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ART INSPIRING TRANSMUTATIONS OF LIFE

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ART INSPIRING TRANSMUTATIONS OF LIFE

Edited by

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Siena College

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The present collection gathers selected studies from three international conferences of the International Society of Phenomenology, the Fine Arts, and Aesthetics: our 12th Annual Conference: *The Artist's Account and the Philosopher's Interpretation*, May 18 and 19, 2007; 13th Annual Conference: *The Artist and the Message—Creativity and Communication*, May 7 and 8, 2008; and 14th Annual Conference: *Originality in Artistic Creation: The Creative Process, Aesthetic Value, The Cultural Role of Art, Metaphysical Significance*, May 14 and 15, 2009. The conferences were held respectively at the Harvard Divinity School (2007) and Radcliffe Gymnasium (2008 and 2009). Their intertwined themes suggested a joint collection enhancing their common orientation under the theme “ART INSPIRING TRANSMUTATIONS OF LIFE”.

Our authors are to be thanked, first of all, for their faithful efforts and precious collaboration.

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INAUGURAL STUDY

THE *PAS DE DEUX*: WEAVING THOUGHT AND ACT

For Tom

How do you know when the work is done?

My answer is always: When the conversation ends.

Peggy Wyman

ABSTRACT

In this essay, two metaphors evoke Anna-Teresa Tymmieniecka's philosophy: weaving and the *pas de deux*. To demonstrate two of her arguments, we look to the works of two contemporary artists who weave nature's leftover materials. Peggy Wyman's cooperates with her materials, allowing the fibers to stretch in all directions and into all dimensions, partner dancing with them. Patrick Dougherty's stick works point to the second Tymmienieckan thesis, that creativity is not tied to consciousness or intentional acts, but to enjoyment. Enjoyment is not a matter of surrendering to the other, as Moritz Geiger posits. The fact is that free from care/intention, we encounter our true selves. We come to life.

A mark of Leonardo da Vinci's genius is that he was able to visualize a description, to conjure the image of a text, as he does in his famed drawing of Vitruvius' description of the perfection of the human body (Venice, Accademia). When it came to drawings from nature, Leonardo attempted an even greater ideal, to capture not only the appearance of nature, but its life force, as he did with the *Star of Bethlehem* drawing (Royal Library, Windsor) in which the leaves whorl, not as they would appear in a photograph, but to give the sense of the plant's energy, its *chi*.

Finding the analogies between Leonardo's drawings and their sources has been one of the joys of my scholarly life. It is only natural then that, since I have worked with the World Phenomenology Institute,¹ I have been much concerned with imaging powerful analogies for philosophic thought, especially Anna Teresa Tymmieniecka's. So a number of my papers are categorized as

“Visualizations.” Please note that I am not trying to find illustrations but works of art that sing the same song as the philosopher.

This study is another such exploration. Its topic is inspired by the theme of the conference, its subject by surprise laid before me in Phoenix in February 2007, and, its method encouraged by Professor Tymieniecka’s own open-hearted transdisciplinary processes. My discussion begins and ends in the first volume of her *Logos and Life* because that’s where the works of art led me. In a way, though, I will end as I begin – like Professor Tymieniecka who returns to certain themes again and again, each time gathering in new inferences, enlarging the scope organically. Her work is about working it out, thinking and living it through. It’s about process *through process*. Indeed Olga Louchakova calls Tymienieckan phenomenology, *process phenomenology*.

And so my own presentation here is also about process, about discovering relationships, about uncovering the discovering; its title about connecting, intersecting, and collaborating. The metaphors are multiple (but not mixed) because that is what I found. The texts I present act to disclose the sense of the artworks, like the male dancer in the *pas de deux* stabilizes and at the same time reveals the movement of his partner. The reverse is also true: the artwork discloses the revelations of the text.

There is another way to see the relationship: the critic is the stabilizing dancer who reveals the relationships between word and image, who beckons the beholder to witness their harmony. To fully envision the *pas de deux* I propose, however, a little backstory is necessary. And that backstory is about my own process of understanding. So I need to backtrack to explain how I got into this.

It’s Gary Backhaus’ fault. I found, in a paper I struggled with at his behest, that my analogy of Tymieniecka’s complexity to tapestry was both inadequate and inappropriate because it only dealt with surface effects and not with structure and technique. Let me explain. The common type of weaving, on a loom, is inadequate as an analogy to Tymieniecka’s thought because its boundaries and framework are fixed and its fabric is made through linear progress. Loom weaving then is better suited to a philosophy based on a rigid framework stasis and reason, one that progresses linearly, than it is to Tymieniecka’s open phenomenology of life.

The analogy to tapestry only applies to the elaborate, its brilliant surface pattern, not to its technique which is diametrically opposed to Tymieniecka’s: the technique of tapestry serves to hide the process of its weaving—its color patterns are brilliant because all we see are the colored wefts which are combed in tightly to hide the strong but dull linen of the structuring warp. With Tymieniecka, the method is apparent throughout; we travel on the shuttle, our

eyes on warp, our hands on the weft. Her philosophy, based on a creativity that is not merely rational or sensuous, comprises all modalities, stretching in all directions and into all dimensions. We need a weaving system in a Tymieniecka mode, one in which the warp is not stretched in taut fixity from a quadrangular frame, but rather strung by and from the dynamic forces of life itself. What art form could illustrate the principle of a logico life warp we could come to know through our own lived experience, in and through the shuttling our own becoming?²

INVENTION

The work of two sculptors who work with natural fiber fill the bill: Peggy Wyman's small works and Patrick Dougherty's giants. I met both in Phoenix in February, shortly after my discussions with Gary Backhaus. The timing couldn't have been more perfect. Since both work to invent harmonies of art and nature through their processes, their works will be my key analogies for this discussion.

Let us first summarize one of Tymieniecka's discussions on how invention sets off on its own, taking a distance from our natural function or from Nature.³ In the first chapter, first part of her first book of the *Logos of Life* series, she dwells on invention, especially on its "operational meaning-bestowing specificity" (*LL 1*, p. 121). As an example she compares hearing the sounds of nature to listening to those sounds with a musical attitude. In the first hearing our awareness is attuned to our vital concerns, e.g. danger; in the second listening, however, "on the wings of invention" we leave . . . associative entanglements that tie us down to the earth behind . . . ; we replace them by enchantment with nature. . . . [We become] "disinterested" in the vital cares of the moment. Our sensation [incorporates itself] into a larger experiential complex. At such a turn Art takes off, leaving Nature behind; it is the incipient moment of Art crystallized in a *pre-perceptual* "sensation," Husserl's "pre-sensations" (*LL 1*, p. 122). In an analogy with biological terms, she says, the creative function is a radical mutation responding to pressures of subterranean pre-perceptual "sensation" and specifically human virtualities.

Tymieniecka does not limit her inquiry to merely the "manifestation of evolutionary progress, but on the contrary, seek[s] its *modi operandi*" (*LL 1*, p. 123). Indeed, her gift is to describe as and ascribe to the process of creation "the entire self-interpretive operational system of the living individual-on-the-brink of turning into a specifically human self-construction" (*LL 1*, p. 123). In this way, she shows that the creativity involves a turning away from, indeed a deconstruction of, the life-subservient perception constitutive of

natural phenomena. The creator, then, is free to take new roles within a different constructive system (*LL I*, pp. 122–123).⁴

In some way the fiber artists—and all artists—become one with their materials, move with their appreciation of the materials. But the major radical transformation of the work of art is that the beholder is taken into its unity, as we shall see.

FREE WEAVING

When I saw the free weaving genre of Peggy Wyman at the Mesa Art Center Crafts exhibition, Tymieniecka's process seemed visualized. I immediately contacted the artist and she, just as immediately, wrote to explain the process she uses. Her response was most generous and is offered below—we are fortunate indeed that Wyman is a writer as well as a fiber sculptor (Figure 1). While Wyman does not speak of meaning, it is clear that for her, the meaning of the work lies in the discoveries of the process. Wyman could direct the needles into a functional basket but she takes on a disinterested attitude and allows herself to be open to the enchantment of the natural flow and massing of the material. In rejecting the “vital cares,” the usefulness of what



Figure 1. Peggy Wyman, *One Convoluted Explanation*, the Studio at Casa Cielo

she could make, she turns away from the practical toward the aesthetic, toward the inventive, toward the larger experiential context. Wyman's creative perception is her openness to the rhythms of life and her willingness to weave a dance with that life. Her *modus operandi* reflects her break with function; it allows her to embrace the process of collaboration as an expression of her enchantment with nature. She (p.c.) describes her process and her intention in the following:

I don't use the warp and woof of traditional flat weaving. I begin and end each sculpture in 3 dimensions. Each piece begins with a bundle of pine needles roughly the thickness of a pencil. Then I either wrap the bundle with Irish waxed linen to create a flexible column that I fit around an object—a wood sphere, a branch of manzanita wood, a seashell, a walnut slice, deer antler, purse handle, belt buckle, etc—or I attach the bundle to a piece of gourd or other material in which I've drilled holes (This is called "casting on"). The shape of the object defines the initial shape of the piece but . . . My weaving is analogous to partner dancing. The materials lead and I follow.



Figure 2. Peggy Wyman, weaving in process, *Fascinatin' Rhythm*, the studio at Casa Cielo

Natural materials all have a bias, a direction they want to go. When I add more pine needles into the coil, each one adds its own bias to the mix. And, instead of my forcing the materials to go in some preconceived direction, I just let them run. Also, the bundle itself has a bias, the result of all the individual needles contributing their separate biases.

She speaks metaphorically of her relationship with the work (Figure 2).

As I work on each piece, I am constantly pausing to wait for the piece to tell me to continue the way we've been going or to take off in another direction. I call this having a conversation with the piece. Sometimes these pauses last for a while because the piece doesn't answer. That's when I put it down and pick up another sculpture to work on (I always have 4 or 5 going at a time to address these pauses). Right now, I have two pieces that haven't spoken to me for over a year! This conversation idea is one that applies to every creative endeavor, from what I can gather in talking with various creative types, whether they be painters, sculptors, dancers, writers or actors. It's that "intuition" you referred to (p.c.)

Tymieniecka terms this as having "perceptual glimpses" of the final in the process. She warns that one must not think of the creator as producing an instant new creation. Rather, like the process of "natural or constitutive perception," the creative perception, catches perceptual glimpses that "carry along the process" toward a progressive clarification and an eventual synthesis. Wyman's literary explanation (p.c.) is more illuminating: "All artists get asked 'How do you when the painting/sculpture/choreography/characterization/story is done?' My answer is always: 'When the conversation ends.'"

STICK WORK

Several years ago I explained Leonardo's Mona Lisa as an image of enjoyment, her mind fully functioning, firing, full of activity. My analysis had everything to do with the context in which she found herself, so I attempted to reconstruct her environment.⁵ Today, I would like to take up the topic of enjoyment again, this time using the fiber works of another artist, Patrick Dougherty, as a visualization of Professor Tymieniecka's explanation of enjoyment. First a little background on Patrick Dougherty. His work exemplifies a creative process that begins in nature. Like Wyman, his work embodies the process by which the artist makes art from natural forms, but unlike Wyman, he forms structures of saplings and twigs without man-made threads; rather he uses the fiber's natural movements and holds them together. He uses renewable resources to build his fantasies, and they are true fantasies for they are not meant to last. They will be swept away in a year when they start to degrade.

Dougherty addressed some of the reasons for his work in a number of interviews. We'll look at them first, even though he made them up after he invented

his process, his works. After hearing his arguments for their meaning we will enter the works not as a product but as a process.

Dougherty is concerned that we have lost our sense of wilderness, that we all “view nature through a man-made window.” Critics have remarked that his work plays on the edge of form and chaos, that it is all open, natural and fluid.

At the turn of the last century people read Herman Melville and Joseph Conrad and felt a righteousness about trying to dominate and control the forces of nature be they beast, tangled forest or weather. Natural resources were maidens-in-waiting for personal and industrial use. Perhaps my sculptures embody “nature” trying to creep out of the backyard and slip into the woods.⁶

Dougherty defies the tradition of garden sculpture, saying:

It seems like humans have to continuously struggle with ideas about nature and redefine our relationship with the natural world. Domesticated gardens versus the wilderness are part of a worldwide discussion and part of my (our) inner conflict. Certainly gardens are a kind of rendition of the unfettered wilds. Shrubs, trees, flowers and grass become commodities and are forced into human geometry. I try to free the surfaces of my work using sticks as a drawing material, work them in such a way they look like they are escaping those chains of being planted in a row. I imagine that the wilderness lurks inside my forms and that it is an irrepressible urge.⁷

He started this sort of work in places where human activity seems to merge with the wild natural forces. He uses local natural renewable materials, employs cadres of local volunteers and develops the motif from sketches, but also in response to what the saplings will do. Miriam Stanton tells us that while he aims for pointed responses,

the pieces are often actually “happenstance” —the result of an interaction between spaces, materials, and ideas. The artist *does* often begin with a loose idea or inspiration in mind, but its form bends along with the branches of which the work is created. Dougherty’s sculptures are an exercise in awareness: the materials, the site, and the workers who create the piece all offer specific voices, needs, and possibilities. An effective final product, then, acts as visual evidence of the *process* by which all these voices were melded together.⁸

I would have preferred woven together, but then Stanton’s “melded” does provide a less structured sense of the construction, and a foretaste of the inevitable unison of entropy.

We have just examined published accounts of Dougherty’s way of working, his ideas and goals. Now I would like to look at the images of Dougherty’s stick works as visualizations of Tymieniecka’s discussions of the creative imagination, the creative process, and the creative response of enjoyment. I hope that the images weave themselves into the text, and that text and image work together as a *pas de deux*.

The setting is the Desert Botanical Garden in Phoenix, February 2007. Patrick Dougherty has woven what seem to be five giant tumbleweeds from

native sticks into an installation he entitles *Line Logic* (the title echoes in this essay). We enter the Dougherty's world through a camera, taking a journey into a new womb that opens its processes to our eyes.

We will move through haltingly, catching “perceptual glimpses” that sample our transit. Entering “we leave, on the wings of invention, . . . associative entanglements . . . ; we replace them by enchantment with nature. . . . [and become] “disinterested” in the vital cares of the moment. . . . Our sensation [incorporates itself] into a larger experiential complex. . . . Art takes off, leaving Nature behind in the incipient moment . . . [of] *pre-perceptual “sensation”* (Figure 3).

The woven womb provides us a way of undergoing Tymieniecka's “originary experience” of creative perception, which she characterizes in the following ways.

- It is here that primordial ties coalesce into a new pattern, a new operating scheme. In the context of this new creation our constitutive operations tentatively bind elemental factors together in a new framework (Figure 4).
- It is here that a new mode of operation projects a novel aim, to introduce a new form into the lifeworld.



Figure 3. Patrick Dougherty's *Line Logic*, Phoenix, Desert Botanical Garden, 2007. Photo: Veronica Koss



Figure 4. Patrick Dougherty, *Line Logic*, detail. Photo: author

- It is here that it searches, for its own construction, for its building elements.
- It is in doing so that it even seeks new criteria of choice; and it chooses its own operating regulations (Kathleen Haney remarks, p.c., that it must be if creation is a dialogue).
- It is in this instance that the novel orchestration shows that it progresses in a flexible state, free, ready to be unbound and bound anew by different ties. (*LL 1*, pp. 350–352)

Dougherty's sticks envelop us in the fragile sensibility of the creative process. We listen to the sticks, we drink them up and absorb them. We enjoy them (Figure 5).

THE FREEDOM OF ENJOYMENT

Unlike the creative process that seeks to dissociate, distance itself from the cares of the world, to turn off the blare of daily life, enjoyment tunes us into a new liberating station. We do not seek to control enjoyment but rather to draw on it. Moritz Geiger maintains that enjoyment is tied to the other, the object of



Figure 5. Patrick Dougherty's *Line Logic*, looking through into the desert. Photo: author

our enjoyment: for him enjoyment is an “arousing of the self in which the self reacts to what flows into it. We are not distant observers conscious of ourselves enjoying [as when we analyze the Mona Lisa’s expression of enjoyment], nor are we engaged in the action of its making. The object takes possession of us. We take it in and delight in its fullness” (*LL 1*, p. 410).

For Tymieniecka, however, enjoyment is not bound to the object, rather, it is uniquely subjective. She refuses to tie enjoyment to intention, because the poetic sense is not of the order of consciousness. Enjoyment is ours; it is in our acts, not in our consciousness (Figure 6).

“Intentional acts, which are ‘purified’ in the phenomenological perspective” [that is, bracketed] from their experiential embodiment, manifest intentional order. In contrast the left-over—what might be thought of as formless—*experiential pulp* (like Dougherty’s sticks) that leftover manifests in *its* complex net of intermotivations, various types of human functioning—not evident in consciousness or intentionality.⁹ That leftover establishes and carries on the continuity of the living self (*LL 1*, p. 413).

- Such concrete experiential pulp of sensing, feeling and emotive stirrings is “conscious” not in virtue of its rational order, but *in virtue of the enjoyment*



Figure 6. PT-C inside Patrick Dougherty's *Line Logic*. Photo: author

of the activities, the processes, the acts within which the self appears. And the self appears as the one who enjoys.

- It is *in virtue of the enjoyment in the acts* that the subject centers, that it is in relevant relation even to the remotest simplest feelings. The experience becomes his own, uniquely specific to himself while remaining accessible to other subjects as well.

And so, we see that *the self lives in acts*. And these acts rise from the experiential pulp on which we enact a new unity and order. *We ourselves* come to life from our actions on the useless leftovers (*LL 1*, p. 414).

