is, this doesn't mean that it is impossible. It only means that the answer will have a more complex, multidimensional nature, and that sometimes it will be difficult to get it, precisely because of the importance of the context of application.

3. Conclusion

The intention behind this close reading of Mode-2 theory was to emphasize the obvious: structural changes that started to emerge from the mid-twentieth century on, within the field of science and technology, resemble at first glance contemporary modifications in art and culture. If we change the word science for art and reread the attributes that separate Mode-2 from Mode-1, it is not at all difficult to see how similarly these two fields behave. It is actually striking that so many analogies are to be found, if one seriously takes into consideration that there existed autonomous spheres of science and art.

In both cases Mode-1 represents a modern, institutionalized concept of science or art, and the question that inevitably follows is: Does Mode-2 represent its postmodern form? Because if it does, then we could simply re-

write the distinction between Mode-1 and Mode-2 onto a modernist versus postmodernist approach. Nevertheless, as the case of Lyotard, who opened the debate on postmodernist science, shows, there has never been a truly postmodernist science.[28]

Henry Etzkowitz and Loet Leydes stress the fact that although Mode-1 science could be compared to a modern, institutionalized concept of science, Mode-2 does not represent a *post*modern concept. The fact is namely that:

> The so-called Mode 2 is not new; it is the original format of science before its academic institutionalization in the nineteenth century. Another question to be answered is why Mode 1 arose after Mode 2: the original organizational and institutional basis of science, consisting of networks and invisible colleges. [...] Where have these ideas, of the scientist as the isolated individual and of science separated from the interests of society, come from? Mode 2 represents the material base of science, how it actually operates. Mode 1 is a construct, built upon that base in order to justify autonomy for science, especially in an earlier era when it was still a fragile institution and needed all the help it could get.[29]

Therefore, there are structural similarities between science before Mode-1 and after Mode-1, so that it would be better to consider Mode-2 to be a *non-* or *un-*modern form than a *post*modern one. It seems that in the case of art, the role of autonomy was raised to a higher power, and became not only accepted but also an inevitable constituent part of art. If Etzkowitz and Leydes raise a question about the scientist as the isolated individual, aesthetics answers simply: genius is genius is genius, as well as art is art is art. While the work of Kant, Hegel *et al* generated a tradition, in which the central issue was the autonomy of art (or, later, the autonomy of culture), it has now become clear that both art and culture have gradually lost their autonomy and that consequently aesthetics as a discipline has to confront the new conditions.

One way of doing that is to understand the past. Following the example of science, it could be stated that Mode-2 art is art before it achieved its autonomy, before it became *art for art's sake*. In this sense it is not new, and it could even be claimed that somehow it is not at all art; or at least it is, in the

[28] See footnote 17.

[29] Henry Etzkowitz and Loet Leydes, "The dynamics of innovation: from National Systems and 'Mode 2' to a Triple Helix of university–industry–government relations", *Research Policy*, vol. 29 (2000), p. 116.

words of Hans Belting, art before the beginning of art.[30] The question why Mode-1 arose after Mode-2 is a basic question related to the autonomisation of different fields within the development of modernity – science/technology, art/culture, ethics/politics – and it points to Kant, to *bourgeoisie*, and to the development of a capitalist mode of production.

Mode-1 production is a construct whether we apply it to science, or to art and aesthetics. And this holds for another issue as well: the ideas of the subject as an isolated individual and of his discipline as separated from the interests of society, are so similar that they probably come from the same background. Nevertheless, it would be too simple to state that Mode-2 represents only the return of something pre-modern, either in art or in science. It would be more correct to say that Mode-2 exposes the limits of Mode-1, which has been probably connected to the most flourishing period of art and science in all of history. Mode-2 arises from the view that the most important things in science (and art) have already been done, and what remains to explore is a task too difficult for the disciplinary Mode-1 approach.

It is important to note that Mode-2 in its recurrence does not represent either a break with or a continuation of Mode-1. This is yet another distinction that distinguishes the Mode-1/Mode-2 approach from a modernist/postmodernist one. That is to say, Mode-2 is not an *Aufhebung* of Mode-1 in some Hegelian sense, and there is no urgent need to use concepts such as the "end" or "death" of art to explain the contemporary situation within the field of art. Mode-2 appears as a parallel form, which does not suppress Mode-1.

As has been stated, the context of setting and solving problems differs significantly with the transition from Mode-1 to Mode-2 (transition is probably not the right word to explain the occurrence of a new mode in this case). While in Mode-1 the context is related to the closed academic sphere, in Mode-2, on the contrary, the context of application determines the production of knowledge (or art) from the very beginning. In this case the relation between science and art is more complex, since not only pre-modern art, but also the art of the avant-gardes, and some other forms of contemporary art, correspond to Mode-2. Several movements, including artistic avant-gardes, however, from impressionism to *Neue Slowenische Kunst*, show another interesting characteristic distinctive of scientific disciplines: after the clash with academic and institutional art, they themselves end in an academic and institutional form which is distinctive of Mode-1.

[30] Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

There are, nonetheless, forms of Mode-2 art that do not have the ambition to regress to Mode-1. Very striking examples are environmental and social art, from Joseph Beuys' 7,000 oak trees, planted in 1982 in Kassel for Documenta 7, to Mel Chin and Mierle Ukeles. One could count under the same rubric also, as was the case already in the times of the classic avant-gardes, political and ideological art, and last but not least bioart. In all these examples it is obvious that problems that artists (but also artistic teams and curators) intend to solve with their projects, originate in a context so complex and heterogeneous that it exceeds the possibilities of any particular approach to find a solution for (or, at least a proper attitude towards) them.

Transdisciplinarity within art operates on a different level when compared to scientific knowledge production; however, it still is one of the distinctive features of Mode-2 art, and probably the essential one for Mode-2 aesthetics. It follows from this characteristic that aesthetics – in order to grasp Mode-2 art – has to go beyond itself, that is, beyond the border established by its Mode-1 precursor. This actually means that aesthetics has to open itself to heterogeneous discourses and knowledge productions beyond its traditional range. (Which in most cases is also beyond the range of philosophy.)

This task is very demanding, for, as already stated, only the hard cases remain, and more and more issues now depend on them. This doesn't mean that Mode-2 aestheticians will have to be biologists, political scientists, environmentalists, neurologists, and so on. It only means that they will have to open conceptual space for issues that are related to these fields, if the context of an artwork demands it. This also does not necessarily mean that we need a new form of normative aesthetics, because aesthetics is either normative or doesn't exist at all, and we have lost any possible norm to say what is good art.

It is true that we may have lost this norm now, but there is still one more important task facing Mode-2 aesthetics, and that is to open a conceptual space for understanding contemporary art that does not follow old and common ways. There is still a lot of contempt and negative reactions related to Mode-2 art that are the consequence of a lack of a proper theoretical or conceptual approach. Mode-2 art becomes art that is more hermetic and obscure than it was during its most notorious avant-garde times. It is the task of Mode-2 aesthetics to show that this art matters, and that by not understanding it we are losing an important part of our self-understanding.

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RETHINKING ART AND VALUES: A COMPARATIVE REVELATION OF THE ORIGIN OF AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE (FROM THE NEO-CONFUCIAN PERSPECTIVES)

Eva Kit Wah Man

Introduction: "The End of Aesthetic Experience"

Richard Shusterman's article, "The End of Aesthetic Experience" published in 1997, studies the contemporary fate of aesthetic experience, which has long been viewed as one of the core concepts of Western aesthetics till the last half century.[1] In accounts of aesthetic experience by Plato, Aristotle and Aquinas all the way down to the pre-modern era, the later development of the concept is analyzed to have turned from objective reality to subjective experience for its explanation and foundation, especially after the term "aesthetic" was officially established in modern aesthetics. Aesthetic experience was then expanded to be an umbrella concept for aesthetic notions like the sublime and the picturesque.[2] I agree with Shusterman that aesthetic experience has become the island of freedom, beauty, and idealistic meaning in an otherwise coldly materialistic and law-determined world.[3]

This paper will begin with the main dimensions of aesthetic experience in the history of Western aesthetics that Shusterman sketches out:

1) the evaluative dimension of aesthetic experience as essentially valuable and enjoyable;
2) the phenomenological dimension as on its immediate presence, vividly felt, subjectively savored; and attention affectively absorbed and focused;
3) the semantic dimension as meaningful experience and not mere sensation;

[1] Richard Shusterman, "The End of Aesthetic Experience," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism,* vol. 55, no. 1 (Winter 1997), pp. 29–41.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 29.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 30.

4) the demarcational-definitional dimension that is the distinction of fine art and representing art's essential aim.[4]

Yet, the critique of the core values of aesthetic experience has also been the practice of Anglo-American analytical aesthetics in the last half century, mainly because arguments advocating an absolute experience are conflictual. The famous articulation and the elaboration of the concept by M. C. Beardsley, as Shusterman describes for example, has been attacked for the following five features:

1) the aesthetic subject's attention is focused on the appearance, form and meaning of objects, highlighting the importance of contemplation leading to the emergence of aesthetic experience in which the qualities of objects manifest;
2) it is an experience of some intensity;
3) it has the component of coherence, meaning that all the qualities are necessary;
4) it has the component of completeness that cannot be analyzed into simpler qualities; and it appears to require or call on nothing outside itself;
5) it has degrees of complexity, illustrating the variations, differentiation and hierarchy of its components according to the qualities of the object.[5]

The analysis has been criticized for excluding works that are not capable of producing, or have never tried to produce, enjoyable experiences of unity and affect. While analytical aestheticians stress that concepts of art and aesthetic must allow for bad instances, Beardsley's concept of aesthetic experience does not accommodate bad works as aesthetic objects or art, and hence makes negative evaluations of artworks impossible.[6]

The sensitive criticisms aimed at Beardsley have also come from a growing unrest and discontent that correspond to artistic scenes in actual reality. Shusterman has described some of them, like the anarchical state and the aimlessness of art works, which has also been cut off from popular currents of taste.[7]

It has been suggested that the end of aesthetic experience depends on

[4] *Ibid.*
[5] Monroe C. Beardsley, *Aesthetics* (New York, N.Y.: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1958), pp. 527–29.
[6] Shusterman, p. 35.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 35.

what happens in the non-aesthetic world that affects our very sensibilities and capacity for experience, demonstrating that aesthetic experience is never fixed or natural. Shusterman's accounts include Walter Benjamin's famous idea of loss of aura in fine art, and the notion that aesthetic experience pervades the everyday world of popular culture and even politics; in a word, the romantic conceptualization of aesthetic experience as pure immediacy of meaning and isolation from the rest of life is now in doubt.[8] Gadamer's and Bourdieu's critique of the two features of immediacy and differentiation (different from the scenes in reality) of aesthetic experience are also mentioned, though with different emphasis. Aesthetic experience is said to be never pure, and is full of preconceptions; it is also the product of historical and institutional inventions and inculcated habits of aesthetic contemplation requiring cultural mediation.[9]

Yet, in terms of our fragmentary experiences in modern life and the disjunctive sensationalism of the media, we also agree with Shusterman that people are losing the capacity for deep experiences and feelings, especially since we are undergoing an expansion of technologies of information. The meaningful questions he raises about aesthetic experience include:

1) Is the concept intrinsically honorific or instead descriptively neutral?
2) Is it robustly phenomenological or simply semantic?
3) Is its primary theoretical function transformational, aiming to revise or enlarge the aesthetic field, or is it instead demarcational?[10]

This paper is thus a response to Shusterman's argument that the concept of aesthetic experience is worth recalling, not for formal definition but for art's reorientation toward values that could restore its vitality and sense of purpose. Shusterman's call for rekindling the notion of aesthetic experience has the following beliefs:

1) it still embraces heightened, meaningful, and valuable phenomenological experience;
2) its importance and richness should be fully recognized, as it will be strengthened and preserved the more it is experienced;
3) its concept is directional and is able to remind us of what is worth seek-

[8] Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," *Illuminations* (New York, N. Y.: Schocken, 1968).

[9] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York, N.Y.: Crossroad, 1982), pp. 86–7.

[10] Shusterman, p. 32.

ing in art and elsewhere in life, besides defining art and acting as critical verdicts.[11]

Aesthetic Experience and the Origin of Values

The recent calls in Anglo-American aesthetics for values and life concerns in art have also turned to the possible strength of aesthetic experience. Matthew Kieran's article, "Art, Imagination, and the Cultivation of Morals," for example, explores the activity of imagination in aesthetic experience and its possible promotion of morality, trying to trace the inner link of so-called "aestheticism" and "ethicism."[12]

Kieran clearly points out that art engages one's sympathetic imagination with respect to different types of people in possible situations, and thus encourages us to be considerate and to become open to various situations in life.[13] We would be able to attend to a morally relevant feature in a more pleasurable, vivid, and diverting manner in aesthetic experience, and the particularity portrayed in art may enable our faculty of moral perception to become more richly differentiated and discriminating, thus enabling us to avoid making moral judgments only with general principles.[14] Aesthetic experience could evoke a particular imaginative understanding in relation to subjects portrayed in daily life, like representations of life, love, death and war, while artworks attempt to find the right description of them. These descriptions could develop deepened imaginative understanding of the nature of our world and possibilities, including immoral ones, as Kieran points out in detail.[15]

But when Kieran says art cultivates our imaginative understanding in a distinctive way, a way in which our ordinary imaginings cannot, he is referring to the nature of aesthetic experience. While he states that imagination distinguishes human beings as moral agents, and that the cultural practice of art may enhance our imaginative understanding in peculiarly significant and powerful ways, the reference is also to aesthetic experience. The experience could extend or lead us to modify our own concerns, goals and val-

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[11] *Ibid.*, p. 39.
[12] Matthew Kieran, "Art, Imagination, and the Cultivation of Morals," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 54, no. 4 (Fall 1996), p. 337.
[13] *Ibid.*, p. 338.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 339.
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 343.

ues and hence would be a close link between art and morality.[16] What will need further reflection and review, Kieran suggests, is the statement that art cannot replace or occlude philosophical inquiry, which would enable us to become clearer about the nature of our relations within, and imaginative understanding of, the world.[17]

Marcia Eaton shares some of her arguments with Kieran when she sees aesthetics as the mother of ethics.[18] We are reminded that common objections have been raised against Kant's formal separation of the aesthetic from the ethical and the cognitive, a separation that ignores the fact that values of intelligible works are based on the appropriate moral emotion and evaluation of viewers.[19] Eaton further suggests that form is prior to content, and hence aesthetics can be construed as before ethics. Her argument, instead of being logical or causal, is rather based on the observation that humans are moved not only by better arguments but also by "more richly textured narratives," which implies that aesthetics can act as a form of "transformative communication" for ethics.[20]

When values are basically inventive, aesthetic objects – being imaginary products – have the nurturing effects in teaching us how to be inventive.

Eaton here shares also some of Beardsley's description of aesthetic experience by saying that aesthetics is what gives experience coherence. Hence moral development entails aesthetic development in the sense that the aesthetic dimensions of experience, including imagination, emotions, and concepts, are those that make the meaning and the enhancement of moral quality possible.[21] Eaton's metaphor that aesthetics is the mother of ethics, situating ethics in a way that provides it with something of value, will be reviewed later in this article from a cross-cultural and philosophical perspective.

We note that in discussing the problem of art and value, American aestheticians have always turned to John Dewey for resource, especially to the insights he gives in his "Pragmatists' Aesthetics." Dewey's explication of aesthetic experience in his *Art as Experience* is as follows:

> Experience occurs continuously, because the interaction of live creature and environing conditions is involved in the very process of li-

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[16] *Ibid.*, p. 348.
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 349.
[18] See Marcia Eaton, "Aesthetics: The Mother of Ethics," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 55, no. 4 (Fall 1997), pp. 355–64.
[19] *Ibid.*, p. 356.
[20] *Ibid.*, p. 359.
[21] *Ibid.*, p. 360.

> ving [...] we have an experience when the material experienced runs its course to *fulfillment*. Then and then only is it *integrated* within and demarcated in the general stream of experience from other experiences. A piece of work is finished in a way that is *satisfactory*; a problem receives its *solution* [...] Such an experience is a *whole* and carries with it its own individualizing quality and *self-sufficiency*. It is an experience [...] Nevertheless, the experience itself has a satisfying emotional quality because it possesses internal integration and fulfillment reached through ordered and organized movement. This artistic structure may be immediately felt. In so far, it is esthetic.[22]

Under the influences of biological evolutionism and his beliefs in pragmatic implications, Dewey's notion of aesthetics is basically instrumental. He states that the activities of living things are characterized by natural needs and the efforts to satisfy needs, and by satisfactions. These terms are primarily employed in a biological sense as described in another work, *Experience and Nature*:

> By need is meant a condition of tensional distribution of energies such that the body is in a condition of uneasy or unstable equilibrium. By demand or effort is meant [...] [to] modify environing bodies in ways which react upon the body, so that its characteristic pattern of active equilibrium is restored. By satisfaction is meant this recovery of equilibrium pattern, consequent upon the changes of environment due to interactions with the active demands of the organism.[23]

But aesthetic experience is more than a recovery of equilibrium pattern. Dewey claims that any activity that is productive of objects whose perception is an immediate good, and whose operation is a continual source of enjoyable perception of other events, exhibits the fineness of art. Artistic activities also directly refresh and enlarge the spirit and are instrumental to the production of further refinements and replenishments.[24]

It is interesting to note that while Dewey states that art and its activities are inevitable in its rightness and coherence, and that its occurrence is spontaneous, unexpected, fresh and unpredictable, thereby hinting that

[22] John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York, N.Y.: Perigee Books, 1980), pp. 35, 38.
[23] John Dewey, *Experience and Nature* (New York, N.Y.: Dover Publications, 1958), pp. 252–3.
[24] *Ibid.*, p. 365.

it is disinterested, art is in fact purposive and instrumental.[25] He says: "A consummatory object that is not also instrumental turns in time to the dust and ashes of boredom. The 'eternal' quality of great art is its renewed instrumentality for further consummatory experiences."[26] Jeffrey Petts follows Dewey and captures his two ideas of aesthetic experience: that it involves a process or "movement" basic to human life, and that this has a distinctive end or "consumption."[27] He explains Dewey's notion of "consummation" as a job felt to be satisfactorily completed, a problem felt to be solved and a game played through "fair and square." He claims accordingly that aesthetic experience is not checking that things have worked according to plan; rather there is a feeling that things are "just so." Furthermore, what is fundamental in understanding the "movement" and "consummation" of aesthetic experience is the distinctly human practice of criticism.[28]

Theories of aesthetic attitude acknowledging that beauty is in the eye of the beholder have been severely criticized by analytic aestheticians like George Dickie, who claims that aesthetic attitude is a myth and so is its disinterestedness.[29] Petts thinks however that these critiques do not withstand the more profound account of the "aesthetic" that Dewey offers. It is interesting to review Petts's reading of Dewey's ideas of aesthetic experience, taking "movement" as an example:

> ['Movement'] is used to capture the dynamic of human life in which particular identifiable experiences emerge as successive and progressive adaptations to situations. Dewey notes that human beings are conscious of this rhythm to their lives, and are thus able intentionally to manipulate objects in the environment as creative means to ends, generating their own adaptations; artists are exemplary in caring particularly for this kind of experience.[30]

Petts hints that there is an implication of value here, for the aesthetic value of an object or event is established through a critical discourse that is both prompted and validated by a felt response or feeling of approbation toward that thing. Petts argues that here lies the possibility of all kinds of

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[25] *Ibid.*, p. 359.
[26] *Ibid.*, p. 365.
[27] Jeffrey Petts, "Aesthetic Experience and the Revelation of Value," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 58, no. 1 (Winter 2000), p. 62.
[28] *Ibid.*, p. 63.
[29] George Dickie, "The Myth of Aesthetic Attitude," *American Philosophical Quarterly I* (1964), pp. 56–65.
[30] Petts, p. 65.

motives and interests in the sense of aesthetic evaluation held in the aesthetic experience – that Dickie's critique does not rule out, say, personal interest. But Petts stresses that an aesthetic experience is privately felt but intrinsically public in that it is marked by a consummating moment faced as a confrontation with value.[31] The kind of value Petts has in mind and shares with Dewey is basically biological:

> My argument, in short, is that aesthetic experience is not simply a socially constructed response to environment [...] but is defining of a more profound natural (to be explained) response of human beings to their environment, without which it would be inexplicable how any cultural preferences could emerge from that experience.[32]

Petts later explained that value is determined by nature, and that our access to the value is by direct feeling. He elaborated that Nature is imbued with "spirit," which "speaks" to those in direct contact with it, revealing itself and our proper relationship to it. The analogy he used is a shamanistic view.[33] With emphasis on interaction with the natural environment, one can say that Dewey provides a sharply contrasting model of aesthetic experience, which can support a transcultural view and common patterns, as the relationship is structured around human needs. The experience is also said to be revelatory of real value because it marks an adaptive felt response of humans to their environment, and this adaptability is grounded on human needs.[34]

Petts thus interprets Dewey's notion of aesthetic experience as follows:

> A Deweyan account of aesthetic experience as revelatory of value releases the 'aesthetic' into intellectual environs beyond those encouraged by aesthetic attitude theorists, and therefore the importance of clarifying the distinction between 'aesthetic attitude' conceived as a 'disinterested' encounter with artworks and nature, and 'aesthetic experience' as the live experience of value for human beings.[35]

The remaining question is: Can the Deweyan account that is still one of the most influential representations of Western aesthetics really provide a satisfying answer to the problem of art and value? Here I would like to refer

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[31] *Ibid.*, p. 67.
[32] *Ibid.*
[33] *Ibid.*, p. 69.
[34] *Ibid.*
[35] *Ibid.*, p. 70.

to a non-Western model before coming back to this question, though the process may involve a change of terminologies and vocabularies, and even paradigm.

The Aesthetic Experience in Traditional Chinese Philosophies as Introduced by Contemporary Neo-Confucians

Despite the saying that systematic aesthetics is absent from traditional Confucian and Taoist philosophies, neo-Confucian scholars Mou Chung San and Tang Chun I have reconstructed theories of human primal experience according to traditional Confucianism and Taoism that allude to aesthetic experience.

In one of his latest writings, Mou Chung San presents and recommends the theory of Taoist's "intellectual intuition" that is aesthetic in nature. First, he points out the "subjective principle" of Taoism as "Wu Wei" (no action), which refers to the effort of the human subject's mind to transcend all kinds of human epistemological functions and move toward the realm of a more metaphysical Tao.

Taoist's philosophy promotes the annulments of subjective activity and knowledge to recover the presentation of nature in itself, which has been hidden and distorted by the self's understanding, perception and conception. According to Taoism, to know is *not* to know, to be wise is to be ignorant, and only so-called fools are able to grasp the truth of nature.

Mou further explicates the wisdom of Taoism, *Xuan Gi,* as a form of intellectual intuition. In the realm of the Tao, when the human mind has stopped 'knowing' and travels with the basic universal element *Chi*, it would, together with other things, present itself in its original nature. These are not "phenomena" in the Kantian sense of epistemology, but the original nature of things that can be manifested only after the abolition of the dominant scheme of subject-object relation exerted by the knowing subject. The state of "intellectual intuition" of the mind in the Taoist sense stated above is the "calmness of mind" described by Chuang Tze's "*Xin Jai*" and as described by Chuang Tze:

> Do not be the master of knowledge [to manipulate things]. Personally realize the infinite to the highest degree and travel in the realm of which there is no sign. Exercise fully what you have received from Nature without any subjective viewpoint. In one word, be absolutely vacuous (hsu). The mind of the perfect man is like a mirror. It does not lean

> forward or backward in its response to things. It responds to things but conceals nothing of its own. Therefore it is able to deal with things without injury to [its reality].[36]

In the "calmness of mind," there are no differentiations of mind and body, form and matter or subject and object but the emergence of all things (including the minds) in themselves. They juxtapose with one another without being known. Mou calls the state 'a negative and static form of birth' that basically is disinterested, non-intentional and non-regulative, and is therefore aesthetic in nature. Mou's elaboration of this state is as follows:

> The state of mind of Xin Jai is the termination, tranquility, emptiness, and nothingness that follow the abolition of the quest and dependency on learning and knowing. The Wu Wei of the above necessarily implies a certain kind of creativity which form is so special that it can be named as negative creativity [...] that in the light of the tranquil state [...], things present themselves in the way that they are [...] not as an object, but as an ideal state [...] and this is the static 'intellectual intuition'.[37]

In the transcendental realm of the Tao, a thing is not an object but an "ideal state," a form in itself, appreciation of which is capable only with Taoist wisdom, that is, the "intellectual intuition" or "the principle of no form" in which the sense of beauty and aesthetic pleasure, the real form of freedom, spring up in tranquility. Achievement of this state requires first the effort of transcendence of all human epistemological constraints or judgments that Kant's aesthetics prescribes and then an engagement in the metaphysical realm of the Tao. These are the criteria and aesthetic categories in Taoist aesthetics: for example, Lao Tze's "Chi," "Wei," "Miao" and "Xu," which refer to the activities and characters of the realm and which are applied in the evaluation of Chinese arts.

We should note that according to the readings of Mou Chung San and Tang Chun I, human primal experience of similar nature also happens in Confucianism. Mou names this experience the Confucian "intellectual intuition" in which the human mind transcends the subject and object relation before engaging with Nature. Here Nature fills the human mind with its attributes of benevolence and creativity, and enables things to actualize them-

[36] Wing-tsit Chan (trans. and compiled), *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 207.

[37] Chung-San Mou, *Intellectual Intuition and Chinese Philosophy* (Taipei, Taiwan: Commercial Press, 1974), pp. 208–11.

selves under the 'light' of the mind that is 'coping' with things. Mou emphasizes that this intuition involves his so-called "Principle of Ontological Actualization," in contrast with the "Principle of Cognitive Presentation" in the Western epistemological sense in which things are perceived as objects.[38] The deeper the engagement of the human mind with Nature or Heaven, the more moral the mind that initiates fuller actualization of things under its light; and the more beautiful the form, the greater the potential to lead one to stronger aesthetic emotion. This helps us to understand both the moral and aesthetic categories central to Confucian philosophy, such as the "harmony," the "vividness" and so on.

Tang Chun I introduces his so-called "host-and-guest" relation to describe the relationship between things and the mind in the human primal experience, in contrast to the subject and object relation in Western epistemology in which subjects are dominant and objects are subordinate. According to Tang, objectification of the mind happens only after the primal experience that he describes as "the totality of intuition" (his understanding of the experience is very similar to that of Mou). The subject is thus divided from the object. Functions and activities of the former (including the artistic ones) then begin to exert their influences and judgments onto the latter.[39] These judgments can be differentiated into the cognitive (truth), the perceptive or the aesthetic (beauty) and the will (goodness). They are made according to the subject's state of mind.

The human mind is said to be basically moral in nature; once it is free from desires, it will act as a mirror to the objects (as things-in-themselves) that are present to it. We should note that all the judgments are conducted in terms of the subject's temperaments, which may have developed from personal history, experiences and preferences, and leading to values and tastes.

A Comparative Revelation

We have seen two philosophical approaches in the introduction of the origin of aesthetic experience. Both models state the relation of art and value and trace them to what happens in the aesthetic experience.

The Deweyan model represents a belief in the biological and natural needs of a human subject, viewing aesthetic experience as an intense, direct,

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[38] *Ibid.*, p. 184.

[39] Chun-I Tang, *Spiritual Values of Chinese Culture* (Taipei, Taiwan: Ching Chung, 1987), p. 187.

immediate and integrated manifestation of the interaction of human beings and the natural living environment. Dewey also recognizes a sense of happiness as the product of the subject's physical adjustment or adaptation fitness, leading to an experience with a satisfying emotional quality, for "it possesses internal integration and fulfillment reached through ordered and organized movement." The fulfillment refers to a feeling that things are "just so," and that is the rightness and coherence manifested in art. Hence, the aesthetic experience is described as the living experience of value of human beings, referring to equilibrium and harmony attained in interaction and adjustment, which also directly refresh and enlarge the spirit and is so "delightful" from the physical base upwards.

We can also detect the harmonious state in aesthetic experience in both the Taoist and Confucian philosophies, yet the differences between them and the Deweyan model are both epistemological and metaphysical. The Taoist emphasizes that the achievement of this state requires effort of transcendence of all human epistemological constraints. The more clear and tranquil the human mind, the more it is able to know – in the light of the tranquil state – that things will present themselves in the way that they *are*, not as an object, but as an ideal state, which is also a "just so." While the "just so" or the rightness Dewey describes refers to the successful adjustment between the subject and the living environment, which is a part of the "Principle of Cognitive Presentation" in the sense that things or the environment are being perceived as objects, the "just so" in the Confucian "Principle of Ontological Actualization" is an ontological manifestation of things under the light of the human mind, which can see things-in-themselves when it is engaged with the metaphysical Nature and Heaven.

This explains the suggestions of Deweyans like Beardsley, who discusses the aesthetic values of aesthetic objects in terms of the measurement of intensity, coherence, integrity and complexity of the aesthetic experience. These measurements are conducted under the "Principle of Cognitive Presentation" from the Confucian perspective, and we may wonder if they can be ultimate answers to the question of art and value. Happiness or delight in the Deweyan sense, if based on a biological dimension, should be different from what is at and from the spiritual level or what in the light of wisdom is implied in Confucian ontology. The former lacks the depth of the meaning of ultimate concern with what things and their values should be, despite the description that meanings of secondary levels like the social one may evolve on the ground of the biological one. In brief, successful environmental adjustment is not equal to an enlightenment revealed in essential

manifestation of things or situations, in their respective contributions to an answer related to art and value.

When aestheticians take the theories of critics like Danto and Bourdieu seriously, and at the same time, have doubts about the end of aesthetic experience, they suggest retracing the values of art from the vividness and the directness of aesthetic experience.[40] As Kieran and Eaton believe, there are moral implications and values in the experience because it can promote imaginative understanding and "transformative communication," which can then enhance morality and ethics. These quests for human purposes and meanings of human life obviously have to go beyond environmental interaction and turn to the capacity of the human mind for hopes and potentials.

The Taoist and the Confucian "intellectual intuition" believe that the human mind is able to transcend the subject and object relation and to engage with Nature. Here Nature fills the human mind with its attributes of benevolence and creativity, enables things to show their completeness under the 'light' of the mind that is accorded with Nature and 'coping' with things. The objectification of the mind happens only after the primal experience of the united encounter; the division of the subject and object ensues, and the activities or the judgments of the former (including the artistic ones) exert their influences onto the latter. Hence, the cognitive, moral and aesthetic judgments emerge.

We should note that both the Deweyan and the Confucian models share the view that aesthetic experience in the broad sense comes before all other human experiences. For Dewey, an experience arises, having a satisfying emotional quality as it possesses internal integration, and the fulfillment achieved through ordered and organized movement is an aesthetic structure itself, which may be immediately felt, and it enables an intellectual (and a moral) experience to be complete.[41] In the Taoist and Confucian traditions, Neo-Confucian scholars read aesthetic experience as an upsurge from the life experience itself, when the mind witnesses the completeness and full manifestation of things-in- themselves. The mind has capacity only when it is totally engaged with Nature.

After the objectification and the division are done, the various forms of judgments emerge, including the aesthetic or artistic one in the narrow sense. Thus, the worries for excluding works that are not capable of produc-

[40] See Arthur C. Danto, "The Art World," *Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 61, no. 19 (1964), pp. 571–84 and Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), p. 23.

[41] See note 22.

ing enjoyable experiences or bad instances of art will not occur, as they are the results of related judgments.

We can describe the aesthetic traditions of the Taoist and the Confucian as the "Ontological Aesthetics of the Realm," which has its own problems to solve in its

discourse of aesthetics. This discourse has to answer the problems of the art world, like the mediation process and artistic knowledge, for example. Yet it has provided a more ultimate answer to the problem of art and value.

We can conclude the possible origins of value emanating from the following:

1) an ultimate Mind or Spirit;
2) a metaphysical Nature or Heaven;
3) an empirical body.

When the origin of value is said to come from a physical and empirical body, it is designated to be fluctuating, dependent and unstable. And it is difficult to see the values as ultimate or universal when they depend on the body and its environment. This form of attribution may explain the notion of "The End of Aesthetic Experience," and the suggestion is that the end of aesthetic experience has gone through things that happen in the non-aesthetic world that have affected our very sensibilities and capacity for experience, revealing that aesthetic experience is never fixed or natural.[42] In the Neo-Confucian reading, when the aesthetic experience happens in the engagement of the human mind with metaphysical Nature, the answers to Shusterman's three meaningful questions about the aesthetic experience that I cited earlier in this paper will then be all positive, which are as follows:

1) the concept of aesthetic experience is intrinsically honorific;
2) it is robustly phenomenological;
3) this concept's primary theoretical function is transformational instead of demarcational, aiming to enlarge it to be the base of the field of truth and goodness.[43]

If the end of aesthetic experience is linked to the anxiety that people are losing the capacity for deep experiences and feelings in the contemporary era, then an aesthetics concerned with – and that has the belief in – the

[42] Shusterman, p. 31.
[43] *Ibid.*, p. 32.

evaluation capacity and the potentiality of the human mind may provide a way to reflect on the reconstruction of experience – as well as on the differences and the possible integration between an Oriental ontology of art and Western analytical aesthetics.

THE REVIVAL OF AESTHETICS

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SOMAESTHETICS AND THE REVIVAL OF AESTHETICS

Richard Shusterman

I welcomed Aleš Erjavec's invitation to contribute an article for the international issue of *Filozofski vestnik* devoted to "The Revival of Aesthetics" and organized to coincide with the XVII International Congress for Aesthetics (in 2007). It provides me with an excellent occasion to reflect on the role of somaesthetics in the project of reviving aesthetics and promoting a more expansive scope and style of aesthetics, emphasizing international dialogue and transcultural metissage. It is a particularly opportune moment for such reflection, since 2007 marks the tenth anniversary of my first using this term in an English publication.[1] Moreover, the international context of this essay is most appropriate since somaesthetics began in international circumstances and was largely inspired through my transcultural explorations in Asian philosophical traditions.

As I sit down to write this text on a gray Paris morning, November 2006, I recall that I first introduced the notion of somaesthetics in my German book *Vor der Interpretation* (1996), where it immediately caught the attention of a reviewer for the influential daily *Frankfurter Algemeine Zeitung* (12.11.96) who however completely misunderstood (or perhaps intentionally misrepresented) its central ideas. With the anti-somatic and exclusively text-centered

[1] That was in my *Practicing Philosophy: Pragmatism and the Philosophical Life* (New York: Routledge, 1997). For further elaboration of somaesthetics, see my *Performing Live* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), ch. 7–8; "Somaesthetics and *The Second Sex*", *Hypatia* 18 (2003), pp. 106–136; "Thinking Through the Body, Educating for the Humanities: A Plea for Somaesthetics," *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 40:1 (2006), pp. 1–21. For critical discussions, see the essays of Gustavo Guerra, Kathleen Higgins, Casey Haskins, and my response in *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 36:4 (2002), pp. 55–115. See also the articles by Thomas Leddy, Anthony Soulez, and Paul C. Taylor in a symposium on *Pragmatist Aesthetics* 2nd edition (which contains a chapter on somaesthetics); the symposium, which includes my response, is published in *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 16:1 (2002), pp. 1–38.

bias so typical of the philosophical hexis, the reviewer told his readers "to imagine [somaesthetics] as something like whipping oneself while reading Kant, mountain-climbing while reading Nietzsche, and doing breathing exercises while reading Heidegger." This ridiculous caricature, however, was useful in provoking me to elaborate the project of somaesthetics in sufficient detail and in repeated publications so as to combat such misinterpretations.

For those still unfamiliar with my conception of somaesthetics, it can be most briefly defined by its focus on the body as a locus of sensory-aesthetic appreciation (*aisthesis*) and creative self-fashioning. As an ameliorative discipline of both theory and practice, somaesthetics aims to enrich not only our abstract, discursive knowledge of the body, but also our lived somatic experience and performance, seeking to enhance the meaning, understanding, efficacy, and beauty of our movements and of the environments to which our movements contribute and from which they also draw their energies and significance.

The silly review from the FAZ also confirmed a general methodological insight that has served me well – the value of trying riskier ideas in international contexts and especially in foreign languages that one's home community is likely not to notice or focus on for criticism. This greater freedom to experiment in distant lands and foreign languages has an anatomical parallel I learned from my work in somatic education – one usually has greater ease and freedom of movement in one's distal than proximate parts of the body. But exploratory experiments in foreign languages calls for skilled translation, and I want here to acknowledge my gratitude to those who have translated my texts on somaesthetics and from whose penetrating questions and comments I have greatly learned.[2]

Not only was my first mention of somaesthetics in a foreign book, but I first conceived this notion while traveling in foreign parts, on a brief visit to Poland, during my year as a Fulbright Professor in Berlin (1995–1996), when I was exploring ways to revive aesthetics through the orientations of pragmatist philosophy. A key aim of my book *Pragmatist Aesthetics* (1992) was to close the gap between art and life, theory and practice, the aesthetic and the practical, so as to help revive aesthetics by enlarging its domain beyond the narrow limits of disinterested non-functionality that philosophy's traditional ideology has assigned it. Aesthetics, I argued, becomes much more vital and

[2] I especially wish to thank Jean-Pierre Cometti, Nicolas Vieillescazes, Heidi Salaverria, Robin Celikates, Fuminori Akiba, Adam Chmielewski, Alina Mitek, Wojciech Malecki, Krystyna Wilkoszewska, Peng Feng, Satoshi Higuchi, Emil Visnovsky, Zdenka Kalnicka, Jinyup and K. M. Kim, Józef Kollár, Arto Haapala, Max Ryynanen, and Gisele Domschke for work relating to translations.

significant, when it engages the practical and thus informs the praxis of life, impacting on a complex of social, ethical, and political issues.

Bringing aesthetics closer to the realm of life and practice, I realized, meant bringing the body more centrally into aesthetic focus, since all life and practice – all perception, cognition, and action – is crucially mediated through the body. Somaesthetics was thus conceived to complement the basic project of pragmatist aesthetics by elaborating the ways that a disciplined, ramified, and interdisciplinary attention to bodily experience, methods, discourses, and performances could enrich our aesthetic experience and practice, not only in the fine arts but in the diverse arts of living.

Moreover, as I explained in a programmatic article "Somaesthetics: A Disciplinary Proposal" (*Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 1999), we need an aesthetics of embodiment to revitalize aesthetics through contact with the living body and to redress the willful neglect of the body in Baumgarten's founding text of modern aesthetics, an omission reinforced by subsequent intellectualist and idealist theories (from Kant through Hegel and Schopenhauer and on to contemporary theories that emphasize disinterested contemplation).

Though Baumgarten gave aesthetics a pragmatic dimension of self-cultivation – expressed in its aim of "the perfection of sensory cognition" that "will give an individual, *ceteris paribus*, an advantage over others", not just in thought but "in the practical action of common life," he essentially excluded somatic cultivation from his systematic program of sensory perfection because he identified interest in the body with physical ferocity, lust, and orgies. Baumgarten defines aesthetics as the science of sensory cognition and as aimed at its perfection. But the senses surely belong to the body and are deeply influenced by its condition. Our sensory perception thus depends on how the body feels and functions, what it desires, does, and suffers. Yet Baumgarten refuses to include the study and perfection of the body within his aesthetic program. Of the many fields of knowledge therein embraced, from theology to ancient myth, there is no mention of anything like physiology or physiognomy. Of the wide range of aesthetic exercises Baumgarten envisages, no distinctively bodily exercise is recommended. On the contrary, he seems keen to discourage vigorous body training, explicitly denouncing what he calls "fierce athletics" ("*ferociae athleticae*"), which he puts on a par with other presumed somatic evils like "lust," "licentiousness," and "orgies". This sadly influential error reflects the religious context of his times and the radically rationalist outlook he inherited from the tradition of Descartes, Leibniz, and Christian Wolff that viewed the body as essentially a machine and therefore not the true site of sensory perception. On the other hand,

these philosophies that sharply divide the body from the perceiving mind were themselves largely inspired by religious doctrines that denigrated the body to save and celebrate the immaterial soul.

We may have gotten beyond these religious contexts and views of embodiment. But because contemporary aesthetics has not yet given the body the systematic attention it needs, our culture's aesthetic ideals of body remain enslaved by shallow and oppressive stereotypes that serve more to increase profits for the cosmetics industries than to enrich our experience of the varieties of bodily charms. We clearly needed, I thought as I wandered alone through a garden in Warsaw, a new aesthetics of the body to revitalize aesthetics in at least three different ways: to revive Baumgarten's idea of aesthetics as a life-improving cognitive discipline that extends far beyond questions of beauty and fine arts and that involves both theory and practical exercise; to end the neglect of the body that Baumgarten disastrously introduced into aesthetics (a neglect intensified by the great idealist tradition in nineteenth-century aesthetics); and to propose an enlarged, somatically centered field that while grounded in aesthetics can also contribute significantly to other crucial philosophical concerns. This third venture, I reasoned, would not only help revitalize aesthetics by connecting it more centrally to other philosophical issues but could also help revive philosophy's original role as an embodied art of living in which aesthetics would understandably play a meaningful role. My 1997 book *Practicing Philosophy* was essentially devoted to defending that idea of philosophy as an aesthetic-ethical way of life.