Now the self does not control the spread of the references of enjoyment, rather it dwells in what Tymieniecka envisions as a “fountain of enjoyment” from which the self-centered acts stream—or bursts forth. However it is not responsible for the quality, determination or the emergence of the acts. It does participate directly or remotely in the life of the acts and it represents the unity of their actions. As the self reaches out into the experiential pulp, it “clads” itself in the qualitative nature of the actual and in the virtual content of the acts. And so, this fountain is the core of the conscious network. Yet basically, it is not the qualitative feature of the content, nor the ordering proficiency, nor anything other than the enjoyment of the acts, which makes the self “alive.” In

the enjoyment of the acts the self unites in one¹⁰ living system singular acts past, present and virtual (*LL 1*, p. 414).

No matter how diversified and isolated our singular acts may be, our enjoyment of acts unifies them, filling out all the crevasses of the structure and all the discontinuities. “Enjoyment penetrates all of them in various degrees of intensity, vigor, etc, and yet carries on a continuing line of life,” The logic of Dougherty’s *Line Logic* is that it sustains the self *and brings it to life*. “The self thus opens upon a *vis viva*, a living power, by which it feels itself alive” (*LL 1*, p. 414, thus, as Haney (p.c.) notes, answering the riddle of the purpose of art.

Enjoyment, then,

- is the thread of life-experience of being alive,
- the life reverberation effected by the acts, and
- the *filum Ariadne* of the labyrinth of the life of the self, totally different from the nature of the acts (*LL 1*, p. 415).

Enjoying as the function of the subject is a retreating, self-reposing state of the subject, who quivers in and with enjoyment. It permeates all subjective functions. The subject reposes in itself in the “enjoyment” of the acts which *eo ipso* becomes its own. In its self-consuming nature, enjoying draws all the experiential tentacles which the subject extends into the life world unto the subject itself. In enjoyment the subject exults in all its operations; it comes into its own, it is self-absorbed. In enjoyment we find our own innermost foothold; we are the ones who live (*LL 1*, p. 415).

For me, this is Tymieniecka at her most poignant. It is also where the creator becomes most vulnerable. And so, it is just the right spot to end—and to begin anew—our tango,¹¹ that most sublimely earthbound of *pas de deux*.

NOTES

¹ I am grateful to Ellen Burns, Kathleen Haney, Veronica Koss, Olga Louchakova, Nancy Mardas and Maureen Callahan Schmid for their suggestions and for their society.

² Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, *Logos and Life: Creative Experience and the Critique of Reason, Book 1*. (Dordrecht, Boston, London, Tokyo: Kluwer, 1988), hereafter cited in text as *LL 1*.

³ Praising the intuition that invention is a function of life’s progress through adaptations to circumstance of Henri Bergson and psychologist Maurice Paradine, (Paradine’s *Traité de Psychologie*, Paris: Presses Universitaire de France, 1943–1956). She goes beyond “the rules set by the vital significance of life” (*LL 1*, p. 121).

⁴ Such a radical mutation brings Jiddu Krishnamurti to mind.

One’s uniqueness as a human being lies in the complete freedom from the content of one’s consciousness which is common to all mankind (so he is not an individual) . . . When man becomes aware of the movement of his own thoughts, he will see the division between the thinker and thought, the observer and the observed, the experiencer and the experience. He will discover that

this division is an illusion. Then only is there pure observation which is insight without any shadow of the past or of time. This timeless insight brings about a deep, radical mutation in the mind (<http://www.jkrishnamurti.org/About> J. Krishnamurti).

Olga Louchakova (p.c.) warns that while Tymieniecka's mutation is meant to free the mind, Krishnamurti's would transcend the mind, directed as it is to the act of witness, basic to spiritual ascent. And further: "This is the stage when it seems that the conscious subject is different from the objects of awareness. Then, it gets transcended into the condition in which the subject and object appear as one. I doubt it is in Husserl's thought—both are the radical mutations of the mind, but they go in different directions. Husserl does not point to oneness, his phenomenological or aesthetic attitude—whatever is the way to call the witnessing—leads to a discrimination between the reflective and pre-reflective, 'pre-sensations' forms of thought, not to transcending subject-object divisions."

⁵ "Leonardo's Enchantress," *The Aesthetics of Enchantment in the Fine Arts, Analecta Husserliana*, 65 (2000), pp. 85–99.

⁶ J.K Grande, *An Interview with Patrick Dougherty, Artfocus/70* (Winter 2001) reprinted at <http://www.artfocus.com/yardworking.html>.

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ Miriam Stanton '05 Updated 2006, <http://web.grinnell.edu/faulconergallery/CampusArt/dougherty.htm>.

⁹ For Kathleen Haney "the emphasis on the functioning of what we loosely refer to as the objective" works very well because it "gives the theses of realism credit, without falling into substantial metaphysics" (p.c.)

¹⁰ Olga Louchakova (p.c.) reminds us that early systems of Taoism and Zen Buddhism would return us to pre-reflexive thought, to the encounter of things as they are. In Vedanta, the constructed self is transcended; "the bliss of the self is reflected in the mind whose desires are completely fulfilled, or temporarily ceased, and there is peace. The essence of self or God is *ananta ananda* (Sanskrit), limitless joy. That what the Buddha statue or Shiva statue will smile at—his/her own nature as fullness." One thinks also of the Mona Lisa smile, or the "archaic" smile. A verse from Advaita Makarands, the Honey of non-duality, expresses this self-fullness.

My salutations to the Lord Krishna,
Who is limitless joy
Whose form is a blessing to the world
One glance from the corner of his eye
Dries up an ocean of delusion
For those who surrender to him.

For Louchakova (p.c.) "this kind of self as limitless joy that can only be experienced in reduction to pure subjectivity and then transcending that subjectivity into oneness."

¹¹ The tango exemplifies creation as a "left-over activity," developed as it was by men who invented the dance while as they waited for their turn in the brothels of Buenos Aires. See Robert Farris Thompson, *The Tango: The Art History of Love*. (New York: Pantheon, 2006).

SECTION I
THE ARTIST AS MEDIATOR OF EVERYDAYNESS
AND INSPIRATION

THE LIMITS OF CREATION: THE ARCHITECT
AS THE MEDIATOR OF THE BEAUTY
AND THE BEAST

Instead of creating mere objects of visual seduction, architecture relates, mediates, and projects meanings. The ultimate meaning of any building is beyond architecture; it directs our consciousness back to the world and toward our own sense of self and being.

Juhani Pallasmaa¹

ABSTRACT

Architecture mediates between different cultures and ideas by engaging humanity on common grounds sharing the same poetic and ethical concerns. Starting with ancient times, philosophy, and architecture went hand in hand in their love for the knowledge of the universe and desire to make the world a better place for humans. A book on the life of the Ottoman chief architect Mehmet Agha entitled “Risale-i Mimariyye”, written by his close friend reveals the most hidden intentions of an architect to create a beautiful place in harmony with the cosmos within his own cultural boundaries. A close reading of the text opens up many questions regarding the poetic creation of an architect in early modern times. His search for a measure and ground for architecture by embracing stories combined from ancient cultures becomes significant as a way to understand the human limits of creation in a traditional world and to grasp how he responded to his era’s demands through his deeds. Consequently, the book reveals an architect’s desire to create a link between a divine order and a human world through a mediating role. This paper will trace back an architect’s intellectual odyssey and how he became the mediator in the lived world by creating a bond between the cosmos and the phenomenology of materials, colors, and sounds that transform into what reveals the beautiful or what evokes the beast.

THE LIVED SPACE OF HUMAN DESIRE

What, pray tell, will form and color do
Whenever there may lack a beauty’s hue
Even though that mansion great may be

A China-thrilling picture gallery
 Let there be no trace of dwelling places
 Unadorned by loved ones' lovely faces
 How well it may be fashioned matters not
 Such a house will still have gone to rot
 Latifi²

Architecture has always been an art form that mediates between the visible and invisible aspects of life. It allows one to recognize what is not given in vision, yet what has a crucial importance for a meaningful life. However, buildings get their significance not through their formal qualities or aesthetic values that depend upon an objectified vision but through their capability to transform humans with a mediating role. As the poet, Latifi was expressing, the meaning of a building reveals itself when the experiencing self encounters one's most hidden desires through the transformative power of architecture. No matter how thrilling the mansion could be, it never becomes a dwelling place until the loved one occupies this dream-like space. The empty house is destined to vanish with all its most valuable ornaments until it allows lovers to meet and adorn it with their beauties united under one roof.

Following the famous Ottoman poet Latifi's lines, we may ask; what were the motives to create something good that is also the source of beauty for an architect? How did the architect perceive his role as a messenger in relation to the cosmic order and the human world?

A book on the life of an Ottoman architect, entitled "Risale-i Mimariyye" (A Book on Architecture) written in the early seventeenth century by Cafer Efendi in Istanbul reveals the most hidden aspects of an architect's desire to create a place, which becomes a bridge between the lived experiences and the imaginary worlds that surpasses mere pragmatic reasoning. Some episodes from the book lead us to grasp the communicative role of an architect. Such architectural ideas express poetic encounters of human beings with the lived space while allowing one to enter the unknown world of the past. As Alberto Pérez-Gómez emphasizes "Hermeneutics involves the interpretation of architectural intentions, reading the works of other times and places in relation to the epistemological contexts in which they were produced. To engage in a productive dialogue and fusion of horizons, the aim is to read between the lines and with courtesy. The world of the work and the world in front of the work, must be allowed to appear, in an act acknowledging the human pursuit of meaning over and above other motivations."³

Its every joy filled corner gives pleasure to the heart.
 The scared excursion spot is charming rose garden
 Oh, God the flowers in the marble are the image of the beloved

Within are the flames of the lamps are not tulips?
 Is it not the lamp a bush of Iram, are not the lights the leaf of the jasmine?
 The spouted fountain is a caged nightingale,
 For, like the nightingale, it continually produces a pleasing sound.⁴

In his book, Cafer Efendi reads architecture as poetry and the architect becomes closer to a poet. Since it is never an aesthetic concern, most of the architectural ideas are expressed through poetic metaphors to connect to the ideal beauty. Consequently, there is always a metaphoric relationship with architecture. Within the text we encounter the mystery of experience as a key to symbolic perception in the invisible realms of imagination. The building is the rose garden with the flowers as the symbol of the beloved. The boundary between what is real and imaginary is blurred to lead to a higher level of spiritual and sensuous experience. Through using poetic expressions, the book reveals an architect's poetic and ethical concerns while recalling the bittersweet aspects of the real world. Despite the fact that he is portrayed as a lucky fellow fortunate enough to enter the palace circles, life's miseries never leave him alone at the same time. The architect becomes a suffering dervish, longing to reach the shores of pureness against the obstacles of life that is a constant struggle between the good and the evil. Particularly, the painful building process depicted by Cafer Efendi during the construction of the Sultanahmet Complex exposes the human limits of creation very openly; "O'Cafer Efendi, why should our nature not be much downcast and weary? Observe how the heavy burden of a noble building like this bears down on me."⁵

Tracing an artist's inclination towards the common good as the object of desire may lead us to understand the distance between what is imagined in an architect's mind's eye as beauty and what is unveiled through the embodied work by becoming a language for the society. As Gadamer emphasizes "Someone who has produced a work of art stands before creation of his hands in just the same way that anyone else does. There is a leap between the planning and the executing on the one hand and the successful achievement on the other."⁶

Intentions "read between lines" might reveal this enigmatic depth of imagination oscillating between the demands of a political system and a search for a poetic voice surpassing mere practical concerns. Even though they are defined by strict ceremonial conventions of the traditional world, built works as mediators of rituals always maintained an uncontrollable feature. The architectural program of a building was accepted as the framework for human action that was never oriented towards a simple functional goal. The ephemeral aspect of place was at the same time bound to one's cultural position held in a hierarchical society, whose future was as unpredictable as human life. Since knowledge

was accepted to lead one closer to truth by giving way to a deeper perception of a constantly changing world, architecture embodied the desires to reach the sublime by creating a hinge between humans and the magical workings of nature during a both corporeal and spiritual journey. Cafer Efendi refers to the struggles of the architect in many episodes to emphasize the distinction between divine inspirations and the vulnerable nature of human beings. Starting with his training in music, the architect Mehmet Agha goes through many life-changing situations that transform his very being while transforming also his artistic creations. His engagement with the human order through a meticulous training based on bodily memory reinforces the link between his existence and the lived world.

THE ARCHITECT AS THE KNOWLEDGEABLE MASTER

In his book, Cafer Efendi starts the first chapter by narrating the arrival of the Agha to Istanbul from Balkans in the year 1562 as a Janissary recruit. After 6 years, he became the watchman of the garden of the tomb of Sultan Süleyman. Subsequently, when he finally entered the service of the imperial gardens, his many adventures on Ottoman lands under different titles until he became the chief architect began.

While Cafer Efendi narrates the stories of ancient masters as role models for the architects, the stories behind sacred buildings are vividly described in relation to their mythical meanings in a society.⁷ Son of Adam, Seth, who is believed to have founded more than a thousand cities, is accepted as their master (*pir*), a word which carries the double meaning of a spiritual guide and a knowledgeable craftsman. The story tells that Seth built the Kaba from clay and marble according to its heavenly prototype. The masters were the first mediators of knowledge preserved both in oral and written traditions that became the models for an architect. In accord with Ottoman literary tradition, history becomes the ancient stories of peoples and civilizations. Such stories are never fixed descriptions of events, but their validity depends on their constant reinterpretation at the present. The ancient models endure their legitimacy through the reinterpretation of mythical stories.

Masters are chosen from saintly figures and based on legendary tales. Their accepted deeds are transmitted as a model for the architect to pursue in his own acts. The masters mediate between divine powers and humans to lead the way for an architect's good deeds. However, while the saints as the blessed ones had the inspiration through divine powers, Cafer Efendi being aware of human nature and limits, brings the science of geometry into sight to legitimize the practice of architecture on earth.

Referring to ancient writings, the first person to write on the science of arithmetic is accepted as Enoch. He was regarded among Ottoman craftsmen as patron saint of the craft guilds and also highly esteemed for various inventions including divination and the arts of writing and the making of garments. For Cafer Efendi, he was the compiler of the science of arithmetic and the science of astronomy, who is also known as Hermes. Since sciences were not written in a book, students had to commit them to their memory as their teacher explicated them. Later, as our writer emphasizes Pythagoras, the most distinguished of seven eminent philosophers collected both the science of geometry and the science of arithmetic into a book. In order not to break the chain of knowledge, Cafer Efendi emphasizes, how the sciences that an architect must know were transmitted to the students by masters to ground their deeds.

In the book, it is explained that the word *hendese*, which means geometry derives from *hindaz* and refers to quantity and measure.⁸ Measure is connected to *estimating with proportion*. It relates to proportional relationships as the imitation of the divine order in the profane space. As Cafer Efendi was saying, harmony is pleasant to human nature and harmonic relations through proportion in architecture is desired by humans as they are inclined towards what is good and beautiful. The architect needs geometry, to create and give form to disordered lands. Yet, how architecture is seen is firstly related to sensuous perceptions. Poetic encounters reinforce one's existence by creating a sense of unity. The relation established between materials, colors and music that is connected to the sounds of the cosmos reveal the deeper concerns to engage with this invisible order. Harmony is the source of pleasure and the binding force between seemingly remote objects. Such a pleasure also depends on the notion of wonder that always preserves the gap between the visible and invisible.

Thus, an architect's creation is a magical process; it stands between bodily perception and imagination. The architect envisions a mental image and embodies the idea through following his intuition. Nevertheless, he must also have knowledge about the inner workings of the cosmos to imitate the idea behind its existence without destroying the given order.

The architect as the magician combines all the knowledge of the lived world to create a work that is recognizable yet, still remains a source of wonder for humans. In his second chapter, Cafer Efendi describes how Agha became skillful (*mahir*) and expert (*hazik*) in his art after learning the arts of mother of pearl and architecture. In the dictionary combined within the book to define terms, *mahir* means an artist who is expert in his profession, while *hazik* refers to a knowledgeable master. After Agha created a lecturn in the form of a reading desk ornamented in geometric forms with sides joined to one another, he

became the object of the Padishah's and viziers' favor and was honored with a higher position in the Sublime Porte.

The sultan was perplexed by the work and examined the interlocking sides of triangles, quadrangles and the sides of pentagons, hexagons and heptagons with great care. Cafer Efendi continues narrating the sultan's wonder by noting how various forms are seen from different angles.⁹ After that poetic encounter, the Sultan said, "God God! What are these beautiful forms? Like wine, they instantly caused me to lose my head."¹⁰ The artwork resembles the mysteries of nature and refers one back to the miracles in life that are beyond human perception. Through the mediating role of the artwork, one recognizes the self in relation to a more than human world.

In another episode, Cafer Efendi writes that the word *mimar* (architect), describes a person who cultivates a place and makes it habitable. He quotes from a saying that for whosoever builds a pious monument, which is for the good of all humans, God prepares a house in paradise as a gift accompanied by *houris*, who are the beautiful-eyed creatures with the contrasted eye colors of white and deep black as the source of pure joy for the beholder. The root of the word architect and the words used to define creations indicate how architecture was understood as an art possessing the potential to transform a place from a desolate land into a cultivated place. However, such a transforming process was only possible through the skills that an architect would acquire through both hard work and talent as a gift granted by God. The word *mimar* (architect) designates someone who is not only a craftsman working with his hands, but also a learned man, who brings order to uncivilized areas by his mediating role in the creation of order.

Architecture was perceived as an art that was connected to the cosmic creation through this mimetic act. The poem on creation consists of many metaphors of architecture, which refer to the tradition of the Ottoman Divan literature;

What is this exalted mosque and retreat for witnessing?
 What is this lofty dome and lamp ornament?
 What is this bright window, what is this luminous taper?
 What is this wonderful creation and what is this beauteous form?
 What is this vault of heaven, and what is this surface of the world?
 What is this lofty arch, and what is this great pavilion?
 What is this? Who made such an edifice?¹¹

In his poems, as a concise example of his approach to the analogy between human creation and cosmos, architectural metaphors are used to depict the divine creation by linking the heavenly spheres to lofty domes or shining stars to ornamented candles. However, Cafer Efendi is particularly aware of the tools

of the architect. The analogy is revealed, yet, he emphasizes that God created without any model or geometry. Moreover, he writes that the world, this great workshop existed previously in the form of an exemplary substance depicted on a plate and with God's command came into existence in the realm of humans.

While the creator of the universe did not need geometry, the artist needed his tools to guide him in his participation to the order by giving shape to forms and materials. According to Cafer Efendi, the world was created with seven lower levels and seven upper levels without columns or masts so that there could be everywhere places of worship, dervish lodges and convents. Furthermore, in order to emphasize another connection between the seven layers of the earth and the divine realms, the seven upper levels are compared to great tents. He once again refers back to the human world to reveal the hidden connections unveiled in the lived experience of rituals, such as the ceremonies taking place under tents of various colors.

Alberto Pérez-Gómez writes that the manner of making buildings and the ornamental vocabulary were always rooted in tradition and the symbolic intention that guided the decisions "depended on his perception of a meaningful place (site) within a hierarchical cosmos and of a meaningful *institution* (situation)."¹² The order created by the architect is the reflection of the cosmos by giving a frame to the human actions. Cafer Efendi contrasts the ruined places with cultivated lands in his dictionary to emphasize the transformative role of architecture to make a place joy giving and prosperous.

THE ARCHITECT'S PURE GOLD HANDS

In the chapter on the Sultanahmet Complex, Cafer Efendi writes, "Do you not see how under the pickaxe the marble makes the noble sound *huve*. . . Like the sound made by sufis and dervishes when attaining a state of rapture and ecstasy with the *sema*, such sound also come from the marble which is being dressed. And Agha is here like a sheikh, for both orders the craftsmen incessantly, saying 'work' . . ."¹³ The architect, again with his mediating role, has the power to communicate his knowledge to the craftsmen. He gives order to their actions and resembles a saintly figure, who directs one to the pureness of the soul through orienting towards the good deeds.

Cafer Efendi compares the rarity of skilled masters through using the metaphor of hands that are pure gold to refer to the alchemist's elixir and the philosopher's stone. "The ability to turn base metals to gold, the power of the philosopher's stone"¹⁴ as the elixir, the symbol of the divine truth carried the potential to change a person from a non-believer to a believer. The precious stone created by the elixir was as rare as the pure heart, which were

the valued attributes of an architect. The architect becomes the mediator in the lived world by transforming the invisible aspects of materials, colors and sounds into an embodied work that engenders poetic responses or what has the potential to evoke the beast that reminds one of its ethical grounds. This transformative power of architecture and its effect on people are vividly expressed in the book to ground architectural creation.

In one instance, the surface of a bow case was compared to the Mirror of Alexander that reflects all the good and the evil in the world. The analogy between a magician and an architect derives from the mythologies of heroic figures. In Ottoman poetry, the beloved's face is a mirror as noted by Andrews because "it is absolutely pure in the way of a mirror made by polishing metal until it is free of rust or scratches or any kind of blemish. And purity of countenance must reach beneath the physical surface to the moral center. Those who behave in shameful manner find their evil written in black on their faces. Then the mirror is described as *alem-nüma* (world displaying), and the Ottoman audience immediately recognizes a reference to the legendary mirror of Alexander, in which the world conqueror was said to be able to view whatever was happening anywhere on earth."¹⁵

THE CREATOR THROUGH THE EYES OF THE BEHOLDER

The pure building has become so intoxicating
Are poems capable of such perfect description?¹⁶

The architect, also a military figure, a bureaucrat, an engineer, a carpenter, a craftsman, compared to a saint with deep knowledge becomes on the one hand a learned man of his time, and on the other hand he is the master of his craft. *Techne* meets *poiesis* to open a way for human participation and action in the world. His magical creation is perhaps condemned to stay as an enigma. It is what remains beyond words in a society; yet, it is what they took pleasure in looking at and touching in an intoxicated state; still, it is that which cannot be described fully by Cafer Efendi other than poetic expressions and divine connections.

We are able to engage with the lived experiences of the past through such literary works. The message arriving as light, colors, textures, and sounds from history, once the means of orientation in the world for human beings, only might obliquely reflect the idea behind the image unless a participant becomes a listener while witnessing its unfolding through a phenomenological experience of space as in the instance of the architect's close friend Cafer Efendi.

Such an engagement might be the way, which allowed Cafer Efendi to communicate his ideas on architecture; through listening and waiting patiently until the buildings started talking to him.

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NOTES

- ¹ Pallasmaa, Juhani. *The Eyes of the Skin*, 2005.
- ² Andrews, Walter G. *The Age of Beloveds: Love and the Beloved in Early-Modern Ottoman and European Culture and Society*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), p.33.
- ³ Pérez Gómez, Alberto, *Built Upon Love: Architectural Longing After Ethics and Aesthetics* (Cambridge, MA : MIT Press, c2006), p. 208.
- ⁴ Translation in, Cafer Efendi. *Risāle-i mimāriyye: an early-seventeenth-century Ottoman treatise on architecture*: facsimile with translation and notes by Howard Crane (Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1987), p. 73; The original Turkish text is published in, Cafer Efendi. *Risāle-i mimāriyye*: transcription by İ. Aydın Yüksel (İstanbul Fetih Cemiyeti, Istanbul, Turkey, 2005), p. 78
- ⁵ Cafer Efendi, *Ibid.*, 1987, p. 69.
- ⁶ Gadamer, Hans Georg, *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays*, trans. Nicholas Walker and edited with an introduction by Robert Bernasconi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p.33.
- ⁷ Cafer Efendi, *Ibid.*, 2005, pp. 18–20.
- ⁸ Cafer Efendi, *Ibid.*, 2005, pp. 20–21.
- ⁹ Cafer Efendi, *Ibid.*, 2005, pp. 27–28.
- ¹⁰ Cafer Efendi, *Ibid.*, 1987, p. 34.
- ¹¹ Cafer Efendi, *Ibid.*, 1987, p. 19.
- ¹² Alberto Pérez-Gómez, “Modern Architecture, Abstraction, and the Poetic Imagination,” *Nefelokokkugia (Cloud-Cuckoo-Land)* 1, (BTU Cottbus, Germany, 2001).
- ¹³ Cafer Efendi, *Ibid.*, 1987, p. 68.
- ¹⁴ Andrews, Walter G., *Ibid.*, p. 343.
- ¹⁵ Andrews, Walter G., *Ibid.*, p. 344.
- ¹⁶ Cafer Efendi, *Ibid.*, 1987, p. 75.

THE ARTISTIC LIFE, THE ART ALIVE

*Not only do we have mountains of butter and ham,
rivers of milk and wine, but we can now make
artificial living beings, living artworks.¹*

*I...born a natural human being...
do hereby forever copyright my unique genetic code,
however it may be scientifically determined,
described or otherwise expressed.
Genetic Code Copyright²*

ABSTRACT

The article is focused on a new form of art, the “bio art”. Bio art rises in science laboratories and it deals with phenomenon of life. So the artifacts produced by bio artists using so called “wet media” balance on a very thin line. From philosophical as well as aesthetical point of view the bio-artifacts seem to extremely interesting since they generate multiple aesthetical, ethical, ontological, and epistemological problems, such is the fascinating bilateral relationship between art and science on the one hand as well as between artist and scientist, on the other. The bio art coping with problems of civilization and its wasteful management opens a controversial curtain from behind some interesting questions emerge. Is the anti-anthropocentric bio art still rational? Do we face here with a new bio-rational *topos* of art? If yes, what is the cultural role and metaphysical significance of Bio Art?

In my article I would like to focus on a new form of art which has recently been called ‘bio art’. From philosophical as well as aesthetical point of view the bio-artifacts seem to be extremely interesting since they generate multiple aesthetical, ethical, ontological, and epistemological problems. Among many others, the fascinating issue seems to be a bilateral relationship between art and science on the one hand, as well as between artist and scientist on the other. The relationship generates very interesting questions connected with creative process, artistic values, or authorship. Moreover, the bio art coping with problems of civilization and its wasteful management opens a controversial curtain from behind which a basic question emerges: do we face here a new bio-rational

topos of art? If yes, what is the cultural role and metaphysical significance of bio art? Or maybe bio art is just another example of Umberto Eco's idea of 'open work'?

Let's try to think what kind of goal the art achieved traveling from Platonian 'imitation of things as they appear' to Duchampian 'it is art if the artist says it is'.

So what is the bio art?

Let's see a boutique opened in 1998 in Pasadena, California. "The boutique, Gene Genies Worldwide, offered 'the key to the biotech revolution's ultimate consumer playground'. It sold new genetic traits to people who wanted to modify their personalities and other characteristics. The boutique was filled with the vestiges of biotechnology—petri dishes and a 10-foot model of the ladder-like structure of DNA. Brochures highlighted traits that studies had shown to be genetic: creativity, conformity, extroversion, introversion, novelty seeking, addiction, criminality, and dozens more. Shoppers initially requested one particular trait they wanted changed, but once they got into it, their shopping lists grew. (...) The co-owners were thrilled at the success of their endeavor, particularly since none of the products they were advertising were actually yet available."³

Let's imagine now a splendid feast. As a main course we have a delicate and juicy steak of frog—of exactly the same which at the same time is joyfully swimming in an aquarium. This making everybody happy 'Disembodied Cuisine' was performed in France by a group of artists and collaborating with them scientists who genetically bred the delicious steaks.⁴ Altogether, they demonstrated a phenomenon of aesthetisation of life—in the fundamental, biological sense of the word.

The idea of aesthetisation of everyday life or of existence is not a new one. We could find it, among many others, in Wolfgang Welsch, Michael Foucault, or Mike Fatherstone.

The last one for example, sees three aspects of aesthetisation of everyday life: (1) a strong tendency to blur any border between life and art which could be observed in artistic avant-garde in the twentieth century (dadaism, surrealism etc.); (2) aesthetisation of life can be understood as the idea of transforming life into art (Oscar Wilde, dandyism); (3) the phenomenon of aesthetisation could be connected with the process of infiltrating of visual signs and symbols into the structure of contemporary societies.⁵

However, it seems that none of the abovementioned theories have such a huge and controversial fund as a phenomenon of aesthetisation of biology or science which recently has been proposed by bio artists and their artistic production—bio art. The last one rises in scientific laboratories and it deals with phenomenon of life. So the artifacts produced by bio artists by using

so called 'wet media' balance on an extremely thin line. For Eduardo Kac, one of the best famous bio artists, "Bio art is a new direction in contemporary art that manipulates the processes of life. Invariably, bio art employs one or more of the following approaches: (1) the coaching of bio-materials into specific inert shapes or behaviors; (2) the unusual or subversive use of biotech tools and processes; (3) the invention or transformation of living organisms with or without social or environmental integration. (...) Bio art must be clearly distinguished from art that exclusively uses traditional or digital media to address biological themes, as in painting or sculpture depicting a chromosome or a digital photograph suggesting cloned children. Bio art is *in vivo*."⁶

Although bio art is rather a new form of art, we could find at least three steps which map its history out: at the very beginning we have mythical chimera, then there is a folk form of bio art, and finally we meet with a 'high', pure, contemporary bio art; one could say, the last one finally embodied or even reincarnated the first one.⁷ "The chimera is a mixture of species—lion, goat, and dragon—that inverts the natural order by producing a paradoxical being."⁸ We can easily enumerate the most famous like Medusa, Echidna, Scylla, Geryon, or Sphinx. On the other hand however, "in science, a chimera is an organism composed of two sorts of cells with different genetic origins, stemming from two different zygotes. Nature generates some chimeras without human intervention. Vegetal chimeras are made of interlocking tissues with genetically different structures, such as the apple tree, the maple, or the sansevieria (...). Human chimeras are the result of chromosomal anomalies: Thus the dizygotic twin, whose sibling is usually stillborn, is transfused with hematopoietic tissue (bone-marrow) from the latter, harboring in this way two blood populations from different groups. The human chimera therefore is not the intermediate body of a Prometheus, a Faust, or a Frankenstein."⁹ As we will see, majority of objects (or maybe much better to say—subjects) of bio art are chimerical in exactly abovementioned sense. However, there seems to be a difference: the bio art is always an effect of human activity, which in this case creates or produces transgenic chimeras. "By collapsing the metaphor of art as a mirror on life with life itself, by making art that mirrors biological processes and the network of commercial concerns that configure our dawning biological age, gene artists engage questions raised by their scientific/corporate/government counterparts: What does it mean to alter a natural evolutionary process millions of years old? How will people think of themselves, and their relation to others, once boundaries such as 'plant' and 'animal' have been eroded? How will we think of conventions such as 'humanness' once we are able to customize people? (...) What does it mean for a society to bring into existence a rabbit that glows green?"¹⁰

Of course, bio artists create their work in very different and original ways: conceptual artist Orlan manipulates her own body and keeps trying a process of multiple plastic surgeries; Jana Sterbak draws with a pen filled with HIV-seropositive blood and anticoagulants; since 1991 every five years Marc Quinn sculpts a model of his head using nine liters of his own frozen congealed blood; Gary Schneider provided his own hair, sperm, and cheek-cell samples to produce his *Genetic Self-Portrait*; Marc Quinn exhibited *A Genomic Portrait* of Sir John Sulston which became the first abstract and at the same time the most realistic, by definition, work in the London National Portrait Gallery.¹¹

Finally, the very famous green rabbit named Alba also represents the third mentioned, the 'high', pure, contemporary bio art and, as his author, creator, and *demiourgós* Eduardo Kac underlines, there are some fundamental points distinguishing him from exotic orchids, blue roses, hairless cats, or other objects of folk genetic art. Both, genetic scientists and genetic artists unanimously agree that the genetic engineering of plant and animals and thus genetic art is just an extension of the genetic folk art long practiced by breeders like Hugo De Vries, one of rediscovers of Mendel's theory of trait propagation.¹²

Of course, genetic manipulation used also by genetic artists "(...) allows biological steps to be skipped in ways that never could through natural selection."¹³ At first glance however, it seems that unlike science, bio art does not make any sense other than aesthetic satisfaction of some fancy. And exactly that fact seems to be a source of variety of controversies.

It seems that the first objects of bio art strictly differentiated from its folk version appeared with the breakdown of genres participated in modernism. While Duchamp, undermining traditional ideas of authorship, originality as well as the nature or goal of art, was drawing a mustache onto a copy of Mona Lisa, bio artists slowly and probably shyly moving from their ateliers to biotech labs have been starting to think if, and eventually how, to modify Mona's genes so that she could grow an actual mustache. But because of some technical troubles the plant bio art and aesthetics had to precede the animal version.

Edward Steichen, a photographer and flower breeder, organized at MoMA in 1934 'one of the most unusual and least understood'¹⁴ solo exhibition of his genetically altered *delphiniums*: "flowers that he had experimented on for 26 years, 'using living materials', as he put it, 'to make poetry'. The results were flowers of gigantic size and colors never seen before, which were described by reviewers as 'breathtaking'.¹⁵ Actually, Steichen's blooms were an effect of a coincidence: artist induced genetic mutations in his plants through the use of colchicines, a medicine that he was taking for his gout. "Applying the drug to plants, Steichen was able to double their chromosome count and thereby

circumvent a naturally occurring fire wall against the propagation of mutation: the fact that hybrids are often sterile. Or as Steichen explained, by forcing normally sterile experimental plants to be fertile, he was able to force the flow of 'nature's progress' to 'jump its banks and find a new outlet'.¹⁶ Moreover, "Steichen's art of flower breeding posed the question 'What is the artist's role in society?' and answered it by suggesting that the artist was to be useful in meeting people's needs."¹⁷

The most controversial form of bio art seems to be however the one dealing with animals. And the most famous and thus the most controversial bio artist seems to be Eduardo Kac who introduced the phrase 'transgenic art' in 1998 in a manifesto with the same title.¹⁸ "[I] proposed the creation (and social integration) of a dog expressing green fluorescent protein. This protein is commonly used as a biomarker in genetic research; however, my goal was to use it primarily for its visual properties as a symbolic gesture, a social marker. (...) The proposal was and is perfectly viable, but it seemed that few believed the project could or would be realized. While I struggled to find venues that could assist me in creating the aforementioned project, entitled GFP K-9, I too realized that canine reproductive technology was not developed enough at the time to enable me to create a dog expressing green fluorescent protein. In the meantime, I started to develop a new transgenic art work, entitled *Genesis*, which premiered at Ars Electronica'99."¹⁹

Let artist himself describe some of his masterpieces: "*Genesis* is a transgenic artwork that explores the intricate relationship between biology, belief systems, information technology, dialogical interaction, ethics, and the Internet. The key element of the work is an 'artist's gene', a synthetic gene that was created by translating a sentence from the biblical Book of Genesis into Morse code, and converting the Morse code into DNA base pairs according to a conversion principle I specially developed for this work. The sentence reads: "Let man have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." (...) The Genesis gene was incorporated into bacteria, which was shown in the gallery. Participants on the Web could turn on an ultraviolet light in the gallery, causing real, biological mutations in the bacteria. After the show, the DNA of the bacteria was translated back into Morse code, and then back into English. The mutation (...) had changed the original sentence from the Bible. The mutated sentence was posted on the Genesis Web site. (...)