But what, I wondered, should the envisaged field of body aesthetics be called, since that conjunction of terms in our culture seems entirely dominated by superficial notions of external form and consumerist cosmetic ideals of supermodels, beauty queens, and body builders; and since the very notion of body too often suggests mere material mass? Somaesthetics (a simple splicing of "soma" and "aesthetics") was the term that came to me. I admit it is more ugly than mellifluous, and can occasionally be misunderstood. I remember the first time I used it as the title of an invited lecture outside North America, the conference organizers (in Scandinavia) misread my handwritten fax and announced the title as "Some Aesthetics" in their program. But by and large, the term "somaesthetics" has been immediately understood as relating to aesthetics of embodiment. I think it aptly designates the field I envisage, and I am pleased that other scholars have also generously adopted it. As a less familiar term (deriving from the Greek word for body), "soma" is used here to distinctively denote the sentient lived body rather than a mere physical body.[3]

[3] Homer is the exception among Ancient Greeks in using σωμα to designate the corpse,

It can thus incorporate dimensions of bodily subjectivity and perception that I regard as crucial to the aesthetics of embodiment and to aesthetic experience in general; since all aesthetic experience, at least for us humans, is embodied experience. Somaesthetics claims the body deserves more careful aesthetic attention not only as an object that externally displays beauty, sublimity, grace, and other aesthetic qualities, but also as a subjectivity that experiences aesthetic pleasures through somatic sensations, kinaesthetic, proprioceptive, haptic, gustatory, etc. The notion of *aisthesis* (perception) that is also incorporated into its name reinforces that somaesthetics is concerned with the sentient perceiving "body-mind" (i.e. *Leib*) rather than with the body as a mere physical object or mechanism (*Körper*).

Moreover, the term "somaesthetics" held particular charm for me, because it mitigated an orthographical problem that increasingly perturbed me. The problem is whether the discipline Baumgarten founded should be rendered in English as "aesthetics" or more simply as "esthetics." Though the matter seems trivial, it is as stubbornly pervasive as the written use of the term (and its cognates e.g. 'aesthetic') and cannot be avoided or deferred. The question of whether "ae" or merely "e" should designate the first vowel sound of our philosophical discipline was even chosen as the theme the artist Saul Steinberg chose to define our field in his poster to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the American Society of Aesthetics. My analytic philosophical education at Jerusalem and Oxford had taught me to use the more sophisticated Greek-styled dipthong "ae" but now that I was advocating American pragmatism, should I not adopt the simpler, more streamlined "esthetic" that Dewey insisted on using. The "ae" was more familiar and more elegant perhaps, but the plain 'e' seemed clearly more honest and economically functional, and thus more in keeping with pragmatism. Discussing Steinberg's poster in *Art News* (Nov. 2006), Danto has described the aesthetics/esthetics difference as one merely "in font" and visual appearance with no morphological or phonetic significance. Though one might challenge his analysis by insisting that a difference of a letter is more than a difference of font, the point remains that the "a" in "aesthetics" does no semantic or phonetic work at all, so that aesthetics and esthetics are phonetically and semantically the same. Principles of functional economy (central to philosophical reasoning and to pragmatism especially) should then urge us to drop the unnecessary, nonfunctional 'a', even though it might be visually more pleasing. Somaesthetics, however, has the advantage of giving the 'a' a real semantic function through

using instead δέμας (frame) for the living body of a person. For more details, see *Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon*.

its use in "soma," while at the same time keeping the visuality and pronunciation of "aesthetics" within its longer lexical frame – and, of course, trying to revive the field of aesthetics by highlighting the vital bodily dimension of creating, perceiving, and appreciating things of beauty and art.

I recognize, however, that the term is not perfect. It does not accord with the best grammar of etymological construction: somatoaesthetic (as in the somatosensory system) would be, strictly speaking, more correct, and some Polish translations of my work insist on making this revision. However, I can defend the construction by noting its established use in physiology and neurology (where it appears without the 'a') in the term "somesthetic" (and also "somesthetics") that is commonly used to designate the somatosensory. The somesthetic system refers to bodily senses other than those of our teleceptors (sight, hearing, smell) and taste; that is, it designates feelings of skin (touch), proprioception, kinaesthesia, bodily temperature, balance, and pain. I was not aware of this usage when I choose the term somaesthetics for the field I envisaged, but its existence is encouraging since it suggests how somaesthetics can usefully intersect with philosophy of mind and neuroscience in sharing a common concern with bodily perceptions.

It also signals the thoroughly interdisciplinary nature of somaesthetics, which expresses my view that aesthetics and philosophy will thrive better through collaborative engagement with other disciplines rather than through a purist policing of disciplinary borders. Somaesthetics shares the broad interpretation of aesthetics as concerned with the wide range of heightened perception that Baumgarten initiated and that has been revived by such enlightened contemporaries as Gernot Böhme, Martin Seel, and Wolfgang Welsch. Engaging a diverse range of knowledge forms and disciplines that structure our somatic care or can improve it, somaesthetics is a framework to promote and integrate this wide variety of theorizing, empirical research, and practical, meliorative disciplines of bodily activity. It is not a single theory or method advanced by a particular philosopher but an open field for collaborative, interdisciplinary, and transcultural inquiry. Those researchers interested in the somatic dimensions of aesthetics and the arts are hereby invited to relate their research to the developing somaesthetic project. Its applications already extend beyond the traditional arts, to fields as diverse as computer design and tattoos to health and fitness and the use of hallucinogenic drugs in education.[4]

[4] See, for instance, Ken Tupper, "Entheogens and Education," *Journal of Drug Education and Awareness* 1:2 (2003), pp. 145–161; Tom Leddy, http://www.aesthetics-online.org/ideas/leddy.html; Titti Kallio, "Why we choose the more attractive looking objects: somatic markers and somaesthetics in user experience," in *Proceedings of the 2003 International*

I cannot here address the full range of somaesthetic inquiry but should at least acknowledge three exemplary contributions that suggest the diversity of somaesthetic research. Martin Jay, arguably America's preeminent intellectual historian, has deployed the concept to probe the connection between contemporary art and political theory. In "Somaesthetics and Democracy: Dewey and Contemporary Body Art," he traces my somaesthetic initiative back to its roots in Dewey's pragmatist aesthetics and then links it to my celebration of hip hop as a vibrantly embodied art engaged in political protest and change. Though I never identified hip hop as the paradigm of somaesthetics (the field is far too diverse to admit of one paradigm and my somaesthetic research has concentrated equally on body-mind disciplines such as Alexander Technique and Feldenkrais method that Jay also notes), Jay argues that a more effective critical example of somaesthetics and politics can be found in the provocative and often perturbing field of contemporary body art – a genre of performance art that focuses on highlighting the artist's own body and usually subjecting it to radical, disturbing experiences or deformations. Jay's insightful analysis shows that rather than being limited to experiences of organic unity and wholesome consummation that Dewey urged, somaesthetics can also illuminate artistic expressions of rupture, abjection, and disgust, which form a significant part of contemporary visual art, but also of perceptions in the ordinary *Lebenswelt*. Though my treatment of rap's aesthetics of rupture and fragmentation expressed a similar wariness of the presumptive demands of all-embracing unity, Jay's analysis makes this point even stronger while extending somaesthetic analysis into contemporary art criticism. Before leaving the field of art, I should also note how Peter J. Arnold and Bryan Turner (the renowned sociologist of the body) have recently applied somaesthetics in their analysis of dance, and Eric Mullis uses it to study dramatic performance.[5]

In "Transactional Somaesthetics: Nietzsche, Women and the Transformation of Bodily Experience," the leading pragmatist feminist philosopher Shannon Sullivan deploys somaesthetics not to address matters in the artworld but to argue for transformations of our real world through the

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Conference on Designing Pleasurable Products and Interfaces, pp. 142–143; *Electronic Edition (ACM DL) BibTeX*; Stephen J. Smith and Rebecca J. Lloyd, "Promoting Vitality in Health and Physical Education," *Qualitative Health Research* 16:2 (2006), pp. 249–267.

[5] Martin Jay, "Somaesthetics and Democracy: Dewey and Contemporary Body Art," *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 36:4 (2002), pp. 55–69; P. Arnold, "Somaesthetics, Education, and the Art of Dance," *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 39 (2005), pp. 48–64. Bryan Turner, "Introduction – Bodily Performance: On Aura and Reproducibility," *Body and Society* 11:4 (2005), pp. 1–17; E. Mullis, "Performative Somaesthetics," *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 40:4 (2006), pp. 104–117.

adoption of somaesthetic methods "that attempt to improve lived experience in concrete ways."[6] Through a critical reading of Nietzsche's intriguing views on the body's importance, Sullivan explores the ways Nietzsche wrongly ignores or trivializes the sorts of somaesthetic practices typically associated with women, and in defending their importance she also examines (through the example of Alexander Technique) the crucial role of dialogue, instruction, and other-directedness in somaesthetic practices, thus refuting the common presumption that working on the body is an essentially selfish project.

One of the most innovative explorations of somaesthetics can be found in the work of the young American philosopher J. J. Abrams, who explores how "somaesthetics could be extended more fully into the future" instead of primarily concentrating (as I have tended to) on exemplars from ancient Asian body-mind practices and similar body-mind disciplines of twentieth-century Western culture. Abrams examines how somaesthetics needs to face the challenges of genetic engineering, robotics, nanotechnology and neural-implant technology all of which can significantly revise our traditional sense and range of body-mind experience and performance.[7] Though I did address the somatic influence of new media in the chapter "Somaesthetics and the Body/Media issue" of my book *Performing Live*, I am grateful that Abrams takes matters much further and underlines the need to direct somaesthetic attention more closely to the new "posthuman" technologies that are now reshaping our experience. My comparative lack of attention to this domain does not signify a denial of its importance, but only the limits of my knowledge and time. There are, to repeat, far too many important research projects in the field of somaesthetics for any single researcher (or research institute) to even begin to achieve or exhaust.

The field of somaesthetics, as I conceive it, can be divided into three main branches, whose structure I have noted in previous writings but which needs to be recalled here both to address some of the more common criticisms of somaesthetics and to note some of the more interesting contributions that others have made to this field. *Analytic somaesthetics*, the most distinctively theoretical and descriptive branch of the project, is devoted to

[6] *Living Across and Through Skins: Transactional Bodies, Pragmatism, and Feminism* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2001), p. 112.

[7] Jerold J. Abrams, "Pragmatism, Artificial Intelligence, and Posthuman Bioethics: Shusterman, Rorty, Foucault," *Human Studies* 27 (2004), pp. 241–258. The German philosopher Dieter Thomä in reviewing the German translation of *Practicing Philosophy* (*Philosophie als Lebenspraxis*) in the Swiss daily *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (20.7.2002) also urges that somaesthetics should consider more closely the new scientific domains of genetic technology and cosmetic surgery.

such research, explaining the nature of somatic perceptions and comportment and their function in our knowledge, action, and construction of the world. Besides traditional topics in philosophy concerning the mind-body issue and somatic aspects of consciousness and action, analytic somaesthetics is concerned with biological factors that relate to somatic self-use; how, for example, greater flexibility in the spine and ribcage can increase one's range of vision by enabling greater rotation of the head, while, on the other hand, more intelligent use of the eyes can conversely (through their occipital muscles) improve the head's rotation and eventually the spine's.

This does not mean somaesthetics should be assimilated into physiology and thus expelled from the humanities; it only underlines the (obvious but much neglected) point that humanities research should be properly informed by the best scientific knowledge relevant to its studies. Renaissance art and art theory owe much of their success to their study of anatomy, mathematics, and the optics of perspective. Philosophers' traditional disdain for the body may be largely a product of their ignorance of physiology (as Nietzsche suggested) coupled with their pride in privileging only the knowledge that they do master.[8] Analytic somaesthetics is also deeply concerned with what the social sciences have to say about the modes and structuring contexts of somatic experience – including genealogical, sociological, and cultural analyses that show how the body is both shaped by social power and employed as an instrument to maintain it, how bodily norms of health, skill, and beauty, and even our categories of gender are constructed to reflect and sustain social forces.

In contrast to analytic somaesthetics whose logic is essentially descriptive, pragmatic somaesthetics has a distinctly normative, often prescriptive character because it involves proposing specific methods of somatic improvement or engaging in their comparison, explanation, and critique. Since the viability of any proposed method will depend on certain facts about the body (whether ontological, physiological or social), this pragmatic dimension presupposes the analytic dimension. But it transcends analysis not simply by evaluating the facts analysis describes, but by proposing methods to improve certain facts by remaking the body and the environing social habits and frameworks that help shape it. A vast and complex array of pragmatic disciplines have been designed to improve our experience and use of our bodies: various diets, modes of grooming and decoration, meditative, martial, and erotic arts, aerobics, dance, massage, bodybuilding, and mod-

[8] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. W. Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage, 1968), par. 408.

ern psychosomatic disciplines like Alexander Technique and Feldenkrais Method.

We can distinguish between holistic or more atomistic methods. While the latter focus on individual body parts or surfaces – styling the hair, painting the nails, shortening the nose through surgery, the former techniques – such as Hatha yoga, t'ai chi ch'uan and Feldenkrais Method – kk comprise systems of somatic postures and movements to develop the harmonious functioning and energy of the person as an integrated whole – refusing, in treating the soma, to divide body from mind.

Somatic practices can also be classified in terms of being directed primarily at the individual practitioner herself or instead primarily at others. A massage therapist or a surgeon works on others but in doing t'ai chi ch'uan or bodybuilding one is working more on oneself. The distinction between self-directed and other-directed somatic practices cannot be rigidly exclusive, since many practices are both. Applying cosmetic makeup is frequently done to oneself and to others; and erotic arts display a simultaneous interest in both one's own experiential pleasures and one's partner's by maneuvering the bodies of both self and other. Moreover, just as self-directed disciplines (like dieting or bodybuilding) often seem motivated by a desire to please others, so other-directed practices like massage may have their own self-oriented pleasures.

Despite these complexities (which stem in part from the interdependence of self and other), the distinction between self-directed and other-directed body disciplines is useful for resisting the common presumption that to focus on the body implies a retreat from the social. Experience as a Feldenkrais practitioner has taught me the importance of caring for one's own somatic state in order to pay proper attention to one's client. In giving a Feldenkrais lesson of Functional Integration, I need to be aware of my own body positioning and breathing, the tension in my hands and other body parts, and the quality of contact my feet have with the floor in order to be in the best condition to assess the client's body tension, muscle tonus, and ease of movement and to move him in the most effective way. I need to make myself somatically very comfortable in order not to be distracted by my own body tensions and in order to communicate the right message to the client. Otherwise, when I touch him, I will be passing on to him my feelings of somatic tension and unease. Because we often fail to realize when and why we are in a state of slight somatic discomfort, part of the Feldenkrais training is devoted to teaching how to discern such states and distinguish their causes.

Somatic disciplines can further be classified as to whether their major orientation is toward external appearance or inner experience. Representational

somaesthetics (such as cosmetics) is concerned more with the body's surface forms while experiential disciplines (such as yoga) aim more at making us feel better in both senses of that ambiguous phrase: to make the quality of our somatic experience more satisfying and also to make it more acutely perceptive. The distinction between representational and experiential somaesthetics is one of dominant tendency rather than rigid dichotomy. Most somatic practices have both representational and experiential dimensions (and rewards), because there is a basic complementarity of representation and experience, outer and inner. How we look influences how we feel, and vice versa. Practices like dieting or bodybuilding that are initially pursued for representational ends often produce inner feelings that are then sought for their own experiential sake. Just as somatic disciplines of inner experience often use representational cues (such as focusing attention on a body part or using imaginative visualizations), so a representational discipline like bodybuilding deploys experiential clues to serve its ends of external form, using feelings to distinguish, for example, the kind of pain that builds muscle from the pain that indicates injury.

Another category of pragmatic somaesthetics – "performative somaesthetics" – may be distinguished for disciplines that focus primarily on building strength, health, or skill and that would include practices like weightlifting, athletics, and martial arts. But to the extent that these disciplines aim either at the external exhibition of performance or at one's inner feeling of power and skill, they might be associated with or assimilated into the representational or experiential categories.

Besides the analytic and pragmatic branches of somaesthetics, we also need what I call *practical somaesthetics*, which involves actually engaging in programs of disciplined, reflective, corporeal practice aimed at somatic self-improvement (whether representational, experiential, or performative). This dimension of not just reading and writing about somatic disciplines but systematically performing them is sadly neglected in contemporary philosophy, though it has often been crucial to the philosophical life in both ancient and non-Western cultures. I have always insisted on this practical dimension while acknowledging the difficulties of inserting it into the ordinary academic curriculum. More and more I have been able to offer instruction in somaesthetics in workshops that include practical demonstrations and exercises. Two recent examples were a special 4-day Ph.D. course on aesthetic experience at the Danish Pedagogical University (May 2006) and a one-day workshop "Thinking Through the Body" at the Jan Van Eyck Academy in Holland (Nov. 2006) (http://thinkingbody.janvaneyck.nl/).

Some criticisms of somaesthetics have been recurrent enough to war-

rant a further response here. One critique claims that our culture is already far too conscious of body aesthetics – a preoccupation that is both fueled and fueled by the billion dollar cosmetics, fashion, and diet industries, so somaesthetics should be rejected for reinforcing this obsession. My response has always been that our cultural problem is not somatic attention per se, but misguided somatic attention. In other words, our attention to the body is one-sidedly, uncritically, and obsessively focused on advertised stereotypes and questionable ideals regarding certain external properties of the body, while neglecting other dimensions of our bodily experience and use that could be much more rewarding both personally and for our social world. Rather than merely affirming our culture's body practices, somaesthetics is a clarion call for "their comparative critique" in terms of their rival methods. That is why I describe its branch of pragmatic somaesthetics as "reconstructive critical theory" where the rival methods are critically "analyzed in terms of their presuppositions, effects, and ideologies".[9] Somaesthetics is not simply aimed at improving the body for its own sake but for its contribution to the flourishing of the whole person and eventually to the society in which that person is situated.[10] Martin Jay, Shannon Sullivan, J. J. Abrams and others have recognized this in applying somaesthetics to projects of democracy, gender, and society relations.

Other criticisms arise from the fact that somaesthetics designates a general field of inquiry and practice rather than a single advocated theory, official doctrine, or exclusive disciplinary technique. Though this plurality is important to its purposes of integrating different varieties of somatic theory and different techniques of somatic practice, it can mislead critics who fail to recognize the different branches. So, for example, in recommending that we practice somaesthetics, I am not recommending that we confine ourselves to practical exercises and give up the discursive work of philosophy (which is an essential part of the practice of analytic somaesthetics and also plays a role in pragmatic somaesthetics). Nor am I recommending all the specific body practices that fall under the rubric of practical somaesthetics, since some of those practices (in terms of their limitations and dangers) are in fact targets of my pragmatic somaesthetic critique. This ambiguity (which gets disambiguated in context and through the distinctions between the different branches of somaesthetics) in no way invalidates the coherency of the field.

[9] Shusterman, *Performing Live*, pp. 142, 156.

[10] I already made this point in *Practicing Philosophy*, giving somaesthetics "the role of critically examining such body practices and their attendant ideologies to see what sense they make, what good or harm they do, and whether they could profit from a better formulation of aims and methods" (p. 176).

Similar ambiguities abound in other fields that involve comparative critique and/or actual practice. One can advocate the practice of philosophy while criticizing many of the philosophies practiced. One can affirm the value of religious study without affirming all of the religions studied, or perhaps even any of them. One can celebrate the actual practice of music, while strongly criticizing particular techniques or styles of making music.

Failure to appreciate somaesthetics' multiple branches and their interrelations can help explain Richard Rorty's critique that my "somatic aesthetics" is a confusion since he presumes that somaesthetics is essentially concerned with nondiscursive practice and that there is no way of fruitfully combining nondiscursive somatic experience with philosophical or any other kind of theory that is essentially discursive. "Talking about things is one of the things we do. Experiencing moments of sensual joy is another. The two do not stand in a dialectical relationship, get in each other's way, or need synthesis in a programme or theory."[11] This presumed dichotomy between language and somatic experience – an obvious heritage of mind/body dualism – is clearly refuted by the important use of language in guiding our nondiscursive somatic practice. Though the experiences of dance, music, and meditation cannot be captured by mere words, there is no doubt that words are very useful in directing practitioners toward the realization of successful performance and enriching appreciation. Rorty, who identifies somatic pleasures too narrowly with those "of food and those of sex," should realize that our culinary pleasures can be heightened and educated through discursive means (cookbooks, food and restaurant criticism), just as our sexual experience can be improved through language – whether it be through impassioned suggestions of our partners in the midst of lovemaking or through reflective dialogue and perusal of erotic manuals in other contexts or perhaps through the reading and writing of love poetry.

Rorty, moreover, wrongly equates somaesthetics with the body practices championed by Foucault, Bataille, and Deleuze that celebrate irrational Dionysian excess. Complaining that "Foucault's, Bataille's and Deleuze's discussions of the body leave [him] cold," Rorty fails to see that my somaesthetic theories provide precisely a critique and an alternative to such philosophies that reduce the value of somatic experience to irrational extremes of passion and pleasure. Ironically, the German press has criticized my pragmatic recommendations in somaesthetics precisely for not remaining fully

[11] Richard Rorty, "Response to Richard Shusterman" in Matthew Festenstein and Simon Thompson (eds.), *Richard Rorty: Critical Dialogues* (Oxford: Polity Press, 2001), p. 156.

in the French Dionysian tradition of radical excess but instead advocating more gentle, sensitive, and thoughtful modes of bodily discipline and joy.[12]

I take, in fact, a pluralistic (which does not mean an "anything goes") position, recognizing that all bodily disciplines have their limits, and that different aims, values, and contexts require different methods. But my main point is that interest in the body does not necessarily signify a retreat from thought, a betrayal of philosophy's reflective, critical enterprise by abandoning oneself blindly to the body's passions and pleasures. First, there is the discursive realm of analytic and pragmatic somaesthetics, describing somatic functions, practices, norms, ideals, methods, social and theoretical contexts and engaging in their comparative critique. But even within the concrete realm of practical somaesthetics there are disciplines that focus precisely on bringing reflective skills to bodily experience by developing a heightened and more precise cognitive awareness of our somatic feelings, posture, or action.

Such body-mind disciplines central to the experiential mode of somaesthetics (and including Alexander Technique, Feldenkrais Method, Zen meditation) are in some ways more mentally or intellectually demanding than they are physically demanding. As my Zen master Roshi Inoue Kido explained at his Dojo by Japan's Inland Sea, the essential is not mastery of the lotus position but mastery of consciousness, of heart and mind. I have repeatedly argued we cannot equate immediate experience narrowly with pure somatic experience, because there are not only immediate experiences of linguistic understanding; there are also somatic experiences that are mediated through language and even consciously experienced in terms of explicit conceptualizations (as when one is asked to assume a specific posture with a particular limb and then asked to sense what that posture feels like). Though introduced to revive aesthetics by rescuing it from a one-sided philosophical intellectualism that banishes cultivation of the body and nondiscursive immediate experience from the domain of true aesthetic culture, somaesthetics was never proposed as an anti-intellectual doctrine of pure experience and feeling, a recipe for purging philosophy and aesthetics from the reflective and discursive inquiry that they need.[13] Somaesthetics offers a way of inte-

[12] *Ibid.* See, for example, "Sanfter atmen" in *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (9/10 Februar, 2002), a review of *Philosophie als Lebenspraxis*. On the other hand, the distinguished German philosopher and aesthetic theorist Gernot Böhme, chides that same book for being too tolerant of Foucault's excesses in "Somästhetik – sanft oder mit Gewalt?," *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie*, Heft 5 (2002). For my somaesthetic approach to eroticism, see "Asian Ars Erotica and the Question of Aesthetics", *JAAC* 65:1 (2007).

[13] This unfortunate misconception of somaesthetics as advocating blind, mute experience with no conceptual or intellectual content is evident in an article published in a

grating the discursive and nondiscursive, the reflective and the immediate, thought and feeling, in the quest of providing greater range, harmony, and clarity to the soma – the body-mind whose union is an ontological given but whose most satisfying unities of performance are both a personal and cultural achievement.

much earlier international issue of *Filozofski vestnik*, connected with a prior International Congress of Aesthetics. See Simo Säätellä, "Between Intellectualism and 'Somaesthetics,'" *Filozofski vestnik* 20: 2 (1999), XIV ICA Supplement, pp. 151–161. The article was written before my 1999 *JAAC* article appeared outlining the project of somaesthetics, so the misconstrual was perhaps an understandable error (by a good philosopher), even if there was already enough in *Practicing Philosophy* to show how erroneous it was. I hope the myth of somaesthetics as a philosophy of nonthinking has now been finally laid to rest.

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"A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME"

Arnold Berleant

What's in a name? that which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet…
Romeo and Juliet (II, ii, 1–2)

Introduction

The theme of this issue of *Filozofski vestnik*, "The Revival of Aesthetics," may be taken to suggest that aesthetics is or has been in decline. I do not think that this is the case. The history of aesthetics shows a gradual and growing development from isolated questions and issues to greater scope and increasing identity as a distinctive field of inquiry. This development has continued to the present, apart from some brief intervals when, with supreme arrogance, the cognitive status of aesthetics has been questioned. I would say instead that we are witnessing a vast expansion of the scope of aesthetic inquiry, and that it is now possible to consider the aesthetic value, not only of nature and the arts, but of technology, popular culture, environment, and social relationships, to mention a few of its new directions.

These are promising possibilities and they would benefit by being clearly identified and described. But at the same time, the field of aesthetics has long labored under handicaps, cognitive as well as professional. These would benefit from articulation and clarification, and it is my intent here to initiate the process. This, then, is an essay on the tasks of aesthetic theory and the pitfalls that beset it. I want to show that aesthetics can be enlightening by discovering and examining the facets and dimensions of experiences we call aesthetic, experience that is expansive and revelatory. This kind of experience can also clarify the relation of aesthetics to other areas of knowledge,

such as cultural studies, and conversely, the bearing of different disciplines on our aesthetic understanding.

Let me consider, first, how aesthetic inquiry might proceed in clearer and more productive directions, beginning with the name of our discipline. The historical origins of 'aesthetics' is well known, and it can be informative and helpful. However, 'aesthetics' has often been used to restrict appreciative experience, and the term itself may be unimportant. What we label aesthetic is not significant; appreciation is. For aesthetic theory is easily caught up in secondary, unproductive, and even false issues, such as the definition of art, the boundaries of art, and the proper designation of beauty. It is this danger that gives this essay its title. What is important, I want to argue, is not what we label beautiful or call art but where we find the kind of value experiences traditionally associated with appreciating beauty, natural and artistic, and how we can enhance and develop such experiences. However, this also requires recognizing the converse of these values in the loss, the negation, the desecration of this mode of experience, and I shall touch on this, as well.

The scope of aesthetic experience

The field of aesthetics is unique in the central place it gives perceptual experience, experience that is never surpassed or transcended. Since this is where any inquiry must start, I consider aesthetics a, perhaps 'the,' foundational discipline, foundational not logically or ontologically but temporally and heuristically. This is a powerful claim, but it recognizes how important are those normative experiences that we call aesthetic.

What constitutes aesthetic experience?

Aesthetic experience has been a subject of discussion since Shaftesbury and Hutcheson inquired into the experience of beauty early in the seventeenth century and claimed that aesthetic appreciation is largely disinterested. Such a view was institutionalized by Kant at the beginning of the eighteenth century and, since then, it has become axiomatic for most aestheticians. At the same time, some have challenged its hegemony and for different reasons: descriptive, empirical, historical, social, conceptual, and theoretical. One key argument is that disinterestedness confines apprecia-

tion to a state of mind, that is, a psychological state, and unduly excludes the somatic and social dimensions of experience.[1]

Aesthetic experience again became important in the nineteenth century and even more in the mid-twentieth, culminating in John Dewey, the principal figure in this re-focusing of aesthetic inquiry.[2] Somewhat in eclipse during the latter part of the last century, interest in aesthetic experience has returned in recent years, both in artistic practice and aesthetic theory, and with renewed vitality and a broader scope. Following the groundwork laid by Dewey in centering discussion on the active human organism, current interpretations of aesthetic experience stress its sensory character to varying degrees and interpret sensory perception far more widely than before. In contrast to a tradition originating in classical Greece that restricts the perception of beauty to sight and hearing, it is now often argued that all the senses are involved to varying degrees, including the proprioceptive and kinesthetic ones, and that the senses do not perceive through discrete and separate channels but rather in combination and often synaesthetically.

Yet another expansion of aesthetic experience in the late twentieth century has been to reject disinterestedness, not only because of its psychological cast, but because it is unduly restrictive in excluding objects and activities that may be functional or have a practical purpose but that one can still appreciate aesthetically. Intrinsic perception must therefore be understood more broadly. It may occur alongside the practical, as in architecture, automobile design, or an English cottage garden, or it may be inseparable from practical uses, as in the appreciation of a perfectly functioning machine or a well-designed article of furniture. Social, cultural, and technological influences are also important factors in aesthetic experience. Because the range of aesthetic value has become vastly greater, so also has its significance as a cultural phenomenon.[3]

Thus with the expansion of perceptual experience to include all the senses and to go beyond a merely psychological attitude or mental state to an experience of the conscious, sensing body, the characterization and meaning

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[1] *Cf.* Jerome Stolnitz, "On the Origins of 'Aesthetic Disinterestedness,'" *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 20 (1961), pp. 131–44; Ronald Hepburn and Arnold Berleant, "An Exchange on Disinterestedness," *Contemporary Aesthetics* 1 (2003) (www.contempaesthetics.org); Arnold Berleant, *Re-thinking Aesthetics, Rogue Essays on Aesthetics and the Arts* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2004), Chs. 2 and 3.

[2] John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Minton, Balch, & Co., 1934).

[3] There is a large and growing literature here, some of it coming from sources in the phenomenological movement and some from the pragmatic. Among the more notable contributors to the enlargement of our understanding of aesthetic experience are Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Mikel Dufrenne, Arnold Berleant, and Wolfgang Welsch.

of aesthetic experience have undergone major changes. What remains critical, however, is the strong emphasis on sensory perception and on the intrinsic character of such perception. The active participation of the appreciator, indeed the appreciator's contribution to the art and to the experience, have become widely recognized and are openly employed in the contemporary arts. Artistic practices, such as including the reader's response and the multitude of forms interactive art has assumed, call on the contribution of the appreciator in overt and active participation for their fulfillment; without that contribution they are incomplete. Indeed, we recognize that absorption in aesthetic appreciation can occur to a degree so complete that the viewer, reader, or listener may entirely abandon the consciousness of being a separate self and enter totally into the aesthetic world. I call this aesthetic engagement, and when it is achieved most fully and intensely and completely, it is the fulfillment of the possibilities of aesthetic experience.

Where can it be found?

When aesthetic experience is so broadly inclusive, its scope of application becomes correspondingly large. Appreciation then is not confined to the art museum or the concert hall but extends in all directions. Not only can any object be appreciated aesthetically but so can every situation. Consequently, aesthetics has generated a proliferation of sub-disciplines such as environmental aesthetics, the aesthetics of everyday life, the aesthetics of popular culture, and the aesthetics of sport, to name a few. The range of aesthetics has also grown, developing new relations with other disciplines and new regions to explore. Comparative aesthetics is one such development, and it expands our understanding of the aesthetic in relating other cultural and historical traditions to the classic Western one. Social aesthetics is another, looking into ways in which aesthetic experience and value enter human relationships and institutions.

There is yet another direction in which the scope of aesthetic experience has moved. In giving primacy to intrinsic sensory perception and to meanings and ideas grasped through such experience, we must acknowledge that this experience is not always rewarding, that it does not lift the capacity and subtlety of the aesthetic process to a richer range and depth. The very inclusiveness of aesthetic experience demands that we take account of experiences that are similar in kind but different in value. Intrinsic sensory awareness perceived through cultural meanings and influences may inten-

sify those objects and situations that range from the unfulfilled to the demeaning and destructive.

In short, we may speak of a negative range of aesthetic experience, of negative aesthetics, so to say, and this can not only reflect lost or frustrated possibilities for enrichment, as in the design of a banal building or martial music that evokes loyalty to false or destructive myths of national or cultural superiority. Aesthetic experience can also produce outright pain, as in entering a favela or urban slum, of dismay in witnessing the clear-cutting of an old growth forest, or of revulsion when encountering kitsch in literature or art. These experiences can produce not only aesthetic pain but moral suffering, both of which, at times, are inseparable. Its capability of identifying negative aesthetic values gives the aesthetic the capacity to act as an incisive force in social criticism, a largely untried region of aesthetic activity but potentially a powerful one. Aesthetic theory and experience are intimately bound up with the moral, negatively as well as positively.

Enlarging the domain of aesthetic value

Recognizing the dark side of aesthetic experience is another reason for exceeding traditional constraints. The aesthetic has not only a history but has evolved over time and has a future. It is clearly unwise to attempt to predict the aesthetic capacities of experiences as yet unknown. We can nonetheless see, at our present stage some of the revealing possibilities that new directions of inquiry offer. As we have just noted, negative aesthetics is a hidden region of perceptual experience that is inseparable from ethical issues. We might even argue that ethical criticism always harbors an aesthetic component. For every decrease in human good is also a beauty unrealized, and moral transgressions always bring with them a diminution of aesthetic capabilities. We might say that an aesthetic affront is part of every immoral act. This is clearly a complex interrelationship; it identifies a direction in which aesthetic inquiry can move into new ground and enlarge our moral as well as our aesthetic understanding.

Then there are perennial issues that can acquire new meaning. One of these concerns the interrelationships between and among the various arts, always an intriguing question and more so now with new arts and new artistic technologies. Some relationships that were challenging not long ago have been more or less settled as the presumed conflict has dissipated or at least become less interesting. Obvious examples are the relation of photography to painting, of film to the novel and to video art, and of assemblages and

environments to sculpture. It is a challenge for aesthetic theory to help us understand how these historically related art forms engage us in different ways and what is distinctive about our experiences with them.

We have already noted new perspectives in experience that can be identified in different historical periods. The question arises of how or whether such historically-qualified experiences can be grasped clearly enough that they retain their identity. Is there, for example, a Victorian sensibility that moves across pre-Raphaelite painting, didactic poetry, gothic novels, and the dark romanticism of nineteenth century symphonic music? What of the baroque in music and architecture or, more recently, dada and surrealist art, pop art and mass culture? Does appreciating seventeenth century Dutch landscape painting entail experientially entering the world of Vermeer or Hobbema and, if it does, how does the world in which we engage compare with the world of those painters?

A somewhat parallel issue concerns the comparative understanding of the characteristic aesthetic sensibility found in different cultural traditions. Can we discern, for example, a tangential connection between the experience of the x-ray paintings in aboriginal art with, say, cubist art of the early twentieth century, or medieval Indian erotic temple sculpture and the work of Rodin or Maillol?

Other related and underlying issues need to be exposed and clarified. Where is aesthetic value located and how is it identified in different cultures? Some obvious complications reside in the frequent fusion of aesthetic with religious experience and meaning. Can they be distinguished and, if they can, how much do they resemble one another? To consider a common, puzzling case, how can we best understand the interrelations of Christian history and beliefs with the aesthetic experience of the masses of Bach, Mozart, or Schubert? I suspect that a somewhat different understanding will emerge in each case and, perhaps, in each individual work. Where does the aesthetic lie in the statuary of Hindu deities, of Western Medieval and Renaissance painting, of the carved wood crucifixions and altarpieces of Riemenschneider in the late Middle Ages? Perhaps this cognitive complexity can be seen most directly in the names different cultures use to identify what we may call beauty: the Hebrew *yapha*, the Greek *to kalon*, the Japanese *wabi-sabi*, the Indian *rasa*.[4] While a beginning has been made in comparative aesthetics, fascinating issues remain. Comparative aesthetics, historical aesthetics, the multi-dimensional richness of aesthetic experience in different arts: these are some of the productive directions in which aesthetic inquiry can move.

[4] See Crispin Sartwell, *Six Names of Beauty* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004).

Obstacles to expanding aesthetic theory

Such promising possibilities may augur an optimistic future for aesthetic theory. Unfortunately, however, aesthetics is burdened with many so-called problems that are either insignificant or misdirected. Here is where the rose, referred to in my title, grows. Indeed, such problems often rest on theoretical assumptions originating in cultural belief systems, or on premises that derive from quite different philosophical sources. We may therefore want to regard some of these problems as false issues in aesthetics, all the more unfortunate in their tendency to deflect us from larger concerns and more productive directions. This is not a vague and general criticism: it rests on specific assumptions and practices.

One of these is the widespread practice of centering discussion on the object, the art object, alone. The question is often asked, "But is it art?", rather than inquiring into the experiential situation in which alone that question is meaningful. This object orientation leads to many minor issues that have produced major efforts at conceptual identification, such as identifying aesthetic qualities, determining the meaning and boundaries of beauty or the definition of 'art.' It is the distortion that results from taking aesthetic inquiry to be about art objects that produced the controversy between formalism and representation in the visual arts and the persistent puzzle over the aesthetic significance of artistic representation, as well as uncharitable responses to new materials, styles, and subject-matter. What we should ask instead is, "Are we experiencing this situation aesthetically and how can we develop the capacity to appreciate these artistic innovations?" One consequence of making aesthetic experience central is the recognition that art is not an object at all but a situation, a field of aesthetic experience, an aesthetic field, and that every art object functions aesthetically and can be understood only as part of a experiential situation involving appreciative, creative, and performative aspects, as well as the objective one.[5] It does not matter whether we call something art or not: What is important is how the object works in appreciative experience. It is such experience that is the heart of the aesthetic.

In considering obstacles to the expansion of aesthetics, it is useful to distinguish between different modes of aesthetic inquiry. I shall call them critical and substantive aesthetics. Defining key concepts, demarcating the

[5] I term this "the aesthetic field" and it is the guiding idea in my work in aesthetics. It was first developed in my book, *The Aesthetic Field, A Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience* (Springfield: C. C. Thomas, 1970) and has been extended and refined in subsequent publications.

boundaries of art, puzzling over whether and how we can characterize the aesthetic properties of objects that function in appreciative experience, specifying precisely the relation these objects have to aspects of the world independent of art – all these may be subsumed under critical aesthetics. So, too, are the concern with the logic of those concepts and the structure of aesthetic theory. Substantive aesthetics, on the other hand, is not directed at objects and their corresponding ideas but toward understanding the content and conditions of appreciative experience. It attends to the first-order factors in such experience and not with the second-order, meta-aesthetic activity of defining and characterizing that experience. In their extremes, these modes of inquiry represent two different and incompatible intellectual cultures, but happily they are not often carried to extreme lengths. Most aestheticians do both critical and substantive aesthetics. The differences among them result from the degree of importance or emphasis given one or the other. Even when not extreme, these differences may be significant, indeed fundamental.[6]

Another obstruction to progress in aesthetic thought results from hierarchical thinking that leads to invidious distinctions as, for example, between the higher arts and the lower or popular arts.[7] Instead of making normative distinctions, we can gain greater understanding from investigating differences in appreciative experience that occur in conjunction with artistic modes, materials, and styles associated with that classification. Here we should also include the folk arts, as well, arts that have histories, styles, and experiences of significant value in their own right. Weaving, basket making, quilting, sculpture using recycled materials, and environments constructed out of discarded objects can offer deep satisfactions to a perceiver and rich insights into the worlds of people who may be too modest or naïve to claim the title of artist. Moreover, it would be misleading to consider the popular arts as a homogeneous group. Significant differences exist among them, and subtle yet important discriminations can be made of appreciative experience between arts in the same modality. Popular music encompasses an enormous range of sub-genres that differ significantly from one another. What makes swing, ballads, jazz, be-bop, rock, hip hop, and rap distinctive and different from one another? This, moreover, is not to deny the qualitative differ-

[6] A fuller discussion of this distinction occurs in A. Berleant, *The Aesthetics of Environment* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), pp. 25–26.

[7] Cultivating the "higher arts" is seen as an important source of creative inquiry in European culture. See the program of The European League of Institutes of the Arts (ELIA) and the Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC).

ence between Bartók and be-bop. It is rather to recognize that each artistic modality (not level) is the occasion for unique appreciative experiences. Differences in quality, refinement, complexity, and subtlety do not tendentiously demarcate degrees of aesthetic value but rather differences in experience that is itself normative. Research into those differences is an important field for aesthetic research.

Another, related traditional hierarchical assumption is the distinction between the fine arts and the practical arts or crafts. This, of course, has cultural and historical roots in the superiority that the classical Greeks attributed to theoretical over practical knowledge. Its modern form appears in the assumption that objects of fine art must be regarded for their own qualities and not for any practical interest. This, the doctrine of the disinterestedness of aesthetic appreciation, has been an axiom of modern aesthetics. While it served to identify the distinctiveness of the aesthetic, at the same time it excluded from aesthetic significance and even legitimacy those arts that are inseparable from practical interests, such as the design arts, and it led to such anomalies as considering architecture a fine art and furniture design a practical one.[8] Resting aesthetic value on appreciative experience undermines these false oppositions and makes possible the illuminating study of finely discriminated qualities of appreciation.

The future of aesthetics

Finally, a word about the implications of the aesthetic topography I have mapped here. Some of these are fairly obvious from what has already been said. Others are not so apparent. Let me indicate several possible directions.

Once we extend the range of the place and the experience of art and the aesthetic, we can better appreciate their critical position in human society. Every design decision affects people's experience, and the aesthetic is an essential part of that experience. Instead of being thought of as a "frill," we begin to grasp the pervasiveness and importance of aesthetic factors. These, then, assume greater importance, and decisions about the design of human environments and institutions and of the activities that are part of their functional processes take on a broader significance. Social decisions,

[8] I have developed an extensive critique of aesthetic disinterestedness in several places. See *Art and Engagement* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991) and especially *Rethinking Aesthetics*, cited above.

such as those implemented through city planning and urban design, residential developments, and architecture, all produce aesthetic consequences. Once their importance is acknowledged, all social decisions will have to consider aesthetic effects in addition to economic constraints and technological requirements. Before any major construction project is begun, a community should require an "aesthetic impact study," as many now require an environmental impact study. Money must no longer rule as an autocratic god, for economic values are never the only values at stake. Such forethought is necessary not only for design decisions in the physical environment but for design decisions about organizations, political processes, and other forms in which societies structure themselves and carry on their activities.

The aesthetic also has an important place in human relationships, both personal and social, and it affects people's daily activities. I call the aesthetic here "social aesthetics," the aesthetic factor present in friendship, family, love, employment, and even in education. Aesthetic decisions and experiences are also embedded in the design of influential factors and features in the everyday environment. These extend from the choice of clothing, the use of appliances, the packaging of articles, the care and management of one's dwelling place, and the other objects and aspects that constitute daily life, to personnel policies and the structuring of employer-employee relations, i.e., the social organization of production. This is not to deny the major importance of an ethical factor in these last cases for, indeed, ethical values lie at the heart of social aesthetics. We should also not fail to include the influence of aesthetic decisions on political life and on social institutions. Aesthetic distinctions are easily transmuted into class distinctions, and class distinctions are quickly institutionalized in political distinctions and discriminatory social practices. Influences on the quality of aesthetic experience pervade the human environment.[9]

Pervasiveness and universality

The assumption that there are universal aesthetic standards and the quest for them have colored the history of aesthetic thought, but such standards have never been established successfully.[10] The individual human and

[9] The key study here is Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990). See also Arnold Berleant and Allen Carlson (eds.), *The Aesthetics of Human Environments* (Peterborough, ON: Broadview, forthcoming 2007).

[10] The question of whether it is possible to establish such standards has been a preoc-

social factors in aesthetic judgment are ineradicable, and with them come the other contextual factors that influence appreciative experience. Yet while aesthetic judgments may not be universal, the aesthetic in experience is valued everywhere, and more research is needed to explore and examine this. Not only do all peoples seem to consider aesthetic satisfactions important; there is a similar breadth found in the occurrence of the aesthetic in every nook and cranny of experience. The traditional boundaries that have circumscribed art and the aesthetic have been forever breached.[11]

Aesthetic understanding

One of the consequences of such a renewal of aesthetics as I have projected here cannot be described or categorized easily. This is a vastly enlarged vision of human understanding. Here artists can be our guides and philosophers our cartographers. Experiential understanding is a legitimate and important mode of knowing the human world. Our awareness deepens as we incorporate the revelations novelists give us into different human conditions, both historically and culturally different.[12] Poets reveal the nuances of particular occurrences and situations; playwrights the peculiarities of an endless range of social situations. As fine artists bring to light new sights and new ways of seeing, composers lead us into the experience of a nonverbal, non-representational realm.[13] So with every art and every original artist.[14]

Not only are the range and subtlety of human experience vastly enlarged through our aesthetic understanding. Artists are uniquely able to penetrate beneath the protective layers with which we shield ourselves. For aesthetic appreciation is not sensory delectation alone but an entrance into domains of awareness that lie outside the boundaries of empirically verifiable scientific knowledge, of linear rationality, as it were.

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cupation of philosophers from Hume and Kant to the present day.

[11] For a revealing account of this, see David Novitz, *The Boundaries of Art* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992).

[12] In her analysis of literary works, Nussbaum probes into the kind of understanding that literature offers. See Martha Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

[13] Vladimir Jankélévitch draws a penetrating distinction between the ineffable and the untellable, and assigns the former to music. The ineffable cannot be explained but "acts like a form of enchantment," dealing with mystery and provoking bewilderment. *Music and the Ineffable* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, (1961) 2003), p. 72.

[14] See Derek Whitehead, "Artist's Labor," *Contemporary Aesthetics* (www.contempaesthetics.org), Vol. 5 (2007).

Philosophers have long had intimations of such "poetic understanding." Heidegger, for example, found the meaning of an artwork's "coming-to-presence" in poetry, for poetry reaches toward what words cannot say directly and literally. Thinking, he wrote, "must think against itself," and poetry discloses being by offering a presence that touches us. Poetry, indeed, becomes the language of being.[15]

Merleau-Ponty approached aesthetic understanding by another route, through vision rather than language, painting rather than poetry. His problem is somewhat different: how to grasp "our mute contact with the things, when they are not yet things said." How can we make the "transition from the mute world to the speaking world"? To do this we must confront "brute vision" and recognize the ineradicable influences both of our corporeal body and of the world of human encounters, culture, and history. What we are seeking, he stated, is being, neither in itself or for itself, but at the intersection of both, before the chasm between consciousness and body that reflection interposes.[16] In pursuing this, Merleau-Ponty invoked original and powerful ideas. One of them is the concept of reversibility, the kind of interdependency that holds between touching and the touched, between the visible and the invisible. This led him to speak of more than interdependency but of a joining together into what he calls "the flesh of the world," the "indivision of this sensible Being that I am and all the rest which feels itself in me, pleasure-reality indivision [...]."[17] His fascinating investigation of this led him to the idea of a 'chiasm' or intertwining. This is a rich concept, whose full elaboration he left unfinished. It points to a direction from which we attempt to grasp the pre-reflective human world where words cannot lead us.

An art object can be analyzed, considered historically and in the context of the artist's oeuvre, and, yes, theorized about in terms of its form, expressive qualities, and technique. It can also be appreciated, and this, too, can be cognized in similar ways. I want to maintain, however, that something remains in the way in which art is grasped in appreciative experience that eludes these cognitive processes. It is this understanding, the grasp of the work that exceeds everything that can be said about it, that is the work's core, its heart. It has to be experienced to exist and, like all perceptually based experience, cannot be fully transcribed or commu-

[15] Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1975), pp. 8, 93. *Cf.* also pp. 137, 216.

[16] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), pp. 36, 38, 63–64, 95, 154.

[17] *Ibid.*, pp. 254–257.

nicated. Such an understanding is what Jankélévitch called ineffable and what Nussbaum described as love's knowledge. Stravinsky put it pointedly in the case of music: "The one true comment on a piece of music is another piece of music."[18]

These last, brief accounts only cite some important efforts to achieve a kind of understanding that, by its very nature, is pre-conceptual. Yet the inarticulability of the end point of philosophy is hardly a new discovery. One cannot help but be reminded of Plato's recognition of it in the incommunicability of his vision of the forms.[19] A comparable but essentially different case is Kant's projection of a noumenal realm of things-in-themselves, a realm that lies beyond the capabilities of human knowledge but that at the same time we can grasp as the ground of possibility. This non-conceptual understanding, what I have been calling aesthetic understanding, has to be rediscovered constantly as philosophy moves into different phases.

Exploring the domain of aesthetic understanding is a task to be undertaken in its own place, for we cannot depict and communicate this understanding directly and exactly through language without losing its very identity. This greatest of questions is like great art. As Derrida observed, "A masterpiece always moves, by definition, in the manner of a ghost."[20] In these times when it is widely claimed that scientific knowledge is exclusive and exhaustive while, on the other side, gross irrationality runs madly amok on an international scale, it remains a challenge for philosophers to recognize this realm of the inarticulable and determine its significance for inquiry. This is something to pursue, not as an investigation into an objective, universal structure and not as an artist's intuitive path, but as the exploration of an elusive and ever-changing region of experience, a domain that may be grasped though not known.

Here aesthetics can help us, for the ultimate inarticulability of the aesthetic provides an occasion for recognizing and clarifying the character and range of a region of human understanding that has been insufficiently considered. To view it as terrain that is contiguous with aesthetic experience is to acknowledge the philosophical importance of aesthetic inquiry. This is a challenge for inquiry and, like the arts themselves, it is substantive rather than critical. In the process aesthetics has to enlarge its scope and develop the confidence to move in new directions. Here is an undertaking of surpassing importance, and its results are unpredictable.

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[18] Jankélévitch, *op. cit.,* Nussbaum, *op. cit.* Igor Stravinsky in an interview in the *New York Review of Books* (May 12, 1966), p. 12.

[19] Plato, *Republic*, VII, 540A.

[20] Jacques Derrida, *Spectres of Marx* (Routledge, 1994), p. 18.

We have come, in our projection of a renewal of aesthetics, to a key place. Here, however, we must stop, for it is not the purpose of this essay to provide answers to the questions I have raised or try to fulfill the productive possibilities of aesthetics. What I hope to have done is draw a topographical map of the landscape of aesthetic theory, and it has brought us to this most fascinating and elusive of questions: recognizing and identifying the kind of understanding that comes by way of art and, more generally, through aesthetic experience.

Conclusion

It is clear that a revival of aesthetics has already begun. The place of the arts and aesthetic experience in human society has expanded and become more prominent. Aesthetic values are discovered in the objects and situations of daily life and extend to the various forms of social relationships. Assimilating all these into the province of aesthetic inquiry provides a basis for social and environmental criticism, giving aesthetic judgment an important social role. Aesthetic experience also has had to grapple with the challenges presented by new arts and artistic technologies. All these have enlarged the range of aesthetic experience of which we are aware and attentive, and which then must be understood in ways that can account for these changes. Part of this expanded range of experience is a growing appreciation of the value of differences among cultures, something an aesthetic sensibility is particularly capable of recognizing. We can think of this variety in aesthetic perception as part of the cultural pool of humankind, as a resource comparable to the human gene pool, a rich fund from which ever new possibilities of perceptual experience can be brought to consciousness. And as the values we find in cultural perceptions increase, our appreciation of the importance of these differences grows accordingly. Lastly, the greater breadth of human cognitive and perceptual awareness leads us to recognize its limits and to gain a more balanced vision of its range.

There is clearly much room for the expansion of aesthetic inquiry as it proceeds down the many avenues that stretch before it. New and revived theoretical questions appear, from re-examining aesthetic appreciation to disclosing the shape of aesthetic understanding. Moreover, theory has a whole other side, for applied aesthetics is becoming increasingly important in the larger culture. Indeed, both of these must go hand in hand, for they are different sides of the same coin. In the process of its expansion, some traditional issues may be abandoned and, with them, the comfort of familiar

ground. But this is all to the good, for it reaffirms the vitality of this inquiry and the continuing importance of aesthetic value in the mass culture of an industrial world. While we may have to forsake the rose, we may discover its hidden fragrance everywhere. So let us proceed.

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THE IMPLICATION OF IMAGES IN THE REVIVAL OF AESTHETICS

Anthony J. Cascardi

The movement to revive aesthetic theory in the contemporary world has produced a fascination with images that has been haunted by the ghost of Platonism. This is true despite the fact that there has been no single, more sustained, or emphatic intellectual enterprise among contemporary aesthetic theorists than to exorcise Plato's philosophical presence. This should hardly come as a surprise. As with postmodern philosophy generally, contemporary aesthetic theory is embedded in a culture dominated by images, and so would seem to require a reversal of Plato's critique of image-making, including the images that are prominent in art. In adopting this stance, contemporary aesthetic theory follows closely in the footsteps of its great-grandfather, Nietzsche, whose own project was conceived as a "reversal" of Platonism. A crucial remark is found in Nietzsche's notebooks of 1870–71: "My philosophy *reversed Platonism*: the farther removed from true beings, all the purer, more beautiful, better it is."[1] Indeed, one of Nietzsche's great hopes was to recover the value of the world of appearances that Plato and his philosophical heirs seemed to have disparaged. If, as outlined in *Republic*, III and X, Plato is skeptical about images because they stand at several removes from the truth of the eternal forms, then it would seem to be the duty of aesthetic theory to overturn Platonism so as to re-capture whatever truth images may contain. But, as I hope to explain, the critique of Plato that underpins much contemporary aesthetic theory is based on a tradition that has misconstrued some of Plato's fundamental ideas. It is contradictory in other ways as well. While one of its main concerns is to assert the validity of contemporary art, it is engaged in a project that is far broader than what may be associated with any narrowly-bounded aesthetic sphere. Indeed, the goals of contemporary

[1] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Studiensausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980), VII, p. 199.

aesthetics require a de-coupling of aesthetics from art. They involve coming to terms with the implications of Nietzsche's insistence that existence and the world could be justified only in aesthetic terms.[2]) In the view of one writer, Alexander Nehamas, this implies the transformation of life itself into a work of art.[3] But whereas Nehamas had Nietzsche's doctrine of interpretation foremost in mind, the transformation of life into art has in fact occurred largely through the cultivation of "style" as corporate-sponsored and media-driven "life-style" rather than as a manifestation of ethical individualism or of responsiveness to qualitative experience. And yet, to re-state my earlier point, the "reversal" of Platonism in contemporary aesthetic theory rests on what is at best an insufficiently nuanced view of what Plato has to say. It discounts Plato's own propensity to write in a discourse that is highly imagistic; indeed, its attempted reversal of Plato applies more accurately to what *became* of Plato – to Platon*ism* – rather than to Plato's writings themselves. In the process, Plato's understanding of the relationship between image and truth was obscured, and some of the force of aesthetics against the iconoclastic opposition to images was lost.

Taken in the root sense, "iconoclasm" suggests the destruction of images; more generally, it indicates the eradication or suppression of images. At the present historical moment such a desire seems anachronistic, if not inconceivable. We live in a cross-cultural, global world where images prevail above all else. Images are the sites of some of the most heated contemporary conflicts, where some of the fiercest political and ideological debates are engaged. Witness the Abu Ghraib photographs, the Muhammad cartoons, the visual images of the 9/11 attacks, and the fascination with video images in the first Gulf War. The dominance of images is apparent in virtually all spheres of life – in politics, in commerce, as well as in academic circles, where there has been a noticeable turn away from the traditional practices of interpreting texts toward the reading of images. Along with Martin Jay's critical account of the disparagement of vision in twentieth-century French thought (*Downcast Eyes)*, there has been a plethora of books heralding the "visual turn" in criticism. Witness Norman Bryson's anthology *Visual Culture*, W. J. T. Mitchell's *Picture Theory*, Gillian Rose's *Visual Methodologies*, as well as books by Jonathan Crary *(Techniques of the Observer*), David Michael Levin (*Modernity and the Hegemony of Vision*), and others.

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[2] "Nur als aesthetisches Phänomen ist das Dasein und die Welt ewig gerechfertigt." *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1988), p. 47.

[3] Alexander Nehamas, *Nietzsche: Life as Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985).

There is no doubt that we need to establish the role of aesthetics in the context of this culture of images, but in order to do so we also need to reflect critically on the received understanding of Plato's critique and, in the process, to place our thinking about images in relation to what we understand about the paradigm of production, which lies in different ways at the heart of Plato's thought and of modern views. Thus one part of my argument (which would take more space to demonstrate than is available) is that the contemporary culture of images evolved as the successor to the culture of industrial production, which it has nonetheless not left entirely behind. Guy Debord in *The Society of the Spectacle*, Baudrillard in *Simulations*, and Žižek in *Welcome to the Dessert of the Real!* already began to see that we need to expand and modify the Marxist understanding of industrial- and commodity-production in order to take into account the fact that simulations now provide grounding for the real. Especially in Baudrillard and Debord it is clear that the primary object of production is no longer the manufactured commodity but the image; the commodity simply provides a support that the image requires. But so too Jameson in his essay "Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism" spoke of the consequences for politics of this "cultural form of image addiction": a distorted understanding of the past and a stunted sense of any transformative hope for the future ("transforming the past into visual mirages, stereotypes, or texts, effectively abolishes any practical sense of the future and of the collective project").[4]

But in spite of what these analyses have shown we still need better ways to deal with the de-centered and mostly globalized frameworks within which production has evolved in the new image-world. Marx already wrote of circulation as "the movement in which general alienation appears as general appropriation, and general appropriation as general alienation." He went on to explain that "because circulation is a totality of the social process, it is also the first form in which not only the social relation appears as something independent of the individuals as, say, in a coin or an exchange value, but the whole of the social movement itself."[5] (Cf. Debord: "the spectacle is not a collection of images; rather, it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images.")[6] But as a result of more recent developments, "pro-

[4] Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," in *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991).

[5] Karl Marx, *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*, in Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 28 (New York: International Publishers, 1987), p. 180.

[6] Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Zone Books, 1995), p. 12.

duction" has become an aesthetic paradigm that incorporates the reproduction, dissemination, and transmission of images as well as their production. The term "aesthetics" here is not indexed philosophically in terms of beauty or art, but rather in terms of the world of appearances as determined by the pre-existing formation of commodity production (Debord: "the spectacle is capital accumulated to the point where it becomes image").[7]

One could thus imagine a view in which the widespread interest in Nietzsche's revindication of appearances is in fact a symptom of the commodified image-world. The parallel question is whether a critical aesthetic theory can adopt Plato's radical alternative. Certain aspects of Plato's critique of images are so well known as to require only a brief summary here, but in other respects Plato's views have been subjected to a long history of mis-interpretation. In a notorious passage in the *Republic*, X, Plato described the painted image of a bed as a degraded and inferior copy of an ideal form – a version of the truth twice removed. If the idea of bed is, as a form, eternal, and so if made at all then made by a god, then what a carpenter makes is a copy of this form, and what a painter produces is a copy of a copy that would seem to have the weakest claim of all on the status of truth. Beyond this, Plato sustains a distinction between the making that is proper to artifacts and the process of emergence by which the things of nature come forth. Stanley Rosen explained that

> the god does not stand to the idea of the bed and the constructed bed as he stands to the Idea of the cow and the existing cow. By making the idea of the cow, the god also makes cows. But by making the idea of the bed, the god does not also make beds [...]. There is as it were an *ontological* difference between the two kinds of work, natural and technical or demiurgic.[8]

Moreover, it seems that the makers of such second- and third-order images – painters, poets, and the like – do not provide anything we might really want to know about the things they copy. Following Plato's argument, we would consult a physician rather than a painter if we wanted to know the truth about the workings of the human body in order to cure the illnesses that afflict it, and we could consult an engineer if we wanted to construct a bridge that would withstand the forces of an earthquake. The implication is that the physician has some genuine knowledge of the body, and the engi-

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 24.

[8] Stanley Rosen, *The Question of Being: A Reversal of Heidegger* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), p. 17.

neer some genuine knowledge of bridges, whereas the painter merely knows something about the *appearance* (the "look") of the body or the bridge. (The philosopher claims to know something higher and truer than painters, physicians, engineers, or anyone else.) Moreover, it seems to Plato that those who are expert in making images in words – the poets, and especially the *tragic* poets – are inclined to produce images that arouse passions and are untruthful in what they say about the gods. For these reasons, and for others articulated elsewhere in the dialogues, Plato is skeptical about the role of images in politics and in political education.

So much is widely accepted. But, as Iris Murdoch pointed out in *The Fire and the Sun*, Plato never *banished* the poets from the state. He simply proposed leading them towards the edge. Plato distinguished between good poetry and bad, and suggested that a reformed kind of poetry might have an important role to play in political education. Indeed, how *could* Plato reasonably exclude poetry on the grounds that it is a discourse of images (albeit of images made in words), since his own dialogues, the *Republic* included, depend heavily on images in order to lead souls, through a process of *psychagogia*, to an understanding of the truth? In fact, Plato's understanding of what counts as "truth" is unimaginable apart from the imagistic discourse that carries it. Think of the image of the divided line, or of the fire that casts shadows on the wall of the cave, or of the sound-image of the cicadas in the *Phaedrus*, or of the mental picture of the charioteer and his horses in the passage of the *Republic* where Plato describes the different parts of the soul. Similar examples could be multiplied at great length. Choose almost any Platonic dialogue and, at its heart, there lies a constellation of images that is central to Plato's understanding of the truth.[9]

How then can we reconcile Plato's reliance on images in his philosophical practice with his apparent censure of images in the philosophical theory of the *Republic,* and what can this tell us about the postmodern desire to "overturn" Plato? In order to pursue these questions it is useful to look at a crucial dialogue on this subject, the *Sophist*. Here, Plato is interested in establishing the difference between sophists and philosophers – a difference that turns in large measure on the images that each of them deploys. The *Sophist*

[9] The dramatic form of Plato's dialogues has been commented upon by a distinguished line of philosophers and critics, among them Paul Friedlander, H. G. Gadamer, and Leo Strauss. More recently see Giovanni Ferrari, *Listening to the Cicadas: A Study of Plato's Phaedrus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), Andrea Nightingale Wilson, *Genres in Dialogue: Plato and the Construct of Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), and Jill Gordon, *Turning Toward Philosophy: Literary Device and Dramatic Structure in Plato's Dialogues* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999).

relies centrally on the trope of hunting: the dialogue separates the *technē* of production and acquisition and then distinguishes among various forms of acquisition, including the acquisition of knowledge. Hunting is regarded as a particular means of acquiring. This is relevant to the central topic of the dialogue because Plato imagines that the search for the identity of the sophist is a kind of hunt, and a particularly difficult one since the sophist seems so closely to resemble the philosopher. Plato's success in establishing the identity of philosophy depends critically on the success of this hunt.

One might well expect that the difference between the sophist and the philosopher would turn on the fact that the one deals in images while the other does not. But this is not in fact the case. Indeed, philosophy *must* be imagistic and the philosopher must use images, if only because knowledge is discursive and discourse is itself comprised of verbal images (εἴδωλα). The difference between philosophy and sophistry lies in the fact that the philosopher is said to offer images that are true while the sophist offers images that are misleading and false.[10] In Plato's view, this is the difference between *icons* and *phantasms*: an *icon* is a true image whereas a *phantasm* is false. And while Plato clearly believes that one can recognize the difference between icons and phantasms, he does not offer an analytical method for distinguishing between them; he offers no set of procedures to serve as a sorting mechanism independent of the *intuition* on which this distinction is based. In other words, a crucial difference between philosophy and sophistry depends upon a faculty that cannot be explained philosophically *if* we view the task of philosophy as an account of the truth that is both internally consistent and complete. On the contrary, the practice of philosophy requires an ability to distinguish between true and false images that has some form of intuition as its final ground. Understood in this sense, philosophy resembles what Blaise Pascal called the *esprit de finesse* more than the *esprit géometrique,* and is related to the classical theory of aesthetic taste that one finds in a philosopher such as Kant. Better said, philosophy requires both an *esprit de finesse* and an *esprit géometrique* as well as the capacity to determine their appropriate roles and measure in any given situation. But this is a matter of wisdom, and for wisdom there is by definition no analytical procedure.

Before discussing some of the questions that this view raises for contemporary aesthetic theory, I would point out one important corollary of what has been said so far. What is regarded by Plato as true in the deepest sense

[10] See *Plato's Sophist*, trans. Seth Benardete (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 235d–236c. See also Stanley Rosen, *Plato's Sophist: The Drama of Original and Image* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983).

is not a state of affairs or a set of propositions, but the whole. Philosophy is for Plato an articulation of the dream of the whole. The *polis* is one example of the whole, but is not itself the whole. Because even true statements must be *other* than and external to what they describe, discourse is by definition a part or a fragment, a view or perspective on the whole. The identification of truth *itself* with perspective in fact occurs much later, though well before Nietzsche (e.g. in Spinoza.) The Platonic dialogues are best viewed as key examples of such partial discourses insofar as they offer literary-dramatic perspectives from which Plato views the whole. Moreover, the fact that philosophy proceeds by images and deals in icons is not just something that happens to be valid for Plato's dialogues by way of accident or circumstance but is also, according to the implications of the dialogues, something that must *necessarily* be true of philosophy itself. Contrary to the received understanding of Plato's views, this is because philosophy can claim no *direct* access to the true nature of things, but can only present the truth by means of images. Hence the various narratives (*mythoi*), dramas, and image-forms that Plato relies on in order to disclose the truth.

And yet various forms of philosophy since Plato have ignored this fundamental insight and instead have attempted to speak in a language that is true in some direct and non-imagistic fashion – in a language that strives to be coherent and complete in itself. Modern philosophy's infatuation with formal logic and mathematics can be understood this way. A rather vivid version of this philosophical dream is articulated in the writings of Descartes, whose explicit goal was to model philosophy along the lines of mathematics. Insofar as Descartes hoped in so doing to purge philosophy of the distortions he associated with certain kinds of images (fictions), he set a path for modern Western philosophy that, unlike Plato, is fundamentally iconoclastic. The form of iconoclasm that is at issue here needs to be understood in the broad sense of the term described above – as involving the suppression of images. Its mathematical pretensions are indicative insofar as mathematics is conceived as a discipline in which the truth appears directly to intuition. Not surprisingly, this iconoclastic bias has had consequences for the ways in which modern philosophy tends to view literature. In modern Western thinking, Plato's original distinction between phantasms and icons was replaced by the distinction between *fiction* and *philosophy*. It is, of course, this distinction that contemporary aesthetics in the Nietzschean vein has been striving to overcome. But the realities are more complicated, both because of what philosophical discourse in the manner of Descartes reveals as a practice and because of what it wrongly assumes about Plato.

I have elsewhere commented that Descartes articulates an anti-aesthet-

ic ideology that he scarcely adheres to in his own philosophical practice.[11] There is an even more pronounced divergence between philosophical practice and philosophical theory in Descartes than there is in Plato. (After all, Plato never attempted to present an account of how a "first philosophy" would function.) Although Descartes desires to model philosophy along the lines of mathematics and so to suppress images, his own discourse is richly imagistic. The *Meditations* and the *Discourse on Method* both rely so centrally on a series of images as to seem literary-poetic in nature. Think of the image of Descartes sitting in his dressing gown, by the fire in the stove-heated room; or of his description of the wax that softens and releases its aroma as he brings it near the warmth of the fire; or of falling into a whirlpool of water where he can neither reach the bottom nor swim to the top. But because the images of the Cartesian texts have so often been suppressed by interpreters, the postmodern critique of Descartes is better understood as a critique of Cartesianism than of Descartes – and in roughly the same way that the postmodern critique of Western metaphysics is more a critique of Platonism than of Plato. These critiques are nonetheless relevant because they were embraced as part of the history of Western philosophy by a number of influential post-Cartesian (hence post-Platonic) thinkers. Hegel's views of Descartes in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* were crucial in this process, but I would also cite Wittgenstein's definition of the world as "all that is the case" in the *Tractatus* and his concomitant relegation to silence of everything that cannot be grasped in these terms. Hegel himself recognized the limitations of mathematical cognition and conceived of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* as meeting goals that mathematics could not fulfill.[12] His aim was for the *Phenomenology* to be more encompassing, hence more true (and more "scientific"), than mathematics. And yet it is apparent that even in Hegel's version the Absolute cannot encompass the whole. This is so if only because the Absolute cannot contain entry into itself; it must in fact *begin*. It is little surprise, then, that a thinker like Adorno attempted to stand the Hegelian dialectic on its head; central to the "negative dialectic" is Adorno's association of the whole with the untrue.[13] And yet the principle of negative dialec-

[11] See Anthony J. Cascardi, *The Subject of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

[12] Hegel describes the limitations of mathematical cognition in the *Phenomenology*, par. 42–46. For example: "philosophical cognition includes both [existence and essence], whereas mathematical cognition sets forth only the genesis of the *existence*, i.e. the *being* of the nature of the thing in *cognition* as such." *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 24.

[13] See Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton (New York: Continuum, 1979).

tics carries the iconoclasm of modern philosophy forward while inverting the relationship between the whole and the true.

There is no doubt that Plato's distinction between a world of appearances and a world of ideas had an important bearing on Descartes' thinking, just as it informed Kant's distinction between the phenomena and things-in-themselves. And yet the hope to eliminate images from philosophy, and the relegation of such things as freedom and the will to the realm of silence, were never among Plato's goals. (Plato's aim was rather to preserve a distinction between image and original, and in this he differs profoundly from postmodern, alias Nietzschean, aesthetics.) The question of *how* Plato's views about images became distorted is nonetheless a complex story; it begins already with Aristotle. Granted that Aristotle preserves something of Plato's insights into the limitations of pure analysis and recognizes that wisdom must include different forms of cognition. For instance, Aristotle sustains the need to distinguish between the fitting and the true when he describes the various forms of knowledge and their appropriate degrees of certainty in connection with different modes of inquiry at the beginning of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. And yet, as a metaphysician, Aristotle exhibits a clear and strong preference for a discourse that is self-contained and analytical. As Rosen observes, it makes no difference whether the designation "metaphysics" derives from Aristotle himself or not, "metaphysics as we know it (but not necessarily as it ought to be known) is a product of Aristotle and the Aristotelian tradition, not of Platonism."[14] It culminates in the philosophical treatise rather than in the dialogue, in narrative, or any other image-laden mode of discourse. The treatise suits metaphysics insofar as it provides "demonstrative knowledge, via predicative discourse, of pure forms."[15]. Aristotle's account of predication in the *Categories* establishes him as a precursor of modern philosophy's "linguistic turn," which adheres to metaphysics in spite of its emphasis on language.

Aristotle's work eventually had a profound effect on the interpretation of Plato. Indeed, with Plotinus it was assumed that Aristotle was one of the most effective expositors of Plato's thought. As Lloyd Gerson remarks, this was in part because Aristotle was assumed to know Plato's philosophy, including the "unwritten teachings," first-hand and to have recorded it. In addition, early Greek historians of philosophy tell that Plotinus' teacher, Ammonius Saccas, was among those who assumed that Aristotle's philosophy was consistent with Platonism. This did not preclude disagreements be-

[14] Rosen, *Plato's Sophist: The Drama of Original and Image*, p. 30.
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

tween Aristotle and Plato nor did it prevent misunderstandings of Plato on Aristotle's part. Nevertheless, Plotinus' adoption of many Aristotelian arguments seems less puzzling when we realize that he took these as compatible with Platonism and as useful for articulating Plato's position, especially in areas where Plato was not explicit.[16]

Owing in part to the reception of Plotinus during the Renaissance, the interest in images in the "neo-platonic" tradition adopted a strangely mystical understanding of Plato's distinction between appearances and ideas and assumed a hyperbolic interpretation of Plato's arguments about beauty and the soul. (The text of Plotinus' *Enneads*, rediscovered by Ficino, was crucial in this history.) If one adds to this neo-platonism an overlay of the Scholastic reading of Aristotle and, beyond that, a dose of the Renaissance re-reading of Plato that concentrated on the *Symposium* rather than the *Republic*, it is not hard to understand how, by the time modern philosophy began, this accretion of commentary and mixing of sources had so seriously distorted Plato's views that the entire tradition seemed in need of new foundations by a "scientifically" inclined philosopher such as Descartes. It was the modern, scientific version of fundamental ontology, grounded in epistemology, against which Nietzsche was largely reacting when he spoke of reversing "Plato" in the name of overcoming metaphysics. In *The Birth of Tragedy*, for instance, Socrates is targeted as a new type of "theoretical" man ("*den Typus des theoretischen Menschen*").[17]

Moreover, Nietzsche's critique of metaphysics depends upon a response to Plato that is at best contradictory in its invocation of aesthetics. The alliance between postmodern philosophy and aesthetics is equally paradoxical in ways that reflect the Nietzschean roots of contemporary thought. Both are committed to "aesthetic" principles even while they deny the existence of a self-contained aesthetic sphere. In the case of aesthetic theory, there is general acceptance of Arthur Danto's view that, while not everything is a work of art, *anything can be* a work of art. (It is worth remembering that among Danto's early works is a book on Nietzsche.)[18] For Nietzsche, the issue was more "existential." As noted above, his conclusion in *The Birth of Tragedy* was that life itself could be justified only as an aesthetic phenomenon. The point is that the turn towards aesthetics depends upon a de-definition of the aesthetic sphere, which is to say, upon a gesture that *releases aesthetics from* the confines of art even while it *absorbs life into* an aesthetic sphere.

[16] Lloyd Gerson, in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, s.v. "Plotinus," (http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/plotinus/).

[17] Nietzsche, *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, p. 98; my emphasis.

[18] Arthur Danto, *Nietzsche as Philosopher* (New York: MacMillan, 1965).

These apparent contradictions are somewhat more intelligible if we place the postmodern (Nietzschean) engagement with Plato in the context of the social and material worlds in which it has taken root, i.e. in light of the cultural pre-eminence of the image. Images in contemporary culture are not just everywhere – on every surface and in every medium, saturating every space – but occupy a place that is *in advance* of the thing itself. The processes of globalization seem to count on what we might call, after Baudrillard, the "precession" of the image, meaning that the image precedes the real not just temporally but ontologically.[19] The physical space of Times Square has been transformed into a collage of digital surface-images; nearly every building there has become de-materialized, its interior functions subordinated to the display of capital on its video-façade (advertising images, multinational power, and seduction). The most "ordinary" cellular phones function as cameras; they show video clips, transmit text, and allow access to the image-rich content of the internet. "Personal" music devices (I-Pods etc.) now capture televised images for consumption "on the go." One of the grandest and most beautiful natural wonders in China, the Jouzhaigou Valley, announces itself to the visitor on large-scale exterior screens that project, among other things, images of the park itself. These simulacra have the effect not only of announcing (or advertising) the real, but of legitimizing it. Wrapped around Motorola's China headquarters is a 13-story poster, and Pepsi qualified for a Guinness record for the largest tri-vision outdoor billboard in Chongqing with a Gatorade advertisement that measured 108 x 295 feet. There is talk of installing the largest video screen ever in the Gargantuan (7.3 million square feet) Golden Resources shopping mall outside Beijing – a screen some 30 x 250 meters in size that will form an artificial sky over this enormous mall. For good or for ill, the visual turn in criticism, and the aesthetic turn in theory, coincide with the rise of this brave new image-world.

Already in 1983 Baudrillard wrote of the "induction," "infiltration," and "illegible violence" of the media.[20] The question now facing aesthetics is whether it can respond *critically* and not merely with fascination or cynicism to a culture that increasingly understands itself as producing, and as produced by, images. I would recall Jameson's critique of "the complacent (yet delirious) camp-following celebration" of this aesthetic new world" even while recognizing the power of current fantasies about the "salvational nature of high technology, from chips to robots."[21] The question for a critical

[19] Baudrillard, "The Precession of Simulacra," in *Simulations*.
[20] Baudrillard, *Simulations*, p. 55.
[21] Jameson, *Postmodernism*, p. 46.

aesthetic theory is whether we can identify some "'moment of truth' within the more evident 'moments of falsehood'" of this culture."[22]

If there is to be any hope of doing so we need first to re-establish the links between the postmodern culture of images and the paradigm of production. I would argue that Western modernity and its successor, postmodernism, is at once a historical frame and a cultural field in which the paradigm of production prevails. This holds true both intellectually and in social and material terms. The productionist idea has a long history, going back to Plato, whose discussion of poiēsis was part of a critique of productionism that pits him against modern thinkers. Indeed, Plato and Kant share less in this regard than Kant and Marx. For it was with Kant that philosophy came to recognize that we truly can know only that which we make. For Marx, human beings produce not unilaterally but universally; production is self-production. More strongly stated, the fundamental form of human production in Western modernity is history.[23] Within the framework of history as it is understood in modernity, one can interpret actions as fitting or just, and one can assess their sense by reference to narrative forms and frames (as in Hayden White's account in *Metahistory*). These principles of judgment, taste, and form rely on the premise that there is no place *outside* of history from which to evaluate it. Kant recognized this much in his essay "An Old Question Raised Again: Is the Human Race Constantly Progressing?" Indeed, since the modern understanding of production accepts the view that history constitutes the whole, there is no possibility that there could exist any "other" domain to which its discourse might appeal. History is the whole, and it is produced.

To situate images within the historical sphere is, first of all, to recognize that they too are produced. This much seems uncontroversial. Yet I would argue that the contemporary culture of images also marks a fundamental transformation within the paradigm of production. We live at a moment when images are not merely the products of human activity (history) but also play an integral role in producing it. The result is a new, more fluid sense of the grounding of the "real" in the image. In part for this reason critical practice can no longer be oriented around a historicism that is wedded to familiar forms of materialism, in part because the object of critique for classical materialism referred to a "real" that was grounded in the categories of time, space, and matter. Its goal was to bring the productionist paradigm,

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[22] *Ibid.*, p. 47.

[23] See Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, in *Early Writings*, trans. Rodney Livingstone and Gregor Benton (New York: Vintage, 1975), p. 391.

in its full historical-materialist dimension, to light. By contrast, the contemporary culture of images takes as its point of departure a shift in both the ordinary and the philosophical suppositions of an equivalence between the "real" and the temporal, spatial, and material world. In spite of the fact that the image cannot in the end escape the coordinates of time, space, and matter, it offers a de-materialized, pseudo-transcendent version of the material world. Classical Marxism allowed us to grasp the conditions by which an automobile is produced (labor, time, materials, capital, etc.), whereas a recent Mercedes advertisement proposes "You're not buying a car. You're buying a belief." We require a critique of image-production, and not merely of production in the old sense, in order to deal with such circumstances. And yet, this brave new image-world is one in which the effects of earlier, materialist modes of production have left indelible traces, which is also to say that it is a world in which the alienated forms of labor and disenchanted forms of social interaction derived from the era of industrial capitalism have assumed a surprising degree of permanence and an appearance of normativity. When Jameson writes that the postmodern world is affectless, and that anxiety and alienation are no longer relevant,[24] he means to describe the displacement of modernism's alienation by a new sense of fragmentation. But the fragmentation of the subject is something for which, I would argue, the alienation of commodity production is a precondition.

The question is whether the "revival" of aesthetics can offer grounds for a critical understanding of such matters. Or is aesthetics merely content to cordon off a sphere for "art" so as to avoid these questions? The sources of a critical posture that might measure up to these challenges are admittedly difficult to find. The orthodox reading of Plato does offer one basis for a critical response to the new image-world, but is hardly without drawbacks. While Plato accepts the view that we have no direct access to originals, but only to images, he also hopes to judge images true or false depending on whether they resemble (are justly proportional to) the originals which they represent. For Plato, the relationship between image and truth is analogous to the relationship between icon and original. And, as I suggested above, the Platonic understanding of originals carries with it a view that is at odds with the ways in which the contemporary world has come to experience itself as an *effect* of production. Moreover, Plato's view seems unable to shed its intellectual elitism; it seems reliant on the anti-democratic belief that the ability to grasp the truth is not shared equally among all individuals but is the province of a privileged (philosophical) few. It is no surprise that Plato's

[24] Jameson, p. 14.

ideal state is ruled by a king – a philosopher-king, to be sure, but a king just the same.

Where then to turn? To recap, my own view is that the contemporary culture of images represents a heightened, extreme, transformed version of the paradigm of production, and ought to be considered within this framework. As sketched out above, this means not just that the image world is *produced* but that what is produced is *primarily* an image-world, not social or material reality. Whereas in Plato the image could be redeemed insofar as it was a truthful semblance of the eternal forms, we live in a culture where the image-domain claims to constitute the truth, which it also puts in brackets, as "truth." The image suggests itself as all-encompassing in a way that displaces or subordinates the claims of the social, the material, and the natural, not to mention the true. In Jameson's analysis, this resulted first in a new aesthetic emphasis on what he called the machines of *re*production:

> not the turbine, nor even Sheeler's grain elevators or smokestacks, not the baroque elaboration of pipes and conveyor belts, nor even the streamlined profile of the railroad train [...] but rather the computer, whose outer shell has no emblematic or visual power [...]. Such machines are indeed machines of reproduction rather than of production.[25]

Twenty-five years later we can see that the computer has come to serve as a new (i.e. post-filmic) kind of "apparatus" for image-support.[26] Hence the confluence of computer monitor and flat-screen t.v., not to mention all other manner of computer-powered image-devices (mp3 players, web-enabled mobile phones, portable/personal dvd payers).

To understand the image-domain as a transformation of the paradigm of production in turn allows us to locate some points of engagement for a critical response to it. Plato thought that images could be truthful resemblances of inaccessible originals, but now the question for aesthetics is as much to discover what the image-world renders *in*visible. What, in spite of the pervasive appeal to the visual, is necessarily excluded from its view? I would identify the following points as necessary considerations for any further development of an aesthetic critique of the image-world, and likewise as central to the viability of aesthetics as a critical enterprise in an age where aesthetic theory can no longer essentially be linked exclusively to art:

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[25] *Ibid.*, p. 36–7.

[26] See the essays in Philip Rosen (ed.), *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology: A Film Theory Reader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).

1. That the seepage of images every area of contemporary life – the saturation of life by image – means that there is no longer a separate aesthetic sphere for aesthetic theory to address. Aesthetics is at once everywhere and nowhere.

2. That with the advent of the image-world the material basis of making has given way to increasingly diffuse forms of production. Accordingly, historical materialism needs to be supplemented by a critical response to the de-materialized forms of production that prevail today.