Entitled *GFP Bunny* comprises the creation of a green fluorescent rabbit (Alba), the public dialogue generated by the project, and the social integration of rabbit. (...) *GFP Bunny* attracted local media in the south of France in June 2000 when the former director of the French institute where Alba was born

used his authority to overrule the scientists who worked on the project and refused to let Alba go to Avignon and then come to my family in Chicago. (...) I denounced censorship through the Internet and through (...) the press. *GFP Bunny* became a global media scandal (...). In 2001 I created ‘The Alba Flag’, a white flag with green rabbit silhouette, and started to fly it in front of my Chicago area house. The flag not only publicly signals the green bunny home, but most importantly stands as a social marker, a beacon of her absence. Continuing my efforts to raise awareness of Alba’s plight and to obtain her freedom, in 2002 I presented a solo exhibition entitled *Free Alba!* (...) Through the leitmotif of the green bunny, this exhibition explored the poetics of life and evolution. (...)

The Eight Day is a transgenic artwork that investigates the new ecology of fluorescent creatures that is evolving worldwide. (...) While fluorescent creatures are being developed in isolation in laboratories, seen collectively in this work for the first time they form the nucleus of a new and emerging synthetic bioluminescent ecosystem. The piece brings together living transgenic life forms and biological robot (biobot) in an environment enclosed under a clear Plexiglas dome, thus making visible what it would be like if these creatures in fact coexisted in the world at large. *The Eight Day* presents an expansion of biodiversity beyond wildtype life forms. As a self-contained artificial ecology it resonates with the words in the title, which add one day to the period of creation of the world (...). The transgenic creatures in *The Eight Day* are GFP plants, GFP amoeba, GFP fish, and GFP mice. Selective breeding and mutation are two key evolutionary forces. *The Eight Day* literally raises the question of transgenic evolution, since all organisms in the piece are mutations of their respective wildtype species and all were selected and bred for their GFP mutations. (...) *The Eight Day* also includes a biological robot, or biobot. A biobot is a robot with an active biological element within its body, which is responsible for aspects of its behavior. The biobot (...) has a colony of GFP amoeba called *Dyctiostelium discoideum* as its “brain cells”. (...) When amoebas divide, the biobot exhibits dynamic behavior inside the enclosed environment.”²⁰

As we see, bio art (or gene art, or transgenic art) manipulates the processes of life and indeed it is literally *in vivo*. Because of that, it could not be classified, let’s say, as ready-made, conceptual art, situationism, or social sculpture.²¹ As it was already mentioned, bio art creates not just a new form of artistic objects but rather new artistic organisms or better to say—artistic subjects. And that is the main reason of diversity of controversies it generates.

Focusing on some of them, on the one hand, “bio art emphasizes the dialogical and relational (e.g., crosspollination, social intercourse, cell interaction, interspecies communication) as much as the material and formal qualities

of art (the shape of frogs, the color of flowers, bioluminescence, the patterns on butterfly wings). While modern and contemporary art have produced objects (painting, sculpture, ready-mades), environments (installations, land art), events (performances, happenings, telecommunications, exchanges), and immaterial works (videos, digital pieces, Web sites), bio art has its 'core materials' ontogeny (organism development) and phylogeny (species evolution), and it opens itself to the entire gamut of life processes and entities, from DNA molecules and the smallest virus to the largest mammal and its evolutionary lineage."²²

But on the other hand, by doing that, bio art seems to dangerously blur the border between art and science: bio art becomes scientific and science is liable to aesthetisation. Moreover, we have to be aware that aesthetic and in this case mostly ornamental character of 'subjects' of bio art brings as its consequence some fundamental changes: for example, a genetically modified body is no longer a natural one but seems to be cultural and technical and thus could be freely constructed and deconstructed.²³ Further, the simple fact that any form of life is composed of the same four-letter genetic alphabet (the chemical bases adenine, guanine, cytosine and thymine—A, G, C, T) means, that any genetic manipulation of one species has maybe not yet so noticeable but surely direct implications for all others.²⁴

I would like to come back to my early question of openness of the bio art. For Umberto Eco not only contemporary works of art are open—although indeed in their case the openness is the most evident. Anyway, the traditional art also based on the idea of openness, which in this case was rather reduced to a possibility of free interpretation of already done, created, organized, and equipped in a particular structure work of art. Meanwhile in the twentieth century, as Eco notices, emerges a more intensive version of the previous openness of works, which are not finished on material level, and which Eco calls 'works in motion'. However, as Eco emphasizes, the new type of relation between an artist and public opens quite a new type of culture in general. At the same time the work of art gains a new social status.²⁵

One could ask about the openness of works of bio art. At first glance it seems that bio artifacts do not fall within any of two Eco's categories, neither the weaker one, nor its stronger subcategory: after all Alba rather does not inspire to interpretation, nor to any material complementation. But if we did not focus on the work itself, but rather on its social repercussions, which by the way seem to be its essence, we could risk a point, that exactly here, on the social side, we should look for its openness: while the traditional open work of art would base on 'a poetics of suggestion', the openness of bio art would rather assume 'a poetics of exhortation'. In fact Alba or Genesis are not 'works in motion' in Eco's sense, but certainly are works exhorting to motion, to reaction:

bio artifacts seem to be extremely ideologically involved and because of that intensively provoking particular social movements. Thanks to their ideological involvement the works of bio art are able to show a new vision of the world. Bio art "(...)" can contribute significantly to the process of understanding and transforming the world, because its function is essentially cognitive."²⁶ Thus art becomes a public policy medium.²⁷ Lori B. Andrews, a distinguished professor of law and director of the Institute for Science, Law, and Technology confesses: "I appreciate artists whose work is influenced by the biological sciences because beyond its aesthetic value, the work can help society to: (1) confront the social implications of its biological choices; (2) understand the limitations of the much hyped biotechnologies; (3) develop policies for dealing with biotechnologies; and (4) confront larger issues of the role of science and the role of art in our society."²⁸

The last word I would like to leave to Eduardo Kac who said: "genetic engineering will continue to have profound consequences in art as well as in the social, medical, political, and economic spheres of life. As an artist I am interested in reflecting on the multiple social implications of genetics, from unacceptable abuse to its hopeful promises, from the notion of 'code' to the question of translation, from the synthesis of genes to the process of mutations, from the metaphors employed by biotechnology to the fetishization of genes and proteins, from simple reductive narratives to complex views that account for environmental influences. The urgent task is to unpack the implicit meanings of the biotechnology revolution and contribute to the creation of alternative views, thus changing genetics into a critically aware new art medium."²⁹

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NOTES

¹ Flusser, Vilém. "On Science," in *Signs of Life. Bio Art and Beyond*, ed. Eduardo Kac. (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2007), p. 371.

² Larry Miller's work was performed at the Horodner Romley Gallery in New York (February 1993).

³ Andrews, L. B. "Art as a Public Policy Medium," in: *Signs of Life. Bio Art and Beyond*, ed. E. Kac. op. cit., p. 126. The co-owners of the boutique were artists Karl Mihail and Tran Kim-Trang. See www.genegenies.com (Retrieved: 01.05.2009).

⁴ The work was performed at the international exhibition of bio art 'L'art Biotech' in Nantes, March 2003. "In the "Disembodied Cuisine" we will attempt to grow frog skeletal muscle over biopolymer for potential food consumption. A biopsy will be taken from an animal which will continue to live and be displayed in the gallery alongside the growing "steak". This installation will culminate in a "feast". <http://www.tca.uwa.edu.au/disembodied/dis.html> (Retrieved: 21. 04. 2009).

- ⁵ See Featherstone, M. *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*. (London, 1991).
- ⁶ See Kac, E. "Art that Looks You in the Eye: Hybrids, Clones, Mutants, Synthetics, and Transgenics," in *Signs of Life. Bio Art and Beyond*, ed. Idem. op. cit., pp. 18–19.
- ⁷ See Tomasula, S. "Genetic Art and the Aesthetics of Biology," *Leonardo*, 35(2), 2002, pp. 137–144.
- ⁸ Andrieu, B. "Embodying the Chimera: Biotechnology and Subjectivity," in *Signs of Life. Bio Art and Beyond*, ed. E. Kac. op. cit., p. 59.
- ⁹ Idem, p. 60.
- ¹⁰ Tomasula, S. "Genetic Art and the Aesthetics of Biology," op. cit., p. 138.
- ¹¹ See Andrews, L. B. "Art as a Public Policy Medium," in *Signs of Life. Bio Art and Beyond*, ed. E. Kac. op. cit., pp. 128–133. Compare: www.bibalex.org/french/lectures/andrews.htm (Retrieved: 01. 05. 2009).
- ¹² See Tomasula, S. "Genetic Art and the Aesthetics of Biology," op. cit., p. 138.
- ¹³ Ibidem, p. 139.
- ¹⁴ Gedrim, R. J. "Edward Steichen's 1936 Exhibition of Delphinium Blooms: An Art. Of Flower Breeding," in *Signs of Life. Bio Art and Beyond*, ed. E. Kac. op. cit., p. 347.
- ¹⁵ Tomasula, S. "Genetic Art and the Aesthetics of Biology," op. cit., p. 138. See also Gedrim, R. J. "Edward Steichen's 1936 Exhibition of Delphinium Blooms," in *History of Photography*, No. 4, 1993. "The show is 'breathtaking!' Giant spikes of brilliant dark blues, the intensity of which is amazing, against the white background of the walls. There is a plum color never before seen by the writer, also delicate pastel blues running into lavenders and pinks. Then pure whites against a deep blue background, some of them having startlingly black eyes, all standing stately and regal in their great containers." in: Modern Art. Museum Scene of Steichen Delphinium Exhibit, "*Greenwich News and Graph*", June 27, 1936.
- ¹⁶ Ibidem.
- ¹⁷ Gedrim, R. J. "Edward Steichen's 1936 Exhibition of Delphinium Blooms: An Art. Of Flower Breeding," in *Signs of Life. Bio Art and Beyond*, ed. E. Kac. op. cit., p. 363.
- ¹⁸ Kac, E. "Transgenic Art," *Leonardo Electronic Almanac* 6(11), 1998.
- ¹⁹ Idem, "Life Transformation—Art Mutation," in *Signs of Life. Bio Art and Beyond*, ed. Idem. op. cit., p. 164. Also see <http://www.ekac.org/geninfo.html>.
- ²⁰ Kac, E. "Life Transformations—Art Mutation," in *Signs of Life. Bio Art and Beyond*, ed. Idem. op. cit., pp. 164–177.
- ²¹ See: Kac, E. "Art that Looks You in the Eye: Hybrids, Clones, Mutants, Synthetics, and Transgenics," in *Signs of Life. Bio Art and Beyond*, ed. Idem. op. cit., p. 19.
- ²² Ibidem, pp. 19–20.
- ²³ See Andrieu, B. "Embodying the Chimera: Biotechnology and Subjectivity," in *Signs of Life. Bio Art and Beyond*, ed. E. Kac. op. cit., p. 67.
- ²⁴ See Tomasula, S. "Genetic Art and the Aesthetics of Biology," op. cit., p. 140.
- ²⁵ See: Eco, U. *The Open Work*, tr. A. Cancogni (Harvard University Press, 1989).
- ²⁶ Robey, D. "Introduction," in, *The Open Work*, ed. U. Eco. op. cit., p. 14.
- ²⁷ See Andrews, L. B. "Art as a Public Policy Medium," in *Signs of Life. Bio Art and Beyond*, ed. E. Kac. op. cit., pp. 125–149.
- ²⁸ Ibidem, p. 126.
- ²⁹ Kac, E. "Life Transformation—Art Mutation," in *Signs of Life. Bio Art and Beyond*, ed. Idem. op. cit., p. 180.

THE HISTORICAL LOGIC OF NON-VERBAL
EXPRESSION IN EVERYDAY LIFE AND THE ARTS:
THE PERCEPTUAL FOUNDATION OF THE
PRECEPT

ABSTRACT

There is a figural basis of grammatical logic to be found in the norms of figural design within human expression. Husserl suggests this in his discussion of part and whole in the *Logical Investigations*. His notion of a “sprachlosen Denkungsform” “thought form without speech” emanates from this figural realm of knowing, a learning to express the visual field that begins from infancy. I explore “styles” of figuration which express the “part-whole” diaeresis of knowing natural to every human. These styles are pre-egoically formed, as a function of the “pure I” in its passive syntheses of judgment. The learning of verbal grammar accommodates one’s style of figural diaeresis.

Taking a cue from Husserl’s reflections on the individuating aspect of judgment, I have developed evidence of individual style both in figurative and verbal expression among historical and contemporary individuals that is, indeed, transgenerational. I show in mature artists over several centuries, and in contemporary adolescent, identical and fraternal twins the accord between figural logic and verbal logic as a style of knowing experience in judgment.

In this study, which requires brevity, I show two essential logical differences of judgment among humans figurally and verbally—the “aggregative” and the “quantum” organization of a field of perception or abstract judgment. Kant discussed the difference of these two manners of part-whole organization in his *Critique of Pure Reason* (A 171, B 212). The individuating nuances of logic within these two foundational differences are explored in other writings.

The artists whose work I discuss as either aggregative or quantum are Eduard Manet, Diego Velazquez, Jacques-Louis David, Vincent Van Gogh, and Paul Cezanne. I present tables of graphic and verbal logical organization that differentiate aggregative from quantum logic. I examine the presence of these forms of figural as well as verbal logic in each of these historical artists, and in the contemporary “sandbox compositions” of the adolescent, identical and fraternal twins.

All perceptive intuition or more formal judgment, just as the verbal judgment that Kant and Husserl contend arise from the figural ground of percept, are not only embedded in time, but constitute in the sequential attention of their magnitudes the very flow of time. Temporality is itself the movement of the attentive percept through its sequence of moments in any episode of thought. Kant speaks of space and time as “quanta continua,” products of the productive imagination, whose ceaseless “flowing” generates the lived experience of time and subsequently the abstract lexicon of how time is conceived immediately and historically.¹ Concepts are derived as abstract meanings which articulate the manner in which the “quanta continua” are experienced in their “whatness” “howness” and their causes, even when the lived experience itself is opaque as the real foundation for these concepts:

The word ‘concept’ might of itself suggest...this unitary consciousness (that) combines the manifold, successively intuited, and thereupon also reproduced into one representation. This consciousness may often be only faint, so that we do not connect it with the act itself, that is, not in any direct manner with the *generation* of the representation, but only with the outcome [that which is thereby represented]. But notwithstanding these variations, such consciousness, however indistinct, must always be present; without it, concepts, and therewith knowledge of objects, are altogether impossible (*Critique of Pure Reason*, 1968, p. 134 [A 104]).

Husserl speaks of this generational matrix of concept as “givenness-time,”² generated by the relationship of the parts and wholes attended in a percept or more formal predication, be it figural or verbal.³ Husserl allows that the “givenness-time” which is the episodic rhythm that presents the objectivity at the level of immediate perception has “a figurative function for higher objects (*Experience and Judgment*, 1973, p. 258).” Husserl terms this figurative function “a diaeresis (*Experience and Judgment*, 1973, p. 14).”⁴ The diaeresis is a Greek term in its signification of dividing a thing “into its natural joints,” that which appears as natural to the judge accommodating his or her style of attentive judgment.⁵ Husserl’s theory of the diaeresis allows for an impelling, formative telos that emerges in every person in an individuating manner that creates a style of judging, a claim that Kant did not allow to the passive synthesis that founds the temporal-spatial *Erlebnis* and its associated higher forms of judgmental abstraction.⁶

Whereas Kant stressed that the figural ground is always opaquely present as the foundation for a representation, Husserl does not allow this “figurative function” to enter fully the atemporal essence indicated by the judicative proposition (*Experience and Judgment*, 1973, pp. 258–259). I contend that this is not the case. I will show how and why the “figurative function” constituted by the diaeresis in its part-whole givenness is not only of the “essence” of what is at issue, but that the series of figurative moments conveyed by certain kinds of

nonverbal or ectypal organization can be considered a grammar. This grammar is a lexicon of eide, awaiting clarification, that imparts the nuanced essence in a manner that the univocal phenomenological clarification can strip of its eidetic complexity, unless the time-stretches (or profiles) are adequately considered. The “higher level” or “higher order” of conceptualization—either in verbal ideation or in the artistic rendering of nonverbal form—offers one an essence through all the “lower level” manifestations that is always of the qualitative temporal-spatial “givenness-time” of the diaeresis, that is of the more primary level of perceptual organization. There may be a consensus among those who judge of the same thing or state-of-affairs, even when each has a separate style of diaeresis, but this agreed upon essence is a generalized, abstractive reference whose adhesion to the ordinary aesthesis that is the tissue of every “higher-order” judgment has lost the distinctive, essential features that can enrich all understandings.

A “historical logic” is the diaeresis that orders experience. It is a logic because the diaeresis of the “lived experience” not only orders the phenomena one attends, but suggests in its part-whole alignments that flow with the movement of attention distinct dependency-independency relations, as well as the derived representational forms and concepts (Kant, 1968, pp. 197–201 [A 163, B 203—A 166, B 207]; Husserl, 1970, 2: pp. 435–492 “Investigation III: On the Theory of Parts and Wholes”). It is a “historical” logic because the diaeresis creates Kant’s notion of the three possibilities of temporal coherence—duration, succession, and coexistence—in the differing possible forms. The logical alignment of the diaeresis as a predication is called by Husserl the “temporal concretum” (Husserl, 1970, 2: p. 488). I will present several recurring historical logics today in the painting and verbalizations of four artists and two pair of adolescent twins. When I say “recurring historical logic” I mean a “style” that can be discerned in a person from his or her earliest years of forming percepts and precepts in judgment. One is familiar with the “style” of well-known painters or writers that exists in their expression of parts and wholes in a painterly composition or plastic form. Since the young Husserl the notion of a life-long style of individuating experience in well-known artists has been substantiated with evidential arguments. I will show several styles of diaeresis in artists that bridge generations in their recurrence, but also in ordinary adolescents, confirming my contention that my work creates a lexicon of perceptual historical logics and in that a foundation for consonant verbal derivations. My work with verbal historical logics has recently been published by Peter Lang *Continuity, Quantum, Continuum, and Dialectic: The Foundational Logics of Western Historical Thinking*. What I present today is the figural ground of several of these historical logics.