3. That the media by which images are transmitted are increasingly hybrid in their nature because they are increasingly de-coupled from their materials. The de-differentiation of the aesthetic sphere in turn means that the medium-bound specificity of the arts is indeed a thing of the past. The question raised by Jean-Luc Nancy – "Why Are There Several Arts and Not Just One?"[27] – needs to be re-phrased around the new hybridization of the media.

4. That production is increasingly de-centered and globalized, and that the forms of agency associated with it are structural and diffuse rather than punctual. Rather than continue to think of the effects of image-making in terms of mass culture and collective agency, aesthetics must take structural agency into account and come to grips with the forms of power that sustain it.

5. That the moments of transmission, communication, and dissemination all form part of the paradigm of production, and are not mere appendages to it.

6. That images have come to challenge some basic assumptions about the categories of time and space. Increasingly, the force of images depends no so much upon their impact in a given place or at a given time, but upon the velocity of their circulation from place to place. Theoretically, this means recognizing the ways in which the rate of circulation and velocity of images provides an aesthetic grounding of the real.

7. If aesthetics seems now to require a critique of images, as distinct from the criticism of texts or works, the relationship between ethics and aesthetics needs likewise to be re-thought by asking about what images say above and beyond what they show, and likewise what they require. As a paradigm of response, the ideal of universal judgment drawn from Kant needs to be revised. The task is not so much to locate the grounds for universal judgment

[27] Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Muses*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), pp. 1–39.

but to find the means to question the images that present themselves *as if* with the force of universal assent.

8. In conclusion I would propose that earlier views of globalization, as well as the strategy of "cognitive mapping" that Jameson developed, in part at least as a response to it, were overly confident about the enduring qualities of space. To be sure, there was never any sense that a new aesthetic (of practice or of theory) would invite a return to some older geographical or nation-based notion of space, but would have to respond to the world-space of multinational capital and its flows. Jameson believed that this space would bring a breakthrough to "some as yet unimaginable new mode of representing [...] in which we may again begin to grasp our positioning as individual and collective subjects and regain a capacity to act and struggle."[28] The political form of postmodernism, he went on to say, would have as its vocation "the invention and projection of a global cognitive mapping, on a social as well as a spatial scale."[29] Nearly a quarter of a century later we can see that these "new modes of representing" have indeed arrived, and that their form is the electronic production, dissemination, and communication of images. We can furthermore claim that these new modes of representing have transformed some of the foundations of the production of the "real." Now, more than ever before, art finds itself faced with the challenge of representing time in the absence of space, and vice-versa, of acting in space where the nearly simultaneity of reception all but obliterates time. The task that is yet to be accomplished for aesthetic theory is to incorporate such concepts as the "circulation" and "flow" of images and to engage critically with these in the face of a world that has been fundamentally transformed by this latest turn in the production paradigm.

[28] Jameson, p. 54.
[29] *Ibid.*

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INAESTHETICS AND TRUTH:
THE DEBATE BETWEEN ALAIN BADIOU AND JACQUES RANCIÈRE

Devin Zane Shaw

The recent interest in Alain Badiou and Jacques Rancière in contemporary radical thought is anything but a "chance encounter on a dissecting table between a sewing machine and an umbrella."[1] In terms of pedagogical genealogy, both began as students of Althusser, only to later develop their own approaches as critical responses to the master. In philosophical terms, both remain committed to thinking the radical possibility of egalitarian politics. Against the trend of delegating rights within the order of the State, or policing, inherent in contemporary political philosophy, both Badiou and Rancière focus on egalitarian interventions which disrupt the logic of the police-state. In addition, both have respectively contributed a considerable body of work to questions regarding art. However, despite the relative proximity, both have found occasion to distance himself from each other. In his *Metapolitics*, Badiou dedicates two chapters to illustrating the shortcomings of Rancière's political thought, while the latter has raised several objections to the former's inaesthetics. I will dedicate this essay to explicating the stakes of the debate on inaesthetics, although Rancière's insistence on the link between art and politics will keep the discussion close to the political debate.

However, my intervention will not be neutral. Instead, it will take the form of a defense of inaesthetics against Rancière's criticisms. In proceeding in this manner, I hope to both delineate the stakes of their debate and pinpoint a few open questions. In general, Badiou's thought is oriented around the novelty of the event and the subject's fidelity to the truth of an event. To summarize, leaving aside the all-important work on ontology, Badiou is interested in:

[1] Lautréamont, "Maldoror," in Hubert Juin (ed.), *Œuvres complètes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1973), p. 234. Translated in *Maldoror*, trans. Alexis Lykiard (Cambridge: Exact Change, 1994), p. 193 (translation modified).

1. The event of truth. An event breaks with the state of the situation, and reconfigures the co-ordinates of the symbolic order. However, an event takes no object ("every truth is *without an object*"[2]). Instead, it induces
2. Effects of subjectification. For each event, or truth (as truths are multiple), a subject must make a wager. After deciding in favor of an event, that it has taken place, this subject proceeds in fidelity to this truth, to 'make sense' of it.
3. The four conditions of philosophy: science, art, politics and love. Philosophy thinks under the events of these four conditions. While each condition is thought proceeding from an event and the subject, each is elucidated according to its own logic. "The process of a truth," Badiou tells us, "thus entirely escapes ontology."[3]

These three points will orient our approach to the debate between Badiou and Rancière. After explicating Badiou's inaesthetics, I will delineate Rancière's major objections. The adjudication of their debate will help us focus on an unresolved tension: what is the relation between inaesthetics and Badiou's other statements on art? While Badiou claims that inaesthetics is the singular domain of thinking art, art is also considered under other conditions of philosophy. Thus the question arises: what is the status of this 'transgression'? Is Badiou eclectically mixing the procedures of truth? Or, despite the singular nature of inaesthetics, can art be thought under other conditions? In briefly proffering examples from Badiou's other work, such as *Le siècle*, I would like to show that, while Rancière is right to accuse inaesthetics of being oriented towards the 'propriety of art,' that inaesthetics is not exhaustive of art's capacity for truth.

Inaesthetics and Truth

To elucidate the link between art and philosophy, in *Handbook of Inaesthetics* Badiou introduces three schemata which tie together art, philosophy and the theme of education. Each of these schemata have both a historical and a contemporary manifestation. From a 'historical' perspective, so to speak, beginning with the Greeks, art precedes the origins of philosophy.

[2] Alain Badiou, *Manifesto for Philosophy*, ed. Norman Madarasz (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999), p. 91.
[3] Alain Badiou, *Being and Event*, trans. Oliver Feltham (New York: Continuum), p. 355.

Theater is well established in Athens by the time Plato proposes the first schema, which is what Badiou calls the didactic schema. As is well-known, Plato banishes nearly all the arts from the city; supported by the thesis that "art is incapable of truth, or that all truth is external to art."[4] The problem with art is not that it imitates things, but that it imitates the effect of truth. Art appears to immediately present the truth, thereby "divert[ing] us from the detour" of philosophy.[5]

In Badiou's reading of Plato, philosophy is constituted by a detour which distances thought from 'empirical' immediacy through dialectical labor. For Badiou, poetry cannot account for the origins of Western philosophy, as poetry is found throughout the world of antiquity. Instead, philosophy can be identified by the subtraction of thought from the immediacy of the poem, and this first occurs with Plato.[6] And while Badiou commends the interruption of the poem by the matheme in *Being and Event*, he finds Plato's conceptualization of art wanting. Plato's didactic schema ostracizes art from truth, as art is "the charm of a semblance of truth."[7] From this position, art can only be condemned or treated pedagogically in an instrumental fashion, the latter option leaving art at the mercy of external prescriptions, namely the norm legislated by philosophy. The effects of art are evaluated only from the basis of the social Good.

In the twentieth century, Marxism utilizes a variant of the didactic schema. For Badiou in *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, Brecht is the exemplar of Marxist didacticism. For Brecht the base of the stage is built upon the scientific truth of dialectical materialism. If we understand Stalinism as the jurisdiction of dialectical materialist philosophy over politics, then Brecht practiced a "Stalinized Platonism": art is separate from the truth of dialectical materialism, but it educates; in the end, art is the pedagogical tool for the courage of truth, "against cowardice *in the face of truth*."[8]

This relation between philosophy and art is inverted by the partisans of the romantic schema. For the latter, "art *alone* is capable of truth," art alone embodies the absolute.[9] Art takes on an educative possibility regarding a truth that philosophy can only point to. For example, the German Romantics held that art can overcome the impasses of philosophy, and can embody a

[4] Alain Badiou, *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, trans. Alberto Toscano (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), p. 2 (hereafter *HI*).
[5] *HI*, p. 2.
[6] Badiou, *Being and Event*, pp. 123–129.
[7] *HI*, p. 2.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 6.
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

new mythology which can reinstate the communitarian bond of Greek antiquity in modern Germany.[10] From here, it is not far to Heideggerian 'hermeneutics,' centered on the figure of Hölderlin. In seeking the originary link between *poeisis* and Being, severed by the Platonic intervention, the thinker can only reiterate the announcement of the destiny of the poetic gods,[11] and shepherd thought towards the saving power of the poem.[12]

Between "didactic banishment" and "romantic glorification," is a "peace treaty of sorts,"[13] which Badiou calls the classical schema. Aristotle, he tells us, bases this schema on two theses: first, art is mimetic, its regime is that of semblance; and second, the purpose of art is neither truth, nor pedagogy, but therapy. The classical schema holds that art's mimetic effects provide the possibility of catharsis, which Badiou provocatively defines as "the deposition of the passions in a transference onto semblance."[14] Art, constrained to the imaginary relation of transference, is evacuated of the weight of the traumatic encounter with the Real. The price of this 'relative peace' between philosophy and art is that the latter becomes what Badiou calls a "public service," a kind of escape mechanism for social pressures.[15] Insofar as art serves this purpose, it can be managed and legitimated – or funded – by the State.

In the twentieth century, Badiou claims, when psychoanalytic discourse

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[10] The "Oldest System-program of German Idealism," written in Hegel's hand, but variously attributed to Hölderlin, Hegel and Schelling, states: "Poesy will thereby attain a higher dignity; in the end she will again become what she was in the beginning – *the instructress of humanity*; for there will be no longer any philosophy, any history; the poetic art alone will survive all the other sciences and arts [...] we must have a new mythology; but this mythology must remain in service to the ideas, must become a mythology of reason." Translated in David Farrell Krell, *The Tragic Absolute* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), p. 25.

[11] For Badiou's take on the 'poetic gods,' see the prologue, entitled "God is Dead," of *Briefings on Existence*: *A Short Treatise on Transitory Ontology*, ed. Norman Madarasz (Albany: SUNY Press, 2006), pp. 21–32.

[12] Though Badiou references the later Heidegger, in "The Origin of the Work of Art," the poem has a specific communitarian-political role. The great work of art "grounds being for and with one another as the historical standing-out of human existence in relation to unconcealment." This is how, according to Heidegger, Hölderlin's work could still "confront the Germans as a test to be stood." See "The Origin of the Work of Art," in David Farrell Krell (ed.), *Basic Writings* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1993), pp. 193 and 203.

[13] *HI*, p. 3.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

[15] As Terry Eagleton states, in rather Lacanian terms, "We can vicariously gratify our self-destructive drives, at the same time as we can indulge in a certain sadistic pleasure at the prospect of others' pain. Tragedy is in this sense a gentrified, socially acceptable version of obscene enjoyment." See *Holy Terror* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 26–27.

interprets art as the manifestation of desire (whether that of the artist or spectator) it activates the classical schema. The work of art makes it possible to inscribe the object of desire, the *objet petit a*, in the Symbolic, thus breaking the impasse of the Real. Although I think this account does some violence to Lacan, I find that Jacques-Alain Miller's recent turn to "psychoanalysis in the city," (I borrow the phrase, or at least its pejorative character, from Slavoj Žižek) is not so far from the classical apparatus of state legitimation. Art renders service to psychoanalysis, and the latter likewise does service to the state.[16]

Missing, however, from these schemata, are the avant-gardes of the twentieth century. According to Badiou, the avant-gardes, from Dada to the Situationists, were a hybrid and unstable entanglement of the didactic and romantic schemata. Thus the avant-gardes oscillated between the attempt to exhaust art of its alienated or alienating character, and the attempt to realize the absolute legibility of art's absolute and separate character. The former attempt is didactic, while the latter is romantic; yet above all, these "partisans of the absoluteness of creative destruction" were anticlassical.[17] Nevertheless, the "aesthetic voluntarism" of the avant-gardes was more likely to splinter than unify, and neither this hybrid nor the other schemata could escape the recent "saturation" of the attempt to think art and philosophy.

In this situation of saturation, Badiou proposes a novel modality of the relation between art and philosophy: inaesthetics. The first definition of inaesthetics can be constructed through the account it provides regarding the relation of art to truth, using the categories of singularity and immanence. The relation is immanent if truth is internal to art's effects; that is, truth is not determined externally to these effects. The relation is singular if it belongs to art and cannot "circulate among other registers of work-producing thought."[18] For the didactic schema, the relation between art and truth is singular but not immanent: art has a singular pedagogical role but truth remains external to it. For the romantic schema, the relation is immanent but not singular. Schelling says it best: "there is properly speaking but one absolute work of art, which may indeed exist in altogether different versions, yet is still only one, even though it should not yet exist in its most ultimate

[16] See "Transcription of the J. P. Elkabbach broadcast with J-A. Miller and M. Accoyer on the phone on Europe 1" available at http://www.lacan.com/europe1.htm. Last accessed August 2006. For Žižek's commentary on this state of affairs, see *Iraq*: *The Borrowed Kettle* (London: Verso, 2004), p. 103.

[17] *HI*, p. 8.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

form."[19] For the classical schema, there is no relation between art and truth; art is relegated to the imaginary effects of verisimilitude, catharsis and transference. We may extrapolate from this account that the avant-gardes vacillated between the either/or of absolute immanence and a singular task for art, often resulting in ruptures in affinities.

The Relation of Art and Truth

	Immanent	~Immanent
Singular	Inaesthetics	Didactic
~Singular	Romantic	Classical

The novel position of inaesthetics, then, is to affirm the singularity and immanence of the relation between art and truth. Yet, the question arises of how this singular and immanent relation can be thought. Badiou jettisons the familiar dichotomy of subject and object in relation to artistic procedures; neither the genius of the subject nor the authority of the object of art hold explanatory power. Instead, he introduces the concepts of the 'artistic configuration' and the 'subject-point.' An artistic configuration is a sequence of works which proceed from an event. A truth is singularized within a configuration, the latter forming a constraint which draws on a fidelity to an event. In a reversal of philosophical tradition, the work of art is thought as a subject-point of an artistic truth. However, for each event there are multiple works, or differential subject-points, which delineate the 'subject,' or 'theme,' of the event. Subject-points are articulated as a sequence of works in fidelity to an event; this conceptualization keeps a work from being understood as an absolute object while at the same time it prevents a subject from being understood as a subject of genius. As Badiou states: "a truth is an artistic configuration initiated by an event [...] and unfolded through chance in the form of works that serve as its subject points."[20] Thus, we can return to our three points of summary to delimit the relation of art and truth under inaesthetics:

[19] Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism*, trans. Peter Heath (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1978), p. 231.
[20] *HI*, p. 12.

1. Artistic events take no object. The work of art is not the object of an event. However, an artistic event submits art to a principle of novelty.
2. The novelty of the event is registered in the sequence of works as subject-points. New configurations *will have taken place* insofar as they are unprecedented within a previous state of the situation.
3. The truths of artistic events are thought from within the condition of art. This is the second implication of the intransitivity of events. Philosophy does not name the truth of a configuration, but registers the novel truths of art.

Instead of locating the truth of art in subjects or objects, truth is localized in artistic procedures, which circulate between configurations and differential subject-points, constrained by a post-evental rupture with the state of the situation. Finally, we can define the educational link between art and philosophy: "the only education is an education *by* truths. The entire, insistent problem is that there be truths, without which the philosophical category of truth is entirely empty and the philosophical act nothing but an academic quibble."[21]

As an example of an artistic event and fidelity, we can turn to Badiou's account of poetry. The event of a certain epoch of poets, announced by Hölderlin and traversing the works of Mallarmé and Celan, amongst others, is the event of poetry's 'disobjectification' of language. The guiding thread, or fidelity, between these works is the affirmation of poetry's singular immanence: poetry names less the difference between languages than it attests to the "difference within language."[22] This difference is the Real of language, the "coming to presence that was previously impossible."[23] The poem does not bring this Real to fruition, but attests to the gap between presence and absence. However, the poem makes no guarantee in this attestation; or in other words, there is no meta-poem: "the meaning the interpretation achieves will never ground the capacity for meaning itself."[24] To summarize, the configuration of the poetic event has no other guarantee but the fidelity of the poets themselves. Philosophy, then does not legislate for the poets, but answers their challenge: to identify the truth of the disobjectification of language.

[21] *Ibid.*, pp. 14–15.
[22] *Ibid.*, p. 32.
[23] *Ibid.*, p. 25.
[24] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

Aesthetics and its Discontents[25]

Like Badiou, Rancière gives a central place in his thought to art. The basic divide between the two concerns this 'placing' of art: while the former names art as one of four separate truth procedures, the latter insists on the aesthetic constitution of the political itself. Rancière does not claim that one dominates the other (aesthetics over politics or vice versa), but that art can intervene in the domain of politics. For Rancière, politics occurs in the challenge to the dominant police order, in the reconfiguration of the distribution [*partage*] of the sensible: the distribution and redistribution of "places and identities, [the] divisions and redivisions of spaces and times, of the visible and invisible, of noise and speech, constituting what I call the distribution [*partage*] of the sensible."[26] Insofar as politics distributes the lines between noise and speech, and visibility, it has an important aesthetic component. But, more specifically, aesthetics and politics relate in "the manner which the practices and visible forms of art themselves intervene in the distribution [*partage*] of the sensible and in its reconfiguration, the way in which they divide spaces and times, subjects and objects, the common and the singular."[27]

Due to the methodological decisions stated above, this cannot be the place to fully explicate all that is at stake in Rancière's conception of the relation between aesthetics of politics and the "politics of aesthetics." Our goal is more modest: to show how Rancière's objections to Badiou originate in their respective conceptions of the domain of truth and art. Rancière's commentary on inaesthetics, entitled "Aesthetics, Inaesthetics, Anti-aesthetics," was first presented at a conference dedicated to Badiou in 1999, then published in *Alain Badiou. Penser le multiple* in 2002, and then revised and included in his *Malaise dans l'esthétique*. He identifies, in his concluding remarks, three processes through which inaesthetics confronts "the equivocations of the homonymy of art."[28] In a possibly counterintuitive move, we will orient the explication of Rancière's position through these concluding remarks.

First, Rancière states that "'inaesthetics' names the operations that dis-

[25] It should be noted that *Malaise dans l'esthétique* echoes the title of the French translation of Freud's *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur*, which is *Le Malaise dans la culture*. I would like to thank Isis Sadek for reviewing my translations; however, all errors of judgment remain mine.

[26] Rancière, *Malaise dans l'esthétique* (Paris: Galilée, 2004), p. 38 (hereafter *MDE*).

[27] *MDE*, p. 39.

[28] Rancière, "Aesthetics, Inaesthetics, Anti-aesthetics," in Peter Hallward (ed.), *Think Again*: *Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy* (New York: Continuum, 2004), p. 231 (hereafter AIA); and *MDE*, p. 116.

sociate the logic of art's aesthetic regime, through which the 'Platonism of the multiple' is constructed as the thought of art."[29] Like Badiou, Rancière names three general regimes of conceptualizing the arts: the ethical regime of images, the representative regime of art and the aesthetic regime of art, which roughly correspond to the didactic schema, the classical schema and the romantic schema respectively.[30] Rancière does not explicitly link the didactic schema and the ethical regime of images, but their descriptions remain close: the connection to Plato, the themes of imitation and image, and education. The representative regime understands the arts in terms of mimesis, providing criteria to judge good and bad art, and provide instructions for the use of art.[31] The aesthetic regime of art is identified by Rancière with the romantic schema, with several modifications. This identification seems correct: Rancière tells us that "Aesthetics as a discourse was born two centuries ago," and he constantly references the young Schelling, Hegel, and above all, Schiller.[32] However, Rancière quarrels with the thesis that Badiou ascribes to romanticism; it is not enough to state that the Romantics held that art was the absolute object of truth. Instead, the aesthetic regime of art names a double movement, the constant negotiation and identification of art and non-art – which ruined the hierarchies of the representative regime – and the "exorbitant promises" of an aesthetic revolution of the forms of art and forms of life.[33]

Nonetheless, the aesthetic regime of art is as romantic as it is contemporary. It operates as the *dispositif* which undermines distinctions between art and non-art, as the name of this "confusion." However, this confusion is only the name for the indistinction between art and non-art, forms of art and forms of life, and the end of a rule for the propriety of art, a "novel equality" of an "aesthetic suspension of the supremacy of form over matter and activity over passivity."[34] How then does inaesthetics "dissociate the logic of art's aesthetic regime?" According to Rancière, this dissociation operates by ascribing a 'propriety' to art, by subtracting artistic truths from "the metaphoric universe in which the aesthetic regime connects the forms of art, the forms

[29] *Ibid*.

[30] See AIA, pp. 219–220; *MDE*, pp. 89–91. The ethical regime of images is described in these terms in Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, trans. Gabriel Rockhill (New York: Continuum, 2004), pp. 20–21.

[31] It is interesting to note that both Rancière and Badiou connect Freud to the regime of mimesis. See Jacques Rancière, *L'inconscient esthétique* (Paris: Galilée, 2001).

[32] *MDE*, p. 15.

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 48.

of life, and the forms of the thought of art."[35] Artistic truths are subtracted, then, from the ordinary circulation of meaning. This accusation is correct, but it seems to miss Badiou's point: an event is subtracted from the state of the situation (in Rancière's terms, the police order), not from a distribution of the sensible.

Let us approach this question from a different angle. As we have seen, Badiou is concerned with novel events of art. Inaesthetics is not a totalizing – to use a fashionable term here – philosophy of art; instead, it names a relation between philosophy and art which "describes the strictly intraphilosophical effects produced by the independent existence of *some* works of art."[36] If it only engages *some* works of art, it is because they introduce ruptures with previous configurations. Or, in other words, there is an issue with counting. Yet again, there is a close proximity between Badiou and Rancière. Just as, for the latter, the 'aesthetics of politics' revolves around who is counted as speaking and who remains the 'part with no part,' the 'politics of aesthetics' revolves around the porous boundary of what appears as art and the implications of these demarcations. Badiou's emphasis on the novelty of the event revolves around the supernumerary name of the event and the post-evental reconfiguration of the domain of the art, which exceeds the "count-for-one" of the state of the situation. However, it should be acknowledged that the count for Rancière concerns the distribution of the sensible, while for Badiou the count is ruptured by the torsion of the event, and this difference concerns their respective ontological commitments.[37] In itself, Rancière's first criticism does not offer a compelling reason to reject inaesthetics, unless he can introduce a conceptual distinction which demonstrates how inaesthetics quietly 'polices' the arts: this concept is modernism.[38]

Thus Rancière's second remark: "'inaesthetics' designates the twisted necessity whereby those dividing lines through which the Platonism of truths hides its affinity with aesthetic Platonism come to coincide with the dividing lines through which *modernism* seeks to guarantee that which is 'proper to art' against its aesthetic indistinction."[39] Modernism, as Rancière defines it,

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[35] AIA, p. 231; *MDE*, p. 116.

[36] *HI*, p. xiv. The emphasis is mine, but I take this point about the difference between inaesthetics and a philosophy of art from Gabriel Riera, "For an 'Ethics of Mystery': Philosophy and the Poem," in Gabriel Riera (ed.), *Alain Badiou*: *Philosophy and its conditions* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2005), pp. 61–62. Aside from this point, I think my differences with Riera's interpretation of inaesthetics should be apparent.

[37] If, that is, we can attribute to Rancière any ontological commitments.

[38] The term 'policing' is borrowed from Rancière's more political works, but it has been utilized regarding aesthetics as well. See *MDE*, p. 18; and *L'inconscient esthétique*, p. 49.

[39] AIA, p. 231; *MDE*, p. 116.

is the conceptualization of art which affirms art's autonomy while denying its heteronomy.[40] Clearly, this definition makes the conception of modernity dependent on the aesthetic regime of art and not vice versa. Modernism is a defensive reaction against the "confusions" of art and non-art, of art's heteronomy, as it delineates the propriety and autonomy of particular arts. Inaesthetics is understood by Rancière to continue this quiet policing of the frontiers of art and non-art.

Badiou, on this account, follows the modernist tendency by delimiting the roles of various arts: anything "'proper to art' is always proper of *an* art."[41] What is proper to art is a truth, or Idea, which is separate from an art. On this reading, Badiou reproduces "the very divisions of *mimesis* in order to ensure the anti-mimetic principle of separation."[42] So, for instance, the poem is divided between its immanent orientation for thought and the truth of which it is the task of philosophy to subtract. A reference to Althusser makes Rancière's distaste more than obvious: for Badiou, following "good Althusserian logic, philosophy is then summoned in order to discern the truths encrypted in the poem, even if this means miraculously rediscovering its own, which it claims to have been divested of."[43]

However, there are two questionable claims regarding this critique. First, how can *a* poem be an imitation or representation of the Idea? This cannot be the case, as an event circulates within a differential arrangement of multiple works. Then, is a particular art a representation of the Idea? Again, this is not the case: it is difficult to see how an artistic configuration would *represent* truth. An artistic configuration is, instead, a procedure of fidelity to the event. Thus Rancière's accusation that Badiou reproduces the effects of *mimesis* in inaesthetics is unclear. And the "good Althusserian logic?" Leaving aside Badiou's own criticisms of Althusser, I don't think that it can be proven that philosophy *necessarily* reads its own truths into works of art. To show this necessity, one would need to comb through biographical details or psychologize an author's motives; otherwise, this claim can only be an assumption most often reserved for one's opponents.

Therefore, we can move to the second question regarding the critique: why condemn modernism *in toto*? If the critique is viewed askew, we could read the situation as the following: what if the proponents of modernism grasped what was at stake in the aesthetic regime of art and decided to intervene on behalf of securing a proper place of art, against a politicizing of art

[40] AIA, p. 221; *MDE*, p. 93.
[41] AIA, p. 224; *MDE*, p. 101.
[42] *Ibid.*
[43] AIA, p. 227; *MDE*, pp. 107–108.

and the vicissitudes of the market? This is definitely the case with Badiou's 'modernism,' which is the attempt to secure artistic configurations worthy of thought beyond the 'service of goods' of the market and political interests.[44] Underlying Rancière's denunciations of modernism or inaesthetics is an underdeveloped normative core: the link between the aesthetic regime of art and the politics of dissensus.[45] For Rancière, any regime of politics presupposes an egalitarian principle: in order to divide the ruled and the rulers, both must be able to understand a common address. In order for those who speak to command, they must presuppose that those with no voice still understand the command. As he states, "in order to obey an order at least two things are required: you must understand the order and you must understand that you must obey it. And to do that, you must already be the equal of the person who is ordering you."[46] Dissensus occurs when this presupposed equality is activated; that is, when those who 'cannot' speak (the "part of those who have no part") begin to: when the position of authority is usurped by the latter.

In an analogous way, the aesthetic regime of art operates through the constant transformation of the line between art and non-art, forms of life, and forms of art. However, when Rancière links dissensus to the aesthetic regime of art, he ends up in a difficult position: while, in principle, the irruption of dissensus is a possibility in any political regime, the aesthetic regime of art is a particular historical mode of making art visible, and thus contingent (as Rancière himself recognizes). There is no necessity that another regime of art, in the future, cannot practice dissensus. Yet Rancière ties dissensus to the fortunes of the aesthetic regime of art. As we have seen, Rancière's problem with inaesthetics is that it intervenes on one side of the aesthetic regime of art, and the link that he makes between the aesthetic regime and the politics of dissensus makes the normative core legible. It seems that, for Rancière, to intervene within the aesthetic regime forecloses on the possibility of dissensus. However, I am tempted to call Rancière's genealogical method a 'reversal of Foucault' (although the latter's last two published volumes of *The History of Sexuality* could be considered Foucault's own 'reversal of Foucault'): instead of unmasking the operations of a historically

[44] See *HI*, p. 15. Badiou states "there are artistic configurations, there are works that constitute the thinking subjects of these configurations, and there is philosophy to separate conceptually all of this from opinion. Our times are worth more than the label on which they pride themselves: "democracy.""

[45] *MDE*, pp. 46–53.

[46] Jacques Rancière, *Disagreement*, trans. Julie Rose (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), p. 16.

situated *dispositif* in order to introduce a critical distance between a subject and his or her subjectification, Rancière 'unmasks' the functioning of the aesthetic regime of art in order to dismiss critical attempts to engage the paradoxical movements between forms of art, forms of life and an increasingly globalized market!

Finally, Rancière admits that, "perhaps," inaesthetics undermines the other two processes, and

> designates the movement whereby the attempt to delimit the places of art, to delimit what is not-yet-art and distinguish between art/non-art, [which] undermines the very end it was supposed to secure and releases what it was supposed to shut away by retying art to non-art and to the discourse on art.[47]

Here, we are in agreement: inaesthetics thinks both the novelty of events and the fidelity of artistic configurations which break with the previous state of art. *However*, while "Aesthetics, Inaesthetics, Anti-aesthetics" offers a possible reconciliation between inaesthetics and the aesthetic regime of art, this offer is rescinded in the revised version published in *Malaise dans l'esthétique*. In the latter, Rancière writes (and I quote in full):

> It does not seem that inaesthetics, such as Badiou understands it, goes in this direction. The "Manifesto of Affirmationism," which represents the current synthesis of his vision of art, shows him to be more concerned with reaffirming a "propriety of art" submitted to the educational vision that he confers on it. In this way, inaesthetics can only encounter the dominant antinomy of modernism. This antinomy is simple to formulate: the more the propriety of art is accentuated, the more this "propriety" tends to be assimilated to an experience of a radical heterogeneity, whose ultimate model is the shock of the encounter with the God who disconcerts Paul or speaks to Moses from out of the cloud. As the *Manifesto* affirms, "Art which is and which comes must be as solidly linked as a demonstration, as surprising as a stroke of night, and as elevated as a star." Assuredly, this formulation is anything but rhetorical approximation. It points exemplarily to the heart of Badiou's problematic: the double transformation of the revolutionary cut in the Lacanian encounter with the face of the Gorgon and the encounter with the Gorgon in the Platonic call of the Ideal. To pose the identity between art which is and which must be, it is necessary to make art the pure

[47] AIA, p. 231; *MDE*, p. 116.

> experience of the imperative dictated by the violent encounter with the Other. On this point, the Platonic strike of the Idea affirmed by inaesthetics is in accord with the commandment of the Other claimed by the aesthetics of the sublime. Both isolate art from aesthetics only to incline it toward ethical indistiction.[48]

I find this final objection, linking the event to the imperative of the Other untenable. First, there is the basic question regarding the concept of the Other: Rancière elides between the use of this concept in Lyotard (the focus of the chapter following this quotation, who draws on Lévinas) and Lacan. This quiet elision can be seen in the reference to the "Lacanian encounter with the face of the Gorgon." Regarding Lacan, one should be careful to separate the Big Other and the Real: the Real is the domain of the traumatic encounter, of symbolic deadlocks, while the Other designates the locus of the symbolic order, or the mediation of meaning and the social bond. However, the Other is not the Lévinasian Other. While the latter is the transcendental imperative which calls one to ethical respect, the former is the symbolic fiction *par excellence*: for a Lacanian, the Other, strictly speaking, does not exist; it functions only insofar as subjects attribute to it symbolic efficacy.

Badiou has also made it clear that his concept of the event, and his ethics, are tied to the Subject, and not the Other. To avoid any confusion, or "ethical indistinction," Badiou clarifies his position *vis-à-vis* Lévinas in the second chapter of his *Ethics*. For Lévinas, "I experience myself ethically as 'pledged' to the appearing of the Other, and subordinated in my being to this pledge."[49] Like Rancière, Badiou finds this phenomenological account ethically ambiguous, and the similarity of their rhetoric is striking: both claim that the ethics of the Other conveniently conforms to democratic consensus and the nullification of politics proper.[50] Thus one cannot even say that Badiou is in 'secret' solidarity with the Lévinasian enterprise. Badiou explicitly states, time and again, that infinity is not the transcendental power of God, but "the banal reality of every situation."[51] The event cannot be guaranteed by the Other; it can only be wagered on by a subject.

Although we have dismissed Rancière's latest objection, he is right to attribute to inaesthetics a concern with the "propriety of art." However, in

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[48] *MDE*, pp. 117–118.

[49] Badiou, *Ethics*, *An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, trans. Peter Hallward (London: Verso, 2001), pp. 19–20.

[50] See, for instance, Badiou, *Ethics*, pp. 23–25; and *MDE*, pp. 145–154

[51] Badiou, *Ethics*, p. 25.

accepting this claim, we must apply an additional turn of the screw: while inaesthetics attempts to delineate the "propriety of art," it does not exhaust the effects of art. Badiou often references artworks within his discussions of the other conditions of philosophy. For example, Mallarmé indicates a thinking of the event, Lautréamont reveals the need for a "severe mathematics," or the same poem by Celan, "An die Haltosegkeiten," registers its effects in both the *Metapolitics* and the *Handbook of Inaesthetics*.[52]

These examples illustrate, I think, that the effects of art extend beyond the domain of inaesthetics. Thus Jean-Jacques Lecerle is right to say that the "general irony of Badiou's readings of poetry is of course that they are such strong and decisive readings that they leave a lot of space for other readings, as the poem spectacularly exceeds the truth that Badiou's reading extracts from it."[53] Even more ironic, perhaps, is that Badiou himself engages with art beyond inaesthetics, leaving us with the question regarding the status of this 'transgression' or 'plenitude.' As previously mentioned, Badiou states in the *Handbook of Inaesthetics* that a singular relation of art and truth indicates that a truth of art belongs to it and does not "circulate among other registers of work-producing thought."[54] Since Badiou examines art under the conditions of other domains of thought, it seems that this requirement is only necessary for inaesthetics, and that art can be thought in connection to other domains. The upshot is that art need not be thought in connection to "political lessons,"[55] but if it is, it is thought outside of the domain of inaesthetics. If there is an exemplary attempt to think the knot between politics and aesthetics in Badiou's *oeuvre*, it is in *Le siècle*.

Inaesthetics and The Century

Le siècle constitutes Badiou's attempt to think how the twentieth century thought itself. In thinking how the twentieth century has thought itself, Badiou gives prominent place to various works of art. To show how this project and inaesthetics differ, one only need compare how Brecht is considered within these respective works.[56] As we have seen, in *Handbook*

[52] See Badiou, *Being and Event*, pp. 191–198; *Briefings on Existence*, p. 57; *Metapolitics*, trans. Jason Barker (London: Verso, 2005), p. 105; and *HI*, p. 34.

[53] Jean-Jacques Lecercle, "Badiou's Poetics," in Peter Hallward (ed.), *Think Again*: *Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy* (New York: Continuum, 2004), p. 216.

[54] *HI*, p. 9.

[55] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

[56] While it was published 2005, a majority of *Le siècle* was delivered as lectures from 1998–2000, not far from the publication of *Handbook of Inaesthetics*.

of Inaesthetics, Badiou attributes to Brecht the practice of a "Stalinized Platonism." Yet, in *Le siècle*, he praises Brecht as the greatest and most "universal" of all communist artists.[57] This universality, no doubt, arises from the fact that, against today's "celebration of moral and democratic consensus," Brecht teaches us how "Theater is a device (*appareil*) to construct truths."[58] This praise is far from the accusations – found in *Handbook of Inaesthetics* – of didacticism, or the use of theater to stage the external truths of dialectical materialism. Therefore, either Badiou is inconsistent regarding the legacy of Brecht, or we have crossed from inaesthetics to a different condition of philosophy, namely politics, from which to evaluate this legacy.

Yet if the example of Brecht serves to demonstrate discord between *Handbook of Inaesthetics* and *Le siècle*, one can turn to Badiou's comments from the latter book on Malevich's *White on White* (1918) for a more inaesthetic treatment of art.[59] In the twentieth century, Malevich is exemplary: against the destructive impulses of the avant-garde (and, incidentally, Heideggerian *Destruktion*), *White on White* introduces the gap of what Badiou calls "minimal difference." Against the purification of the *passion du réel*, which aims at demolishing the semblant to strike right at the Real, *White on White* exhibits, and inscribes in painting, the gap itself, between background and form. Therefore, "one must avoid interpreting *White on White* as a symbol of the destruction of painting, as it is a matter, rather, of a subtractive assumption." Malevich opposes the 'dialectic' between the semblant and the Real, activated by the militants of the twentieth century, by exhibiting the gap itself as Real: "*White on White* is a proposition of thought, which opposes minimal difference to maximal destruction." Here Badiou openly aligns his subtractive thought with Malevich, who demonstrated, against the destructive impulses of the *passion du réel*, an inaesthetic gesture.

Therefore, these two examples show that not only is *Le siècle* deserving of a more extensive analysis, but that the relationship between inaesthetics and Badiou's other work remains ambiguous. To summarize, by way of open questions:

1. Rancière is correct to accuse inaesthetics of maintaining a propriety of art. Inaesthetics is concerned with thinking the singular and immanent truths of art; that is, thinking the truth of art not as object, but from within the fidelity to artistic events (in the plural) and not through the prescrip-

[57] Badiou, *Le siècle* (Paris: Seuil, 2005), p. 68.
[58] *Ibid*., p. 67.
[59] *Ibid*., pp. 86–87 (the following quotes on Malevich are taken from these two pages).

tions of philosophy or politics. It should be noted however, that inaesthetics does not exhaust the thinking of art: outside of *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, Badiou addresses art under the other conditions of philosophy. Yet, how are we to understand the relation between art and the other conditions of philosophy? Are we left to the abyss of fidelity and decision, or the guarantee of the master's *oeuvre*?

2. Artistic events follow a principle of novelty or rupture. Events break with a previous state of the situation and reconfigure a situation with previously unheard of elements. In this way, inaesthetics is concerned with artworks which reconfigure the divisions between art and non-art. However, an event is not analogous to the call of the Other; an event is not guaranteed by the transcendence of a God, but a wager by a subject on the void. A subject of truth wagers that the event has taken place, and pursues the discord of fidelity against the state of the situation. While this conception of artistic innovation allows for Badiou to maintain a rather modern selection of evental works, it remains difficult to sustain in analyzing the locality of contemporary art. Despite his circumstantial cynicism, inaesthetics does not foreclose on contemporary questions. Were there not contemporary locations for thought, why reinvigorate the relation between art and philosophy under the rubric of inaesthetics?

3. Finally, a critique of Rancière: is there not a problem with attaching the politics of dissensus (which is possible in any political regime presupposing the egalitarian principle) to a particular historical regime, namely the aesthetic regime of art? Could there not be other dissensual regimes of art? Or, is it even necessary that art is explicitly tied to politics? By separating artistic truths and political truths, Badiou avoids this 'historicist' impasse. Instead of tracing the relationship between events and historical regimes, Badiou offers us the conceptual tools to distinguish how events, whether artistic or political, stand out from their time.

CULTURAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL INTERACTIONS TODAY

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THE STORIES OF FOUR WORDS

Gao Jianping

It might be unimaginable that during the period from 1978 to 1985 in China, almost all books on aesthetics became bestsellers, with as many as tens of thousands of copies being sold in a short time, and this discipline became a highly popular one with thousands of students choosing it as their subject for master or doctoral level studies. This period is now called the "aesthetics craze," which, as I wrote in an article, "greatly stimulated the development of aesthetics [...] in China," and fostered an enthusiastic band of aestheticians."[1] This was actually a revival of aesthetics after the Cultural Revolution, and historians can continue to dispute the cause of the "craze," but no one will disavow the fact that this happened during a crucial political period, and played an important political and ideological role in transforming the society from a closed one to one with an "open-door" policy, as it was called by Deng Xiaoping and his colleagues.

Aesthetics, particularly its Chinese translation *meixue*, literally signifies the study of beauty, which became a replacement for Mao Zedong's "struggle philosophy" (continuously creating enemies and calling for people to fight against each other before and during the Cultural Revolution). This does not mean that aesthetics became a political philosophy at that time. This was simply an effort to develop aesthetics in China, and its importance for social transformation lay in that it balanced the all-encompassing political ideology as a legacy of the Cultural Revolution, as well as offered an entry point for Western ideas by justifying the translation and publication of Western academic works in China. Disinterestedness played a role in relaxing the

[1] Jianping Gao, "The 'Aesthetics Craze' in China: Its Cause and Significance," *Dialogue and Universalism*, Vol. VII, No. 3–4 (1997), pp. 34–35. More general information on the "aesthetics craze" can be found in that article; here I present the same history but from a different perspective.

tense atmosphere; it turned out to be most beneficial for a benign political climate.

In this study, I shall choose four words in Chinese aesthetics that were of central import during that period. All four words were originally translated from Russian or other European languages, and have prevailed in China since the middle of the twentieth century. As we know, every word has its own destiny. When a word is translated into a new language, its meaning can somehow be changed according to the new context. This is quite common in Europe when some academic works are translated into various European languages. If we consider that China is a culture quite different from those in Europe, the transformation of meaning in this way will be more understandable. The Chinese have to find a Chinese word or a compound of characters (unlike in the translation among European languages, where often the same word can be kept) that is equivalent to the original one when the translation is made. Nevertheless, the Chinese word or compound inevitably retains the meanings of the original Chinese characters. For instance, when the Chinese translate the word "*Ästhetik*," they cannot just translate it as "aesthetics" in English or "*esthétique*" in French, but translate it into two characters spelled as "*mei-xue*" that literally mean a study of beauty. This also provides potential freedom for a translator to choose different Chinese characters to translate the same word in European languages.

What I want to present in this study is not merely the change of meaning that occurs when a word is translated into Chinese as stated above, but that during the period of the "aesthetics craze," many words were deliberately retranslated by Chinese scholars with characters other than the familiar ones in order to imbue them with new meanings or connotations for aesthetic as well as political purposes.

1. Party literature or Party publications

From the 1940s to the 1970s the Chinese mainly received Marxist aesthetics from Russia, and, at a time when analytic aesthetics was prevailing in West, the Chinese persisted in utilitarian or instrumentalist ideas on literature and art by promoting art for the sake of class struggle, art in the service of workers, farmers, and soldiers, and art that would further the purposes of socialist construction and revolution. During this period, Kant's aesthetics of disinterestedness was sharply criticized, and very few books of analytic aesthetics were translated and discussed. The most important foundation for

these instrumentalist ideas, in addition to many others, was a short essay by Vladimir Ilyich Lenin entitled "Party Organisation and Party Literature."

This was an essay written in 1905, when the Social Democratic Party of Russia became powerful owing to a revolution that happened that same year. In this essay, Lenin wrote,

> Down with non-partisan writers! Down with Literary supermen! Literature must become part of the common cause of the proletariat, 'a cog and a screw' of one single great Social-Democratic mechanism set in motion by the entire politically-conscious vanguard of the entire working class.[2]

The revolution broke the restrictions formerly exerted on the Party publications. At that moment, Lenin called for a change in the strategy, for an end to the disguises of the past, and for a strengthening of control over the party's publications, demanding that they openly serve the practical struggle of the party. In Lenin's view, Russia had not yet developed a capitalist economy. The Social-Democratic Party should thus keep both the minimum program and the maximum program. The minimum program was to be "civilized" and to eliminate the remnants of the serf system, while the maximum program was to realize socialism and communism. At that time, a proletarian party was not supposed to break with the bourgeoisie and disrupt the bourgeois revolution with the intention of "civilizing" Russia, but to join it. In other words, the proletarian party was supposed to unite with different kinds of social groups, including the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie. A union such as this, however, should not be achieved at the cost of the independence of the proletarian party as concerns its ideology. In a revolutionary period many different persons with different kinds of ideas would join the party. The Party should "digest" them with its own program, rather than let them keep their own world views, which could eventually transform the Party. Owing to this reason, Lenin did not permit the Party newspapers and magazines to become contaminated and to spread ideas incompatible with the Party's program. He insisted that the purity of its publications was of crucial importance for securing the purity of the Party.

Lenin did not discuss the "principle" in an aesthetic context, and his "literature" mainly referred to publications in general, rather than to literature as an art form. But the "Party literature" later turned out to be a key concept

[2] V. I. Lenin, "Party Organisation and Party Literature," in *Lenin Collected Works* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1965), Vol. 10, p. 45.

in the Chinese version of Marxist aesthetics. The Chinese translation for the word "literature" is *wenxue*, which denotes, in the ear of the Chinese, poetry, fictional novels, and other belles-lettres, excluding non-fiction writings. Lenin's teaching convinced them that pure literature was impure, fictional novels should maintain a non-fictional purpose, and that *belles-lettres* were in the service of the practical political struggle.

In the books of literary and artistic theory in China at that time, a history was invented for the Party spirit. It begins with Engels claiming not to oppose to "partisan poetry,"[3] with his explanation of realism as "the truthful reproduction of typical characters under typical circumstances," and his calling for a presentation of "the rebellious reaction of the working class against the oppressive medium which surrounds them."[4] Lenin's accentuation of the conscious service of literature to the goal of the proletarian party was regarded as a further development of Engels' idea in a new historical and social setting. The next stage was set by Mao Zedong, who maintained in his famous "Talks at the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art" that, "Party work in literature and art occupies a definite and assigned position in Party revolutionary work as a whole and is subordinated to the revolutionary tasks set by the Party in a given revolutionary period."[5]

Mao Zedong's "Talks" were made in 1942 in Yenan, a base area of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) during the warring period, when its central tasks were to fight against the Japanese invasion, as well as to prepare for a possible break with the Kuomintang Government (KMT) during or after the Anti-Japanese War. At such a time literature had to be related to the war; if it was not actually such, at least politicians would require it to be. Mao thus followed Lenin's principle and insisted that, "Revolutionary Literature and art are part of the whole revolutionary cause [...] they are indispensable cogs and screw in the whole mechanism, and an indispensable part of the entire revolutionary cause."[6]

After the CCP won the war with the KMT, this "principle" became the guideline for literature and art. What had been only a war time policy, became in the 1950s a central principle for the theory of literature and art all over China.

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[3] "Engels to Minna Kautsky," London, Novermber 26, 1885. See www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1885/letters/85_11_26.htm.

[4] "Engels to Margaret Harkness in London," April 1888. See www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1888/letters/88_04_15.htm.

[5] Mao Zedong, "Talks at the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art" (May 1942), in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Vol. 3. See www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-3/mswv3_08.htm.

[6] *Ibid*. Translation modified.

There was also a unique distinction in China that the Party principle was held to be a part of the theory of literature and art, rather than a part of *meixue* or aesthetics, since *meixue* literally means the study of beauty, and was thus considered mainly as a discipline devoted to harmony instead of struggle. Therefore, the fate of aesthetics depended on the political situation. There was an attempt to establish aesthetics during the 1950s and early 1960s, but when society turned to the left and the Cultural Revolution approached, literary theory based on the Party principle replaced aesthetics.

During the Cultural Revolution (1966–76), literature became an instrument for political struggles, and Jiang Qing, Mao's wife, who was the actual leader in the realm of literature and arts during that period, pushed the Party principle to an extreme and consequently eliminated most literature and arts except for several so-called "model Peking operas," i.e., Peking operas with modern and revolutionary themes in traditional forms.

How to discuss the principle of the Party spirit in the period after the Cultural Revolution? At the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s this became the difficult question for Chinese aestheticians and literary theorists. They were eager to formulate a theory that would be different from the one that prevailed during the previous period of the Cultural Revolution, but that could also find confirmation among those who were regarded as classical writers of Marxism.

It was not an easy job at that time for Chinese literary theorists to challenge the long established system of literary theory within which the Party principle was considered to be one of the key concepts. They made various efforts towards the end of 1970s without any obvious effect, since most people were still used to the old theory. In the end, the reformers in literary circles, supported by certain high ranking officials in the Party, found a way to create some changes in the system while tactfully avoiding a confrontation with literary theory as a whole – by finding a new translation of the so-called Party principle. In No. 22 (1982) of the *Red Flag*, the central magazine of the CCP, a new translation of Lenin's "Party Organization and Party Literature" was published. The new title was "Party Organization and Party Publications." The translators argued that, "literature" in Russian did not indicate pure literature, or *belles-lettres*, but possessed a much broader meaning. In fact, it was the same in other European languages. In English, literature could indicate fictional or creative literature, as well as other kinds of writing. *Wenxue*, the Chinese compound for literature, came from the translation made in the modern era, and was no longer related to the original meanings of *wen* and *xue* that had existed separately in ancient Chinese; it was therefore directly understood as *belles-lettres*. On the other hand, there existed no word in an-

cient China which would retain meanings that would exactly correspond to "literature" in Western languages or in Russian. In this case, it could be only partly correct when it was translated as "the Party *wenxue*." Lenin indeed emphasized, "that in this field greater scope must undoubtedly be allowed for personal initiative, individual inclination, thought and fantasy, form and content."[7] It was thus meant to include the "pure" literature, and it could thus not be said that the old translation was totally wrong. What was at stake was actually not to make a new translation from a semantic point of view, but to create a new ideological and political one.

The new translation indeed had a strong effect, and its public appearance immediately put all authors of literary theory textbooks in an awkward situation. (There were hundreds of textbooks for different educational levels of students.) An examination of the textbooks edited during the period immediately after the new translation was published shows that many editors were panicked, for they did not know what to do. Soon afterwards, the "principle of the Party spirit" disappeared from all the literary theory textbooks in China. At the same time, the "aesthetics craze" appeared. This was an unusual event for aesthetics, and as Chinese aestheticians, we all benefited from it. It was this re-translation that gave Chinese aesthetics a new beginning.

2. Imaged thought

From 1978 to approximately 1985, a new key term appeared in Chinese literary theory, i.e. *xingxiang siwei*, namely, "thinking in images" or "imaged thought". This was originally a term from Russian literary criticism, formulated after an expression by the famous Russian literary critic Vissarion Grigoryevich Belinsky (1811–1848): "thought resides in images". What Belinsky wanted to do, was to explore the quality of art from the perspective of epistemology.

There exist three possible relations between art and knowledge: art is a kind of knowledge like scientific knowledge, which demonstrates truth; art is a special kind of knowledge, or a particular way of demonstrating truth; art is not knowledge, and thus does not demonstrate any truth. Of these three positions, Belinsky took up the second, i.e. for him, art was a special kind of knowledge and a particular way of demonstrating the truth. On the

[7] V. I. Lenin, "Party Organisation and Party Literature," in *Lenin Collected Works*, Vol. 10, p. 46.

one hand, Belinsky tried hard to distinguish between science and art, and regarded them as different human activities. He insisted that their difference existed not in the contents proper, but in the means or methods that were employed in dealing with the contents. Belinsky wrote: "The philosophers speak by means of syllogism, while the poets speak by means of images and pictures, but what they say is the same."[8]

It appears that Belinsky did not distinguish between imaged thought as a means of recognizing the truth and merely as a way of demonstrating the truth. The examples of the syllogism and images he put forth, implied that this kind of "thought" only related to the latter, but what he intended to do was to prove that "imaged thought" could indeed reach the truth, or, in his words, "art is the direct perception of the truth."[9]

The "imaged thought" or "thinking in images" was popular in China in the late 1950s and early 1960s. This topic was discussed by many authors who, though different in many respects, shared the same idea that the qualities of art should be studied within the framework of epistemology. Both science and art, according to them, represented a cognition of the world, but the latter retained a special characteristic, namely to do this by means of images.

In May 1966, when Chinese society was on the path towards the Cultural Revolution, a paper entitled "Marxist Epistemology Must Be Retained in the Field of Literature and Art: A Critique of the Imaged Thought," by Zheng Jiqiao, a scholar-official in a northeast province of China, appeared in the *Red Flag*, the central magazine of the CCP.[10] Zheng argued that "cognition" should be realized from the concrete to the general, and from the perceptual stage to the rational one, while the view of "thinking in images" implied a sensuous thought, and thus something impossible. Man *cannot* think in images and thought *must* be abstract. He suggested that the process of creating a work of art was to create ideas by means of abstract thinking, and then to organize images with these ideas.

This paper was, on the whole, written in the style of an academic discourse, but was published at the wrong time. Although written in 1963, its publication was long delayed and it thus appeared only as late as 1966. Its publication in the *Red Flag* also added an authoritative quality to it. The paper met with unexpected success because of the Cultural Revolution, which

[8] V. G. Belinsky, "A Glance at the Russian Literature in 1847," translated from Chinese from *Foreign Theorists and Writers on Imaged Thought*, edited by The Institute of Foreign Literature, CASS (Beijing: The Press of Chinese Social Sciences, 1979), p. 55.

[9] *Ibid.,* p. 59.

[10] *Red Flag*, No. 5 (1966).

commenced immediately afterwards, and because of the rumors that Mao Zedong himself had praised it. Another fact that should be mentioned was that at that time no academic discussions were possible, since the whole society was preparing for a "revolution" or chaos.

The unnatural victory was followed by an unnatural loss. In 1965, Mao wrote a letter on poetry to Chen Yi, a former general and then the Minister of Foreign Affairs of China. The letter contained the following statement: "One should think in images when writing poems, rather than speak directly in prose."

It was a private letter that was not published until 1978.[11] In this letter Mao only discussed the ways of making poetry, criticizing Chen Yi's poems for writing down feelings or facts in a straightforward manner, rather than demonstrating them by means of vivid images. It was a letter in response to Chen's poems that were presented to him before – a rather common exchange between the two of them. Nonetheless, this letter became very influential as soon as it was made publicly known. Shortly after its publication in 1978, more than a dozen books and hundreds of papers on "imaged thought" appeared, with the most important among them being the huge volume *Foreign Theorists and Writers on Imaged Thought* (500,000 characters), produced by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, with some leading scholars as its translators and editors.

"Imaged thought" refers to a rather special meaning of "the direct perception of the truth" and to "never separating from images" during the thinking process. The truth was considered to be approached by means of two pathways: the first was through logical thinking with concepts, arguments, and judgments, and the second was thinking in images. "Imaged thought" is the latter. This is a quite modern idea, but during that time the Chinese sought remarks from writers of different countries and different ages to prove it. For instance, Zhu Guangqian, a leading aesthetician in China at that time, wrote that "imagination" was just "imaged thought". Many remarks quoted in the book *Foreign Theorists and Writers on Imaged Thought* were about imagination, fantasy, intuition, inspiration, etc. The "imaged thought" was taken as something discussed by people from ancient times to the present and not only in China, but also all over the world, though elsewhere purportedly different terms were used.

[11] Mao Zedong, "A Letter to Comrade Chen Yi on Poetry," *Poetry*, No. 1 (1978). *Poetry* was an influential Chinese magazine for poetry and its criticism. It mainly focused on new poems written in modern Chinese language with fewer rules and in non-classical forms, but many of Mao Zedong's old-styled poems (written in classical Chinese language, and following old rules and forms) were also published in it in the 1950s and 1960s.

The reason why the concept "imaged thought" was so popular was also that it allowed a break with the corpus of literary theory of the Cultural Revolution. It was in accordance with the formula made by Zheng Jiqiao that the recognition of the truth needed abstract thought, while the task of the artists was only to demonstrate the truth and to visualize certain political ideas made by certain politicians who were considered to be the only persons able to think correctly. This formula dominated during the Cultural Revolution. Now that the Cultural Revolution was over, literary theorists needed to find a new theoretical language to justify the artistic styles they preferred. They insisted that artists were able to attain knowledge of life by themselves, instead of merely proving and presenting the "truth" discovered by politicians. Mao's letter to Chen Yi was useful to them in promoting their theoretical ambitions and their independent thought. At this time, Zheng was no longer important, though he still tried to defend himself. Almost all the important theorists and translators sided with the "imaged thought." This phrase quickly returned to the textbooks on literary theory and became an authoritative concept. It also added momentum to the development of aesthetics, particularly psychological aesthetics in China. Many of the advocates of "imaged thought" were also the leading aestheticians. In fact, if we were to say that the re-translation of the "Party principle" promoted the "aesthetics craze" from a negative aspect, we could also say that "imaged thought" did it from a positive and active aspect. It encouraged creation and appreciation, which was the focus of aesthetics in the early 1980s.

Our story about "imaged thought" cannot stop here. As we mentioned previously, there may exist three possible relationships between art and knowledge, with the idea of "imaged thought" being the second: art is a special kind of knowledge, or a particular way of demonstrating truth. This idea played a special role in literary theory during the development of Chinese society from that of the Cultural Revolution into a society more open to modern literary criticism and aesthetics. However, as early as the beginning of the 1980s, the concept of "imaged thought" was questioned by some scholars, and in the middle of the 1980s Chinese theorists gradually abandoned this concept, owing to several reasons:

1) Art was no longer regarded as a kind of knowledge and a pathway to truth. The process that started with the interpretation of art as a kind of knowledge, continued with the interpretation of art as a special kind of knowledge, and lead to art understood not as a kind of knowledge, but in fact towards the autonomy of art. The concept of "imaged thought" promoted this process. But when Kant's aesthetics made a return with the help

of the works on aesthetics by Li Zehou, art was no longer taken as a way of acquiring knowledge of the world, and aesthetics was no longer a part of epistemology. This was a natural development, occurring alongside the revival of aesthetics in China.

2) In the 1980s there was a current of scientism prevailing among Chinese aestheticians. At first, people took "imaged thought" as a scientific concept, but later realized that it was no more than a philosophic supposition, instead of a scientific conclusion. This concept was not proven by any accepted psychological studies, nor was it based on experiments on the human mind.

3) Russian influence was gradually replaced by Western influence. Chinese scholars educated before the Cultural Revolution were strongly under the influence of the Soviet Union, while those educated after it were much more strongly influenced by theories arising from Western countries. When the new generation of scholars became the main driving force in academic studies, the whole aesthetic discourse inevitably underwent a great change. "Imaged thought" no longer had a place in it.

Today hardly anyone in China mentions "imaged thought", but I still think that once it was an important concept, which furthermore played a key role in the emergence of the "aesthetics craze" in the 1980s in China. It deserves careful study since it was a part of the history of modern Chinese aesthetics.

3. Subjectivity or Subjectavity?

There were two terms that attracted the attention of aestheticians in China after the Cultural Revolution: one was "subject" or *zhuti*, and another was "noumenon" or *benti*. Both terms related to a book on Kant by Li Zehou, *The Critique of the Critical Philosophy*.[12]

Li called his own philosophy both "subjective practical philosophy" and "anthropological ontology". In Chinese, the "subject" or its adjective form, the "subjective", can be translated by two terms: *zhuguan* and *zhuti*. In the semantic framework of the Chinese language *zhuguan* usually bears the sense of willful, or even arbitrary. Under the influence of the theory of reflection (a theory developed mainly on the basis of Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*), people would mostly talk about *zhuguan* (subjective) and *keguan* (objective), and regarded the former as something negative and the latter as something positive. For instance, to do something subjectively (*zhuguan*),

[12] Li Zehou, *The Critique of Critical Philosophy* (Beijing: People Press, 1979).

means to do it according to one's will or whim, while to do something objectively (*keguan*), means to do it according to the natural law.

In this context, the discussion of the subject, the subjective, or of subjectivity required a new translation. Chinese theorists chose *zhuti*, and thus *zhutixing*. Again, it was Zhu Guangqian who gave a new translation of Karl Marx's "Theses on Feuerbach". The first sentence of this short note reads as follows: "The chief defect of all hitherto existing materialism – that of Feuerbach included – is that the thing, reality, sensuousness, is conceived only in the form of the object or of *contemplation*, but not as *human sensuous activity*, *practice*, not subjectively."[13]

It is obvious that Marx used "subjectively" in a positive sense. Here "subjectively" was translated by an authoritative institute into the Chinese language as *zhuguan*.[14] Zhu Guangqian, however, made a new translation of it as *zhuti*. Zhu gave a particular explanation for this new translation by arguing that *zhuguan* gave the reader the impression that it was conceived as a personal opinion, while *zhuti* stressed the meaning of conceiving it from the viewpoint of human practice.[15]

Li Zehou provided a clearer explanation as to what "subjectivity" and "practice" were supposed to be. He maintained that *zhutixing* was not like the subjectivity advocated by many western philosophers, Jean-Paul Sartre, for example. Instead, his intent was to stress the physical activities of human beings, rather than the spiritual activities which he thought were considered by Western philosophers. Owing to this reason, he argued that his *zhutixing* could not be the translation of "subjectivity". It was actually untranslatable, and, if a translation had to be made, he suggested translating it as *subjectavity*, a new word coined for a new meaning. For the same reason, he also maintained that his *shijian* could not be translated into praxis, but only practice. He interpreted the former as including also various spiritual activities, while the latter supposedly referred merely to the physical ones.

Practice was a key notion from the end of the 1970s to the beginning of the 1980s because of the great ideological campaign called "Practice is the sole criterion of truth." This was not merely an academic discussion in a narrow sense, but a political campaign let by Deng Xiaoping and his team

[13] Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucher, 2nd edition (New York and London: Norton, 1978) p. 143.

[14] *Selected Works of Marx-Engels*, trans. & ed. by the Institute for the Compilation and Translation of the Works by Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin, CCP (Beijing: The People Press, 1972), Vol. 1, p. 16.

[15] Zhu Guangqian, *Pick up Wheat-Ears of Aesthetics* (Tianjin: Hundred Flowers Press, 1980), p. 73.

to eliminate the ideology of the Cultural Revolution, which implied that everyone's remarks, including those made by Mao Zedong, should also be verified by practice. Although *zhutixing* as a term was discussed in a narrower philosophical circle, it echoed the broader general discussion.

Zhuti and *zhutixing* became extensively influential in aesthetics and literary theory, owing to a 1985 paper by Liu Zaifu entitled "On the Subjectivity of Literature". This paper became important due to two reasons: (1) The discussion of "imaged thought" came to an end at that time, and art was thus no longer regarded as providing knowledge of the world, thus leaving room for the subjective tendency in art. (2) Its publication coincided with a great discussion on human nature and humanism, which became the background for the idea of "subjectivity."

4. The "study of noumena" and "ontology"

Ontology is translated into Chinese as *bentilun*, but this translation also has its own history and its special complexity.

Bentilun is a word translated from German philosophical writings in the early twentieth century. In Lan Gongwu's translation of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, "Ontologie" (ontology) was translated as *bentilun*. This word was accepted as a suitable Chinese semantic equivalent for ontology in general, and was adopted by many encyclopedias, dictionaries and books on western philosophy.

In the West, ontology refers to the discipline or study of being. This word was first coined by the German philosopher Rudolf Goclenius in a dictionary of philosophy published in 1613. Christian Wolff (1679–1754) gave a definition of this discipline as "a science of being as being in general."[16] It is clear that this discipline was conceived as a study of the general characteristics shared by individual objects, or their being, rather than something that exists behind the appearance of the world. *Bentilun*, as its Chinese translation, refers to the study of *benti*, which retains a strong sense of the original, the source, and the true body of the object. The word *benti* reminds the Chinese of Buddhism and the neo-Confucianism of Zhu Xi (1130–1200). The translator attempted to facilitate the Chinese understanding of the word, and therefore employed a traditional Chinese term. This translation was actually an effort to match Chinese thought with that of Western philosophy. Owing

[16] Christian Wolff, *Philosophia prima sive ontologia methodo scientifica pertractata, qua omnes cognitionis humanae principia contineutur*, § 1.

to the fundamental difference between Chinese and Western world views, a match such as this will necessarily result in a misreading: the Chinese stress lay on the ceaseless generating process arising from an original body to its various appearances, while for Europeans it designated the being in general in the world.

When the word *bentilun* became popular in the 1980s in China, it was still related to the terminology arising from the Chinese translation of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. On the one hand, Lan Gongwu translated ontology as *bentilun*, on the other hand, he translated "the doctrine of noumena" or "the concept of noumena" as *bentilun* as well.[17] Deng Xiaomang, another translator of the same book, translated these two expressions in the same way.[18] As we know, Kant held a negative attitude towards ontology, and was, in his *Critique of Pure Reason,* critical of Wolff's ontology. He attempted to transfer the question of philosophy from "How can the world be possible?" into "How can man's cognition become possible?" Kant put forth the concept of "things-in-themselves" and considered that they cannot be objects of cognition. He argued that man was unable to recognize the "things-in-themselves" or "noumena", but he maintained that these "noumena" indeed existed behind the phenomena of the world. Therefore, Kant was not the person who erected a new ontology. He named his philosophy a critical one, and decided to do away with any kind of ontology. Therefore, from Kant's "things-in-themselves" or "noumena" (*benti*), an ontological system could not be developed.

It would thus be misleading if one was to interpret Kant's philosophy from the position of traditional "ontology". Nevertheless, the desire or even "craze" for ontology in China could find its clue in the second *bentilun* mentioned above, i.e. in the doctrine of noumena. Kant argued that "things-in-themselves" are not recognizable, but many philosophers after him, such as Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche engaged in a struggle to attain the "things-in-themselves". Chinese philosophers attempted to achieve this same goal by means of the concept "practice", on the basis of their readings of Marx's works. In his "Theses on Feuerbach", Marx wrote: "Man must prove the truth, that is, the reality and power, the this-sidedness of his thinking in practice."[19] This was considered to be the key to opening the door towards "things-in-themselves". Practice thus becomes "*benti*", while

[17] See Lang Gongwu's translation of Kant's *Critique of Judgment* (Beijing: The Commercial Press, 1997).

[18] See Deng Xiaomang's translation of Kant's *Critique of Judgment* (Beijing: The People Press, 2004).

[19] Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, p. 144.

the discussion of this *benti* becomes a *bentilun*. The situation was made even more confusing when this *bentilun* was translated back into "ontology".

Benti and *bentilun* formed their characteristic histories in China. Many Chinese, especially those in the fields of literary and art criticism, no longer followed the original meanings of these words, but used them according to their own needs.

This discussion has continued up until the present day. Some scholars have tried to trace the original meanings of these two words in Western languages, and some regard them as words indigenous to China. In reality this is not a matter of being correct or wrong, but of understanding what these words actually mean in the Chinese context.

A word has its own fate, and follows its own path. This is not only the case with ontology, but also with subjectivity – and with all the four words discussed, and many more that have not been mentioned here. Every word can tell us an interesting story, if we are interested in listening. I chose these four words as examples to show how important it is for us to notice the transcultural histories of certain terms, theories, and themes. When a term or a theory travels to a new culture, it necessarily gains certain meanings, and plays a new role in that society. When we attempt to understand the acquired meanings of notions and terms from philosophy and aesthetics in a culture other than our own, we should not only try to find something similar to us, but, more importantly, look for the additional meanings generated in that culture for our familiar terms.

When we talk about the revival of aesthetics in China, we may find that in the last two or three decades in modern China there have been two such revivals. In the 1980s, there was an "aesthetics craze" which was achieved, as we saw above, with the help of the translation and re-translation of certain key words, and by breaking away from the ideology of the Cultural Revolution. This revival of aesthetics resulted in the establishment of the autonomy of art and in aesthetic disinterestedness, which was, in some senses, an interpretation of Marxist aesthetics with the help of Kant's philosophy. We are currently faced with the second revival of aesthetics in China, in which Kant is being questioned, and Heidegger, Wittgenstein, and John Dewey are becoming more and more important to us – although for most Chinese aestheticians the most important works remain those by Confucius, the *Book of Change*, and other ancient Chinese classics.

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A VIEWPOINT ON PAINTING?
ON A PROBLEMATIC THEORY OF COMPUTATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

Ken'ichi Iwaki

Preface

It would be an inevitable condition of our philosophy and aesthetics to accept that after the linguistic turn and postmodern philosophy of the twentieth century, the traditional essentialist thinking has finally broken down. It is this 'essentialism' that adheres to the existence of a super-historical or a-historical principle, i.e. an absolute truth beyond our history in various realms, such as the religious, the political, the cultural, etc. This fanatical essentialist thinking has a negative aspect because through this thinking, violence against people who don't want to share the same opinion, often occurs. Nor is this matter different in the case of art. As soon as it is understood and explained from the framework of essentialist thinking, it easily falls victim to the essentialist discourse. It seems that even now, art is not only theoretically, but also practically bound to such a framework of essentialism.

Concerning this problem, the philosophical thought of Kiyoshi Miki (1897–1945) can give us a good suggestion as how to reconsider our experience in the holistic sense, i.e. beyond the philosophy in the narrow sense of the discipline. Miki didn't use the notion of 'essentialism'. In the 1930s he had, however, already criticized the philosophical thought which we can call 'essentialist' and proposed a new philosophical thinking.

In this paper, I would like to point out the actuality of Miki's thinking (*Part 1*),[1] and then, from Miki's view, critically reexamine the discourse on painting in Japan and Eastern Asia. In this discourse we shall find an aspect of the essentialist understanding of art which has been for a long time strongly bound to the western theory of perspective after the Renaissance and photographic theory. I would like to try to clarify the problematic under-

[1] See also Iwaki 2001b.

standing of painting which computational psychology has developed.[2] Most of all, the psychological explanation of 'depth', which we see in pictures, is a stumbling block to an understanding of the peculiarity of pre-modern and non-western pictures. This explanation, which had obtained its plausibility from the tradition of geometric perspective and photography has, however, provided the fixed framework of pictorial theories. It seems to have become a 'common sense' for many people and an 'essential' framework of art theories. Is this essentialist understanding of painting really correct? Hasn't it overlooked the individual structures of many pictures and reduced them to a single criterion? This, then, is our question (*Part 2*).

Part 1. Miki's Philosophical Thinking and its Actuality

Concerning Miki's critique of the essentialist thinking, his "Rekishi Tetsugaku" ("Philosophy of History," 1932) and *Kousoryoku no Ronri (Logic of Imagination, Logik der Einbildungskraft*, 1937–43) are the most important among his many writings. Regarding his critique of essentialism, the most suggestive concepts (notions) which Miki emphasized are the notions of 'fact' (*Tatsache*), 'pathos', 'social body', critique of the philosophical 'standpoint of organism', 'institution' and 'myth'.

1-1. 'Fact' (Tatsache)

In his "Philosophy of History", Miki proposes to explain history from the viewpoint of 'fact'. According to Miki, we can generally find two aspects of history, that is 'the history as logos' and 'the history as being'. The former is the past world which was known and ordered in our consciousness. Historical texts, novels, or diaries for instance, show direct expressions of it. 'The history as logos' is 'a subjective aspect of history'. 'The history as being' designates the past world as a whole, and is thus an 'objective aspect of history'. Behind the past which we are conscious of,

the vast unconscious past world remains as 'the history of being'. In this sense, 'the history as being' antedates 'the history as logos'. However, we should at the same time know that we can assume the 'history of being',

[2] Concerning the 'computational psychology', *cf.* Akifumi Tokuzumi, *Kokoro no Keisanriron (Computational Theory of Mind).* Tokyo-Daigaku-Shuppankai (Tokyo University Press), Tokyo, 1991. This psychology belongs to the traditional 'experimental psychology' and tries to explain the process of our competences (mind, perception, language etc.) starting from the computational system, which consists of three steps, 'input-process-output' of information.

i.e. a hidden dimension of history, when an aspect of it can just surface and appear to our consciousness ('the history as logos'). 'The history of being' is the history which has yet to become explicit and is illuminated in due course as dependent on our logos. It is the potential dimension for our historical consciousness. As Miki suggests, all historical sources intermediately stand between the subjective and the objective in history. Through finding a new historical source or changing our interpretation on the given historical sources, 'the new history as logos' is innovated and we obtain a new view on history. Through such a paradigm shift of 'the history as logos', a new aspect of 'the history as being' comes into our view and our understanding of the past world is changed.

Miki also emphasizes the significance of 'the present' because our description of history is not a simple objective representation of the past (this would be impossible), but is an act of 'pulling' the past sources up to our 'present' through their selection. In order to describe history, we need a perspective to the past world as a whole, granted that it is tentative. In other words, description of history means the setting of our present perspective to the past. Miki distinguishes the notion of the 'present' from the 'modern' or the 'contemporary'. 'Present' is an original notion in the philosophy of history. Only from the perspective of 'present', can we talk about the peculiar meaning of the 'modern' or 'contemporary' world as a period different from others (PH, Chapter 1).

Every 'moment' in the 'history as being' has a crucial meaning as 'present' because from the perspective of every 'present' as a 'moment', the past world has been understood, constructed or reconstructed each time.[3] Therefore, we cannot separate 'the history as being' from 'the history as logos'. These two aspects are intertwining in history. This dynamic field of history in which 'the history of being' and 'the history of logos' have their origin, is 'the history as fact' (*Tatsache*). Miki also called it 'the *primordial* history' (*Ur-Geschichte*). Miki proposes to interpret this dynamic movement of history as 'dialectic', which was a popular notion of his day. Human beings irresistibly live in the 'present', we are involved in 'the history as fact' and responding to it from the view of each 'present' (PH, Chapter 1, Section 2).

In Miki's concept of the philosophy of history, the actions of human beings play a prominent role. History takes its shape through our active response to the past, selecting and drawing out some aspects of it. We have to know that history is a product of our 'decision' (*Ent-scheidung* [= decision and section = *Scheidung*]). Even if we are unconscious of it, we live with ex-

[3] On the notion of 'moment', *cf.* PH, pp. 30 and 164.

pectations of our future and with actions through the selection of something from the past. The selective action in this case is not determined beforehand, but depends on 'freedom', because 'decision' can be possible only because of free will. We thus cannot explain 'the history as fact' by any causality.[4]

'The history as fact' is not only the theoretical, but also 'the sensuous' and 'the physical' because with all our sensuous organs and bodies we renovate and innovate it. We are being involved in it. 'The history as fact' is the world of 'things' which we have actively produced and by which we are bodily surrounded.

The reason why Miki pretends to use the notion of 'fact' (*Tatsache*) is that he keeps Fichte's notion of 'act' (*Tathandlung*) in mind. According to his *Theory of Science (Wissenschaftslehre*, 1794), which followed and developed the Kantian notion of 'I' (*Ich*), Fichte insisted that the original nature of 'I' is action (*Handlung*) as the 'self's absolute activity'. This originally active self reflects upon its 'self-consciousness' through the results of its own actions. In the self-consciousness of 'I', action (*Handlung*) of 'I' and its result (*Tat*) are always combined. This inseparable relation is the transcendental condition of 'I' which Fichte calls 'act' (*Tathandlung*).

Against this notion of 'act', Miki brings forth the notion of 'fact' (*Tat-Sache*) because he thinks that our 'self' cannot be reduced to the personal self-consciousness.[5] But our 'self' is also understood as a bodily and a sensuous being, always related to things which were made by its actions and those of others. In this sense, 'I' is never the closed being, but the being which has originally been opened to the outside of itself. Miki was thus attracted by the notion of 'pathos' in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807).

1-2. 'Pathos' and 'Social Body'

Sociality and historicity have originally penetrated into our feelings because feelings are involved in 'the history as fact'. Our acts, carried out by our proper feelings, such as love or hate, have already been mediated by social conditions. Passion which has been penetrated by such sociality is called 'pathos'. Hegel separated this 'pathos' (*Pathos*) from the simple personal passion (*Leidenschaft*). In this context of Hegel's reception, we find Miki's notion of 'social body'.

[4] It is tangible that Miki referred here to Heidegger's understanding of 'history' (*Geschichte*) in *Sein und Zeit* (1927). *Cf.* PH, pp. 44 and 168. Before the publication of *Sein und Zeit*, in 1923–24, Miki had visited Heidegger in Marburg and studied his early thought. It is interesting to note that Heidegger introduced him to H.-G. Gadamer.

[5] Miki separated 'Tat' and 'Sache' in order to stress the difference between two compounds, 'Tat-Handlung' and 'Tat-Sache'.

> In our understanding [of Hegel's text] passion (*Leidenschaft*) relates to the personal body, while pathos relates to the social body. [...] In every historical act, the personal and the social are inseparably connected in our body. The body includes a personal and a social aspect in itself (PH, p. 42).

Miki obviously takes the philosophical position which reduces the human experience neither to the individual nor the society. Instead, he tries to grasp them in their mutual dynamic relation ('dialectic') between the individual and the society. We can say that he already has been freed from essentialist thinking.

In the context of his introduction of 'pathos', the notion of 'destiny' (*Schicksal*) in Hegel's philosophy is also referred to. Miki appreciates Hegel, who called destiny 'pathos', because the meaning of 'incident' (*pathema*) is also implicated in the Greek notion of 'pathos'. This implication accentuates the peculiar meaning of 'pathos' compared to the simple passion. 'Pathos' is the passion which is fatally conducted and carried by the historical incident (see PH, p. 43). Seeing the function of 'destiny' in 'the history as fact', tells us that history is never explained by any causality. We live in 'the history as fact' through our selection and decision of the past and the future, as being driven by 'pathos' beyond our consciousness. So, the incidentally selected or the not selected will act upon us in the future as a destiny to be taken upon ourselves. 'Incidence' is 'necessity' at the same time. Therefore, the recognition of 'incidence' or the inseparable relation between 'incidence' and 'necessity' takes us to a crucial point when we consider human experiences and history.

Miki says that,

> destiny and the law of causality are mutually exclusive because destiny implicates a certain incident which is never explained by causality. However, the simple incident isn't the necessity yet. The notion of destiny activates itself in a condition in which an incident also implicates a necessity. ... Incidence plays a much more important role than necessity [in the history as fact]. (*Ibid.*, p. 43.)

The experience of 'the history as fact' is the 'original experience' (*ibid.*, p. 48). 'The history as fact' can be called the 'historical and social environment' which we cannot observe from outside of it.[6] From this viewpoint, traditional philosophy is criticized as the theory of 'organism'.

[6] On 'environment', *cf.* PH 2, Chapter 2, Section 2. Miki's teacher Nishida had also dealt with 'environment' as a an important notion for philosophy of history.

1-3. Miki's Critique of the 'Theory of Organism'

According to Miki, the philosophy of Aristotle, of German romanticism of the nineteenth century, especially Schelling, and German hermeneutics since Dilthey, all share the 'theory of organism' in the long tradition of western philosophy. Miki criticizes an aspect of this tradition, which tends to explain the historical world from the viewpoint of the organism. In this long tradition, history has been taken as a 'continuous' and a 'necessary' development from potentiality (*dynamis*) to actuality (*energeia*). The development of history is interpreted as a similar process of the organic nature (birth-growth-aging-death). This traditional thinking and common belief have become deeply rooted in our general apprehension.

Miki questions this deep-rooted common sense. His term, 'contemplative stance', characterizes the theory of organism. One could take the stance which explains the history and the human being from the viewpoint of 'organism', when he/she assumes that outside of history or beyond it, he/she could contemplate (=survey) history as 'a closed whole'. Following this approach, all that a human being makes, i.e. history, society, nation, etc., is taken as an artwork which necessarily integrates its every part into an organic whole. Miki claims that the traditional philosophical theory of 'organism' takes a 'position of [classical] aesthetics'. As long as we retain this thinking, the lives of human beings and also history are understood from the viewpoint of the previously discussed whole (in Miki's terminology, from the viewpoint of the 'teleology with a determined goal'). We thus are not aware that human beings are open to the future. Miki calls the 'stance of contemplative thinking' also a 'stance of understanding'. This is the idealistic stance which holds to the 'idea of a closed whole'. According to this stance, our history has already been given and concluded in advance. Indeed, we should assume the whole when we want to rightly understand something. But if we would assume it to be a fixed whole, the process of history and human life would have to be taken as a necessary and inevitable step to the given goal, and therefore, the possibility of our freedom would be excluded.

At first sight, this lasting idea of 'organism' appears to emphasize a beautiful harmony between a whole and its parts. Within this idea, however, an aspect which negates our freedom is hidden. In other words, this idea leads to a social determinism which insists that the experiences of human beings are historically and socially determined in advance. Miki has acknowledged this dangerous aspect of the theory of organism.[7]

[7] Also today 'social determinism' is dominant in terms of 'contextualist' thinking. Junichi Murata pointed out the problem of 'foundationalism of technology' and of 'so-

Miki developed his critique on the theory of 'organism' in his reviews of literature of his time. We can find it in his article "History and critique in the classics" (1937), in which German literature from the end of the nineteenth century to the first half of the twentieth century is critically discussed.[8] His critique of E. Bertram, A. Saur and J. Nadler is especially notable. Bertram turned his attention to Nietzsche's thought of the 'superhuman' (*Übermensch*) in his interpretation of Nietzsche's philosophy and emphasized the role of the individual who shoulders the destiny of his nation and era. According to Miki, Bertram's reception of Nietzsche is an 'aristocratic' one and a 'worship of the hero' (Vol. 11, p. 376). Saur and Nadler, contrariwise, developed the history of literature from the viewpoint of race and emphasized the 'tradition of blood[-relation]' (p. 382). These two concepts are apparently opposed to each other. Although in the former the originality of genius was stressed, and in the latter the anonymous local folklores, they both shared the same concept, that of 'organism', according to which history was regarded as an organic whole.

Through this literary theory, Miki actually criticized the German ideological tendencies of his time, one of which was the heroism concocted by Nazism (the cult of Hitler) and the other of which was racism.[9] When we become aware that Miki wrote this article in 1937, his literary criticism becomes a more profound critique of his time. In the Japan of those days, 'Nihon-shugi' (Japanism = Japanese nationalism), which urged the revival of 'blood and soil', i.e. a revival and accentuation of Japanese nationalist tradition, was strongly advocated.

1937 was the year in which Japan began its second invasion into China and rushed headlong toward World War II. Miki's writings, ranging from the "Philosophy of History" to his literary reviews, reflected upon the crisis of Japan. Crisis was the 'the history as fact' of Japan in those days. 'Myth' and 'institution', of which Miki wrote from 1937 to 1938 in his *Logic of Imagination*, should be read in this context.[10]

1-4. 'Myth' and 'Institution'

At the time of "Philosophy of History", Miki had already learned with the help of Marxist and Heidegger's philosophies that the human being isn't

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cial determinism' and proposed the 'flexibility of our interpretation'. *Cf.* Murata's two articles, 1999.

[8] Miki, Vol. 11, p. 457.

[9] Georg Lukács, who had left Germany, strongly criticized Bertram's ideological understanding of Nietzsche in 1937. (See Iwaki 2001b).