FURTHER EPISTEMOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS
OF THE MOVEMENT FROM PERCEPT TO PRECEPT
AS A HISTORICAL-LOGICAL MOVEMENT
IN HUSSERLIAN THOUGHT

Husserl's recognition that atemporal essences are always in the matrix of the temporal concretum generated by the attentive sequence left this "givenness-time" as a heritage to be explored. Indeed, he himself intuited from his early thought that this originary level of experience had some form of influence upon the higher-order judgment, perhaps more than the "figurative" which he saw as but what Kant called the ectypal content images which became meaning through higher-order judgments. In his earliest thought of the *Logical Investigations* Husserl states: "This (modified act, i.e. the atemporal abstraction) does not remove the fact that the "original" judgement is in some sense logically implicit in the modified act (*Logical Investigations*, 1973, 2: p. 629)." Husserl calls the atemporal concept in this passage a "deposit of judgement," the temporal concretum out of which the deposit arose still accessible if one dwells on the character and meaning attributed to that deposit. Husserl's several reflections all have substance as I will argue from the evidence of my phenomenological inquiries: there is a perceptual diaeresis that occurs from infancy on that as a passive synthesis is a "sprachlosen Denkungsform," but which over the maturation of thought includes in its higher level expressions (the highest of which is the graphic expression of the artist) categorical language as a helpmeet to the passive and active organizations of the perceptual episode. This originary "sprachlosen Denkungsform" is the givenness-time of either the perceptual or verbal judgment as the part-whole succession of image or word that is the formative aspect and ground of the literal thought which focuses upon the meaning of the content attended. The "sprachlosen Denkungsform" underlies and undergirds the literal intention of the semantic aspect of the judgment, but all form the unity of the judgment, each aspect needed to be understood as one seeks the *eidōs* or essence of what is attended. Husserl knew as early as the *Logical Investigations* that the products of attention are not simply the objects or states-of-affairs attended, but the form and aspects of judgment imparted by the attentional process which contribute to what is known in a judgment in its very structure and meaning (*Logical Investigations*, 1970, 1: pp. 383–386 [Investigation II, Par. 23]). The episode of attention in a judgment generates a temporal form of knowing, articulating the temporal order of what is known, in the manner of an Aristotelian "period" of expression. I will call this undergirding, temporally-constituting "language-free form of thought" "sprachlosen Denkungsform" an *attentional episteme*.

By *attentional episteme*, I mean a temporal flux of judgment that shapes the matter it apprehends into distinct continuities and discontinuities, the design of which as a “period” of attention is a thought in itself in that the thought is not simply in the qualia that are taken up by attention, but the temporal rhythm as rhythm imparts a dwelling or changing focus, a recalling or an expectation which affects the qualia attended. This dwelling, changing, or recalling is not the continuous structure of the temporal flux that Husserl in *Ideas II* called the second manner of aesthetic synthesis “continuous synthesis as continuous fusion” (1989, p. 21, fn. 1), which he studied at length in *Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness* (1905). Rather, the dwelling, changing, recalling is of the first kind of aesthetic synthesis in its periodic flux of attentional judgment: “synthesis as connection or binding in the proper sense, terms that imply a synthesis of what is separated (1989, p. 21, fn. 1).

The meaning of the thought, then, is a combination of the attentive phases as they create a distinct quality of attentive experience and the certain kinds of content qualia correspondent to that manner of attending. Both “what is it that one attends?” and “how do the phases of attention affect what one sees?” are the normal inquiries of a phenomenological inquirer, each question successively deepening a more precise knowledge of what is known of the perception or judgment. The qualities and character of the “what” are the product of the *attentional episteme* as a qualitative time, the quality of time being its rhythm of duration and change. The “what” known as the material content of attention is an epistemic gain, to be sure, but a derivative of the qualitative temporality of the attentive “period.” Differing attentive episodes as they enforce a durational focus or changing focus bring forth the qualia that the respective dwelling in its rhythm generates by dint of that quality of attention.

The *attentional episteme* whose *diaeresis* is the division of an episode of experience in a pattern of part-whole flux precedes in the ontogenetic development of the person the denotative language which identifies and describes parts and wholes. Research by cognitive psychologists into the spatial manipulations of infants have led them to see the actuality of what Husserl referred to as “language-free thought,” an activity which the cognitive psychologist Jonas Langer has inferred is the organization of “routines” of thought precursory to the syntactic structure of pragmatic propositions.⁷ Subjects or agents, actions, and objects or patients are discriminated in the spatial play of the infants. The products of the attentional episteme of the infant in an episode of attention are the organizations of dependent or independent parts and wholes which interact and generate what Kant called the category of relations (*Critique of Pure Reason*, 1968, p. 113 [A 80, B 106]). Based upon such inquiry, what Husserl will call the thematic, active syntheses of position-taking, also emerges even

before verbal language. The denotative language present in the active syntheses which take positions of description, explanation, etc., of things, states-of-affairs, events, and ideas become moments in the attentional episteme, but these categorial linguistic augmentations are derived from the “language-free” form of thought which undergirds every episode of judgment.

Central to my thesis, and central as well to the theses of Kant and Husserl even when not fully developed in its implications, is that the *attentional episteme* as a *diaeresis* of an episode of perception or verbal judgment is occasioned by the style of attention itself, not what is attended. As both Kant and Husserl argued in finding the cause of the aesthetic diaeresis in the pure “I” or ego,⁸ this spiritual-cognitive act is independent of any material cause from without or within. The significance of this etiology is that either attentional episodes in their rhythm are wholly arbitrary as they occur, albeit independent in their focus from the nature of the material stimuli, or there is a rule that governs how attention is determined by the “pure I.” I contend that rule is an invariant rhythm of attention whose meanings I will discuss below; the attentive episteme is neither arbitrary nor without significance as to what its “net” of attention perceives and develops as experiential meaning and evidence for higher forms of judgment. I have discerned the attentional episteme as a style, as a recurrent diaeresis in every episode of perception or verbal judgment in persons over a career of thought. What Husserl has called the “phases” of an episode of judgment are the dependent and independent parts and wholes that form the flux of temporality that is the recurring diaeresis. The diaeresis as a “language-free form of thought” generated by the attentional episteme is filled with language in thematic acts of judgment, each thematic act a predication that focuses upon its choice of content in an active synthesis.⁹ Yet, the active syntheses of the thematic acts are conveyed by the temporal form of the diaeresis of attention, the passive syntheses that are their context and rhythmic flux in attention. Husserl addresses this distinction when he discriminates between the “intuitional phases” “Anschauungsphasen” of an episode of judgment and the “object phases” “gegenständlichen Phasen” which are the content of each intuitional phase (*Zur Phänomenologie des Innereren Zeitbewusstseins* (1893–1917), 1966, p. 228). The “object phases” as content-focused attention are active syntheses that grasp each object with distinct epistemic foci directed towards the features and elements of what is attended, thus the appellation “Auffassungsformen,” “comprehensional”- or “apperceptional”- forms. Nonetheless, the active synthetic form as a thematization of content must accommodate and thus nest within the “language-free thought” as the rhythmic episode of the diaeresis in its intuitional, qua attentional form. The “intuitional phase” and the “objective phase” of temporal-spatial judgment occur as one

simultaneous temporal moment of predication. An active synthesis, such as questioning, declaring, describing, or aesthetic formulations such as a prose or a poetic articulation, will have the same attentional episteme in its rhythm of givenness-time, constituting what is judged with the same diaeresis, if that articulation is a well-formed sentential judgment (nonidiomatic in its complete sentential form). Husserl stresses that the active syntheses of “Auffassung” in their form of predication do not constitute time (*Zur Phänomenologie des Inneren Zeitbewusstseins* (1893–1917), 1966, p. 229), rather the flux of the intuitional form is the givenness-time which is the channel and medium of becoming for the objective moments of the thing, state-of-affair, event, or idea as *eide*. Only the aesthetic syntheses generate temporality in their continuing flux. Husserl’s identification of two kinds of aesthetic synthesis, that which is continual as a stream of integration into the now, the retentive, and the protentive, and, the diaeresis as the part-whole formulation of content in the attentional episteme as an individuated moment (cf. *Ideas II*, 1989, p. 21, fn 1) are the interrelated tissue of phenomenal and ideational movement that are as passive syntheses always the medium of each active synthesis in its mode of analyzing and characterizing the content.¹⁰ Phenomenology seeks to identify in its reflective analysis the *eide* within any state-of-affairs. The *eide* are the content identifications accomplished by reflection, either a material essence or an ideational *eidos*. This is Husserl’s chief concern: the formulation the content in its actual essence or *eidos*. Husserl never identified the individuated content moments in their phases as a recurrent, periodic style of diaeresis. Thus, when he speaks of the qualitative temporal moment, i.e. the “Zeitgestalt” of the diaeresis, he stresses the content as potential *eide* (*Analysen zur Passiven Synthesis, Aus Vorlesungs- Und Forschungsmanuskripten, 1918–1926*, 1966, pp. 142–143 [Par. 30]), rather than focusing his discussion on the horizontal window of attentive temporality as a condition of the *qualia* that becomes *eide*.

THE PERCEPTUAL LOGIC OF THE AGGREGATION AND THE PERCEPTUAL LOGIC OF THE QUANTUM

Kant enables us to comprehend how the attentive temporality functions as a condition of the *qualia* that becomes *eide* in a striking illustration in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. He describes two differing ways of viewing 13 coins on a table, one as a quantum of coins seen in its collective value, another as the material presence of each coin. He explicates how differing perceptions generated by the extensive magnitudes at the level of schema-image lead to the differing reflective concepts:

All appearances, then, are continuous magnitudes, alike in their intuition, as extensive, and in their mere perception (sensation, and with it reality) as intensive. If the synthesis of the manifold of appearance is interrupted, we have an aggregate of difference appearances, and not appearance as a genuine quantum. Such an aggregate is not generated by continuing without break (a) productive synthesis of a certain kind, but through repetition of an ever-ceasing synthesis. If I called thirteen thalers a quantum of money, I should be correct, provided my intention is to state the value of a mark of fine silver. For this is a continuous magnitude, in which no part is the smallest, and in which every part can constitute a piece of coin that always contains material for still smaller pieces. But if I understand by the phrase thirteen round thalers, so many coins, quite apart from the question of what their silver standard may be, I then use the phrase, quantum of thalers, inappropriately. It ought to be entitled an aggregate, that is, a number of pieces of money (1968, p. 204 [A 170, B 212]).

When Kant discriminates between a quantitative series composed of an “ever-ceasing synthesis,” i.e. an aggregation, and the quantum continuum of the “mark of silver,” he has reflected upon the “notion” imparted at the level of perception offered by a schema-image, yet his real interest is how a conscious intention governed by a speculative idea enlivens such an image in a perception. One’s conscious choice of how the coins are to be perceived governs the activity of the schema-image, it has been cued by a speculative decision to create the differing possibilities of quantitative organization that generates either a time-series of an “ever-ceasing” aggregation of coins or that of a mark of silver’s “quantum continuum.” Kant offers in this example two kinds of attentional episteme that I will explore as the fundamental difference in the structuring of perceptual and preceptual events. Kant will be described as a quantum thinker who even in his recognition of an aggregative time-series that differentiates each coin, formulates that understanding in accord with his actual quantum attentional episteme. Kant states that the aggregate of coins is that of “ever-ceasing synthesis,” which is his recognition that as a “quantum” perception of the mark of fine silver they are connected, but in the actuality of their material existence each one separated by a boundary—the ever-ceasing synthesis—that dissolves their “dynamic” cohesion as a quantum manifold. Kant’s concept of the boundary is a quantum understanding that I will show is rooted in a mathematical perspective of time-series in which any episode of judgment is given an interdependent diaeresis, rather than the isolation of independent wholes that will be the genuine aggregate diaeresis. Kant used the term “boundary” “Grenze” as an indicator for how the separateness of things can be discriminated in our temporal-spatial judgment given their apparent dynamic state of interrelatedness as we consciously conceive.¹¹ The truly aggregative thinker does not posit as Kant the necessity of seeing a dynamic interrelatedness as a natural manifold in the normal perception of states-of-affairs.

While any individual can choose to see with an analytical decision either the abstract collective quantum or the aggregate of material singularities in a focused observation, in a casual observation the differing points of view of the aggregative or the quantum arise without forethought and are synthetic (*Critique of Pure Reason*, 1968, pp. 48–49 [A 7, B 11–A 8, B 12]), bearing the style of the person’s attentional episteme. Moreover, even in the analytical play of judgment that can see either the aggregative or quantum field of particulars, what is seen will actually have characteristics of his or her proclivity of *attentional episteme*. Analysis is a willed metacognition; synthetic knowledge is conditioned by one’s a priori attentional episteme because it is a predication that emanates from the a priori depths of one’s intelligence (*Critique of Pure Reason*, 1968, p. 119 [B 116]). If examined as an artefactual record of a metacognitive act, analysis is revealed in its figural or verbal structure as bearing characteristics of the style of *attentional episteme*. Figural percepts, likewise, can be analytically dissected and so rendered, but always within the compositional style to some predicative degree of the attentional episteme. It is my contention that there is a proclivity in every individual towards either the aggregative or the quantum rooted in that person’s a priori event-schema, that is the diaeresis which shapes one’s assertion of an event-structure for every particular state-of-affairs judged. As I will discuss further, both the aggregative and the quantum organizations of content are mathematical possibilities in Kant’s meaning of the term (*Critique of Pure Reason*, 1968, pp. 195–196 [A 161, B 200]). Each has a manner of constituting relations that is different. The historical logics of continuity and continuum are forms of the aggregative mathematical organization; the historical logics which I call the quantum and the dialectic are of the quantum mathematical organization, which Kant in his discussion also calls “a manifold.” The event-structures imparted by a person of either mathematical proclivity will stress relationships in the parts and wholes that form the states-of-affairs that are discursive findings generated by the part-whole mathematical organizations.

A study of the career of thought of any person or persons who exhibit articulate conflicts of ideation can be studied as manifestations of the pre-reflective, individuative differences of attentional episteme—the foundational forms of the quantum and the aggregative—in any century. Rooted in the nature of human reason, the range of attentional epistemes is finite and recurrent. Every person exhibits one or the other of these essential aspects of attention as an emphasis in perception and thought, but among those whose reflective judgments seek to comprehend the human and the world with ever higher-orders of evidence and analysis, these differences become more manifest and articulate. For example, the exchange of the letters between Gottlob Frege

and Bertrand Russell, especially in their respective treatments of the nature of “thought,” reflects the dichotomy of quantum versus aggregative diaereses. Russell explains his mode of thinking to Frege by arguing that whereas Frege sees Mt. Blanc in a thought or judgment as a mediated, “meaning” term standing for the immeasurability of the sensed snowfields (i.e. a nondissective *eidos*),¹² he sees the mountain as the sensed objective whole which dominates every moment of the judgment (i.e. a dissective identification):

Concerning sense and meaning, I see nothing but difficulties which I cannot overcome. I explained the reasons why I cannot accept your view as a whole in the appendix to my book, and I still agree with what I there wrote. I believe that in spite of all its snowfields Mont Blanc itself is a component part of what is actually asserted in the proposition ‘Mont Blanc is more than 4000 metres high’. We do not assert the thought, for this is a private psychological matter: we assert the object of the thought, and this is, to my mind, a certain complex (an objective proposition, one might say) in which Mont Blanc is itself a component part. If we do not admit this, then we get the conclusion that we know nothing at all about Mount Blanc. This is why for me the meaning of a proposition is not the true, but a certain complex which (in the given case) is true (Frege, 1980, p. 169).

Another instance of this marked difference between the manifold (quantum) principle that mediates a state-of-affairs by its synthesizing rule and the aggregative conception of a state-of-affairs as either the singular entity or some form of interconnected singulars is the conflict between Frege and Russell over the term “manifold” itself. Frege writes to Russell:

You write that a class consisting of more than one object is in the first place not one object but many. While an ordinary class forms a whole, certain classes do not form wholes but are mere manifolds, and what gives rise to contradictions is that they are nevertheless regarded as units. . . . If a class name is not meaningless, then, in my opinion, it means an object. In saying something about a manifold or set, we treat it as a object. A class name can appear as the subject of a singular proposition and therefore has the character of a proper name, e.g., ‘the class of prime numbers comprises infinitely many objects’ . . . ‘The Romans conquered Gaul’ must be conceived in the same way. The Romans are here the Roman people, held together by customs, institutions and laws. An army is in this sense a whole, or system. We regard every physical body as a whole, or system, consisting of parts (Frege, 1980, pp. 139–140).

The pervasive difference of attentional epistemes that surface in the conceptual conflicts between Frege and Russell extend to the famous paradox which threatened to overturn Frege’s philosophy of mathematics. In their correspondence, as early as the first letters in 1902, Russell challenged set theory with the paradox of “the predicate of being a predicate which cannot be predicated of itself.” Russell writes:

Let *w* be the predicate of being a predicate which cannot be predicated of itself. Can *w* be predicated of itself? From either answer follows its contradictory. We must therefore conclude that *w* is not a predicate. Likewise, there is no class (as a whole) of those classes which, as wholes, are not

members of themselves. From this I conclude that under certain circumstances a definable set does not form a whole... The above contradiction can be expressed in Peano's notation as follows:

$$w = \text{cls } \cap x \ni (x \sim _x) \supset: w_w. = /w \sim _w.1$$

[note1: This formula says that if w is the class of x such that $x \notin w$, then $w \in w \leftrightarrow w \notin w$] (Frege, 1980, pp. 130–131).