[10] On Miki's approach to 'myth' and 'institution', see Iwaki 2001b. In this essay I summarize the applicable part of this article.

only a conscious being, but also a sensuous and a physical one, and that the human body is a 'social body'. This became Miki's basic position.

Miki's thinking has yet another aspect, namely that the human being is taken as an 'expressive being'. Miki took this idea from his teacher, Nishida Kitaro, who had developed it in his youth. He called it then the 'active subject', and in his later period, an 'active intuition'.[11] Inheriting this notion of Nishida's, Miki proclaimed in the preface to his *Logic of Imagination* (1939), that he took the standpoint of 'active intuition' (LI, p. 8). Together with the notions of 'expression', '*poiesis*' and 'action', emphasizing the role of 'feeling' in human beings basically characterizes the philosophy of Nishida. Nishida thought that the experience of the human being consists of a structure with three stages, namely 'knowledge', 'will', and 'feeling', and he took 'feeling' to be the deepest stage. He called this stage 'nothingness', that which no knowledge can reach. It is the origin from which knowledge is first born. Miki's understanding of the relationship between 'logos' and 'pathos' was derived from this concept of Nishida's. Miki developed the basis of his theory of 'myth and 'institution' on the basis of Nishida's idea.

It is the peculiarity of 'institution' that it is a 'fiction' (idea) set in a society. Miki tried to grasp the origin of the 'institution'. Only when an 'institution' as 'fiction' comes into force in the minds and feelings of the people – when it is not only a theoretical knowledge, but also takes root in the common belief of the people – it can obtain its reality in a society as 'institution'. Miki pointed out this original structure of 'institution'. Through 'custom', the 'institution' as 'fiction' (the ideal) becomes the real and natural framework of feeling ('pathos') in people. Therefore, 'institution' is not only 'the logical' (ideal). When it penetrates into the 'pathos' of the people, it transcends every personal consciousness and becomes 'the collective' and 'the authoritative' (p. 99). Miki clarified the process in which 'institution' becomes 'second nature' to us, as a matter of the concrete structure of our consciousness. The establishment of 'institution' means that a 'fiction' gradually changes into the natural of the consciousness, i.e. 'myth' in a society (p. 135). 'Institution in a society implicates a certain sense of myth' (p. 28).

The logic of 'institution' cannot be grasped in the dimension of theory because it has already been 'the logic of feeling' and 'the logic of imagination' (*Logik der Einbildungskraft*). It is 'the psychological before the logical'. Miki argued that such psychological powers of 'myth' are at work not only in the ancient worlds, but everywhere. 'Myth' is an expression of 'the sense of solidarity' (p. 24) and should therefore be understood 'not from the view of

[11] On this notion of Nishida, see Iwaki 1998.

idea, but from the view of image', which is 'unity of logos and pathos' (p. 75). 'Myth' is a product of the imagination which is acting upon, and penetrating into, pathos. It is a product of the 'collective presentation which tends to keep its custom, institution and tradition' (p. 96). Precisely because 'myth' is a product of the imagination which has roots more deeply in pathos than in knowledge, it always keeps its deep and incorrigible power. It cannot be gotten rid of simply by theory.

From the standpoint of 'the logic of imagination', Miki grasps 'myth' and 'institution' as an inseparable interpenetration of 'logos' and 'pathos'. Because history can never be reduced to a simple causality, it has to be understood in the complicated interpenetration of logos and pathos, in which also body and feeling are involved. Miki wrote in his "Ideology and Pathology" (1933) that our 'research of the consciousness' should not end in the theory of ideology, but should break through to the research of pathos, i.e. 'pathology'. His intent was to clarify the structure of the ideology which has penetrated into the pathos of people. According to Miki, 'pathology' is a philosophical theory in the sense that it 'urges us to a reflection on our situation of today' (Vol. 11, p. 213).

Following Nishida's concept of history, Miki turned his attention to the power of unconscious 'pathos' in history, and from this viewpoint attempted to develop his philosophy of history, society, and literature. Miki, however, did not reduce human experience to pathos, but kept the inseparable relationship between logos and pathos in mind. We thus cannot identify his thought with mythologizing romanticism. Also in his *Logic of Imagination* Miki criticized Bertram's 'mythical idea of the history' (p. 58). Miki did not admire myth, but, rather, the analysis of its incorrigibility. Miki cautioned against confusing 'history' with 'myth' because this confusion is politically very dangerous (LI, p. 98).

Miki had discussed 'myth' and 'institution' in 1937. When we consider those days, it becomes clearer that his thinking on this topic was a very careful critique of the politically dangerous tendencies in Japan. As mentioned above, in those days 'fiction' (ideology) of 'the Japanese nation' was for many people changing into 'myth'. This fiction was being rooted in the pathos of Japanese people without the feeling of its dangers. Miki's article on 'myth' should be read as a critical theoretical assessment of such a dangerous ideology in pathos.

However, the sharply critical function of Miki's thinking could not find suitable reception in those days when Japan was heading for a catastrophe. Miki died a violent death in prison in 1945.

Part 2. On the Problematic Understanding of Painting

We have learned from Miki's philosophical thinking that 'fiction' (idea, ideology or theory) displays its real power when it has become rooted in one's feeling and body, and when an ideology has become a 'myth' in our society. This view covers the case of our understanding of art.

In the case of painting, we will be able to point out the strong belief ('myth') in the understanding of 'depth', depending on the geometric perspective and also photography, which is a mechanical adaptation of the theory of perspective. Even experts of East Asian painting and painters understand and explain the structure of all paintings from the viewpoint of Western theories of geometric perspective and photography. This understanding presumes the 'viewpoint' of painters *outside* of the pictures, i.e. the existence of an external viewpoint. This assumption is not applicable to every picture, and is, furthermore, only a historically construed criterion. But, it has become a 'myth'. As I learned from Miki's thought, when a theory (ideology) has become a 'myth', it exercises great power in one's culture. So, people can't understand paintings without this criterion.

But, in fact, there are not so many pictures which were painted from this rigid geometric perspective. The viewpoint is therefore generated *within* the picture whenever a painter paints (draws) an image in the picture. This means that the viewpoint cannot be located outside the picture, for it always changes its position depending on the brushwork of the painter.[12] We cannot confirm any viewpoints outside of a picture. This is the truth of painting. We have to say, however, that although the framework of Western geometric perspective and framework of a single-lens (eye) camera have not had such a long history as painting in general, this framework has been the 'essential' one when people wanted to understand and explain pictures.

It is therefore our task to critically reexamine this understanding (= myth), considering the process of making pictures. It seems that the development of new media, digital cameras and computers has made it unnecessary to describe the details of a picture through words.

People think that by directly showing parts of it, they can precisely explain the work. Direct seeing is all they believe. There thus remains a strange belief in direct perception. Most people would then be hushed up, when professors or experts who have already won eminence as connoisseurs of art, would command, 'Take a straight look at this and you can understand it!'

But does their command really make sense? Showing the details is only

[12] *Cf.* Iwaki 2006b.

Fig. 1. Albrecht Dürer, "A painter, drawing a lying nude", wood engraving. (*cf.* Solso 1994, p. 220.)

a matter of knowledge about what it is. Isn't something more important missing here? This is my question to them. This question will show its urgency when they begin to explain the *process* of making pictures. When we open art journals or textbooks, we see that most explanations of paintings depend on the theory of, and belief in, 'one viewpoint' and 'plural viewpoints' which are in a conspiracy to assume the 'existence of viewpoint(s) outside of the picture'. This belief in the 'existence of a viewpoint outside of the picture' has been originally derived from the theory of the geometric perspective since the Renaissance and the modern theory of photography. These relatively new theories have become the belief of people. It means that an 'institution' has taken root in the people's mind as a 'myth'. This 'myth' has gained strong persistency through the cognitive sciences, particularly computational psychology since the end of the nineteenth century and the art theories which have developed their theory following this psychology.

My task in this paper shall therefore be to clarify the incoherence regarding the explanation of painting by these psychological theories. Through such a reexamination of them, their rigid belief in the 'existence of viewpoint outside of the picture' will be broken down. We shall then be able to find another possibility to understand pictures.

2-1. The Problem of Computational Psychology and Its Theory of Painting

A painting isn't a simple representation (copy) of our reality, but is a medium which provides us with a perspective on reality. Through various expressive actions our experience is always reconstituted and changed in history. Belief in the constancy of perception is very strong and for people it is not easy to understand that their perceptions have been constructed and

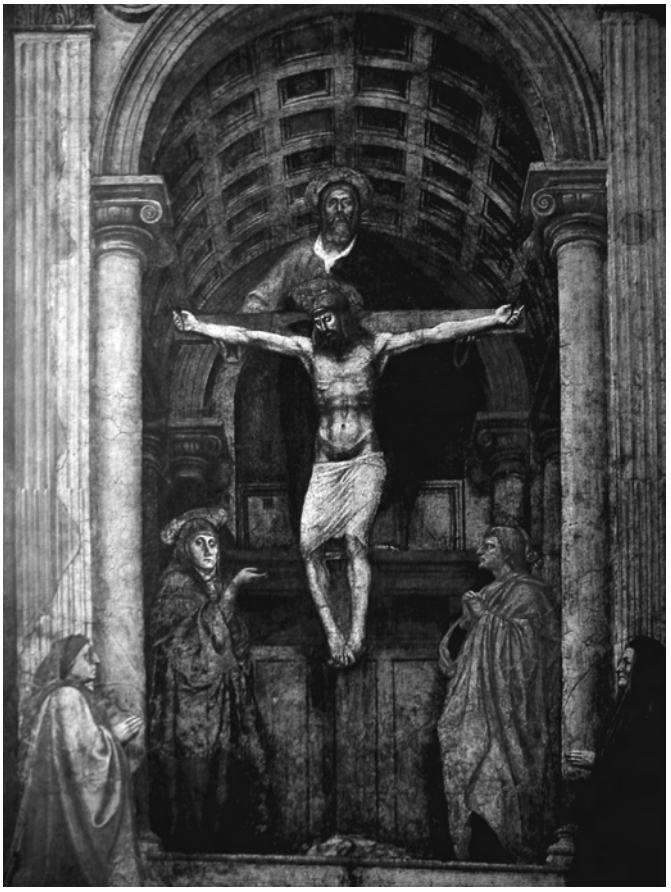

Fig. 2. Masaccio, "St. Trinity", 1426–28, 667 x 317cm, fresco. Florence, Temple of St. Mara Novella. (*Cf.* Solso 1994, p. 243.)

changed in the context of history. Most people undoubtedly believe that they directly touch the world through their perceptive organs.

Cognitive psychology has to be conscious of the fact that the perception of the human being is historically limited and that its framework is constantly changing. It is, however, very difficult to accept this fact as long as it is bound to its traditional assumptions.

The biggest problem is hidden in the assumption of experimental or computational psychology, in that it usually understands perception on the basis of the 'real space' in which we physically live and move. This psychology has played a very influential role in art theory, education, and aesthetics. It seems that cognitive psychology has introduced a fatal prejudice into art theory. According to computational psychology, the perception of 'depth' in pictures is only an 'illusion' on the two-dimensional tableau or screen, on which three-dimensional things in 'real space' are projected.

Is this explanation right? Can 'real space' really be the criterion of 'depth'?

Computational psychology referred to geometric perspective in the Renaissance, when it wanted to explain the perception of 'depth'. As is well known, a Rennaissance architect, F. Brunelleschi (1377–1446), tried to show it by using mirrors, and L. B. Alberti (1404–1472), both an architect and painter, theorized it. Geometric perspective wasn't only a technique of painting, but also a scientific invention which realized an illusion of real, three-dimensional space on the two-dimensional tableau. In virtue of this scientific method, the status of painters rose from that of mere craftsmen to scientists. But at the same time, the understanding that painting makes an illusion of three-dimensional space became common sense. One of the most important painters of German Renaissance, A. Dürer (1490–ca. 1538), clearly illustrated this idea in his wood engravings, making them favorite references for the psychological explanation of 'depth' (see, for example Solso, 1994, p. 220; Fig. 1). These works of Dürer show how the painter can make an illusion of three-dimensional things in real space on his two-dimensional tableau.

From this example, we can see how the 'depth' was understood.

For making a painting, its criterion is 'real things in a three-dimensional space'.

From this standpoint, 'depth, which is realized on a tableau', must always be taken as an 'illusion'.

From the technique of 'perspective', 'one eye' is fixed as the convergent point.

While the 'painter' and 'real things' belong to the same real space, the painter stands 'outside' of the picture. Pictorial space (the world of the picture) and real space (the real world) are entirely different.

In this explanation, 'depth' is always observed 'from the side'. This means that the one who explains 'depth' isn't at the point of the concerned painter, but he/she has left the position of this painter and has moved to a place from where both the painter and the things are able to be observed.

These five topics on 'depth' are apparently self-evident for many people and computational psychology has also shared the understanding of 'depth, with this *common sense*. Geometric perspective is the mother of this *common sense* and photography is its adoptive mother. In the case of photography, we can identify the existence of a camera eye in a real space. This eye cannot cancel its existence, i.e. it can't prove its alibi. Therefore, from two-dimensional pictures, we can trace the existence of a camera eye in the real space, and the subject who set it. This mechanism has enforced the belief that the viewpoint of painters also exists outside of their picture.

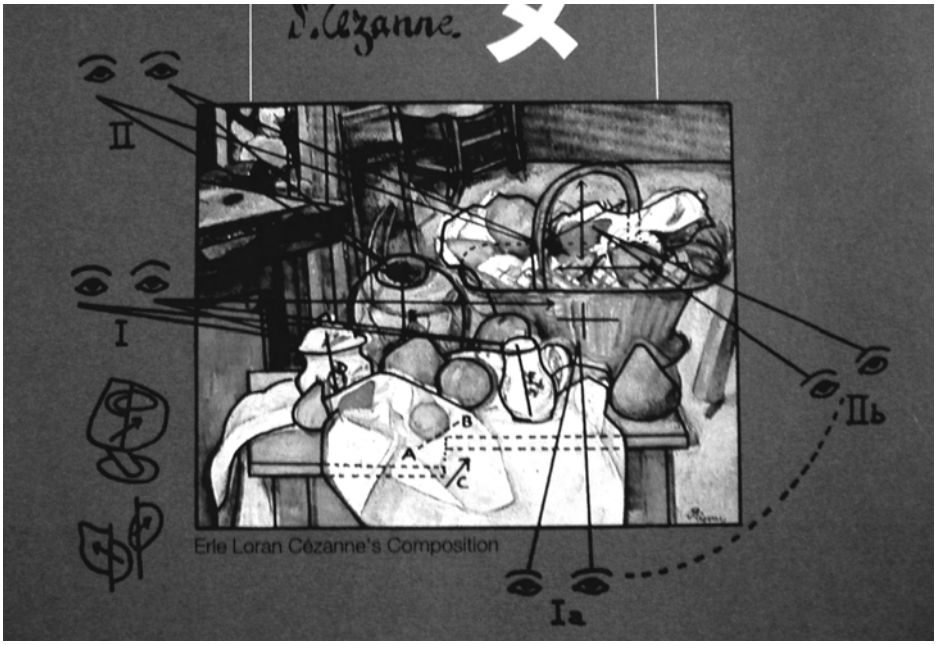

Fig. 3. E. Loran, "Cézanne's composition" (Loran 1943).

But, there is a big problem here, one which we have to examine further.

In common sense, it is entirely overlooked that *'depth' originates only in the relationship between the observer and the observed by the observer (him/her)*. Topic 5 suggests that when 'depth' is taken as the distance between the observer and the observed, we have already left the real perception of 'depth' and replaced it with 'distance', as the perception of 'depth' has already been distinguished. Dürer's wood engravings show us this incoherence. In fact, as Topic 4 suggests, the painters of the Renaissance tried to make the illusion of three-dimensional space by setting a viewpoint of the observer *outside* of the picture. Alberti's theory of perspective is a theory of geometric proportion of 'depth' which premises on the 'distance' between the observer and the observed. Masaccio (1401–1428) also premised the 'distance' between the two and composed his picture dependent on the 'distance' which is seen when we leave the place of 'depth'. Computational psychologists have used his picture as a very suitable proof to explain their theory of 'depth' (*cf.* Solso, 1994, pp. 242–3; Fig. 2).

Resting on this questionable assumption of common sense, two hypotheses of psychology have purportedly retained their reliability and nature of fact. It is thus claimed that (1) 'perception of depth has its origin in the per-

ception of things in real space', and (2) 'depth realized on a two-dimensional canvas or screen is only an illusion of it'. These hypotheses have become a generally accepted opinion and have been carelessly applied to the understanding of pictures before the Renaissance and in the non-western world. Children's pictures are also understood from the viewpoint of this strange doctrine. According to this understanding, every painting which does not follow this doctrine would be judged 'strange', 'wrong' or 'immature'. But we should know that even during the Renaissance, save a few examples, there weren't any pictures which exactly and automatically followed the method of the geometric perspective. If the painters of those days, Michelangelo, Leonardo, and Raphael, for instance, had made their pictures by precisely following this mechanical method, we wouldn't distinguish the excellent individual qualities of their paintings.

No matter how strange the hypotheses of psychology, these hypotheses of perspective have penetrated into common sense even in the modern pictorial theories of East Asian countries. In this way, an ideology has become a 'myth' and has become rooted in the body. Following these hypotheses, painting has also been taught in art schools in East Asia. It wouldn't be wrong to learn a new method for art. But it is necessary to be emancipated from the fixed criterion of perspective theory, and we shouldn't reduce every painting to it when we try to understand precisely and explain the peculiarity of each painting in the world.

The above observations are also important for the understanding of modern painting, for there persist strong influences of computational psychology on it, as in the interpretation of Cézanne by Erle Loran for instance, whose interpretation of this painter is, even today, the predominantly accepted one in Japan. Loran used an illustration to explain the characteristic structure of Cézanne's painting "Still Life" (Fig. 3). We can discern from this illustration that Loran understood this picture from the viewpoint of conventional psychological theory. He assumed the viewpoints of Cézanne outside of the picture. From this viewpoint, he suggested that Cézanne did not (or could not) follow the principle of geometric perspective and so, his "Still Life" was painted from at least four viewpoints *outside* of the picture. Even if Loran thought to have shown the modern character of Cézanne's painting, his judgment itself was bound to a conventional viewpoint. From this viewpoint, Cézanne's originality could be found only in his deviation from the

norm of the geometric perspective, while his factual modernist originality was disregarded. We have to say that Loran misunderstood Cézanne's painting. We should, therefore, find another way to understand it, a way which follows and describes the 'process of making pictures' concretely.[13]

Conclusion

It is our urgent task to be emancipated from the fixed criterion of geometric perspective and to turn to an inquiry into the processes of pictorial expression. Through this practical research we can find ways to suitably understand art in the world.

As mentioned above, the theory of 'single viewpoint' of painting and that of 'plural viewpoints' share the same assumption that the viewpoint of painting exists *outside* of it, i.e. in a real three-dimensional space. We should notice that these two ideas have supported each other and allowed for strong discourses of painting. We know that 'cubism' invented the picture of 'plural viewpoints' in order to overcome the tradition of the painting with a 'single viewpoint'. Without dispute, Loran, whom we mentioned above, accepted the idea of cubism and applied it to his explanation of Cézanne's picture. From the viewpoint of cubism, he understood Cézanne's originality; nonetheless, Cézanne had not shared the same conception with the cubists who later accepted only one of his many creative aspects.

We would have to remember that an exponent of cubism, Picasso, found a good hint of painting beyond the traditional painting from the native African images. Since this legend has become popular, the theory of 'plural viewpoints' has gained its plausibility and has been applied to explain paintings which didn't follow the geometric perspective. These paintings are 'pre-modern', 'barbaric', 'naïve', 'natural', 'powerful', or 'innocent', because they 'deviate' from the pictures by geometric perspective and 'still' stay on the 'stage of plural viewpoints'. These adjectives have been used accordingly, depending on cultural viewpoints of various authors. We shouldn't overlook that these adjectives implicate an ideology which is bound to the modern Eurocentric thinking.

We should know that the notions of 'naïvité' or 'primitiveness' do not only characterize the artistic styles, but that they also involve certain ideo-

[13] Concerning Cézanne's painting, a good hint is offered to us by G. Boehm's interpretation (Boehm 1988). On the problem of interpretation of Cézanne, see Iwaki 2006b. I analyzed the process of making pictures by children and in the non-western world in Iwaki 2001a, Chapter 4.

logical aspects. In order to free themselves from modern traditional western art, cubists depended on the 'plural viewpoints painting' of pre-modern Oceanic worlds. Gauguin moved to a 'primitive' colonial land to find new possibilities for his art. They shared a common longing for the lost paradise. But we cannot force such primitiveness on any other people, much less can we identify the primitiveness with the understanding of 'plural-view-points-perception', which assumes the viewpoints outside of pictures. The existence of one or plural viewpoints *outside* of the picture is only a 'myth' created by modern European painting. As Miki suggested, we have to reexamine the 'myth' of our world because this 'myth' of 'viewpoint' has penetrated even into the 'feeling' of East Asian intellectuals. We see that the Japanese intellectuals and artists of the 1930s, who had learned their European art history and had known the popularity of primitive arts, searched for such 'primitiveness' in their own southern colonial cultures, in Taiwan, for instance, and expected the artists from such cultures to make such arts.[14] This demand unconsciously postulated the ideology of an Asian 'organic' unity. They have taken part in the cultural politics of the colonies of those days. They were also the contemporaries of Miki, who was at that time developing his critical theory of 'myth'.

In this paper, I don't want to insist on the needlessness of the theory of perspective. What I want to point out is that it has its limitations and is of limited scope. My proposal is to research the process of painting in a way which will bring about a relativization of the explanations offered by the theory of perspective, and which will contribute to the fair understanding and interpretation of various cultures. This will able to be a concrete application of Miki's concept and a challenge for the revival of aesthetics.

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[14] See Liu Chien Yuan, "Local Color in the Modern Painting of Taiwan", in Ken'ichi Iwaki (ed.), *Geijutu / Kattou no Genba-Nihon Kindai Geijutsushisou no Kontekusuto (Art as a Topos of Conflict: Context of the Modern Japanese Theories of Arts)*, Koyou-shobou, Kyoto 2002.

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"NATURE INTERVENES IN STROKES": SENSING THE END OF THE COLONY AND THE ORIGIN OF THE AESTHETIC

Patrick D. Flores

The post-colonial problematic may well demonstrate that the intuition of being free or being entitled to freedom in the representation of art is terminal and seminal: the final stage of transfer of influence that assumes a level of mastery and strategic conversion, on the one hand, and the incipient embodiment of the techniques of presence, of being manifest and manifestly different, on the other. It confirms a condition of an end to the rule of empire at the same time that such an emancipatory ideal supplements the coloniality that had been sought to be exceeded. This speculation falls within a modernity that may be described as exasperating: any transgression seems to reiterate a colonial premise as change becomes possible exclusively within a particular horizon of a universal history that seemingly cannot be transcended, perhaps because it is foundational and immanent. That the expiration of the colony is disseminated in an articulation of art that is invested with the capacity to include an "elsewhere" and an "impossibility" (because not yet possible) condenses this anxiety or anticipation. Moreover, it instills the subjectivity that beholds the imminent post-colonial moment, cherishes the consummation of the deed of art as the achievement of the national self and not the native other, and stirs the senses to respond to a (per)formative world.

Indeed, the finality of the colony can only be grasped in the origin of the discriminating/discriminatory aesthetic that "makes over"; specifically, in the affective practice of fine art that is acclaimed in a European exposition of painting as well as in the affectation to exalt this remarkable triumph that could have only been realized within colonialism and that could have been the only measure of the latter's end(s). The aesthetic here works as a process of making worlds sensible and differential, of creating the feeling of being in the world, or the yearning to belong to another one, or the conviction of having deserved to be out of it and settle beyond its realm, in an afterlife.

And so, to revive, or perhaps survive, "aesthetics" as a contemporary undertaking is to some extent to protract modernity, to delay a post-modern break so that the liberal project, importuned as it is by guarantees of renewal, could still transpire against all post-colonial misgivings. It is only through the distinction of an identity, the equivalent right to an identification, that this particular humanity in a universe of multi-cultural, affirmative selves may be secured.

Painting

In 1884, the Filipino painter-patriot Juan Luna (1857–1899) received the first gold medal at the Madrid Exposition for his large painting titled *Spoliarium*. This exalted work would take us to a distant place and moment. It was a Rome of Emperors who presided over dreadful struggles between humans and beasts, slaves and rogues. Through the door of the spoliarium passed such gargantuan creatures as elephants and rhinoceros, along with dead animals that were tossed to the beast-men. It was the chamber into which the fatalities of the arena were consigned and later burned, despoiled and dispossessed. This distance in history is paradoxically the painting's source of intimacy: the sight provokes beholders to profess their inalienable ethico-political belief, to discern the depraved impulse of an empire that leaves corpses in its wake. Its alienation is its internal critique.

But this distant place and moment was Luna's contemporary Rome, too: the city that had been his address when he apprenticed for his mentor Alejo Vera, the "taciturn painter of Roman catacombs." Rome may have been an icon of antiquity to which his art aspired, the former colonizer of Hispania or Spain, which had been his country's conqueror. The *Spoliarium* was completed here and was first exhibited at the Palazzo delle Esposizione. Madrid was its destination, although Luna had his eye on Paris as the emerging center of art in light of the waning of the Salon; in 1884, the Salon des Independents had already commenced. Indeed, *Spoliarium* would collect layers of both concurrent and discrepant time. Luna had been caught up in a cycle of provenance and future: Manila (colony), Rome (antiquity), Madrid (empire), Paris (modernity).

The Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan, under the auspices of the Spanish crown, reached the Philippine islands in 1521. This initiated colonization that lasted until 1898, when the Filipino masses staged a revolution against Spain, which ceded the territory to the United States. Juan Luna entered the local art academy before he sailed for Spain in 1877 to be

schooled at the Real Academia de Bellas Artes. In 1893, in a fit of rage in Paris, he killed his wife. The court acquitted him, accepting his defense that it was a crime of passion inflamed by adultery and attributing his temper partly to the nature of his "savage" race. In 1896, he was implicated in the anti-Spanish revolt and was arrested. Before he died, he was appointed by the Philippine Revolutionary Government as a diplomat working for the recognition of the republic.

It is because of this palimpsest of relations that the *Spoliarium*, far from being a static tableau, inhabits a moving allegorical space. If allegory permits a transposition of a tale impossible to narrate and offers a moral resolution to a predicament difficult to reveal, then Luna's opus finds affinity with Francisco Baltazar's metrical romance *Florante at Laura* (Florante and Laura, 1838; 1875) in which its hero laments a failed homeland, in the guise of Albania, that is suffused with and surrounded by a regime of deceit, and thus constructing the colonial plight as a transterritorial or transnational, indeed, global disorder:

> All over the country
> treachery reigns,
> while merit and goodness are prostrate,
> entombed alive in suffering and grief.[1]

It is this allegorical device that enables *Spoliarium* to evoke a multitude of meanings beyond the anecdote that it depicts; and most of all, the sublime. It becomes a mode through which an abject disposition in another locale becomes so tangible and urgent that Luna's peer Graciano Lopez-Jaena would be so consumed to proclaim in a banquet:

> For me, if there is anything grandiose, sublime in the *Spoliarium,* it is that through this canvas, through the figure depicted in it, through its coloring, floats the living image of the Filipino people grieving over their misfortunes. Because, gentlemen, the Philippines is nothing more than a *Spoliarium* in reality, with all its horrors. There rubbish lies everywhere; there human dignity is mocked; the rights of man are torn into shreds; equality is a shapeless mass; and liberty is embers, ashes, smoke.[2]

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[1] Patricia Melendrez-Cruz and Apolonio Chua (eds.), *Himalay: Kalipunan ng mga Pagaaral Kay Balagtas* (Manila: Cultural Center of the Philippines, 1988).

[2] Teodoro Agoncillo (ed.), *Graciano Lopez Jaena: Speeches, Articles and Letters* (Manila:

This allegorical insight freights Luna with valor – making him the visionary, the teller of truth – as can be gleaned in paeans by his confreres, the elite coterie of illustrious Filipino gentlemen in Europe who entreated for reforms from the mother country Spain. Foremost of these was Jose Rizal's oration on the breakthrough in Madrid. The would-be National Hero conceived of heroism as a species of genius, which claims equivalence with all self-determining beings and therefore the universality of being equally human: a fulfilled self, instead of an emptied other. Rizal was in ecstasy when he declared among the *ilustrado*:

> Luna and Hidalgo are Spanish as well as Philippine glories. They were born in the Philippines but they could have been born in Spain, because genius knows no country, genius sprouts everywhere, genius is like light, air, the patrimony of everybody, cosmopolitan like space, like life, like God.[3]

Inspiring

If the aesthetic is rooted at once in a universalist conception and in a particularized, differentiated expression of bodily affect, then Rizal's pretension to the genius of Luna is key. It is salient because it is through Luna that the Philippines is acknowledged, endowed with culture as an actually existing world, a world that, because colonized, is capable of transcending its primitive, barbaric status, in other words, its "country." This elision of country in favor of "nature" is also an elision of "origin" but not of the originary stature of the genius that is natural: light and air elude history and serve as the "patrimony" not of citizens but of all; space, life, and God breach boundaries of human contemplation and drift freely as a cosmopolitan element. As Kant would contend:

> Since the genius is one of nature's elect – a type that must be regarded as but a rare phenomenon – for other clever minds his example gives rise to a school, that is so say a methodical instruction according to rules, collected so far as the circumstances admit, from such products of genius and their peculiarities – fine art is for such persons a matter

National Historical Commission, 1974). Quoted in *Zero In: Private Art, Public Lives* (Manila: Eugenio Lopez Foundation, Inc., Ayala Museum, Ateneo Art Gallery, 2002), p. 78.

[3] *Political and Historical Writings*, Vol. VII (Manila: National Heroes Commission, 1964). Quoted in *Zero In,* p. 74.

> of imitation, for which its nature, through the medium of genius, gave the rule.[4]

This sense of universality is entangled with a certain privileging of the sublime, and in this case, the sublime is transcoded in the painting and the reception to it. The immense scale of the painting (425 x 775 cm) is paramount. Compared with the preceding miniaturist portraiture of Philippine nineteenth-century art that sensitively dwells on the intricate details of petit bourgeois property, Luna's work practically cannot be possessed; it encompasses the potential proprietor and supersedes the domestic sanctum. Thus, because it is an expanse, it becomes a virtual landscape, a natural history. As Susan Stewart puts it: "Our most fundamental relation to the gigantic is articulated in our relation to landscape, our immediate and lived relation to nature as it surrounds us."[5] Rizal would ratify this, esteeming a cataclysmic nature as the hand that had ordained *Spoliarium:*

> In *El Spoliarium* through the canvas that is not mute, can be heard the tumult of the multitude, the shouting of the slaves, the metallic creaking of the armor of the corpses, the sobs of the bereaved, the murmurs of prayer, with such vigor and realism as one hears the din of thunder in the midst of the crash of the cataracts or the impressive and dreadful tremor of the earthquake.
> The same nature that engenders such a phenomenon intervenes also in those strokes.[6]

The last line is instructive: nature is pictured as an artisan that is preconditional to the facture of an artifact that is valued as art, a making that vividly captures the textured sound of things and people in the charged tenor of words. Nature, therefore, does not stand as something outside art; in fact, it is an internal force that infringes on art as if it were a form of will within a will to form. This relates well with the painting acting like "natural history": the conflation of art as both natural and historical overcomes the antinomy between nature/human and object/subject. *Spoliarium* becomes an inscribing and an inscription, a stroke, and concomitantly, a signature.

Here we confront the vision of painting, or better still, following Jose

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[4] Allen Wood (ed.), *Basic Writings of Kant* (New York: The Modern Library, 2001), p. 191.

[5] Susan Stewart, "The Gigantic," in *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), p. 71.

[6] *Political and Historical Writings*, Vol. VII. Quoted in *Zero In,* p. 75.

Rizal, a distraction, a temptation, a spell, or what he terms in his novel *Noli Me Tangere* (1887), "el demonio de las comparaciones," or the phantasm of differences. It appears in a troubling incident involving the reformist personage Crisostomo Ibarra, said to be the surrogate of Rizal:

> The sight of the botanical gardens drove away his gay reminiscences: the devil of comparisons placed him before the botanical gardens of Europe, in the countries where much effort and much gold are needed to make a leaf bloom or a bud open; and even more, to those of the colonies rich and well-tended, and all open to the public. Ibarra removed his gaze, looked right, and there saw old Manila, still surrounded by its walls and moats, like an anemic young woman in a dress from her grandmother's best times.[7]

The Philippines and Spain in this crossroad confounded by vexing resemblances and haunting enchantments become "comparative contemporaries." In fact, Rizal's interventions tended to bleed into other texts conveying common persuasions. Two instances could be mentioned:

First, Rizal would draft a critical commentary on the accounts of the Spanish chronicler Antonio de Morga titled *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* (Historical Events of the Philippine Islands, 1609). In one section, de Morga writes: "There was a list of many things and words considered extremely insulting and discrediting when uttered against men or women, which were excused with more difficulty than offenses committed against persons, or injuries against their bodies."[8] Rizal rails that the inhabitants of the islands, derogatorily christened *indios,* could be subjected to the orientalist assumption that they actually respond to shame, and that they are amenable to be violently punished rather than be shamed, justifying colonialism on the basis of a distorted humanity.

> What a high opinion the ancient Filipinos must have of moral sensibility when they considered offenses to it more serious than the offenses to the body! [...] For this reason the friars are surprised that the Indios should prefer even now whipping to a bad word or an insult and this

[7] Jose Rizal, *Noli Me Tangere.* Ma. Trans. Soledad Lacson-Locsin (Manila: Bookmark, 1996), p. 67. Benedict Anderson translates "el demonio de las comparaciones" as "specter of comparisons."

[8] Antonio de Morga, *Historical Events of the Philippine Islands* (1609), with annotations by Jose Rizal (reprint: Manila: National Historical Institute, 1990), p. 288.

> which ought to make them think and reflect, only suggests to them the deduction that the Indio is a kind of monkey or something like an animal.[9]

The tributes to Luna and Hidalgo reprise this outlook but through an inversion of the perverted racial orientation:

> *Rizal:*
> The morrow of a long day for those regions is announced in brilliant tints and rose-colored dawns, and that race, fallen into lethargy during the historic night while the sun illumines other continents, again awakens, moved by the electric impact that contact with Western peoples produces, and she demands light, life, the civilization that one time they have bequeathed her, thus confirming the eternal laws of constant evolution, of change, of periodicity, of progress.[10]

> *Lopez-Jaena:*
> What do those precious ancient objects prove which have been found in the excavations in Pampanga, Pangasinan, and Manila – jars so highly esteemed in Japan and China, a sample of which is now found in the Ethnographic Museum of Berlin? What do they show, those perfectly preserved mummies, smelling of embalming perfume that were excavated in the caves in Samar, some of whose inhabitants still possess the knowledge of the difficult art of embalming with aromatic herbs as done by the ancient Egyptians?[11]

In the preceding citations, Rizal and Lopez-Jaena would array ethnology and fine art to validate that the Philippines had the identity of civilization before Spain usurped it, and that it is not only the habitus of a transferred artistic modality within the Enlightenment trajectory that ratifies it; the ethnological birthright accords it equivalent entitlements to civilization and the franchise of nationhood, the first in Southeast Asia. These are occasions not only of relativization, but more importantly of reciprocal critique. That said, it was also this mixture of ethnology and fine art that sustained the world fairs and expositions of the nineteenth century where painting and live Philippine people in simulated villages were mingled (Madrid in

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[9] *Ibid*., p. 288.
[10] *Political and Historical Writings*. Vol. VII. Quoted in *Zero In*, p. 74.
[11] Teodoro Agoncillo (ed.), *Graciano Lopez Jaena: Speeches, Articles and Letters*. Quoted in *Zero In*, p. 77.

1887 and Barcelona in 1889), and the exhibitionary rhetoric that guided the establishment of national museums in the colonies.

Second, Rizal might have referenced Luna's *Spoliarium* to prefigure the scene in *Noli Me Tangere* in a chapter in which the character Tarsilo, suspected by Spanish authorities of rebellion, is tortured with rigor.[12] Through Luna and Rizal, the setting of the spoliarium vacillates between discourses of fearlessness and vanquish, a rhythm that may be necessary to portray the allegory of abjection and the redemption it seeks to ensure. It is instructive to intersperse these two acts:

> *Spoliarium:*
> In the center of the large canvas, two dead gladiators are seen being dragged across the stone floor to be dumped in a dark corner along with other bodies. At the left, two elderly scavengers, hunched like vultures, greedily eye the gladiators' effects: leather boots and straps, protective metal linings, talismans, and other accessories; while beside them another Roman raises a helpless fist at the inhuman spectacle.[13]

> *Noli Me Tangere:*
> Tarsilo shook his head and they lowered him again. His eyelids were starting to close, the pupils of his eyes continued gazing at the sky where white clouds were floating. He bent his neck to keep on seeing the light of day, but he was soon submerged in water and a sordid curtain fell and shut out for him the spectacle of the world.[14]

The revolution of Luna and Rizal is thus staged as an execution, foretold by detention and torment as verisimilarly inflicted on Florante of *Florante at Laura*, wailing while tied to a tree, and on Tarsilo, bludgeoned and broken.

Performing

To reiterate an earlier point, *Spoliarium* is not only formative to the degree that it constitutes the terms by which it is understood. It is also performative because it renders the object as a spectacle and the beholding subject as a spectator, a scheme that refers to the very circumstance of the painting

[12] I am grateful to John Clark for this reference.

[13] Alice Guillermo, "Spoliarium," in *A Portfolio of Philippine Art Masterpieces* (Manila: Department of Education, Culture and Sports, 1989), p. 51.

[14] Jose Rizal, *Noli Me Tangere*, pp. 495–501.

itself: of gladiators being made to perform in harrowing contests, and in their final hours are being surveilled or even pillaged. In other words, the painting is always *before* us: in the past and in the present, incessantly in performance. Owing to the vastness of the canvas, the viewer is immersed in and engulfed by this world. And it is not only the scale that creates the emotional ambience; the feeling of suffering and the manner of mourning produce an entire affective system that may be understood on two fronts: the killing that traumatizes the body, on the one hand, and the melancholy that this immolation generates, on the other.

Interestingly, the resonance is not in any high-art specimen, but in the mentality of the folk. In Esteban Villanueva's depiction (1821) of the Basi Revolt of 1787, an uprising incited by government regulation of sugarcane wine in the northern Philippine province of Ilocos, the template is Christ's passion, consisting of fourteen panels that recall the Way of the Cross. While the tone is documentary and cautionary, its spirit is ominous: a comet streaks across the sky, rebels are beheaded with the local gentry looking on, and with these episodes persecution is consummated in the name of a rebirth. This example is tangential to the performance of the Moriones[15] in the southern islands of Marinduque in which a Roman figure, Longino (Longinus), who may be either the soldier who pierced Christ's side or the centurion in Calvary afflicted with a malady of the eye who was healed when the earth trembled on Christ's death and was consequently condemned by Pilate. In Boac, Gasan, and Mogpog, a ritual proceeds from the hunt for Longino, the person disguised by a wooden mask bearing a grotesque face of a Roman legionnaire, around the town that ends up in his decapitation and a funeral procession. Mindful of this folklore, we can make the argument then that the *Spoliarium* syndrome is not remote from the Philippine temperament. The impulse is deep because it does not only pertain to witnessing an insurrection and a resurrection; it also weaves the myth of the martyr-criminal, who becomes sacramental and cultic within the performance and the continuum of "religious devotion, public spectacle, punitive justice and art."[16] The mysticism inhabits convulsing flesh and how it outlives the torment: "To see a soul 'cleansed' while 'still in the body' [...] was an edifying sight."[17] In this theater of debilitated humanity in *Spoliarium* and in the woes of Florante, Tarsilo, the Basi rebels, and Longino, a "community of suffering" is formed:

[15] Teruya Adachi, "The Morion as a Stranger," *RIMA* 28 (1, 1994), pp. 13–32.

[16] Mitchell B. Merback, *The Thief, the Cross and the Wheel: Pain and Spectacle in Medieval and Renaissance Europe* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1999), p. 129.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 156.

"the reeking gallows, splashed with the potent blood of martyrs, was its cult station, and the demolished body of the criminal its living cult image."[18]

The supplement of this suffering, captivity, and enslavement is the loss of a prospect and the longing that it motivates. *Spoliarium* is as much passage as it is vestige, thus the image of mourning is stark as signaled by the woman at the far right of the painting, who can be "Filipinas ravished in captivity."[19] This bereavement may be inflected with hope, a vigil for transformation, emancipation, or revolution. An eminent art historian reminds us in his analysis of Jacques Louis David's *Marat at his Last Breath* (1793) that the modern instinct musters force in the political whirl in which it spins, "the form of the contingency that makes modernism what it is."[20] And this contingency may well be socialist: "socialism occupied the real ground on which modernity could be described and opposed."[21] We must recall that Luna had thought of socialism, too, in his letters to Rizal.