Frege answers that the paradox is remarkable, and will cause him to rethink his own Basic Laws of Arithmetic, yet Frege adds a criticism of Russell's formulation of the paradox that he intimates will perhaps enable him to find a solution that preserves his own theoretical approach. That criticism is tendered through a 'manifold' perspective of ordering the paradox itself (Frege, 1980, pp. 132–133):

Incidentally, the expression 'A predicate is predicated of itself' does not seem exact to me. A predicate is as a rule a first-level function which requires an object as argument and which cannot therefore have itself as argument (subject). Therefore I would rather say: 'A concept is predicated of its own extension'. If the function $\iota(\xi)$ is a concept, I designate its extension (or the pertinent class) by ' $\acute{\epsilon}\iota(\epsilon_)$ ' (though now I have some doubts about the justification for this). ' $\iota(\acute{\epsilon}\iota(\epsilon_))$ ' or ' $\acute{\epsilon}\iota(\epsilon_)(\acute{\epsilon}\iota(\epsilon_))$ ' is then the predication of the concept $\iota(\xi_)$ of its own extension.

Frege employs the Kantian notion of the "specification" to create a concept for the predicative extension, allowing thus "a range of values" in the new manifold which may include both a positive and negative manifestation of the predicative extension. He pointed out to Russell that it is a part of a whole that is the initial predication, and that Russell's use of "a predicate" is to treat it as a whole, overlooking the subject of which it is predicated. By creating the manifold of the predicate itself, it now can become this whole that may have its own range of parts—some of which may disallow its existence in certain cases.¹³ What Russell does as an aggregative thinker is to treat each entity, whether part or whole, as a whole in that moment. Russell was uncomfortable with a mathematics based upon the existence of classes and their members from the outset. To think in classes with members is quantum (manifold) thought. When Russell makes a class a member of itself, he is thinking as an aggregative thinker where there is a "one to one" correspondence between every term and every judged entity. This is analogous to seeing Mont Blanc as a whole, and not conceiving it as an abstract term for countless snowfields. Russell explains in a later letter to Frege in this period of their correspondence that he seeks a mathematics without classes. Russell says to Frege that Frege's notion of a "range of values" under a concept is perhaps fruitful, even as Russell rejects the notion remarking that he thinks he can state functions in isolation without needing to associate them with a higher ordering concept (1980, p. 166). Russell

had written to Frege in a similar vein earlier on August 8, 1902 (Frege, 1980, pp. 143–144):

Many thanks for your explanations concerning ranges of values. I now understand the necessity of treating ranges of values not merely as aggregates of objects or as systems. But I still lack a direct intuition, a direct insight into what you call a range of values: logically it is necessary, but it remains for me a justified hypothesis.

Analytically, one can understand every perspective, but as Russell intimates, it is not possible to have one's own synthesis, i.e. direct intuition, of a *diaeresis* that is not one's own. Each predication, whether figural or verbal will be the outward marks of one's deeper comprehension.

DISCERNING THE AGGREGATIVE AND THE QUANTUM DIAERESIS IN THE VERBAL SENTENCE

The complete temporal concretum of the aggregative or the quantum sentence realized through distinct and recurring grammatical form as it comes to expression in the well-formed sentence. Each sentence is a temporal concretum, and the thought path of the sentence as it is formed, is the experience of the temporal rhythm—the Aristotelian period—of that attentive episteme. The quantum is realized with a “nondissective” grammar. The aggregate with a “dissective” grammar.¹⁴

The snow fell—nondissective; the snowflakes fell—dissective.

The former lacks adjectival specificity, emphasizing the unity of a state-of-affairs; the latter articulates discrete entities and their properties. For example, the noun phrase “Nansen, who explored the Arctic. . .” is nondissective, while the noun phrase “The arctic explorer Nansen. . .” is dissective.

Some of the grammatical differences that differentiate the quantum/nondissective from the aggregative/dissective vision:

- The grammar that constitutes the quantum of each sentential judgment is nondissectively stated through collective attribution: a preference for noncount and plural nouns, indefinite articles, the weak sense of “the,” or determiners such as “some,” “many,” “few,” “every,” and predicate adjectives and adverbs that articulate a general condition.
- The grammar that constitutes the aggregative diaeresis of each sentential judgment is dissectively stated, creating distinct moments in time or locations in space: a preference for count and proper nouns, definite articles, premodifying adjectives, and adverbs that are specific in terms of time, place, and manner.

The “well-formed” sentence is one that articulates the entire predication with a complete thought. Each complete thought is a temporal journey, a “thought path” as Gottlob Frege asserts (Frege, 1980, pp. 157–158). One can recognize how temporal phase is linked to temporal phase in the complete thought journey of the predication by denoting with symbolic logic the phases that form that entire part-whole set of relations. Time stretch increments can be conjoined into a temporal concretum in each sentential judgment in four manners, as indicated in the formulas: entailment “ \subset ”, succession (if-then) “ \supset ”, intersective encounter “ \bullet ,” and equivalence “ \equiv .” The design of a temporal concretum depends upon a dependency/independency relationship signaled by these forms of connecting parts and wholes. One’s experience of time is generated by the intentional flux carried by the continuities, discontinuities, and coexistences of these interrelations. The interconnections, achieved grammatically with verbal, prepositional, adverbial, and other syntactic forms, generate a historical logic.¹⁵ Verbal tense is not significant in considering the time stretch design of the sentential judgment; it is a higher level of foundedness. All verbal times serve, besides their “objective (natural) time”, the forms of givenness-time (Husserl) as it interconnects parts and wholes to generate the episodic form of the temporal concretum.

\supset is a succession of one temporal path by another, as $A \supset B$. Succession is not an “implication” of “if A, then B”. The succession is considered as the “weak sense” of if/then, analogous to a “conditional” relation, rather than a material implication (cf. Carnap, *Introduction to Symbolic Logic and Its Applications*, 1958, p. 8). The succession is merely a setting of one temporal path after the other as a sequence.

\bullet is an intersection of one temporal path with another, so that the temporalities meet in a moment.

\equiv is an equivalence of two temporal paths. Equivalence is not identity. In a diaeresis one imparts a juxtaposition that is deemed as two faces of the same entity or state-of-affairs. The equivalence may also be an analogue or some other tropic comparative.

An example of the time flux of the sentential judgment generated by the interconnecting temporal paths: $(A \supset B) \bullet C$: where “A” is a temporal path linked to the temporal path “B.” “C” is a third temporal path that intersects either “A” or “B”. A typical sentence in this style of temporal concretum might be:

[A [He ran \supset B [and (he) jumped [\bullet C [the leap completing the high jump event].¹⁶

Two separate event moments are linked, and the third event-moment denoting further information concerning the temporal concretum as a whole.

The quantum temporal concretum that took up a state of affairs of a bowl holding sugar would be articulated as:

The bowl holding the sugar is blue
 $[f(A_i) [\text{holding the sugar} [\supset f(A_j) [s_b \text{ is blue} [\equiv A_{ij} [s_c \text{ The bowl}]]]]]]]$.

Note the post-modifying adjective and the verbal noun phrase which offers a “how” as the general condition.

The aggregative temporal concretum, in its continuity variant,¹⁷ would be articulated as:

The blue bowl holds the sugar
 $[C_i [s_a \text{ holds the sugar} [\bullet B_j [s_b \text{ blue} [\subset A_i [s_c \text{ The bowl}]]]]]]]$

Note the pre-modifying adjective and the transitive verb that offers a specific direct object of the particular “what” held by the property-specific bowl.

DISCERNING THE AGGREGATIVE AND THE QUANTUM DIAERESES IN THE FIGURAL COMPOSITION

The figural ground of the percept will precede such a verbal predication in actual cognition. There is a figural lexicon that generates the verbal equivalent of the aggregative or quantum organization. By studying painters over centuries who have written well-formed sentences that were artefacts of analysis, I have been able to acquire evidence of their respective verbal historical logics. Then, by identifying recurrent constancies in these painters’ geometry of figuration, I have been able to read the paintings as figural temporal concretums. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing contended in his time-honoured essay on the verbal art of narrative and the figural art of painting that the latter as a finished canvas is a static realization of a meaning, while the former realizes meaning only sentence by sentence.¹⁸ My analysis has shown me that the painting may be finally the static artefact, but one can trace its phasal development as a temporal concretum by attending how the eye is moved through the complete expression. Geometrical forms in their interrelationships are the vocabulary. The rendering of these forms reflect generational and national characteristics, as well as personal style,¹⁹ but as quadrilaterals, triangular forms, ellipses, circles, and spheres, they are clear as pictorial fundamentals in every century of the human record.²⁰ There is in any painterly composition the personal style, which I argue is that person’s historical logic over a career of thought, but of course one sees the tenets of the genre in a particular generation, as well as the national characteristics of composition and the regional (West, Asia, etc.) norms. One must discern these differences in comprehending the cultural meaning of a

painting. I have addressed these differences in several publications.²¹ In this paper I focus solely on the personal style as the painter's historical logic over a career of activity. However, I will conclude this paper with reference to my study of adolescents who created three-dimensional geometric compositions in a sandbox, contending that the artist's personal style is not intentionally chosen, but as the adolescent evidence suggests, a pre-reflective style of figural diaeresis is the conative impetus of such a style.

CHARACTERISTICS THAT EQUATE THE VERBAL
HISTORICAL LOGIC TO ITS FIGURAL FOUNDATIONAL
CHARACTERISTICS

The characteristics of the verbal historical logic reflect a fundamental difference between what I have discussed as the contrasting quantum and aggregative diaereses which emanate from the figural lexicon of perceptual cognition. One must understand both the figural and verbal within this dichotomy of the cognitive diaeresis.

Quantum verbal characteristics

1. A whole state is described (albeit from a distinct perspective), rather than an incremental piece of a whole. Process-oriented: the predicate is an operational reality for subject. Thus, the subject is equivalent “≡” with its predicate. “Accident” is disallowed insofar as a non-interdependent element.
2. Collective and general attribution using **nondissective** grammar—noncount nouns, indefinite differentiators and articles, post-modifying adjectives and generalized adverbial states.
3. Dynamic verbs that are non-agentive or when agentive suggesting a moment of a coexistent state of elements (e.g. rain, snow, drink, write, play, talk, ripen, grow up, improve, turn red) that generate a general understanding of the event, i.e. nondissective.
4. Verbal nouns, gerunds, noncount nouns, and plurals offer collective or indefinite specification.
5. Tight sentence structure (Asyndeton).
6. Singular time or manner, stated nondissectively, so that it is an island in time even as it endures, rather than suggesting preceding or succeeding moments.
7. Experimental language: demonstrating the atypical, specialized, or seldom seen as a “pattern” of elements worth attending.

Graphic Equivalents

1. Platonic solid(s) contains main content and movement of painting (circle, square, triangle, also pyramid or other derived forms). Although disparate elements may be beyond containment, a shift of Platonic solid within painting will contain these elements imaginatively. Thus, a coexistent state is constantly suggested. [Accident is denied rather than affirmed, as in Continuity].
2. All forms and areas interconnected by similar features, colors, conjoining line, shared centers of gravity.
3. Contrasts and asymmetries heighten through difference the functional or active reality depicted. One sees it as a set of interdependent elements in the tension of the reciprocal coexistence.
4. The cohering Platonic solid that integrates is more evident than the separate elements so integrated. The Gestalt of the form dominates.
5. Sameness of color, line, and other features, as well as interdependent setting, creates a tight unity.
6. The Gestalt emphasis generates the sense of a quantum period whole in itself. Any movement would be within the elements of the whole, such as a shift in perspective, rather than a preceding or subsequent visual reality.
7. Odd juxtapositions, asymmetry, and distinct contrasts offer a Gestalt pattern that is unexpected.

Aggregative verbal characteristics

1. Parts incrementally added to form a whole. A section or segment of a summative whole described. Accidents that do not belong to main whole addressed can be aspects of predication.
2. Property-oriented: particularization of person, place, or thing by grammatical differentiators—proper nouns, count nouns, adjectives, definite articles, and other dissective identifiers.
3. Stative verbs: usually infinitives, copulars, intransitives that enable one to view fully dissective elements of the event.
4. Nominalization (nouns and noun phrases pervade).
5. Loose Syntax (polysyndeton).
6. Single moment in time or manner differentiated dissectively so that another, succeeding moment can be imagined.
7. Typical language: nouns are commonly understood; specialized or experimental semantics or experimental syntax are avoided (so as to create a durational sense of relatedness in audience).

Graphic Equivalents

1. Separate elements organized as a collective whole by spatial organizer, often a quadrilateral, that indicates an in-common instance. Separate elements in or beyond the organizing form can appear “accidental” insofar as not being of the theme or “ratio” of the in-common form.
2. Each figural form or area of the in-common form has its own center of gravity, integrity, resisting complete interdependence.
3. Encompassing form of the contained figural forms, and the separate gravities of dispersed figural forms, depict an inertial state (for that moment).
4. Each figural form is well-articulated and distinct from other element.
5. Complexly articulated forms and areas interrupt tight symmetry or unity (thus, polysyndetonic).
6. Some form or feature indicates this is but a moment in time, or a passing condition.
7. Commonly understood stable meanings communicated by repetition of conventional form and area graphics.

DISCERNING THE QUANTUM DIAERESIS IN FIGURAL COMPOSITION

The quantum historical logic uses sharply articulated Platonic solids and their linear and planimetric abstractions.²² The figural historical-logical expression of each particular visual moment as an instantiation of the idea (intuition) that coheres the whole is symbolically “ $f(A_n) \equiv A_n$.” This organization underlies Kant’s understanding of the “manifold” as well as Frege’s “set theory.” Platonic 360 degree solids are present in all compositions as a cohering presence, as well as triangular sections that function to emphasize a specific, instantiating moment of that idea. The figures of representational paintings and geometric areas of color, point, line, and plane in non-representational paintings are configured into the Platonic forms. The quantum thinker Jacques-Louis David painted in a century, the Enlightenment, that mathematics was prominent as aesthetic style,²³ thus one can see more readily in his works this organization. His verbal historical logic is that of a quantum thinker.²⁴ I will examine his figural historical logic in two paintings, *The Death of Socrates (1787)* and *The Oath of the Horatii (1784)* (Figures 1 and 2).

In *The Death of Socrates*, Socrates and those who attend him in his last hours are configured in a trapezoid. Two triangular groups forming each of the parallels impinge on Socrates who is a rhomboidal configuration that joins them into the trapezoidal quadrilateral. Socrates as a rhomboidal configuration is the idea



Figure 1. David, *Death of Socrates*, 1787, Metropolitan Museum, New York



Figure 2. David, *Oath of the Horatii*, 1784, Louvre, Paris

“ A_n ” that is instantiated “ $f(A_n)$ ” by the adjoining triangulations of students of his thought, reporting on his death and carrying his thought further. The painting shows individuals climbing the stairs into the day, a reference perhaps to the movement towards surface actuality from the Cave Analogy. The triangular groupings inscribed in the trapezoid, as well as Socrates rhomboidal form that joins them, are an indication of a Platonic solid where such circumscription of internested forms occur (Livio, 2003, p. 67). In *The Oath of the Horatii* the men form a triangular form set upon the rectangular floor, their shadows impinging upon the trapezoidal figuration of women and children. The “Oath” taking is an instantiation ($f(A_i) \equiv$) of a distinct masculine value that is the ground of their position “ A_i .” One can see the triangular shadow as the dark implications of this act that destroy the children of the mothers, the alternate quadrilateral idea “ A_j .” This tragic possibility is given in David’s 1789 painting of *The Lictors bringing back to Brutus the body of his son*, where the mother reaches out towards the body.

Examples from a century later of the quantum thinkers Vincent Van Gogh²⁵ and Paul Cézanne²⁶ illustrate the recurrence of this geometric juxtaposition of the triangle and quadrilateral square or rectangle as a historical-logical narrative. In Paul Cézanne’s still life with apples (1890–1894) (Figure 3), the apples form a triangular figuration resting on a circle that impinge upon a rectangular section of wood. Circular forms that include the apples move the eye so



Figure 3. Cézanne, *Still Life with Apples*, 1888–93, sold at Sotheby’s New York, 1993



Figure 4. Van Gogh, *Bedroom at Arles*, 1889 (Third Version), Musée d'Orsay, Paris

that the apples can be seen through imaginative projection as a revolving form around the canvas. Erle Loran argues that this circular movement occurs in every Cézanne canvas.²⁷ Vincent Van Gogh's *Bedroom in Arles* (Figure 4) has a triangular swathe formed by the angle of the chairs table and bed whose point impinges on a rectangular painting over the bed. Perhaps this place of sleep is an instantiation " $f(A_i)$ " of the painting of the countryside above the head of the bed, a pastoral scene " A_i ." The triangular swathe of wire that hangs the rectangular picture reinforces the juxtaposition of triangle and rectangle. The picture on the left-hand side of the room suggests that the triangular swathe could be moved in that direction, instantiating another event/perspective

DISCERNING THE AGGREGATIVE DIAERESIS IN FIGURAL COMPOSITION

The continuity aggregative diaeresis is symbolically " $C \cdot B \subset A$ ", which indicates the temporal paths of two particular realities meeting for a moment, both entailed by a more durational temporal reality. I will illustrate the continuity variant of the aggregative historical logic with two artists, Eduoard



Figure 5. Manet, *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe*, 1862–63, Musée d'Orsay, Paris

Manet²⁸ and Diego Velazquez.²⁹ Manet's *Le Dejeunur sur L'herbe* (1862–1863) (Figure 5) has the three lunching figures, particularized in their separate postures, with the woman in the sunlight further in the rear, all contained in a rhomboidal swathe. There are two events so contained, the three lunching figures and then the kneeling woman. The figural aggregative logic in its continuity variant never circumscribes figures or objects tightly with a geometrical form, rather contains them “C” allowing space. The containing space is the comprehending intuition (or idea). This spatial roominess reflects the property-oriented character of this historical logic, where each entity is particularized, and its in-common character suggested by a framing geometric figure. The in-commonness is the containing/entailing quadrilateral, whose idea in this composition may be suggested as “everyday pleasure as beauty.” In the assertoric modal variant of continuity aggregative logic, the frame is always rhomboidal. Both Manet and Velazquez have this modality of continuity historical logic. The assertoric modality of verbal logic is that of a sequence of event structures, or as Kant puts it “action and consequence” (see Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 1968, pp. 109–110 [A 75, B 100–A 76, B 101]). The figural assertoric modality emphasizes diagonals that lead the eye dynamically, that is from one event structure to the next event structure. Kandinsky discusses the diagonal in his *Point and Line to Plane* (1979, pp. 57–61, 130–131). The

rhomboidal as a quadrilateral form offers a completeness, i.e. 360 degrees, but one that suggests the dynamic character of a triangular convergence, diagonally slanted sides of the rhomboidal form. The trees create the converging recession drawing the eye back from the lunching group to the pastoral icon of the kneeling woman. Diego Velázquez's *Las Meninas* (1656) (Figure 6) similar to the composition of Manet has a rhomboidal swathe framing the family of Philip IV. The top of the rhomboid is the doorframe above the separate figure in the rear, whose presence is the second event structure. The eye is drawn back by the receding sides of the rhomboid towards the figure in the rear. The



Figure 6. Velázquez, *Las Meninas*, 1656, Prado, Madrid

rhomboidal idea is the durational reality of the Court and its functionaries captured in this one moment of portraiture.

ADOLESCENT IDENTICAL TWINS WITH THE CONTINUITY
VARIANT OF AGGREGATIVE LOGIC

The adolescent identical twins Mark and Morris share the same modal variant of historical logic, which is the problematic modality of continuity aggregative logic.³⁰ The problematic modality examines one situation in its genus, species, and differentia.³¹ My research has shown that identical twins have this exact identity in thought, with small variations that show absolute individuality within this category (Blum, *Continuity, Quantum, Continuum, and Dialectic*, pp. 439–475). The sand table composition of both Mark (Figure 7) and Morris (Figure 8) show the loose quadrilateral containment of the figures. The problematic modality of continuity logic is not the converging rhomboid as in the assertoric modality, rather the vertical stasis of the rectangular quadrilateral. Kandinsky speaks of the vertical as generating this stasis (1979, pp. 130–131). Mark and Morris speak of movement from one area to the next in an incremental manner, dwelling on the properties of life conveyed by each area depicted. The genus is understood by them as each person's life choices, the species the several life choices, and the differentia the particulars that make up the particular species area.



Figure 7. Mark's Sandbox



Figure 8. Morris' Sandbox

ADOLESCENT FRATERNAL TWINS WITH QUANTUM-BASED
HISTORICAL LOGIC: THE PURE QUANTUM AND THE
DIALECTICAL

Anton and Bruno share the same apodeictic modality (cf. Kant, 1968, pp. 109–110), but differ in the quantum organizations of each verbal sentence and each figural composition. Fraternal twins do not emanate from the same egg, and thus their coexistent epigenesis has biological differences. My research into verbal and figural historical logic with identical and fraternal twins has



Figure 9. Anton's Sandbox

suggested to me psychogenetic bases in the thought paths of persons. Anton is a dialectical thinker³² whose apodeictic modality verbally is that of a single event claim that offers disjunctive options of phasal development “ $(\forall B_i, B_j, \dots, B_n) \subset A_n$.” Figurally, one sees a Platonic solid of circular composition which harbors circumscribed triangles (Figure 9). It is meant to be seen from above as a series of options that cohere in a developmental, circular whole.

Bruno's historical logic is the pure quantum, similar to Van Gogh and Cézanne, except for his apodeictic modality.³³ Cézanne with his converging triangular swathes that lead one upward and around, are of the assertoric modality. Van Gogh presents more stasis with his triangular swathes. One can vary the perspective, each angle somewhat changing the saliences of the scene: one is encouraged to deliberate how the genus, species, and differentia that are presented can shift places, a genus becoming a differentia, etc. The triangular figure in Bruno's sand box composition is seen from above as the peaked roof of a square house (Figure 10). There is a stability of one event, which can be disjunctively explored from differing angles as observation. Bruno states in his post construction interview “that one can stand over it and view it from any angle,” and that there is no one point of its beginning.

The apodeictic modality is “the necessary,” and its figural enclosing form is the circle or that which is a perfect sphere (see Plato, *Timaeus*, 34 b, 36 c). Of



Figure 10. Bruno's Sandbox

the painters, Tiepolo is an apodeictic continuity thinker, Gauguin an apodeictic quantum thinker, and Picasso an apodeictic dialectical thinker.

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NOTES

¹ Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*, tr. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: Macmillan, 1968), p. 204 [A 170, B 212]. Further reference to this text and edition are in parentheses.

² Husserl, Edmund. *Experience and Judgment*, tr. James S. Churchill and Karl Ameriks (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), pp. 258–259 [Par. 64 C.]. Further reference to this text and edition is in parentheses.

³ Husserl, Edmund *Logical Investigations*, tr. J. N. Findlay, Two volumes (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), Vol. 2, pp. 436–440. Further reference to these text and edition is in parentheses.

⁴ Husserl uses this term indirectly to refer to the fundamental parts and wholes that cohere phenomena. In the passage where he introduces the term diaeresis he states: “What is it that is ‘bound together’ and ‘separated’ in the judgment? Further: which among the multiple judgment-forms which tradition distinguishes is the most primitive, i.e., that one which, as being the undermost, and founding all others, must be presupposed, and by an essential necessity conceived as underlying, in order that other forms of a ‘higher level’ can be founded on it?”

⁵ See Peters, F. E. *Greek Philosophical Terms, A Historical Lexicon* (New York: New York University Press, 1967), pp. 34–36.

⁶ Husserl using Leibnizian language makes this point clearly in his *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis*, Lectures on Transcendental Logic, tr. Anthony J. Steinbock (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001), pp. 635 [34], 637 [36], and 642 [39]. Further reference to this text and edition: See also Husserl's Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, Second Book: *Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution*, tr. Richard Rojcewicz and Andre Schuwer (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989), pp. 289–290, on this understanding of monadic individuation of experience. As I will argue, had Husserl been able to cooperate with Dilthey on studies of the grammatical stylistics of thinkers, both men would have offered each other increasing insight into the genesis of idea out of the inner temporal rhythms of pre-egological “lived experience.” This text will be referred to in further references as Ideas II.

Kant was chary of predeterminative functions of mind insofar as judgments that were necessarily individual and idiosyncratic. He termed this mistaken vision “preformation,” referring to Leibniz and others who seemed locked in the scholastic tradition of individuation. For Kant, the a priori was always chosen by the reflective judgment in its constitutive form. While Kant saw habits of mind in persons that had an individual style, he saw them as always self-chosen maxims. See *Critique of Pure Reason*, 1968, pp. 174–175 [B 167–168], and pp. 547–549 [A 665–A 668, B 693–696].

⁷ See Langer, Jonas. *The Origins of Logic, One to Two Years* (Orlando: Academic Press, 1986), pp. 15–17. Further reference to this text and edition.

⁸ Immanuel Kant discusses the structure and function of the ‘I’ or pure ‘I’ of apperception most extensively in *Critique of Pure Reason*, 1968, 368 ff., 375 ff. Husserl, in what seems exact concordance with Kant, states in his 1913 Ideas: “Jedes Erlebnis, als zeitliches Sein, ist Erlebnis seines reinen Ich;” Edmund Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und Phänomenologischen Philosophie* (Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1950), p. 198. The English translation of this text which offers a thorough discussion of the structure and function of the “pure ego” is Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, First Book: *General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology*, tr. F. Kersten (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1983), pp. 225–226 [Section 192]. Further reference to this text and edition is in parentheses as Ideas I.

⁹ Husserl, Edmund. *Zur Phänomenologie des Innereren Zeitbewusstseins (1893–1917)* (Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966), pp. 228–229 [No. 30 Dreierlei Phasen]. Further reference to this text and edition.

¹⁰ See also Husserl's description of the three forms of continuity in the flux of time, which combine these two aesthetic forms of flowing synthesis in *Analysen zur Passiven Synthesis, Aus Vorlesungs-Und Forschungsmanuskripten, 1918–1926*, ed. Margot Fleischer (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966), pp. 412–413. Further reference to this text and edition.

¹¹ See a discussion of Kant's use of the term “boundary” “Grenze” in Rudolf Eisler, *Kant-Lexikon* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1961), pp. 225–226. Kant writes of demarcating “boundaries” between things that enable knowledge of them, even as such cognitive organizers are impositions on the complex interrelations of their existence, negatively delimiting the unknown richness of this interrelation; see Par. 57 of his Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics.

¹² See Frege's view in: Gottlob Frege, *Philosophical and Mathematical Correspondence*, tr. Hans Kaal (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 163. Further reference to this text and edition in parentheses.

¹³ See a recognition of this manifold ordering by Frege to address the ostensible predicational paradox in the Introduction to Bertrand Russell, *Toward the “Principles of Mathematics” 1900–1902*, ed. Gregory H. Moore (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), p. xxxvii. The editor,

Gregory H. Moore, calls the Fregeian manifold “a hierarchy of objects,” treating it as an aggregative thinker would. Further reference to this text and edition. An extensive argument addressing the Russell paradox with the manifold complex that subsumes the paradoxical ‘predicate’ is offered by Frege in his 1903 *Grundgesetze der Arithmetik*, Volume II. See *The Frege Reader*, ed. Michael Beaney (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), pp. 279–289.

¹⁴ See Nelson Goodman for the logical distinction of the disjunctive, which is the logic of the aggregative attentional episteme, *The Structure of Appearance* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1951), 54 ff. See Eli Hirsch, “Essence and Identity in Identity and Individuation,” ed. Milton K. Munitz (New York: New York University Press, 1971), p. 45, for the logic of the nondisjunctive attentional episteme.

¹⁵ I use the symbolic expressions of “sentential connectives” of Rudolf Carnap, *Introduction to Symbolic Logic and its Applications*, tr. William H. Meyer and John Wilkinson (New York: Dover, 1958), pp. 6–9. Further reference to this text and edition.

¹⁶ The use of brackets and parentheses in symbolic expressions follows the standard usage of Hans Reichenbach, *Elements of Symbolic Logic* (New York: Macmillan, 1947), pp. 105, 147, and 237, in Reichenbach’s discussion of “closed expressions.” See also Rudolf Carnap’s *Introduction to Symbolic Logic and Its Applications*, 1958, p. 7, in his discussion of brackets and parentheses is in accord with Reichenbach.

For models of the correlation and juxtaposition of grammar with their symbolic value, see Hornstein, Norbert. *Logic as Grammar* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1987), and a discussion of this method of notation in James D. McCawley, *Everything that Linguists have Always Wanted to Know about Logic** but were ashamed to ask (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 87 ff. Further reference to these texts and editions is in parentheses.

¹⁷ I discuss the two major variants of aggregative historical logic and the two major variants of quantum logic in my text Blum, Mark E. *Continuity, Quantum, Continuum, and Dialectic: The Foundational Logics of Western Historical Thinking* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006). Further reference to this text and edition is in parentheses.

¹⁸ Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, Laocoön, *An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry*, tr. Edward Allen McCormick (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1962), 78 ff.

¹⁹ Heinrich Wölfflin’s work at the onset of the twentieth century, which discriminates between generational, national, and personal style is still a fecund source for this path of analysis. See Wölfflin, Heinrich. *Principles of Art History, The Problem of the Development of Style in Later Art*, tr. M. D. Hottinger (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 1950).

²⁰ Wassily Kandinsky’s work on the figural meaning of geometric point, line, and plane was a lexicon for his own work, but as I contend a lexicon for all geometrical meaning as logical formal expression. While my analyses and interpretations of the geometrical forms of figural historical logic go beyond Kandinsky’s study, I see validity in all his assertions. See Kandinsky, Wassily. *Point and Line to Plane*, tr. Howard Dearstyne and Hilla Rebay (New York: Dover Publications, 1979). Further reference to this text and edition is in parentheses.

²¹ I have written articles that have examined Western paintings from the eighteenth through the nineteenth centuries in terms of generational elements of style in Mark E. Blum, “The European Metahistorical Narrative and Its Changing ‘Metaparadigms’ in the Modern Age (Part II): Western Painting 1815–1914,” to be published in the collection *Crossing Bridges: Essays and Transgressions* by Springer Verlag. I have examined national differences in painterly style between the United States and Germany, over generations, in Blum, Mark E. Conventions of National Historical Judgment: Outgrowing the Norms (<http://louisville.edu/a-s/history/blum/index.html>).

²² For a discussion of platonic solids see Livio, Mario. *The Golden Ratio, The Story of Phi, The World’s Most Astonishing Number* (New York: Broadway Books, 2003), pp. 67–68. Further

reference to this text and edition is in parentheses. See Plato, Meno (pp. 82–85) and Timaeus (pp. 53–56).

²³ See as an example of the prominence of mathematical aesthetics the controversy of Giles Hussey and William Hogarth in Sheila O’Connell, “An Explanation of Hogarth’s ‘Analysis of Beauty’ Plate I, Figure 66,” in *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 126, No. 970 (Jan., 1984), pp. 32–34. Hussey stressed the sharp delineation of geometrical forms in composing representational realities; see Bowyer, William. *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century Comprizing Biographical Memoirs* (London: Printed for the Author, 1814), pp. 177–192. Hogarth argued with the sharpness of line in these forms, preferring the wavy or “serpentine line.” See Hogarth, William. *The Analysis of Beauty* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), especially pp. 48–59. I will present below that Hogarth, as an aggregative historical-logical thinker, preferred a looser line than a quantum thinker, such as Hussey, even as he used quadrilateral forms in his compositions. Further references to these texts and editions are in parentheses.

Hussey’s characteristic sentence as cited from Bowyer is: “I accept you, not as a scholar, but as a friend;” (Bowyer, 1814, p. 179). The symbolic analysis of the sentence is $[f(A_i) [s_a \text{ I accept you } [\equiv [\sim A_i \vee A_i [s_b \text{ not as a scholar, but as a friend}]]]]]$. Hogarth’s characteristic sentence, taken from his chapter on ‘Composition with the Waving-Line’ is “There is scarce a room in any house whatever, where one does not see the waving-line employ’d in some way or other.” (Hogarth, 1997, p. 48). The symbolic analysis of the sentence is $[C_i [s_a \text{ where one does not see the waving-line employ'd } [\bullet B_i [s_b \text{ where one does not see } [C A_i p[s_c \text{ There is scarce a room}_{A_i} \text{ in any house whatsoever}_p]]]]]]]$.

²⁴ J’oubliais peu à peu les mauvaises formes francaises qui se presentment sans cesse sous ma main.

(Louis Hauteoeur, Louis David (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1954), p. 49.)

I am neglecting little by little the poor form of French that presents itself unceasingly under my hand.

$[f(A_n)_{n+1}(pqr) \equiv A_n(pqr)] \wp [f(\varepsilon A_i, A_j, \dots A_n)_{n+1}]$: where ‘ $f(A_n)_{n+1}$ ’ are the functional moments or parts whose sum instantiate, and thereby are equivalent to the whole ‘ A_n ’. There are a sequence of related actions implied by the ‘ $f(\varepsilon A_i, A_j, \dots A_n)_{n+1}$ ’. ‘Pqr’ are differentiators that further specify the functions of the subject and/or the subject itself but are not central to the temporal flux that is established

$[f(A)_i [s_a \text{ les mauvaises formes francaises } [\supset f(A)_j p [s_b \text{ qui se presentment sans cesse}_{f(A_j)} \text{ sous ma main}_p [\equiv A_{ij} p [s_c \text{ J'oubliais}_{A_{ij}} \text{ peu à peu}_p]]]]]]]$.

$[f(A)_i [s_a \text{ the poor form of French } [\supset f(A)_j p [s_b \text{ that presents itself unceasingly}_{f(A_j)} \text{ under my hand}_p [\equiv A_{ij} p [s_c \text{ I am neglecting}_{A_{ij}} \text{ little by little}_p]]]]]]]$.

²⁵ Je trouvez assez étrange qu’ il me reclamé un tableau de tournesols en m’offrant en échange je suppose, ou comme cadeau, quelques études qu’il a laissées ici.

(Douglas Cooper, Paul Gauguin: 45 Lettres .. Vincent, Théo et Jo van Gogh, Staatsuitgeverij, ’s-Gravenhage: La Bibliotheque des Arts, 1983, p. 253 (Note).

I think it is rather strange that he claims a picture of sunflowers from me, offering me in exchange, I suppose, or as a gift, some studies he left here.

(Letter 571, January 17, 1889— Van Gogh, Vincent. *The Complete Letters of Vincent Van Gogh*, Second Edition, Vol. III, (Greenwich, CO: New York Graphic Society, 1959), p. 120).

Van Gogh’s quantum diaeresis is of the problematic modality. See below for footnote 31 (and its text in body of paper) for a discussion of this modality of thought as it effects the structure of the main diaeresis.

I immediately reported to His Majesty, God keep him, what your Excellency tells me in it about the firedogs, whereupon His Majesty was freed from the anxiety which he felt judging that they had reached Spain.

(Letter to Massimi, March 28, 1654, *Burlington Magazine*, No. 685 (April, 1960): 166.

$[C_i [s_a \text{ de quanta V.S. Illma. en ella me dize de los morillos } [\bullet B_j [s_b \text{ Luego di quenta } [C A_i p [s_c \text{ a S.M.} C_i \text{ Dios le guarde}_p [\wedge (C_i \supset B_j) \subset A_i [\wedge C_j [s_d \text{ jugando que hubiesen llegado a Espa\~{n}a } [\bullet B_j [s_e \text{ del cuidado con que estava } [C A_j [s_f \text{ con que salio S.M. } [\wedge (C_i \supset B_j) \subset A_i]]]]]]]]]]]$.