> I am reading *Le Socialisme Contemporain* by E. D. Laveye [...] which is a compilation of the theories of Karl Marx, Lasalle, etcetera; Catholic socialism, the conservative, the evangelical, etcetera. I find it most interesting, but what would like is a book which stresses the miseries of our contemporary society, a kind of Divine Comedy, a Dante who would take a walk through the shops where one can hardly breathe and where he would see men, children, and women in the most wretched condition imaginable.[22]

Luna had asked Rizal for guidance on these concerns, but Rizal never responded. It is curious why the latter never talked about European workers and their movement, socialism, and Marx at a season when there was socialist ferment in Spain, pervading the lives of peasants in Andalusia and the workers of Barcelona. There was a Marxist group in Madrid; and Anselmo Lorenzo, the beacon of Spanish anarchism, published in *La Solidaridad*.[23]

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[18] *Ibid*., p. 157.

[19] Guillermo, p. 51.

[20] T. J. Clark quoted in J. M Bernstein, *Against Voluptuous Bodies: Late Modernism and the Meaning of Painting* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), p. 171.

[21] *Ibid*., p. 166.

[22] *Rizal's Correspondence*, pp. 561–562. Luna to Rizal, letter no. 254 (May 13, 1891).

[23] Georges Fisher, *Jose Rizal, Philippin, 1861–1896, Un Aspect du Nationalisme Moderne*. No publication details.

Representing

The temptation to cite Edmund Burke to explicate the notion of the sublime is difficult to resist; but it is strategically implicated here by way of W. J. T. Mitchell who thinks of it politically, to be specific, as a "politics of sensibility," situated within Burke's representation of the French Revolution. Such reckoning of the sublime enables us to appropriate the concept as constitutive of the aesthetic and of its post-colonial attrition. Mitchell elaborates by referring to a tale that Burke tells about a boy:

> who had been born blind, and continued so until he was thirteen or fourteen years old; he was then couched for a cataract, by which operation he received his sight. Among many remarkable particulars that attended his first perceptions [...] the first time the boy saw a black object, it gave him a great uneasiness; and [...] some time after, upon accidentally seeing a negro woman, he was struck with great horror at the sight.[24]

According to Mitchell, this narrative mediates the sublime, "as much owing to the clash of aesthetic and political sensibilities as it is to the mechanics of vision."[25] The aesthetic, therefore, is imbricated not only in the guileless description of the sight, or the compromised art of describing, but also in the natural, or naturalized, declensions of social difference and power, in the ethnological premise of things, that can be identified and interpreted. This premise is transcoded as "of nature" or partaking of an indigenous, native order: "the doubled figure of slavery, of both sexual and racial servitude, appears in the natural colors of power and sublimity."[26] The sublime may be productive in this respect in a couple of ways:

First is the belief of the sublime as terror and horror, felt as dangerous and painful only because it is beheld vicariously, from a distance, albeit within critical intimacy: "The passion caused by the great and sublime in nature [...] is astonishment, and astonishment is that state of the soul in which all its motions are suspended with some degree of horror."[27] It is intuited as wrenching and estranging, but excites delight, comprises passion, and

[24] W. J. T. Mitchell, *Iconology* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1986), p. 131.
[25] *Ibid.*, p. 131.
[26] *Ibid.*
[27] Edmund Burke quoted in Walter John Hipple, *The Beautiful, the Sublime, and the Picturesque in Eighteenth-Century British Aesthetic Theory* (Carbondale: The Southern Illinois University Press, 1957), p. 89.

marks an ethico-political decision to preserve the self and lighten the burden of others. Burke:

> There is no spectacle we so eagerly pursue, as that of some uncommon and grievous calamity; so that whether the misfortune is before our eyes, or whether they are turned back to it in history, it always touches with delight. This is not an unmixed delight, but blended with no small uneasiness. The delight we have in such things, hinders us from shunning scenes of misery; and the pain we feel, prompts us to relieve ourselves in relieving those who suffer.[28]

Second are the incommensurability of the affective agency and the intractability of the sublime. Kant states that the sublime "cannot be contained in any sensuous form, but rather concerns rational ideas, which, although no adequate presentation of them is possible may be excited and called into mind by that very inadequacy itself which does not admit of presentation through the senses."[29] What the sublime inscribes is an "imagination of its own image"[30] that prevails but also signifies finitude, making it "at heart, both a paradoxical and intense experience. It is the sensible world in its excess which limits perceptual cognition, yet it is a particular instance of this excess which gives the scope of rational cognition such a dramatic impact."[31]

It is this lack, this "obscurity" that concretizes the sublime, "precisely because it is a frustration of the power of vision. Physiologically, it induces pain by making us strain to see that which cannot be comprehended."[32] Thus, art is created, the sublime resides in a substance called painting, in a national treasure named *Spoliarium,* born in the "tension between what is perceptually overwhelming and what is nevertheless known to be artifice."[33] The painting thus humbles: it does not end in itself, it is open-ended, or, as Alfred Gell[34] in discussing art as agency would posit, is open-endedly social. Again, Burke: "Greatness of dimension, too, is sublime, and infinity fills the

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[28] Edmund Burke, "A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful" in Feagin, Susan and Patrick Maynard (eds.), *Aesthetics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

[29] Wood (ed.), *Basic Writings of Kant*, p. 307.

[30] *Ibid*., p. 308.

[31] Paul Crowther, *The Kantian Sublime: From Morality to Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).

[32] Mitchell, p. 126.

[33] Crowther, pp. 153–154.

[34] Alfred Gell, *Art as Agency* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

mind with that 'delightful horror' which is the essential effect of sublimity, an effect which is approximated by the 'artificial infinite' of succession and uniformity (as in a colonnade), the imagination continuing beyond the actual limits of the object."[35]

This incompletion and denial of absolute intellection leads to representation: "The sublime is most appropriately rendered in words."[36] Such a latitude in theory brings this essay to its conclusion: to the corpus of hagiographic texts produced within the colonial period that saturates the sublime in the evocation of rupture. We distill this in Rizal's homage to the painting *Spoliarium* and the painter Luna, acclamations that would institute genius and link life stories of heroic art and artists with the biographical discourse of the nation. If the sublime is efficacious because it is textualized, the textualization of Rizal's destiny thrives in this hermeneutic thicket. When he was shot by a firing squad in 1896, his death sparked outrage and reverence, igniting a revolution that he did not rouse but was its fire. Some historians would later call him a pacifist who refused the uprising; others, including peasants whom he had never met, would conjure him as messianic, godlike, miracular. Rizal as sublime hence teeters on being estranged from the colonial atrocity and the uprising against it and being a co-sufferer of a collective oppression. Surely, it is the idiom of the passion of Christ, the *Pasyon* in the Philippine language Tagalog, that is the sieve of this sacrificial marvel, prompting the Spanish philosopher Miguel de Unamuno to assert that Rizal is the "Tagalog Christ suffering in the garden of Gethsemane."

And quite unerringly, we find resonance in the sermons of the Catholic friars, contrived as catechetical stagecraft that made the sublime of deliverance palpable and within apprehension. A homily on the Sunday after Easter in seventeenth century colonial Philippines by the Dominican Francisco Blancas de San Jose speaks of the qualities of a resurrected body, an insight that infuses the faithful with the hope of liberation from the corruption of a colonized body. One of these traits is agility:

> The second is what is called in Spanish *Agilidad*, and in Tagalog *Calicsihan* (agility). Even if man's body is now heavy and weak, it will not so remain, but on the contrary will become agile, and will lighten beyond comparison to all that is agile. Those so imbued will be more lively than birds in their flight, and more rapid than bullets, whether the path be upward, or downward, or from side to side without slacking [...]

[35] Burke in Hipple, p. 90.
[36] Mitchell, p. 125.

> Again and again they may court and visit each other, without fatigue or surfeit.[37]

This religious oratory coheres with the affective resources, the refunctioned means of gathering the glimmer of a redemption through representation in art and in words. Modernity here is not merely reflexivity, of producing knowledge knowingly, or autonomy from instrumentalist reason, but more engagingly is an intimation – of participating in a kindred passion as an intimate and at the same time of professing an "inclination outward" – in which the suffering and sanctified agency and subject is inspired, taking in the breath of likely freedom and fathoms the lapsed tenure of the colonial order because it has already gained a humanity, the faculty of reinvention, and, at last, salvation, a fate "without fatigue or surfeit."

This discourse on humanity is contentious; it lies at the heart of how, for instance, the Spanish transcribers (many of whom clerics) of a geohistory sensed the people of the Philippines. Antonio de Morga, whom we earlier read as a scribe of custom, is pertinent, having written a comprehensive compendium of what might pertain to a germinal Filipiniana, an "excellent specimen of the geographical relation as practiced in the Renaissance."[38] This would entail

> reliance on empirical observation, or a well-documented synthesis of primary sources, organized topically according to a method, and described in plain language for a practical aim [...] the capacity to organize information coherently and the degree of engagement with a historical perspective rooted in classical and biblical sources.[39]

It is worth noting that this copious ethnographic material amassed to depict the scale of culture of the colony, its stage of barbarism and its aptitude for civility and finesse, would be tinged with Counter-Reformation zeal and prejudice, and was in cadence with the conduct of proselytization. For instance, "quite often this ethnographic material is buried within a hagiographic discourse composed in praise of the missionaries themselves, which

[37] Doreen Fernandez, "A Heavenly Agility: Translation as a Process of Understanding," in Jose Mario Francisco (ed.), *Sermones: Francisco Blancas de San Jose, O.P. (1614)* (Manila: Pulong: Sources for Philippine Studies, 1994), pp. 411–412.

[38] Joan-Pau Rubies. "The Spanish Contribution to the Ethnology of Asia in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in Daniel Carey (ed.), *Asian Travel in the Renaissance* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), p. 114.

[39] *Ibid.*, pp. 115–116.

distorts the image a reader can form of a native cultural system."[40] Therefore, there is a relay between the discursive vectors of the speech of Rizal, whose sui generis erudition and nationalism in the Philippine annals is itself panegyric par excellence; the sermon of Blancas de San Jose; and the report of de Morga, all of which hold out a universal providence for all humans in history and beyond it. What must be foregrounded is the labor of translation and "productive mistranslation" that underwrites these enunciations:

> Against this, one must consider that those very ideological biases, based on the Christian understanding of universal history combined with the humanist understanding of civilization, created the intellectual framework for a largely empirical, methodically sophisticated, and increasingly systematic research on world history [...] it was in fact the tension between the principles of Christianity and civilization which conditioned the transformation of practical ethnography into antiquarian ethnology.[41]

The tilt toward the sublime ultimately is a needed maneuver to draw attention to the dread of colonialism, and also to the creative conspiracies within what anthropologists call "local moral worlds" that the resistance to this coloniality animates through the decision about what it means and takes to be human. Thus, the ideal of the universal is a distressing disruption of locality, a kind of pain, but it is nevertheless the vein of its inalienable well being. This is an exacting effort that must be worked through with perspicacity. As Drucilla Cornell advises as she re-politicizes the Kantian legacy:

> The universal is always culturally articulated [...] The task that cultural difference sets for us is the articulation of universality through a difficult labor of translation; the terms made to stand for one another are transformed in the process and the movement of that unanticipated transformation establishes the universal as that which is yet to be achieved and which, in order to resist domestication, may never be fully or finally achievable.[42]

Aesthetics as a universalizing discipline that endorses a metaphysical and ontological theory of the "aesthetic" and by extension of its normative

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[40] *Ibid.*, p. 117.
[41] *Ibid.*, pp. 119–120.
[42] Drucilla Cornell, "Enlightening the Enlightenment: A Response to John Brenkman," *Critical Inquiry* (Autumn 1999), p. 137.

inculcation in art and the "artistic" becomes constructively universal if it finds its interior and its clearing – verily, its nature as in the "natural history" of the *Spoliarium* – in an exceptional acumen like Luna and in an eccentric geography like the post-colony. Aesthetics, if it is vulnerable or hospitable to this constraint, could stand its ground as universal because it co-habits, represents, un-bounds, and inevitably dissolves into what Ackbar Abbas would enigmatically call a displace.[43] It henceforth becomes, if we may propose a phrase, a *tropic of undoing* in which the travail of affect is a (dis)figuration of the spoil that is the Philippines: Luna's great painting is after all a camp, a cell of plunder and, according to Rizal, is birthed in virtual catastrophe, in the "shadows, the contrasts, the moribund lights, mystery and the terrible, like the reverberation of the dark tempests [...] the lightning and roaring eruptions."[44]

It is through the aesthetic of this magnitude that the colonial is refused and reformed as a termination that may herald the fundamental sovereignties embedded in nationalism, democracy, humanism, and other vehicles of a coming totality, which are in time to be bewitched by the promise of distinction, disinterest, and indifference. If the aesthetic as constitutive of the universal is "culturally articulated," or if it were to be located, then it should be a hereafter, its ontogenesis stemming from an apocalyptic seizure of the earth and its effusive interlocutors who style themselves as heirs to the enlightenment and await the consequences of its culmination.

In the end, there is melancholy in this expectancy, in the ardor of taking risks, in facing a chance that is almost a panacea and a specter that everything may actually be a negation. This mood deepens largely because the fantasy, the memory, or the desire is at once homespun and worldwide, kindled in exile, whether the idealist were a curate on a mission to a heathen frontier, an expatriate in the metropolis, or a soul raging against damnation. The originary – the genius, the artist, the evangelist, the archivist – thus is also exilic, an unnerving attachment and worldliness with which Edward Said is wistfully acquainted: "what is true of all exile is not that home and love of home are lost, but that loss is inherent in the very existence of both."[45] This is what a social scientist finds out in the Philippines when she grapples with the emotion – or the tropic – that permeates the singing of an English song about a foreign season, *Autumn Leaves,* in an amateur competition in a monsoon peninsula south of the capital of Manila:

[43] Akbar Abbas in a lecture at the Sydney Biennale (2006), unpublished.

[44] *Political and Historical Writings*, Vol. VII. Quoted in *Zero In*, p. 75.

[45] Edward Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003).

> It seems possible that one element in the "sentimental" and nostalgic atmosphere of the singing is built precisely out of the origins of that risk; the loss that the author signified by *Autumn Leaves* makes no immediate sense in the tropics, but the idea of loss itself does; in singing a song part of whose meaning escapes one, one evokes, among other losses, the sadness at not having completely understood, at being excluded in relation to a cultural register which, if one masters it, can open the doors of possibility and change one's life.[46]

This essay marks a return to the aesthetic not to further the discourse of culture as a cultivation of the senses or to ensconce a hegemonic egalitarian exploit crystallized in patriotism. Rather, it is to posit the realization that the history of art and nation in a vernacular locus like the Philippines converges at a moment of an otherworldly epiphany, a glimpse into the breathtaking future of freedom within the odyssey of humanity's progressive amelioration. Because of this revelation, a consciousness of lineage and possibility is ordained and the aesthetic becomes, uncannily, a post-colonial origin and the colony ends, restively.

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[46] Fenella Cannell, *Power and Intimacy in the Christian Philippines* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 209. See also Reynaldo Ileto, *Filipinos and their Revolution: Event, Discourse, and Historiography* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1998); and *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840–1910* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1979). On "local moral words," please see Arthur Kleinman, "Pain and Resistance: The Delegitimation and Relegitimation of Local Worlds," in Mary-Jo Delvecchio Good et al. (eds.), *Pain as Human Experience: An Anthropological Perspective* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); and Benedict Kerkvliet, *Everyday Politics in the Philippines: Class and Status Relations in a Central Luzon Village* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1991).

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RETRO-AVANT-GARDE: AESTHETIC REVIVAL AND THE CON/FIGURATIONS OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY TIME

Tyrus Miller

1.

The paradoxical term "retro-avant-garde" was first developed by artists working in the late socialist and post-socialist contexts of Eastern Europe, Central Europe, and the territories of the ex-Yugoslavia.[1] In general, its semantic field has been defined by a range of post-modern and mostly post-socialist art practices that draw formal, philosophical, and social inspiration from the politicized, powerfully utopian avant-gardes of the early decades of the twentieth-century, especially in the USSR and East-Central Europe. For example, the following manifesto by the Slovene art group IRWIN figured the post-communist legacy of the Cold War's east-west geo-political divide in terms of alternative temporal zones, in which the arts of the twentieth century exhibit significantly different rhythms and narratives of development. In the former "East," this temporality authorized – or even compelled – an artistic return to the avant-gardes of the past, which had never been allowed to play out their historical potential fully. The contemporary artist could help release those untapped utopian energies of the past, while utilizing them creatively in a historically and ideologically problematic present:

> As artists from the EAST, we claim that it is impossible to annul several decades of experience of the EAST and to neutralize its vital potential.

[1] The first use of the term dates back to 1983 with the exhibition of the political / conceptual rock group Laibach in the ŠKUC Gallery in Ljubljana, in which they presented art works, their first video, and a cassette tape recording of music. The exhibition's title was "Ausstellung Laibach Kunst – Monumentalna Retroavantgarda." For documentation and further information, see New Collectivism (ed.), *Neue Slowenische Kunst,* trans. Marjan Golobič (Los Angeles: Amok Books, 1991).

> The development of EASTERN MODERNISM from the past into the present will run through the FUTURE. The FUTURE is the time interval denoting the difference.
>
> Being aware that the history of art is not a history of different forms of appearance, but a history of signifiers, we demand that this DIFFERENCE be given a name.
>
> THE NAME OF EASTERN ART IS EASTERN MODERNISM.
>
> THE NAME OF ITS METHOD IS RETRO-AVANT-GARDISM.[2]

The tone of this appropriative look back by contemporary artists throughout the former "East Bloc" was not always as affirmative as it was for IRWIN, however. It ranged from extremes of nihilistic critical parody to rhetorical reference to avant-garde rigor against the banal hypocrisy of cultural policy in state socialism to authentically celebratory tribute, with many highly complex hybrid positions in between. At the negative extreme, reviewing in 1980 a number of the emigré revue *Á-Ya*, the Russian artists Komar and Melamid, associated with Russian underground versions of pop art and conceptualism, wrote a bitter assessment of Kazimir Malevich and more generally denounced the whole avant-garde and socialist cultural legacy of the Soviet Union:

> [N]ot only was Malevich an illiterate philosopher and the inventor of the artistic movement Suprematism [...] but he was also an active Commissar, one of the first of the Soviet bureaucrats who concerned themselves with the separation of good from bad in the realm of the arts. His bureaucratic heirs, having exchanged Malevich's bad form for their own good uniforms, left his content untouched, and currently reign supreme in Russia. Recognizing this, Russian artists discovered that Lenin's avant-garde and Stalin's academicism are essentially only two different sides of the same socialist utopia. With the failure of this utopia its art too was discredited.[3]

[2] Eda Čufer and IRWIN, "The Ear Behind the Painting" (1991), in Miško Šuvaković and Dubravka Djurić (eds.), *Impossible Histories: Historical Avant-gardes, Neo-avant-gardes, and Post-avant-gardes in Yugoslavia, 1918–1991* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2003), p. 581.

[3] Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid, "The Barren Flowers of Evil" (1980), in *Primary Documents: A Sourcebook for Eastern and Central European Art Since the 1950s* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2002), p. 270.

In contrast, the statement by the Neue Slowenische Kunst artists Eda Čufer and IRWIN accompanying their Moscow "Embassy" action – which included unfurling a huge Malevich-inspired black square on the Kremlin's Red Square – established a much more measured, even redemptive relation to the radical avant-garde of the socialist past:

> Retro-avant-garde is the basic artistic procedure of Neue Slowenische Kunst, based on the premise that traumas from the past affecting the present and the future can be healed only by returning to the initial conflicts. Modern art has not yet overcome the conflict brought about by the rapid and efficient assimilation of historical avant-garde movements in the systems of totalitarian states. The common perception of the avant-garde as a fundamental phenomenon of twentieth-century art is loaded with fears and prejudices. On the other hand this period is naively glorified and mythicized, while on the other hand its abuses, compromises, and failures are counted with bureaucratic pedantry to remind us that this magnificent delusion should not be repeated.[4]

Shuttling between the domain of artists' manifestos and contemporary art criticism, the term "retro-avant-garde" received further elaboration by curators and theorist-practioners such Peter Weibel, Boris Groys, Marina Gržinić, and Inke Arns, who over the last decade have attached it to a number of exhibitions, catalogues, video productions, and theoretical texts.

In all these operative uses of the term, evidently, the conceptual and ideological content has been extremely variable, linked to a wide range of artistic, theoretical, and programmatic intentions. But they have in common a specified version of the "revival of the aesthetic" of the classical avant-garde within the contemporary cultural-political horizon: an artistically mediated qualification of the postmodern present, drawing its energy retrospectively from a largely fictive relation to the past, a return that creatively revises the actual historical lack of continuity or the ugly actuality that eventuated from the avant-garde's utopian dreams. Retro-avant-garde artists responded to a futurism past from the perspective of that now-actualized "future" which had once been addressed as the utopian horizon of earlier avant-garde artworks. This revival of the aesthetic under the paradoxical banner of the retro-avant-garde can be understood, thus, as a self-conscious and reflexive way to phenomenalize and reshape the *time* of the twentieth century in contemporary works of art: a way of re-imagining and imaging this lost, or at least lapsed

[4] Čufer and IRWIN, "NSK State in Time" (1992/93), in *Primary Documents*, p. 301.

time, rendering available for artistic manipulation and aesthetic experience its passing, its continuities and traumatic breaks, and its entwinement with the empirical contingencies of national and global histories.

It is not my intention, however, to discuss here specific interpretations of the "retro-avant-garde" term and concept by artists or critics. This is partially because the extensive research of Inke Arns, published first in her 2004 dissertation at the Humboldt University, more recently in the book based on her thesis, documents these developments in detail and with considerable critical acumen.[5] Yet it is also because my intention in this paper is more properly philosophical, or metahistorical and metacritical, than historical and critical. Here I would echo Peter Osborne's claim, in *The Politics of Time*, that such basic terminology like modernism and postmodernism, avant-garde and – I will add – retro-avant-garde, have generally not in themselves been taken as problems for philosophical reflection, although philosophers such as Jean-François Lyotard, Jürgen Habermas, Richard Rorty, and Gianni Vattimo (to name only a few luminaries) were actively involved in generating a critical and polemical discourse in which such notions were employed.[6] Accordingly, in what follows, I will not be greatly concerned with practical matters of how one might do things, artistic and critical, with this paradoxical, neologistic word "retro-avant-garde," and still less will I seek to enumerate and evaluate the various ways it has already been used. Rather I seek to illuminate the more fundamental problem of what this seemingly bizarre term would imply if we were to take it seriously as a historiographic concept. Furthermore, I wish to understand the philosophical conditions under which its conceptual content becomes thinkable and meaningful. Finally, I will also ask what these considerations might tell us about our conceptions of time, historical change, and the role of aesthetics in historical knowledge.

2.

Peter Osborne suggests that basic periodizing categories can be understood as diverse ways of "temporalizing history." In other words, they de-

[5] Inke Arns, *Objects in the Mirror May Be Closer Than They Appear! Die Avant-garde im Rückspiegel, Zum Paradigmenwechsel der künstlerischen Avant-garderezeption in (Ex-) Jugoslavien und Russland von der 1980s Jahren bis in die Gegenwart*, Dissertation (Berlin: Humboldt University, 2004); Inke Arns, *Avangarda v vzvratnem ogledalu* [Avant-garde in the Rearview Mirror] (Ljubljana: Maska, 2006).

[6] Peter Osborne, *The Politics of Time: Modernity and Avant-Garde* (London: Verso Press, 1995), p. vii.

scribe ways in which we interpret and figure being in time as meaningful historical activity and experience:

> 'Modernity' and 'postmodernity', 'modernism', 'postmodernism' and 'avant-garde' are categories of historical consciousness which are constructed at the level of the apprehension of history as a whole. More specifically, they are categories of historical totalization in the medium of cultural experience. As such, each involves a distinct form of historical temporalization [...] through which the three dimensions of phenomenological or lived time (past, present, future) are linked together within the dynamic and eccentric unity of a single historical view.[7]

Two aspects of Osborne's formulation are notable for my purpose. First is that these periodizing conceptions are not simply monodimensional metrics of chronology and the quantitative differences between successive moments – i.e. on this day in 1921 we are in the "modern," whereas seventy years later, by 1991 we have entered the "postmodern" epoch. Rather, they also designate shifts in the *configuration* of past, present, and future that gives "history" its content and character at a given moment. In a sense, we might say that the difference between modernity and postmodernity lies less in the sheer chronological difference between 1921 and 1991, than in the different ways in which modernity and postmodernity configure the possible relations between 1921 and 1991. In this regard, 1921–1991 is not necessarily commutable with 1991–1921, since these chronological coordinates exist within a different topology of past, present, and future in the two cases. Periodizing terms are needed precisely to mark these topological shifts within an apparently homogeneous chronology. Such terms, thus, not only measure chronology, but also advance interpretations about qualitative differences in the way historicity is being represented and experienced, against the background of chronological continuity. In an essay that touches upon some of the same temporal paradoxes as retro-avant-gardism, Fredric Jameson has suggested that in our readings of cultural artifacts we must not only account for them historically, but also consider how they express epochal qualities in their very stance towards historical representation:

> Historicity is, in fact, neither a representation of the past nor a representation of the future (although its various forms use such representations): it can first and foremost be defined as a perception of the pre-

[7] Osborne, p. ix.

> sent as history; that is, as a relationship to the present which somehow defamiliarizes it and allows us that distance from immediacy which is at length characterized as a historical perspective. It is appropriate, in other words, also to insist on the historicality of the operation itself, which is our way of conceiving of historicity in this particular society and mode of production; appropriate also to observe that what is at stake is essentially a process of reification whereby we draw back from our immersion in the here and now [...] and grasp it as a kind of thing.[8]

We might say accordingly: our periodizing concepts register under a single term both *historical* distinctions and differences in the mode of *historicity*, as the dynamic topology in which the dimensions of time are configured.

Second, Osborne connects this configurational aspect of time in period concepts with different modes of cultural experience, which are themselves figurally mediated by images, language, constructed spaces and artifacts, and bodily performances. We might go on to conclude – although Osborne does not develop this argument at length – that various sorts of figural acts and artifacts, such as art objects and performances, narratives and images, serve as the vehicles by which our temporalizing apprehension of historicity is experienced. Thus, historical experience and aesthetic experience of figural products of culture are intertwined, even mutually constitutive. Each provides the other with a hermeneutic framework by which the other can be interpreted and experienced as meaningful. When we read Joyce's *Ulysses*, for example, we do not merely encounter a cultural artifact that communicates something about its represented context, Dublin on the 16th of June 1904, or of the context of its production in the years of World War I and the early 1920s. We also apprehend, through our aesthetic experience of the work, the very texture and meaning of time in modernity: that particular way in which the past and future are qualified and related to the present. Thus, the canonical opinion that *Ulysses* is a paradigm of the "modernist novel," seemingly so natural given its style and the time of its publication, is actually a highly complex correlation of an artistic figuration with a temporal configuration, which thus implies a further interpretative hypothesis about the mutual translatability of these two types of figure, the temporal into the cultural and vice versa. Moreover, we should note, it is within this periodizing framework of modernity – in which cultural figuration and temporal

[8] Fredric Jameson, "Nostalgia for the Present," in *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1991), p. 284.

configuration are conceived as transposable analogues of one another – that the historical sense of "avant-garde" is also developed.

One of the most sophisticated extensions of this idea of the figural nature of historicizing concepts is the deconstructive rhetorical criticism of Paul De Man, especially in his early writings collected in *Blindness and Insight*. There, in essays such as "Literary History and Literary Modernity" and "Lyric and Modernity," De Man subjected to scrutiny literary criticism's typical ascription of period successivity to figural and stylistic aspects of poetic texts. Especially the terms "modern" and "modernity" with respect to literature bring this problem to the fore:

> The term "modernity" is not used in a simple chronological sense as an approximate synonym for "recent" or "contemporary" with a positive or negative value-emphasis added. It designates more generally the problematical possibility of all literature's existing in the present, of being considered, or read, from a point of view that claims to share with it its own sense of a temporal present. In theory, the question of modernity could therefore be asked of any literature at any time, contemporaneous or not. In practice, however, the question has to be put somewhat more pragmatically from a point of view that postulates a roughly contemporaneous perspective and that favors recent over older literature. This necessity is inherent in the ambivalent status of the term "modernity," which is itself partly pragmatic and descriptive, partly conceptual and normative. In the common usage of the word the pragmatic implications usually overshadow theoretical possibilities that remain unexplored. My emphasis tries to restore this balance to some degree: hence the stress on literary categories and dimensions that exist independently of historical contingencies.[9]

De Man's focus is on certain basic rhetorical mechanisms in literature, especially the tendency to allegorize structural features of literary language in terms of historical – or pseudo-historical – indices, which in turn generate what is, for him, the largely illusory substance of literary historical and critical discourse. Indeed, in his later work, De Man advances a radical Nietzschean skepticism about any substantive linkages between literary meaning and history, which he views as an unrepresentable play of material

[9] Paul De Man, "Lyric and Modernity," in *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983, 2nd Edition), pp.166–167.

actions and blind forces, only retrospectively and willfully allegorized as meaningful.

I do not think this is a necessarily trajectory from De Man's point of departure. But in any case, however, his work does point to a far more rhetorically constructed – and hence, critically *de*-constructible – interaction between modes of temporality and frameworks of historical explanation than has generally been acknowledged by the disciplines of literary history, art history, or cultural history in their use of periodizing concepts. Moreover, when he suggests that critical ascriptions of modernity employ a rhetoric of temporality that need not entail strict *historical* contemporaneity, he opens the periodizing concept of modernity to the sort of figural mobility and transpossibility that also self-consciously characterizes the concept of retro-avant-gardism. Unlike De Man, however, I do not believe that the figural nature of historicizing terms renders any use of them merely strategic, unstable, and ultimately spurious. Rather, I would suggest that their function is hermeneutically projective and culturally creative, insofar as they play an active role in constructing any possible historical experience and in any account of historical experience we inevitably rediscover their figural precipitate. Akin to the schemata and frameworks that preshape our perceptual encounters with the world, periodizing figures are images we actualize and concretize in our metabolic encounters with the cultural world, with its temporal dimensions of past, present, and future and its geo-cultural extension.

Indeed, I believe that already with the classical avant-gardes, there was a high level of self-consciousness about their artistic activity being, above all, a labor of qualifying time in the form of a new historicity that would be proper to their age. It is in this light that we can the reconsider the comically hyperbolic paradox of anticipation and future realization of the final passages of Filippo Tomaso Marinetti's 1909 "Founding and Manifesto of Futurism." Marinetti imagines the last act of the aging futurists as that of provoking their own totemic murder at the hands of the younger generation, who by killing their ancestors, will unwittingly become the most orthodox "disciples" of those "old men" they kill:

> The oldest of us is thirty: so we have at least a decade for finishing our work. When we are forty, other younger and stronger men will probably throw us in the wastebasket like useless manuscripts – we want it to happen!
> They will come against us, our successors, will come from far away, from every quarter, dancing to the winged cadence of their first songs,

> flexing the hooked claws of predators, sniffing doglike at the academy doors the strong odours of our decaying minds, which will already have been promised to the literary catacombs.
>
> But we won't be there. [...] At last they'll find us – one winter's night – in open country, beneath a sad roof drummed by a monotonous rain. They'll see us crouched beside our trembling aeroplanes in the act of warming our hands at the poor little blaze that our books of today will give out when they take fire from the flight of our images.
>
> They'll storm around us, panting with scorn and anguish, and all of them, exasperated by our proud daring, will hurtle to kill us, driven by a hatred the more implacable the more their hearts will be drunk with love and admiration for us.
>
> Injustice, strong and sane, will break out radiantly in their eyes.
>
> Art, in fact, can be nothing but violence, cruelty, and injustice.[10]

The implications of this temporal self-consciousness are more far-reaching and enduring, ultimately, than the more dated characteristics of the classical avant-gardes, such as their critical negativity, their vaunted penchant for public scandal, or their demand for perpetual formal innovation. In fact, it is this lesson, first and foremost, that the retroavantgardists have learned from the historical avant-garde and which retro-avant-gardism has reflexively taken up as its characteristic note: treating time as a malleable resource for cultural creation, as an immaterial material that can be crafted into aesthetically communicable images.

3.

"Modernism" and "avant-garde" are generic classes of *time-images*, which correlate particular cultural figures – an archive of spaces, acts, and artifacts – with specific ways of experiencing the qualitative articulation of time. The term "time-image," introduced by Gilles Deleuze in his Bergson-derived cinema theory,[11] has to date not received much consideration as a concept in historiographic theory. Yet the concept of time-image, I wish to suggest,

[10] Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, "The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism" (1909), in Mary Ann Caws (ed.), *Manifesto: A Century of Isms* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), p. 189.

[11] Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986); *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989).

holds untapped potential for the historical interpretation of cultural and aesthetic works, since it comprehends a wide range of possibilities for figuring historical experiences and for communicating history figurally. Many of the artifacts and works that may be interpreted as time-images would not ordinarily be thought to have anything to do with history more narrowly conceived, yet they reveal their historicity in light of this interpretative concept. One might, however, argue that the disciplinary concepts, authorized sources, and paradigmatic narratives of historical writing are simply special, conventionalized, and naturalized cases of a much more general repertoire of time-images by which we experience historicity. It is their privilege within a disciplinary framework of training and writing and not their inherent monopoly on historicity that defines historical texts and documents as properly "historical" materials, as opposed to fiction, myth, custom, rumor, entertainment, or other putatively "extra-historical" genres of discourse and culture.

Deleuze formulates his notion of time-image through reflection on the art of the cinema, in which the unfolding image on the screen depicts both movement in space and duration in time. These phenomenological dimensions of experience are not simply abstract, external metrics of the cinema image, however; they are also singularly qualified by the particular movements and metamorphoses within the frame and by the specific kinds of linkage between the segments of a sequence. Deleuze distinguishes between two modes of cinema image, according to the relationship between motion and time in the image. In the first case, "the movement-image," movement of bodies in space is the predominant feature, and the experience of time derives from that primary experience of spatial movement. We might imagine a fairly clichéd montage sequence in which a car passes various recognizable sights of the city of Los Angeles, and at last is seen in a long shot with highway stretching out in front of it and the desert in the distance. Even with elliptical jumps from place to place, nothing violates our sense of normal spatial continuity and movement: the highway, the automobile, and the driver form a single coordinated representation of passage through space in a proportionate, homogeneous span of time. We would understand this as a spatial journey out of the city and into the open country, and our sense of the temporality of the sequence would derive from our construction of the spatial itinerary from the montage. Yet it can also be possible that the filmmaker wishes to make the primary focus an experience of time, and s/he will shape the movements and the space in ways that violate our intuitive sense of sensory-motor continuity, so as figurally to capture an image of time. Corollary to my first example, Michelangelo Antonioni's *Zabriskie Point* represents our drive out of Los Angeles into the desert as the passage

from the time of modernity, a hectic time of traffic and real estate speculation and political violence, into a qualitatively heterogeneous temporal order composed of chthonic nature, slow geological metamorphosis, and mythic consciousness. Consistently faithful to this primacy of time as the raw material of his image, Antonioni concludes his film with the famous slow-motion explosion of a model housing development in the desert, in a radical "unhousing" of modern space that Antonioni shows us twice, first in the imagined anticipation of the disaffected young women, then again in the actuality of the present, which is nonetheless dilated to several minutes of screen duration. Space, movement, and causality are figurally warped to the shape of a direct representation of time, a "time-image" that retains an intimate relation with the invisible thoughts and affections of mental events – in this case, the alienation of the young women from her older capitalist boss and her conversion, in an indiscernable instant, to the revolutionary nihilism of her young dead lover, with whom she had experienced the inhuman geological time-space of the California desert.

How might we apply to questions of historiography this distinction between "movement-image," in which time derives indirectly from the spatial and causal relations in and between images, and "time-images," which aim to represent a mode of time directly and bend movement and relation to conform to the temporal figure? Without making reference to Deleuze, Osborne in fact suggests an analogous framework. "If Aristotle," Osborne asks, "sought to understand time through change, since it is first encountered in entities that change, might we not reverse the procedure, and seek to comprehend change through time?"[12] He goes on to conclude:

> [T]here is a deeper conceptual logic to be found at work in such categories of cultural self-consciousness than is suggested by the way in which they are usually deployed, as markers for chronologically distinct and empirically identifiable periods, movements, forms or styles: a logic of historical totalization which raises questions about the nature of historical time itself.[13]

We need to distinguish two sorts of period notions, however, in keeping with this primacy of historical change or of states of time. In the first case, analogous to the "movement image," we derive the qualities of time – i.e. crisis-ridden, stagnating, peaceful, chaotic, etc. – from the events and

[12] Osborne, p. viii.
[13] *Ibid.*

movements of change. The time of history is derived from the rhythms of what happens "in" time. In the figure formed of them in historical writing, the facts and documents are made to reveal a pattern of evolution and movement through the successive days and months and years. In the second case, however, analogous to Deleuze's "time image," particular qualities and types of time express themselves in singular occurrences and mixtures, through particular images, artifacts, spaces, and movements. The historian may not be searching for direct links of narrative and causality between the different elements, which might even derive from diverse chronological or cultural contexts. Rather s/he seeks in them a virtual conceptuality that will be methodologically disclosed through techniques of montage, multimedia assemblage, play between documentary and personal memory, interpenetration of fictional and factual frameworks, or other experimental modes of figural thought typically associated more with the arts than the discipline of history.

With this framework in mind, I would suggest a similar distinction pertains to the periodizing concepts of avant-garde, in its classical sense of advanced "movements" and their succession, and retro-avant-garde, which reflexively highlights the fundamentally *temporal* content of avantgardism. Typically, theories of the avant-garde, including Peter Bürger's influential institutional theory, have emphasized the avant-garde's provocative and critical negativity, its transgression of conventions and public norms of communication and behavior, and its rejection of the limits of art as a specialized realm of production, practice, and perception. In turn, these characteristics underwrite its peculiar temporal dynamics as a series of conflicting movements: the rapid succession of ever-more radical "isms," the demand for perpetual innovation in advance of the generalized adoption of the avant-garde's utopian projections, the swift rise and fall of avant-garde movements as public provocations, and their ambivalent fellow-travelling and sometimes identification with broader revolutionary social movements of the right and left. Put more simply, however, the basic trope of classical avant-gardism is precisely "movement": the forward thrust of the small, militant, disciplined, organized group, which is temporarily provocative, incomprehensible, and utopian, because of the historical lag of the masses behind the historical condition to come, which the avant-garde adumbrates. Critical negativity in the domain of culture and aesthetics, thus, is figuratively projected onto the temporal axis of history as anticipation and prefiguration.

Retro-avant-garde, in its paradoxical highlighting of the temporal dynamics of anticipation that it rhetorically inverts, brings this temporal element to the fore and derives its own nature as present tense occurrence

from its more primary, direct figuration of temporal relation: its belated, retrospective, backwards-turned reference to the futural thrust of the avant-garde. The seeming loss of forward "movement," the apparent stasis in which past and present seem to pool together in retro-avant-garde works, or the odd temporal void in which the revived utopian rhetoric of the past appears to be suspended, is in fact not a loss of time, but a more direct confrontation with it. The aberrant movement of backward referring futurism leads us to ask why anticipation, and hence negativity as its aesthetic correlate, once seemed like the exclusive temporal resource the avant-garde had to transform culture and explore utopian alternatives to the existing social, sensory, and semiotic order.

If it is understood as the heir of avant-garde time-consciousness, accomplishing a break with the linear progressive thrust of the avant-garde and an elaboration of more complex temporal figures out of avant-garde artistic practice, retro-avant-gardism need not be seen as just one more in a long line of valedictory gestures towards a discredited avant-garde. It may help recover the avant-garde's authentically revolutionary position in culture, which was never, or never solely, based on its critical negativity, but rather more generally on *temporal heterogeneity to the present*, which results from its artistic treatment of time as a figurable material. If this is so, however, then there may still be much cultural work for a reconceived avant-garde to do, and despite regular, authoritative announcements of the "death of the avant-garde," we may yet bear witness to the revival of avant-garde aesthetics in many times and places. Insofar as there is not just one mode of temporal heterogeneity available to artists, but a plurality – critical, poetic, redemptive, and utopian – there may also be an indefinite multitude of ways in which the avant-garde's cultural work of shaping time can be artistically achieved.

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Surface and Depth (2002), *Performing Live* (2000), *Practicing Philosophy: Pragmatism and the Philosophical Life* (1997), *Sous l'interprétation* (1994), *Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art* (1992, 2nd edition 2000, and already translated into twelve languages) and *T. S. Eliot and the Philosophy of Criticism* (1988). The editor of *Analytic Aesthetics* (1989), *Bourdieu: A Critical Reader* (1999), and *The Range of Pragmatism and the Limits of Philosophy* (2004), he is also co-editor of *The Interpretive Turn* (1991). His many awards include Senior Fulbright and National Endowment of the Humanities Fellowships, and a Humboldt Transcoop Grant.

Wolfgang Welsch, born in 1946, studied Philosophy, Art History, Psychology and Archeology at the Universities of Munich and Wuerzburg. Doctorate in 1974, Habilitation in 1982. He is currently Professor of Philosophy at the Friedrich-Schiller-University of Jena. Visiting Professorships include Humboldt-University of Berlin (1992–93), Stanford University (1994–1995 and 2000–2001) and Emory University (1998). In 1992 he received the Max Planck Research Award. Main fields of research: epistemology and evolutionary anthropology, aesthetics and art theory, philosophy of culture, contemporary philosophy. Main publications in the field of aesthetics*: Aisthesis. Grundzüge und Perspektiven der Aristotelischen Sinneslehre* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1987), *Unsere postmoderne Moderne* (Weinheim: VCH Acta humaniora, 1987, 6th enlarged ed. Berlin: Akademie, 2002), *Ästhetisches Denken* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1990, 6th enlarged ed. 2003), *Die Aktualität des Ästhetischen* (Munich: Fink, 1993), *Grenzgänge der Ästhetik* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1996), *Undoing Aesthetics* (London: Sage, 1997), *Medien-Welten-Wirklichkeiten* (Munich: Fink, 1998).

Ernest Ženko (1968) studied physics and philosophy at the University of Ljubljana. In 1997 he graduated from the Department of Philosophy of the Faculty of Arts, where he also received his Ph.D. (2002). During his studies he received scholarships to study at the Friedrich Schiller University (Jena) and at the Kolleg Friedrich Nietzsche (Weimar). From 1999 to2002 he was a researcher at the Institute of Philosophy of the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (Ljubljana). He is a member of the Slovenian Society of Aesthetics, of the International Association for Aesthetics, and the editor of the *IAA Newsletter*. He is the author of *Space and the Arts: Space between Philosophy, Fine Arts and Science – Leonardo da Vinci, László Moholy-Nagy, and Andy Warhol* (Ljubljana, 2000) and *Totality and the Arts: Lyotard, Jameson and Welsch* (Ljubljana, 2003). As an Assistant Professor of Aesthetics and Philosophy of Culture he teaches at the University of Primorska, Faculty of Humanities Koper, and carries out research at the Koper Science and Research Centre.

ABSTRACTS • IZVLEČKI

Wolfgang Welsch
The Return of Beauty?
Key words: *varieties of beauty, avant-garde, contingency, aleatory, aestheticization, transculturality*

The essay questions some aspects in the current propagation of a "return of beauty" and suggests that in fact there has merely been a boost in the discourse on beauty – whilst beauty itself has permanently and abundantly been around. Modern objections to beauty did not do away with beauty altogether but only attacked established types of beauty in favor of other ones. The paper critically discusses some effects of the present re-appraisal of beauty that are devastating to the perception and production of art. Finally, it is recommended that we devote more attention to the phenomenon of breathtaking beauty and the fact of its universal appreciation without limitation to cultural context.

Wolfgang Welsch
Vrnitev lepega?
Ključne besede: *zvrsti lepega, avantgarda, naključje, slučajno, estetizacija, transkulturalnost*

Esej problematizira nekatere vidike aktualnega propagiranja »vrnitve lepega« in predlaga tezo, da gre dejansko zgolj za razširjenje govora o lepem, ki pa je bilo sámo nenehno in v obilju vseskozi tu. Moderni ugovori proti lepemu slednjega niso povsem odpravili, pač pa so le napadli uveljavljene vrste lepega v korist ostalih vrst. Prispevek kritično razpravlja o nekaterih učinkih sedanjega ponovnega poveličevanja lepega, ki so uničujoči za dojemanje in produkcijo umetnosti. Avtor na koncu predlaga, da posvetimo več pozornosti pojavu lepote, ob kateri ostanemo brez besed, in dejstvu, da slednjo univerzalno cenijo ne glede na kulturni kontekst.

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Thierry de Duve
The Post-Duchamp Deal. Remarks on a few Specifications of the Word 'Art'
Key words: *art, aesthetics, Kant, art theory, modern, contemporary*

The purpose of this paper is to offer some theoretical clarification of the word art in the wake of the reception of Duchamp's readymades and their acknowledgment by art history. It became clear in the sixties that it is now both technically possible and institutionally legitimate to make art from absolutely anything whatever. To this a priori possibility I would like to give the term art in general. After which I shall define three other terms which may help clarify our usage of the word art in the post-Duchamp situation: art, period; art altogether; and art itself. Their articulation is intended to lay the ground for an aesthetic theory of art adapted to our times.

Thierry de Duve
Postduchampovski dogovor. Pripombe o nekaterih določitvah besede 'umetnost'
Ključne besede: *umetnost, estetika, Kant, teorija umetnosti, moderno, sodobno*

Namen prispevka je ponuditi teoretsko pojasnitev besede umetnost v luči recepcije Duchampovih readymadeov in njihovega pripoznanja s strani umetnostne zgodovine. V šestdesetih letih prejšnjega stoletja je postalo jasno, da je odslej tako tehnično možno kot institucionalno legitimno narediti umetniško delo iz absolutno česarkoli. To apriorno možnost bi poimenoval umetnost nasploh. Zatem skušam definirati tri druge termine, ki nam lahko pomagajo pojasniti našo rabo besede umetnost v postduchampovski situaciji: umetnost, obdobje; docela umetnost; sama umetnost. Artikulacija le-teh naj bi ponudila osnovo za estetsko teorijo umetnosti, prilagojeno našemu času.

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Mario Perniola
Cultural Turns in Aesthetics and Anti-Aesthetics
Key words: *aesthetics, anti-aesthetics, philosophy of culture, New Age, culture of performance, history of aesthetics*

The paper intends to bridge the existing gap between aesthetic knowledge and contemporary society. The first part focuses on the cultural turn in aesthetics, the roots of which can already be found in the English criticism of the eighteenth century. This enterprise is inspired by a methodology that regards aesthetics as a "meeting place" of many disciplines and varying cultural traditions. A second type of cultural turn is carried out by writers (e.g. Baudelaire): the target of their polemic is the concept of aesthetic disinterestedness. According to them, the beautiful, instead, has to create the greatest interest because it is none other than the promise of happiness. However, the two different approaches are not so incompatible as seems at first sight. Finally, the text focuses on the New Age and the culture of performance, which, even if presenting opposite traits, have one thing in common: they translate at the empirical and factual level experiences that originally belonged to another sphere, namely the spiritual and the symbolic.

Mario Perniola
Kulturni obrati v estetiki in antiestetiki
Ključne besede: *estetika, antiestetika, filozofija kulture, new age, kultura performansa, zgodovina estetike*

V prispevku skušamo premostiti zev med estetsko vednostjo in sodobno družbo. V prvem delu razpravljamo o kulturnem obratu v estetiki, katerega korenine je mogoče najti že v angleški kritiki osemnajstega stoletja. To podvzetje navdihuje metodologija, ki ima estetiko za »mesto srečanja« mnogih disciplin in menjajočih se kulturnih tradicij. Drugo vrsto kulturnega obrata izpeljejo književniki (npr. Baudelaire): tarča njihove polemike je pojem estetske brezinteresnosti. Trdijo, da mora lepo namesto tega ustvariti največji interes, saj samo ni nič drugega kot obljuba sreče. Vendar pa dva različna pristopa med seboj nista tako nezdružljiva, kot je nemara videti na prvi pogled. Na koncu se članek osredotoči na new age in kulturo performansa;

čeprav predstavljata nasprotne poteze, imata nekaj skupnega: prevajata empirično in faktično raven izkustev, ki so izvorno spadali v drugo sfero, namreč duhovno in simbolno.

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Yrjö Sepänmaa

Home Team and Visiting Team in Applied Environmental Aesthetics

Key words: *aestheticist/ethicist, applied aesthetics, environmental aesthetics, metacriticism, practical aesthetics*

The core question in aesthetics now and in the future is, how to combine philosophical theory with practice. Though reference is made to applied philosophy, and particularly to applied ethics, it is seldom made to applied aesthetics, even though we have a social need for it. The function of applied environmental aesthetics is to lay a foundation for practical actions. The goal is to connect the theoretical side closely to everyday problem solving. This means proceeding from a "passive" outsider aesthetics to an "active", influencing and participating insider aesthetics. The process begins with a theory of applicability, after which actual problem cases follow. The aesthetic point of view is united with ethical, social, and cultural discussions, as well as with the expertise of environmental professionals in education, administration, design and planning, business, etc. The theoreticians and the practitioners form two teams, which should meet and co-operate with each other. In stepping from being a bystander to becoming a participant, the aestheticians will link their work to a network of specialists and professionals.

Yrjö Sepänmaa

Domače in gostujoče moštvo v aplicirani okoljski estetiki

Ključne besede: *esteticist/eticist, aplicirana estetika, okoljska estetika, metakritika, praktična estetika*

Ključno vprašanje v estetiki danes in v prihodnje je, kako povezovati filozofsko teorijo s prakso. Čeprav se običajno sklicujejo na aplicirano filozofijo, še posebej na aplicirano etiko, pa se le redko sklicujejo na aplicirano estetiko, kljub temu da obstaja družbena potreba po njej. Funkcija aplicirane okoljske estetike je postaviti temelj za praktično delovanje, cilj pa je tesno povezati teoretsko plat z vsakodnevnim reševanjem problemov. To pomeni napredovati od »pasivne« zunanje estetike k »aktivni«, vplivni in soudeleženi notranji estetiki. Proces se prične s teorijo aplikabilnosti, zatem sledijo aktualni primeri problemov. Estetski vidik je združen z etičnimi, družbenimi in kulturnimi razpravami, kakor tudi s strokovnim znanjem okoljskih profesionalcev v vzgoji, administraciji, oblikovanju in načrtovanju, poslovanju itn. Teoretiki in praktiki tvorijo dve moštvi, ki se morata drugo z drugim srečati in medsebojno sodelovati. S tem, da bodo estetiki prenehali biti stranski opazovalci in postali sodelujoči, bodo svoje delo povezali z mrežo specialistov in profesionalcev.

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Curtis L. Carter
Aesthetics into the Twenty-First Century
Key words: *aesthetics, art, interdisciplinary, philosophy, Anglo-American, dreariness of aesthetics, social-political aesthetics, postmodern, popular arts, post-socialist, fine arts*

The new concerns facing aestheticians in the twenty-first century require serious attention if the discipline is to maintain continued viability as an intellectual discipline. Just as art changes as cultures develop, so must aesthetics. In support of this view is a personal account of evolving engagement with aesthetics and the factors that led to embracing change and a plurality of practices as essential to the health of aesthetic today. A brief examination of the state of aesthetics as it has evolved in the American Society for Aesthetics since its inception in the 1940s will follow. These two lines of development, one idiosyncratic and personal, and the other focusing on the aims and outcomes of one prominent national society, will perhaps offer some useful background for understanding the current state of aesthetics and the problems confronting the discipline today. Following these considerations will be a look at some of the main concerns reflected in the social and political aesthetics and the expansion of aesthetics to include the popular arts which again challenges aesthetics to move beyond its historic boundaries.

Curtis L. Carter
Estetika v enaindvajseto stoletje
Ključne besede: *estetika, umetnost, interdisciplinarno, filozofija, angloameriško, puščobnost estetike, družbenopolitična estetika, postmoderna, popularne umetnosti, postsocialistično, lepe umetnosti*

Če naj estetika v enaindvajsetem stoletju ohrani svojo zmožnost biti intelektualna disciplina, potem se je treba resno posvetiti novemu, s katerim se estetiki soočamo. Kot se umetnost spreminja z razvojem kultur, tako se mora tudi estetika. Temu gledišču v prid govori tudi oseben prikaz o razvijajočem se ukvarjanju z estetiko in z dejavniki, ki vodijo v sprejetje spremembe in pluralnosti praks kot bistvenih za zdravje estetike danes. Sledi kratek pregled stanja estetike, kakor se je razvijala v Ameriškem društvu za estetiko od njegovih zametkov v štiridesetih letih prejšnjega stoletja. Ti dve liniji razvoja, prva idiosinkratična in osebna, ter druga, ki se osredotoča na cilje in rezultate prominentnega nacionalnega društva, lahko nemara ponudita koristno ozadje za razumevanje trenutnega stanja estetike in problemov, s katerimi se ta disciplina sooča danes. Tem premišljevanjem sledi prikaz nekaterih glavnih problemov, ki jih odražata družbena in politična estetika ter ekspanzija estetike, ki naj bi vključila popularne umetnosti, ki prav tako izzivajo estetiko, naj se premakne onstran svojih zgodovinskih meja.

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Lev Kreft
The Second Modernity of Naturalist Aesthetics
Ključne besede: *naturalism, aesthetics, second modernity, Dutton, Welsch, Komar and Melamid*

Naturalist aestetics, strictly speaking, is a move to establish naturalist explanation

of aesthetic phenomena. It was nearly forgotten, at least in the history of aesthetics, where, if mentioned, it was put aside as something dead and despised. Its reappearance in recent years, among other occasions at the XIVth International Congress of Aesthetics (Rio de Janeiro, 2004), came as a surprise and a challenge. Its second modernity has predecessors in the first modernity, and Darwin is only one of the many, and its background in contemporary naturalist proposals in social and human sciences (biosociology, evolutionary psychology, cognitive science, etc.). Contemporary proposals to explain some basic aesthetic preferences of taste, and aesthetic pleasure itself in terms of evolution, may be illuminated by historical background. We can also understand them (in Ulrich Beck's vocabulary) as second modernity, as a move to deal with uncertainties of aesthetics. What still makes contemporary naturalist aesthetics a continuation of aesthetic modernity, however, is its inability to take (contemporary) art seriously.

Lev Kreft
Druga modernost naturalistične estetike
Ključne besede: *naturalizem, estetika, druga modernost, Dutton, Welsch, Komar in Melamid*

V dobesednem pomenu stremi naturalistična estetika k naturalistični pojasnitvi estetskih pojavov. Vsaj v zgodovini estetike je bila skoraj pozabljena, če pa je bila tam vendarle omenjena, je bila odpravljena kot nekaj mrtvega in preziranja vrednega. Njen ponovni vznik v zadnjih letih, med drugim na svetovnem kongresu estetike v Rio de Janeiru, predstavlja presenečenje in izziv. Njena druga modernost ima predhodnike v prvi modernosti, med katerimi je Darwin le eden od mnogih, ima pa tudi ozadje v sodobnih naturalističnih predlogih v družbenih in humanističnih vedah (biosociologija, evolucijska psihologija, kognitivna znanost in druge). Sodobni predlogi, da bi pojasnili nekatera temeljna estetska nagnjenja okusa in estetsko ugodje samo s pomočjo evolucije, se dajo osvetliti z zgodovinskim ozadjem. Po drugi strani pa jih lahko razumemo (v besednjaku Ulricha Becka) kot drugo modernost, torej kot poskus, kako opraviti z negotovostjo estetike. Nezmožnost, da bi se resno lotila (sodobne) umetnosti, pa sodobno naturalistično estetiko vendarle kaže kot kontinuiteto estetske modernosti.

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Ernest Ženko
Mode-2 Aesthetics
Key words: *aesthetics, knowledge production, Mode-2, autonomy of art, art and science*

The author's initial assumption is that in the eyes of much of the younger generation of artists, curators, art critics, and even philosophers, aesthetics has lost its potential to say essential or meaningful truths about contemporary art. Since their beginnings in the eighteenth century, both art and aesthetics have drawn their import from the division between the aesthetic and the practical. The work of Kant generated a tradition which was decisive for our understanding of aesthetics. For this tradition the central issue was the autonomy of art (or, later, the autonomy of culture). It has now become clear that both art and culture have gradually lost their autonomy, and that consequently aesthetics as a discipline lost its former significance. It is, however,

important to realise that if society has changed, then not only art and aesthetics, but also other fields and disciplines have had to respond to this change. Due to the fact that for the most part the co-evolution of society and science is responsible for the change that we are witnessing, the author focuses on changes in the contemporary production of knowledge in order to understand this change, in the hope that it could be enlightening to aesthetics as well. He proceeds to the close reading of the theory of scientific knowledge production developed by Michael Gibbons *et al*, termed Mode-2. In the final part of the article the relation between knowledge production and art/culture is established, showing that aesthetics needs transgress its disciplinary borders in order to survive.

Ernest Ženko
»Drugi način« estetike
Ključne besede: *estetika, produkcija vednosti, drugi način, avtonomija umetnosti, umetnost in znanost*

Avtorjeva izvorna predpostavka je, da je v očeh večine mlade generacije umetnikov, kuratorjev, umetnostnih kritikov in celo filozofov estetika izgubila svojo sposobnost povedati bistvene ali smiselne resnice o sodobni umetnosti. Vse od svojih začetkov v osemnajstem stoletju sta tako umetnost kot estetika svoj vpliv črpali iz razlikovanja med estetskim in praktičnim. Kantovo delo je proizvedlo tradicijo, ki je bila odločilnega pomena za naše razumevanje estetike. Za to tradicijo je osrednje vprašanje avtonomija umetnosti (ali pozneje avtonomija kulture). Sedaj je postalo jasno, da sta tako umetnost kot kultura postopoma izgubili svojo avtonomijo in da je estetika kot disciplina posledično izgubila svojo nekdanjo pomembnost. Pomembno pa je ugotoviti, da če se je spremenila družba, se morata spremeniti ne le umetnost in estetika, temveč se morajo na to spremembo odzvati tudi druga polja in discipline. Zaradi dejstva, da je koevolucija družbe in znanosti odgovorna za spremembe, ki smo jim priča, se avtor osredotoča na sodobno produkcijo vednosti, da bi pojasnil to spremembo, v upanju, da bi bilo to lahko pojasnjujoče tudi za estetiko. V nadaljevanju se loteva podrobnega branja teorije produkcije znanstvene vednosti, ki so jo razvili Michael Gibbons et al in jo poimenovali *Mode-2* (»Drugi način«). V zadnjem delu prispevka vzpostavi avtor odnos med umetnostjo in kulturo, pri čemer pokaže, da mora estetika prestopiti svoje meje, da bi preživela.

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Eva Kit Wah Man
Rethinking Art and Values: A Comparative Revelation of the Origin of Aesthetic Experience (from the Neo-Confucian Perspectives)
Key words: *aesthetic experience, ethics, physical adjustment, fulfillment, consummation, intellectual intuition*

In his article, "The End of Aesthetic Experience" (1997) Richard Shusterman studies the contemporary fate of aesthetic experience, which has long been regarded as one of the core concepts of Western aesthetics till the last half century. It has then expanded into an umbrella concept for aesthetic notions such as the sublime and the picturesque. I agree with Shusterman that aesthetic experience has become the island of freedom, beauty, and idealistic meaning in an otherwise cold materialistic

and law-determined world. My paper starts from the main dimensions of aesthetic experience in the history of Western aesthetics as concluded by Shusterman. In terms of our experiential practices in the fragmentation of modern life and the disjointed sensationalism of the media, I also agree with Shusterman that people are losing the capacity for deep experience and feeling, especially when we are undergoing various extensive series of informational revolutions. My paper is also a response to Shusterman's claim that the concept of aesthetic experience is worth recalling, not for formal definition but for art's reorientation toward values and populations that could restore its vitality and sense of purpose. I mention the recent calls for values and life concerns in art in the Anglo-American aesthetics circles, which has also turned to the possible strength of aesthetic experience, claiming that "Aesthetics is the Mother of Ethics." Amidst the discourse is the review of John Dewey's notion of "aesthetic experience," which claims to support a transcultural view and common patterns, as the relationship is structured around human needs. A basic question posed in the article is whether this Deweyan notion still remains equally influential as in the past and whether it really provides a satisfying answer to the problem of art and value? The discussion will turn then to neo-Confucian aesthetic models for reference, and to point out some meaningful comparative revelations.

Eva Kit Wah Man

Premisliti umetnost in vrednote: primerjalno razkritje izvora estetskega izkustva (z neokonfucijanskega gledišča)

Ključne besede: *estetsko izkustvo, etika, fizična prilagoditev, izpopolnjenje, izpolnjenje, intelektualna intuicija*

V svojem članku »Konec estetskega izkustva« (1997) Richard Shusterman preučuje sodobno usodo estetskega izkustva, ki so ga dolgo časa, vse do zadnje polovice stoletja, imeli za enega ključnih pojmov zahodne estetike. Nato se je razširil v pojem, ki je predstavljal nekakšen dežnik za estetske pojme, kot sta sublimno in slikovito. S Shustermanom se sama strinjam, da je estetsko izkustvo postalo otok svobode, lepote in idealističnega pomena v sicer hladnem, materialističnem in z zakoni določenem svetu. Moj prispevek izhaja iz glavnih razsežnosti estetskega izkustva v zgodovini zahodne estetike, kakor sklene Shusterman. Upoštevaje naše eksperimentalne prakse v fragmentaciji sodobnega življenja in razkosani senzacionalizem medijev, se s Shustermanom tudi strinjam, da ljudje izgubljajo zmožnosti za globlje izkustvo in občutek, še zlasti tedaj, ko prestajamo razne ekstenzivne nize informacijskih revolucij. Moj prispevek predstavlja tudi odgovor na Shustermanovo trditev, da je vredno obuditi spomin na pojem estetskega izkustva, ne toliko zaradi formalne definicije, temveč zaradi preusmeritve umetnosti k vrednotam in populacijam, ki bi lahko obnovile njeno vitalnost in smisel. Omenjam nedavne zahteve po vrednotah in bolj življenjskih zadevah v umetnosti v angloameriških estetskih krogih, ki so odkrile tudi možno moč estetskega izkustva, pri čemer sama trdim, da je »estetika mati etike«. Nekje na sredi prispevka se nahaja prikaz pojma »estetskega izkustva«, kot ga je vpeljal John Dewey, ki naj bi podpiral transkulturno gledišče in skupne vzorce, kolikor se razmerje strukturira okoli človeških potreb. Osnovno vprašanje, ki ga postavljam v članku, je, ali ta deweyjevski pojem ostaja še vedno enako vpliven kot v preteklosti in ali zares ponuja zadovoljiv odgovor na problem umetnosti in vrednot? V nadaljevanju razpravljam o neokonfucijanskih estetiških modelih kot referenci in izpostavljam pomembna primerjalna razkritja.

Richard M. Shusterman
Somaesthetics and the Revival of Aesthetics
Key words: *somaesthetics, body, mind, pragmatism, Feldenkrais Method, nondiscursive experience, cultural critique*

This paper examines the ten-year history of somaesthetics – describing the field's origins and genealogical roots, explaining its terminology, analyzing its structure, tracing its reception, exploring its most interesting applications, and responding to the most important criticisms that have been directed at it. Somaesthetics, as the paper shows, emerges from the framework of my work in pragmatist aesthetics which sought to revive aesthetics by bringing art closer to life and bridging the presumed divide between the aesthetic and the practical while also advocating an idea of ethics as an art of living. One way to bring more life to aesthetics is to emphasize the role of the living body in art and aesthetic experience. Another strategy of revival is to expand the field of aesthetics to make it more relevant to more people by including practices of somatic stylization and enhanced somatic perception (*aisthesis*). Somaesthetics, a discipline of both theory and practice, deploys these means of revival, and seems to have had some positive influence. It has been applied by diverse authors in many different fields – from performance art and computer design, to sports, feminist issues of identity, and the use of technological body enhancements in the art of living.
The three main branches of somaesthetics are introduced, and the complex structure of the field is used in refuting some of the typical criticisms made against it. Somaesthetics is not a blanket apology for the dangerous excesses of our body culture, but rather a site for the ideological critique of the dominant somatic ideals. Its interest in the body is not a celebration of irrationality or the abandoning of critical reflection.

Richard M. Shusterman
Somaestetika in preporod estetike
Ključne besede: *somaestetika, telo, duh, pragmatizem, Feldenkraisova metoda, nediskurzivno izkustvo, kulturna kritika*

Prispevek preučuje desetletno zgodovino somaestetike – opisuje izvore tega polja in njegove genealoške korenine, pojasnjuje njegovo terminologijo, analizira strukturo, sledi recepciji, raziskuje najzanimivejše aplikacije in odgovarja na najpomembnejše kritike. Somaestetika je nastopila, kot pokažemo v članku, v okviru mojega dela v pragmatistični estetiki, ki je skušalo obnoviti estetiko prek približevanja umetnosti življenju in premostiti domnevno delitev na estetsko in praktično, pri čemer se je zavzemalo tudi za idejo o etiki kot umetnosti življenja. En način, da v estetiko vnesemo več življenja, je ta, da poudarimo vlogo živega telesa v umetnosti in v estetskem izkustvu. Druga strategija preporoda je razširiti polje estetike, da bi ga naredili relevantnejšega za večje število ljudi, tako da vključimo prakse somatske stilizacije in povečane somatske percepcije (*aisthesis*). Somaestetika, disciplina tako teorije kot prakse, razvija ta sredstva preporoda in videti je, da ima določen pozitiven vpliv. Številni avtorji so jo aplicirali na mnoga različna področja – od umetnosti performansa in računalniškega oblikovanja do športa, feminističnih vprašanj identitete in rabe tehnoloških telesnih izboljšav v umetnosti življenja.
Vpeljem tri glavne veje somaestetike, kompleksno strukturo polja pa uporabim pri ovržbi nekaterih značilnih kritik, ki so bile usmerjene proti njej. Somaestetika ni

počezna apologija, ki bi opravičevala nevarne ekscese naše kulture telesa, temveč prej mesto za ideološko kritiko vladajočih somatičnih idealov. Njeno zanimanje za telo ni slavljenje iracionalnosti ali opustitev kritične refleksije.

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Arnold Berleant
"A Rose by Any Other Name"
Key words: *aesthetic engagement, aesthetic experience, aesthetic inquiry, aesthetic understanding, appreciation, negative aesthetics*

This is an essay on the tasks and capacities of aesthetic theory and the pitfalls that beset it. I want to show that aesthetics can be enlightening by revealing and studying the facets and dimensions of experiences we call aesthetic, experience that is expansive and revelatory. This kind of experience can also clarify the relation of aesthetics to other areas of knowledge, such as cultural studies, and conversely, the bearing of other disciplines on our aesthetic understanding. Aesthetic theory, however, is easily caught up in secondary, unproductive, and false issues, and these are what gives this essay its title. What is important, I want to argue, is not what we label beautiful or call art but where we find the kind of value experiences traditionally associated with appreciating beauty, natural and artistic, and how we can enhance and develop such experiences. However, this also requires recognizing the converse of such values in the loss, the negation, the desecration of this mode of experience. I conclude by proposing a larger philosophical role for aesthetics.

Arnold Berleant
»Vrtnica katerega koli drugega imena«
Ključne besede: *estetski angažma, estetsko izkustvo, estetsko raziskovanje, estetsko razumevanje, presoja, negativna estetika*

Gre za esej o nalogah in zmožnostih estetske teorije ter o nevarnostih, ki prežijo nanjo. Skušam pokazati, da je estetika lahko poučna, ko odkriva in preučuje površine ter razsežnosti izkustev, ki jih imenujemo estetska, gre pa za izkustvo, ki je ekspanzivno in razodevajoče. Ta vrsta izkustva lahko tudi pojasni odnos estetike do drugih področij vednosti, kot so kulturne študije, in obratno, vpliv, ki ga imajo druge discipline na naše estetsko razumevanje. Vendar pa se tudi estetska teorija zlahka ujame v sekundarna, neproduktivna in napačna vprašanja, po teh pa smo poimenovali pričujoči esej. Poudariti skušam, da ni pomembno tisto, kar etiketiramo kot lepo ali kar imenujemo umetnost, temveč tisto, v čemer najdemo izkustva vrednot, ki se jih tradicionalno povezuje s cenjenjem lepote, naravnega in umetniškega, in kako lahko povečamo in razvijemo takšna izkustva. Toda tudi to zahteva prepoznanje nasprotja takšnih vrednot v izgubi, negaciji ali onečaščenju tega načina izkustva. Sklenem s predlogom o večji filozofski vlogi estetike.

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Anthony J. Cascardi
The Implication of Images in the Revival of Aesthetics
Key words: *image, iconoclasm, production, Platonism*

Contemporary aesthetic theory is embedded in a culture dominated by images, and so would seem to require a reversal of Plato's critique of image-making. In adopting this stance, aesthetic theory follows in the footsteps of Nietzsche, whose own project was conceived as a reversal of Platonism. But the critique of Plato that underpins these views is based on a tradition that has misconstrued some of Plato's fundamental ideas. For this reason, the standard critique of Platonism is ineffective as a critical response to the culture of images. Aesthetic theory needs instead to produce a critique of the contemporary image-world based on the view that it emerges from a transformation in the paradigm of production. Images are no longer merely a part of the world that is produced, but themselves have a crucial role in the process of production.

Anthony J. Cascardi
Posledica podob v preporodu estetike
Ključne besede: *podoba, ikonoklazem, produkcija, platonizem*

Sodobna estetska teorija je zasidrana v kulturi, ki ji vladajo podobe, zato je videti, da potrebuje sprevrnitev Platonove kritike izdelovanja podob. Pri privzemanju tega stališča sledi estetska teorija Nietzschejevim stopinjam, čigar lastni projekt je bil zamišljen kot sprevrnitev platonizma. Toda kritika Platona, ki podpira ta stališča, temelji na tradiciji, ki je napačno razlagala nekatere Platonove osnovne ideje. Iz tega razloga je standardna kritika platonizma kot kritični odgovor na kulturo podob neučinkovita. Estetska teorija mora namesto tega proizvesti kritiko sodobnega sveta podobe, ki temelji na gledišču, da ta nastopa kot transformacija paradigme produkcije. Podobe niso več zgolj del sveta, ki je produciran, temveč imajo same ključno vlogo v procesu produkcije.

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Devin Zane Shaw
Inaesthetics and Truth: The Debate between Alain Badiou and Jacques Rancière
Key words: *Badiou, Rancière, inaesthetics, aesthetics, event*

In this essay I attempt to defend Badiou's conception of inaesthetics, drawn from the *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, from the pertinent criticisms of Rancière. In doing so, it is possible to delimit the intra-philosophical effects (truth effects) of artistic events (this combination being the domain of inaesthetics). Badiou can be defended from all of Rancière's objections, save the objection that inaesthetics asserts a 'propriety of art.' However, in granting this objection, it is possible to open a different question regarding Badiou's work: what is the status of Badiou's comments on art outside of the *Handbook of Inaesthetics*? Through a reading of *Le siècle*, I show that, for Badiou, the importance of art extends beyond inaesthetics to other domains of thought. Yet Badiou has yet to answer the question of how art and truth relate outside of the domain of inaesthetics.

Devin Zane Shaw
Inestetika in resnica: razprava med Alainom Badioujem in Jacquesom Rancièrom
Ključne besede: *Badiou, Rancière, inestetika, estetika, dogodek*

V pričujočem prispevku skušam braniti Badioujevo pojmovanje inestetike, zasnovano v *Malem priročniku o inestetiki*, pred Rancièrovimi pertinentnimi kritikami. Pri tem je mogoče razmejiti znotrajfilozofske učinke (učinke resnice) od umetniških dogodkov (ta povezava predstavlja področje inestetike). Badiouja lahko uspešno ubranimo pred vsemi Rancièrovimi ugovori, razen pred ugovorom, da inestetika zahteva »ustreznost umetnosti«. Kljub temu da sami menimo, da gre za upravičen ugovor, pa je možno odpreti tudi drugačno vprašanje glede Badioujevega dela: kakšen je status Badioujevih pripomb o umetnosti v *Malem priročniku o inestetiki*? Prek branja Badioujevega dela *20. stoletje* pokažemo, da za Badiouja pomembnost umetnosti sega onstran inestetike na druga področja misli. Toda Badiou mora šele odgovoriti na vprašanje, v kakšnem razmerju sta umetnost in resnica zunaj področja inestetike.

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Gao Jianping
The Stories of Four Words
Key words: *Party literature, imaged thought, subjectivity, ontology*

In the paper I trace the histories of four terms. All four words were originally translated from western languages or Russian, but have attained new meanings in China. The first is the "principle of the Party literature," an expression made by V. I. Lenin, which remained influential in China for a very long time. The change in its translation to the "principle of Party publication" eventually became a part of the ideological liberation of the early 1980s. The second is "imaged thought." This term enabled Chinese literature to separate itself from the political ideology after the Cultural Revolution. The third is "subjectivity," a term originally translated as *zhuguanxing*, and then as *zhutixing*, which in the ears of Chinese philosophers substantially changed from a term with a negative sense, to one with a positive sense, and which paved the way for a philosophical revolution in China. The fourth is "ontology". The Chinese mixed the ontology criticized by Kant with the doctrine of noumena implied by Kant's philosophy, with ontology thus gaining its special meanings in Chinese philosophy and aesthetics. By presenting the histories of four terms, the author attempts to demonstrate how one and the same term can be ascribed different meanings in different cultures, and how it undergoes specific changes and historical transformations.

Gao Jianping
Zgodbe štirih besed
Ključne besede: *partijska literatura, upodobljena misel, subjektivnost, ontologija*

V prispevku sledim zgodbam/zgodovinam štirih terminov. Vse štiri besede izvorno predstavljajo prevod iz zahodnih jezikov ali iz ruščine v kitajščino, a so na Kitajskem dobile nove pomene. Prva je »načelo partijske literature«, Leninov izraz, ki je ostal na Kitajskem zelo dolgo vpliven. S spremembo v prevodu v »načelo partijske objave« je ta izraz sčasoma postal del ideološke liberalizacije v zgodnjih osemdesetih letih

prejšnjega stoletja. Druga beseda je »zamišljena misel«. Ta termin je kitajski literaturi omogočil, da se je po kitajski kulturni revoluciji ločila od politične ideologije. Tretji termin, »subjektivnost«, ki je bil izvorno preveden kot *zhuguanxing*, potem pa kot *zhutixing*, ki za ušesa kitajskih filozofov predstavlja bistveno spremembo od termina z negativnim k terminu s pozitivnim pomenom, je tlakoval pot za filozofsko revolucijo na Kitajskem. Četrta beseda je »ontologija«. Kitajci so med seboj pomešali ontologijo, ki jo je Kant kritiziral z naukom o noumena, ki ga je implicirala Kantova filozofija, tako da je ontologija v kitajski filozofiji in estetiki dobila posebne pomene. S predstavitvijo zgodb/zgodovin skuša avtor pokazati, kako lahko enemu in istemu terminu pripišemo različne pomene v različnih kulturah in kako lahko nek termin utrpi specifične spremembe in zgodovinske transformacije.

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Ken'ichi Iwaki

A Viewpoint of Painting? On a Problematic Theory of Computational Psychology

Key words: *Kiyoshi Miki, the history of fact, institution and myth, philosophy of organism, viewpoint(s) on painting, geometric perspective, computational psychology*

The general understanding of pictorial representation as constructed through the viewpoint of the artist outside the picture space is mediated through our present-day familiarity with geometric perspective and photography. This presumes the existence of an external viewpoint. This understanding of painting has become common sense. In this way a 'historical product' has been taken as an 'a-historical essence' of our understanding. Even now, many theories on painting seem to remain caught in such a essentialist thinking. In this paper I discuss the problem of essentialist thinking, basing my views on the philosophy of Kiyoshi Miki, one of the important philosophers of the 'Kyoto School', and then reexamine the belief in the existence of viewpoints *outside* of painting.

Ken'ichi Iwaki

Gledišče o slikarstvu? O problematični teoriji komputacijske psihologije

Ključne besede: *Kiyoshi Miki, zgodovina dejstva, institucija in mit, filozofija organizma, gledišče/gledišča o slikarstvu, geometrična perspektiva, komputacijska psihologija*

Splošno razumevanje slikovne reprezentacije kot konstruirane skozi gledišče umetnika zunaj prostora slike je posredovano z našo vsakdanjo domačnostjo z geometrično perspektivo in fotografijo. To predpostavlja obstoj zunanjega gledišča. Tako razumevanje slikarstva je postalo zdravi razum. Na ta način je bil »zgodovinski produkt« vzet kot ahistorično bistvo našega razumevanja. Celo sedaj je videti, da so mnoge teorije slikarstva ujete v takšno esencialistično mišljenje. V tekstu razpravljam o problemu esencialističnega mišljenja, pri čemer svoje poglede utemeljujem s filozofijo Kiyoshija Mikija, enega izmed pomembnih filozofov »kjotske šole«, potem pa se ponovno lotevam preučevanja prepričanja o obstoju gledišč *zunaj* slikarstva.

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Patrick D. Flores
"Nature intervenes in strokes": Sensing the End of the Colony and the Origin of the Aesthetic
Key words: *post-colonial, sublime, Philippines, origin, painting*

The essay attempts to offer an alternative genealogy of aesthetics from the perspective of a post-colonial history. Here a painting from the Philippines, Juan Luna's *Spoliarium* (1884), is reworked to offer insights into this possible operation that exceeds the typical methods of relativization and the exclusively nationalist anti-colonial critique. It focuses on both art and the discourse about it, including the oration of the National Hero Jose Rizal, and how these intersect with the end of the colony and the compelling emergence of the aesthetic in eccentric grounds.

Patrick D. Flores
»Narava intervenira sunkovito«: čutiti konec kolonije in izvor estetike
Ključne besede: *postkolonialno, sublimno, Filipini, izvor, slikarstvo*

Esej skuša ponuditi alternativo genealogiji estetike s perspektive postkolonialne zgodovine. S pomočjo razlage slike s Filipinov, *Spoliarium* (1884) Juana Lune, skušamo priti do uvidov v možno operacijo, ki presega značilne metode relativizacije in izključno nacionalistične antikolonialne kritike. Osredotočamo se tako na umetnost kot na govor o njej, vključno s slavnostnim govorom narodnega junaka Joseja Rizala, obenem pa nas zanima, kako se to križa s koncem kolonije in očarljivim vznikom estetskega na nenavadnih tleh.

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Tyrus Miller
Retro-Avant-Garde: Aesthetic Revival and the Con/Figuration of Twentieth-Century Time
Key words: *avant-garde, retro-avant-garde, modern, postmodern, figure, time image, historiography, periodizing concepts, Paul de Man, Gilles Deleuze*

The concept of retro-avant-garde was first advanced by artists working in the late socialist and post-socialist contexts of Eastern Europe, Central Europe, and the territories of the ex-Yugoslavia. In general, its semantic field has been defined by a range of post-modern and mostly post-socialist art practices that draw formal, philosophical, and social inspiration from the politicized, powerfully utopian avant-gardes of the early decades of the twentieth-century, especially in the USSR and East-Central Europe. However, its paradoxical reference forward and backward in time highlights the temporal dimensions of period concepts such as modernity, postmodernity, and avant-garde in ways that make retro-avant-garde worthy of theoretical reflection. I explore the nature of period concepts, which serve not only as historical metrics, but also as designations of basic characteristics of historicity, the configuration of the dimensions of past, present, and future in a given historical context and the limits and possibilities of historical experience and representation. I go on to explore the applicability to historiography of Gilles Deleuze's distinction, developed in his cinema theory, between "movement images" and "time images." In the case of historical thought, the distinction lies in whether the representation of

time is thought to be a function of historical change or, on the contrary, whether the representation of historical change is qualified by the mode of time. I conclude by suggesting that if the avant-garde has primarily been conceptualized under the figure of "movement," retro-avant-garde reveals the degree to which classical avantgardism was dependent on an image of time: time itself as material to be artistically crafted and shaped into an historical experience appropriate to the modern age.

Tyrus Miller

Retroavantgarda: estetski preporod in kon/figuracija časa dvajsetega stoletja

Ključne besede: *avantgarda, retroavantgarda, moderna, postmoderna, figura, podoba čas, historiografija, periodizirajoči pojmi, Paul de Man, Gilles Deleuze*

Pojem retroavantgarde so najprej predlagali umetniki, ki so ustvarjali v poznem socializmu in v postsocialističnih kontekstih Vzhodne in Srednje Evrope ter ozemelj nekdanje Jugoslavije. Na splošno je njeno semantično polje definiral niz postmodernih in večinoma postsocialističnih umetniških praks, ki so se formalno, filozofsko in družbeno navdihovale pri politiziranih, močno utopičnih avantgardah zgodnjih desetletij dvajsetega stoletja, zlasti v ZSSR in vzhodno-srednji Evropi. Vendar pa paradoksna referenca naprej in nazaj v času poudarja časovne razsežnosti pojmov, ki opredeljujejo neko obdobje, kot so modernost, postmodernost in avantgarda, na načine, zaradi katerih je retroavantgarda vredna teoretskega premisleka. Raziskujem naravo obdobnih pojmov, ki ne služijo le kot zgodovinska metrika, temveč tudi kot označbe osnovnih značilnosti zgodovinskosti, konfiguracijo razsežnosti preteklosti, sedanjosti in prihodnosti v danem zgodovinskem kontekstu ter meje in možnosti zgodovinskega izkustva in reprezentacije. V nadaljevanju me zanima aplikabilnost razlikovanja, ki ga je vpeljal Gilles Deleuze ter razvil v svoji teoriji filma, med »podobami gibanjem« in »podobami časa«, na historiografijo. V primeru zgodovinske misli se razlikovanje nahaja v tem, ali ima reprezentacija časa za funkcijo zgodovinske spremembe, ali pa, nasprotno, reprezentacijo zgodovinske spremembe določa način časa. Sklenem s predlogom, da če je bila avantgarda primarno konceptualizirana pod figuro »gibanja«, retroavantgarda razkriva stopnjo, do katere je bil klasičen avantgardizem odvisen od podobe časa: čas sam kot material, ki naj bi ga umetniško predelali in izoblikovali v zgodovinsko izkustvo, ki ustreza moderni dobi.