$[C_i [s_a \text{ what your Excellency tells me in it about the firedogs } [\bullet B_j [s_b \text{ I immediately reported } [C A_i [s_c \text{ to His Majesty}_{A_i} \text{ God keep him}_p [\wedge (C_i \supset B_j) \subset A_i [\wedge [C_j [s_d \text{ judging that they had reached Spain } [\bullet B_j [s_e \text{ the anxiety he felt } [C A_j [s_f \text{ whereupon His Majesty was freed from } [\wedge (C_j \supset B_j) \subset A_j]]]]]]]]]]$.

³⁰ Matt: These people who at first spit on the idea of the Americans coming to their land need the protection of our troops to live the way they had—before Saddam Hussein.

$[C_i p[s_a \text{ to live the way they had}_{C_i} \text{—before Saddam Hussein}_p [\bullet B_j [s_b \text{ need the protection of our troops } [C A_i p [s_c \text{ These people}_{A_i} \text{ who at first spit on the idea of the Americans coming to their land}_p]]]]]$.

Mitch: In the war with Iraq, we (USA) went into Kuwait and southern parts of Iraq to push the forces of Saddam Hussein’s army out of Kuwait and free the people.

$[C_i \wedge C_j [s_a \text{ to push the forces of Saddam Hussein’s army out of Kuwait}_{C_i} \text{ and free the people } C_j [\bullet B_i \wedge B_j [s_b \text{ we (U.S.A.) went into Kuwait}_{B_i} \text{ and (we went into) southern parts of Iraq}_{B_j} [C A_i p [s_c \text{ In the war with Iraq}]]]]]$.

³¹ See Kant, Immanuel. *Logic*, tr. Robert S. Hartman and Wolfgang Schwarz (New York: Dover Publications, 1974), p. 114. See also Blum, Mark E. *Continuity, Quantum, Continuum, and Dialectic*, pp. 207–216.

³² Camping—the very word rolls off the tongue and evokes images of rolling rivers, towering mountains, clear blue skies dotted with marshmallow soft clouds and a crystalline orb illumination of all of “God’s untouched handicrafts.”

$[A_{ij} [s_a \text{ Camping } \supset [\vee B_j [s_b \text{ the very word rolls of the tongue } [\vee B_{j,p,q,r} [s_c \text{ and evokes images}_{B_j} \text{ of rolling rivers,}_p \text{ towering mountains,}_q \text{ clear blue skies dotted with marsh- mallow soft clouds}_r \text{ and a crystalline orb illumination of all “God’s untouched handicrafts.}^s”] \wedge [(B_j \vee B_{j,p,q,r}) \subset A_{ij}]]]]]]$.

³³ Having spent 6 years as a camper and 1 year as a camp staff member, I have obviously amassed quite a trove of memories.

$[\vee f(A_i) [s_a \text{ Having spent 6 years as a camper } [\vee f(A_j) [s_b \text{ and (having spent) 1 year as a camp staff member } [\equiv A_{ij} p [s_c \text{ I have. . .amassed quite a trove of memories}_{A_{ij}} \text{ . . .obviously}_p]]]]]$.

THE RELEVANCE OF BEAUTIFUL
INFRASTRUCTURE

ABSTRACT

The infrastructural landscapes commissioned by Robert Moses and designed by master structural engineers such as Othmar Ammann from the 1920s to the 1960s demonstrate a vast range of design qualities. Beauty has not always been deemed relevant to the creation of structure and infrastructure, and yet there are lessons from this era in the design and interpretation of the physical environment. Building upon qualitative techniques that enabled structural artists to use slender elements to, in the words of Hans-Georg Gadamer, “defy the traditional principles of structural engineering... and to create something totally new,” this project illuminates the potential of structures to embody humanistic richness and depth of perceptual experience.

The infrastructural landscapes commissioned by Robert Moses and designed by master structural engineers such as Othmar Ammann from the 1920s to the 1960s demonstrate a vast range of design qualities. For the past few years I have been involved with research and design work around issues of the planning, design, and analysis of twentieth-century infrastructure. Beauty has not always been deemed relevant to the creation of structure and infrastructure, and yet there are lessons from this era in the design and interpretation of the physical environment. Building upon qualitative techniques that enabled structural artists to use slender elements to, in the words of Hans-Georg Gadamer, “defy the traditional principles of structural engineering...and to create something totally new”,¹ this project illuminates the potential of structures to embody humanistic richness and depth of perceptual experience.

I want to acknowledge Professors Hilary Ballon and Kenneth Jackson at Columbia University for inviting me to speak earlier this year on related topics at the Robert Moses symposium coordinated with the tripartite exhibit of Moses-era public design in New York during spring 2007. I’m thankful for working with Marion Pressley, Lauren Meier, and Paul McGinley on the Belt Parkway Master Plan, and their encouragement that I speak on

Moses-era preservation at the 2006 National Historic Roads Conference. Many thanks to my structural design mentors Edward Allen and Waclaw Zalewski at MIT, to my coworkers at EYP/ architecture and engineering, and to my colleagues at MIT, Harvard, and the Boston Architectural College who contributed comments during the research, including Dr. Herb Childress.

As chairman of public authorities rather than as a planner or designer, Moses transformed New York without discrete boundaries, claiming New York City's entire park and vehicular systems through an ever-expanding list of authorities. His visions of infrastructure for pleasure driving, however, were realized with altered design qualities during the 1940s, this is demonstrated in structures the Triborough Bridge Authority (TBA) built from 1934 to 1951, synthesizing technological optimism and technical optimization, i.e. perceivable phenomena of form and internal forces. Yet these two understandings became increasingly divergent in infrastructure design. I believe this divergence—the evolution of increasingly contradictory understandings of design—diluted the potency of structures to embody imagination through design craft. Yet this divergence illuminates the potential of aesthetic quality to be relevant to the design and preservation of infrastructure. Starting with the significance of Moses' TBA and its structures linking Manhattan to Queens and the Bronx, I shall analyze the 1936 Harlem River Crossing and the adjacent 1949 Ward's Island Pedestrian Bridge, informing our conceptions of infrastructural aesthetics then and now.

In appraising the public design work of the 70,000 projects funded by the Works Progress Administration, Harry Hopkins singled out the Triborough Bridge, saying “there is none of which we are prouder.”² The Harlem River Bridge was awarded the “Most Beautiful Steel Bridge” of 1936 by the American Institute of Steel Construction. Engineer Ammann, who had assisted Lindenthal on Hell's Gate bridge, and who completed the Bayonne and George Washington Bridges as the Port Authority's Chief Engineer, made the project efficient beyond previous unrealistically ornamented proposals. Yet its particular visual articulation evoked pride through other WPA venues. As photographer Berenice Abbott captured urban visions old and new in *Changing New York*—both projects Moses built and neighborhoods he was demolishing—she reveled in the bridge's modern richness through her photography.³

Yet after Moses' depression-era financing ended, his wartime TBA projects included giant recreation lands on Randall's Island isolated from the Harlem residents for whom the amenities were to benefit. In 1966, Moses wrote a short publication, “Public Works and Beauty,” stating:

Beautification of practical public works is not new. . . Natural beauty we understand, but what is man-made beauty? . . . The greatest structural beauty man has created is the spiderlike, bare, unencrusted, unornamented suspension bridge, held aloft by cunningly woven wires. . . By all means, let us give more attention to beauty in public enterprises. . . The greatest opportunity for demonstration of the principles of national beautification is on the highway system[. . .]⁴

As vicarious creator and interpreter, Moses' eloquence late in TBA's existence would have better described earlier works, than the output after World War II that exhibited less exuberance. Aside from the Verrazano's giant leap, postwar interventions appeared like banal highways Moses rallied against, even one particular project that wasn't for cars to cross.

For the 1949 pedestrian bridge to Ward's Island, TBA's publications show a one-way diagrammatic arrow from population dots huddled in Manhattan's grid, crossing one direction toward idyllic parkland.⁵ Yet it is not a thin, lithe structure for enjoying the route to recreation; it is an unmitigated extrusion with undistinguished lighting and grating. The beam's inefficiency in carrying light pedestrian loads on a narrow 12-foot deck is highlighted by its continuous depth, deeper than most members of the six-lane Harlem River Bridge upriver, with undifferentiated steel plates concealing the structure. This simplicity, which Ammann strove toward in his giant vehicular spans, took on weighty opacity at this scale. It is a built diagram: a thickened line in elevation without the fine-grained patterning Abbott and others cherished. Ammann's descriptions and Moses' own visual accounts are abrupt, noting simplicity and solidity, how the towers "are enclosed and will have a neat appearance." Moses had proclaimed in 1941 how the TBA "has provided the warp on the metropolitan loom, the heavier threads across which the lighter ones are woven."⁶ Yet this lightest thread to Ward's Island more nearly resembled a narrowed highway viaduct, not a bold gateway to Triborough's verdant island utopia.

A reductive interpretation or explanation would be that Moses chose an efficient but less extravagant design without regarding human implications, or that the repeated plate girders were less expensive given postwar material and labor costs. Yet Moses had encouraged both "architects and engineers to use their imagination, to make their designs different from and better than any similar designs done before."⁷ From Jones Beach onward, he asked bridge designers if they could achieve beauty, "Different from every other bridge. . . to be daring."⁸ As built, however, the Harlem River and Ward's Island bridges reflect different embodiments of technological optimism, and structural analysis demonstrates how they reflect markedly different design philosophies.

Knowing forces and support conditions which act on structures, designers predict structural behavior and choose shapes that negotiate between situational limitations and ideal forms for resisting forces. Beams and trusses—such as bridges—all have their patterns of bending moments, intensities of bending action caused by the loads they support. The more closely their shapes resemble their bending moment diagrams, the more efficiently the structures use materials. While contemporary design methods emphasize numerical calculation of bending without respect to form, we can also understand the behavior of trusses, beams, and other structures accurately, visually, and qualitatively through techniques, rarely taught today, called graphic statics. This technique derives from early force studies by da Vinci, Galileo, and Stevin. Since the 1860s, the ETH in Zurich has educated Swiss engineering students in graphical traditions, including Lindenthal, Ammann, Maillart, Christian Menn and Santiago Calatrava.⁹

Compared to typical numerical means, this graphical tool is appropriate for interpretive analysis not only because of technical accuracy, but because it is an approach through which Ammann and his mentors in New York bridge construction were educated. Even a quick estimate demonstrates the slight curve at the top of the Harlem River bridge reduces internal forces by a quarter. The curvature and shaping is not arbitrary; it reduces forces and helps the truss more closely resemble its bending moment diagram while accommodating other constraints of lift operation and constructability. All of the Triborough spans from the 1930s exhibited forms which benefited from an understanding of how their shape and form made them graceful and efficient, but the pedestrian bridge does not follow these understandings.

Yet the built plate-girder version is not how the pedestrian design began. In the 1934–1937 working model of the site built in Ammann’s office and displayed at TBA’s lobby until 1940, a different pedestrian bridge is shown. This proposal spanned the same location and bearing points with combinations of beams and trusses, echoing the bridges upstream, punctuating the trusses’ rhythm alongside pedestrians by choosing to omit the “shoulders” of each truss to allow unobstructed views at deck level. An examination of the completed structures shows they have many elements and decisions that are not simply products of rational, reductive engineering nor ruthlessly technocratic disregard for aesthetics. Moses’ projects’ attention to detail is evident in specific planting species at the bases of his bridges, curved “radiator” handrails and rustic streetlamps he employed amidst Triborough’s modernism. Yet at larger scales, the curved truss chords that enabled thinner bridge components, and interchanges’ curved alignments, caused divergent understandings of these geometries. From Giedion to recent urbanists, the engineered curves

of roadways and infrastructure provoke reactions by embodying speed and motion; commentators are seduced by curves' evocation of modernist *Zeitgeist*, crossing the Triborough into "a new space-time continuum."¹⁰

Understanding bridges graphically, whereby structural design is neither a passive analytical result nor mere artistry, shows designers' choices within their repertoire of solutions: arches, cables, trusses, etc. The 1936 Harlem River and Queens Suspension spans, like the Hell's Gate and Washington and Brooklyn bridges before them, demonstrate a close relationship of form and forces, where curves are chosen for their capacity to do structural work, with the "spiderlike" webs Moses praised, thin members and cables all with axial forces. By the late 1930s TBA designers used curves to embellish and dramatize regardless of forces. This is evident in railings and other details chosen to shape pedestrian experiences where humans are closest to the structure. This embellished approach takes over an entire structure in the three-hinged arched pedestrian bridges TBA built over the Belt Parkway in Brooklyn, featured in MoMA's 1944 "Built in USA" exhibit. These embellishments are powerful yet problematic, blurring the curvature of Art-Deco swoops, calculated banked ramps, and structural arches, blurring them as if they were all merely styled components with a "modern look."

The more extreme divergence occurs in the curve of Ward's Island Bridge, which reproduces the curved Harlem River lift profile in form without using its shape to function structurally. Whereas the 1936 bridges use curves to leap gracefully to a given length with thinness, by the 1940s bridges were typical, correct assemblages extruded to a suitable length. As constructing sizable bridges of standardized design became a frequent pursuit across the nation's highways and creating individualized infrastructural landmarks lost novelty, structural design became mere technical optimization—focused on cost or other considerations—without the optimism and attention to form and experience. This is why the pedestrian bridge disappoints, not because Moses abandoned Ammann's original scheme or because of something inherently lacking in beam and girder design. Rather, it represents the post-World War II dilution and divergence of qualities in designs executed by Moses and his legions of "Moses Men," divergences which permeated postwar highway construction bureaucracies.

Historic bridges, stations, and other monuments shaped by means of graphical understandings of force optimization are largely in need of stewardship and rehabilitation due to age. This is not idle speculation: just upstream from Triborough is the Willis Avenue bridge, which is currently for sale for one dollar to a new owner, someone to transplant it from its historic context. This is an admittedly oddly shaped pair of spans, but published interpretive

descriptions fail to state that they are not arbitrary shapes but reflect reasonably shaped responses to two different loading conditions.¹¹

Bridges and infrastructure can become tools not only to reach scenic landscapes, but rich experiences themselves in geometrical patterning and geometry. The Triborough trusses communicate intricate patterns nested within the overall structure. The camelback trusses have cross-members which are smaller Warren trusses, and each of the individual members are further broken down to repeating trussed lengths. The significant depth of the truss geometry enables the individual members to be broken down in scale, enabling us to mentally perceive fragments from the scale of a landmark to the scale of the human hand. We can identify fractal-like interrelationships of scale, whereby the same diamond-braced geometry is incorporated both overhead and below the surface of the deck, within the depth of the towers, and also within the individual members. This is not a repetition as “motif” for mere appearance, but incorporating a configuration effective for accommodating different lengths and proportions of structural components.

This interwoven, polyvalent patterning is one of the key phenomena that illuminates potential directions toward beautiful infrastructure and elegance in structures more generally, both for reflective interpretation and for new creativity. If a physical structure presents phenomena that are more than just an undifferentiated beam but have intellectual depth to its perceivable form, this enables the imagery of the structure to become a structured image, a Heideggerian *Gebild*, accomplishing a “transformation into structure” in a broader sense.¹² I would assert that our conception of infrastructure should include the capacity for it to not only be a recognizable landmark in our cognitive map of the urban environment, something that is suitable to commute through without disorientation, but also one that allows us to experience its spaces to “acquire a sense of that the work holds in store for us and to allow it to enhance our feeling for life.”¹³ Writing these words in a mid-twentieth century context, the philosopher Gadamer attempts to leave room within phenomenology for the new structures which so bewildered him in their ephemeral lightness. His design assessment is primarily a vehicle within his broader argument for cultural foundations of beauty, but his critique of structural members is quite specific:

Then there is the case of modern architecture: what a liberation—or temptation, perhaps—it has been to defy the traditional principles of structural engineering with the help of modern materials and to create something totally new that has no resemblance to the traditional methods of erecting buildings brick upon brick. These buildings seem to teeter upon their slender delicate columns, while the walls, the whole protective outer structure, are replaced by tentlike coverings and canopies.¹⁴

Gadamer's original text, describing this entirely new creation (*Schoepfung*), asserts it has no structural continuity with the placing of masonry (more literally of "stone upon stone," sharing Rilke's poetic choice of words to evoke centuries-old construction) and thus risks a disquieting discontinuity with broader cultural order in what used to be a familiar world. Yet I believe that while slender supports and widespread use of large-pane float glass were undeniably shocking in the last century (and may still be in some domains) for enclosed buildings, infrastructure holds a different capacity. I would assert that it is precisely through works of public infrastructure that, not through sheer opacity and solidity but through greater resonance with resisting natural forces through form that these designs may—even in all of their thinness—connect as positive fragments with the continuity of bridges and other infrastructures of other places and times and materials. Such ideas of positive fragments, which have their source "not in personal experience but in a dialogue with the latent content and structure of our world,"¹⁵ point to the potential value and elegance in conceptualizing structural design as a dialogue with latent natural forces rather than as a mere technical result or a mere artistic whim. Because they can be solutions to a given situation and set of internal solutions that are rendered visible in perceivable forms, works of infrastructure can embody Gadamer's return to "the power in . . . consummately wrought form,"¹⁶ that is in the original German the *Formkraft* in appraising the potential for a created object to retain the capacity to communicate human qualities.¹⁷ It is relevant to consider beauty and elegance because works of infrastructure can be artful creations of deliberate choice, "something exemplary which is not simply produced by following rules."¹⁸

This past winter, on the bus from Boston to New York, a child in front of me took his mother's camera, and as soon we crossed from the Bronx he started snapping pictures, not of people or skyscrapers, but of overpasses, swooping tangles of ramps. His mother seemed surprised he didn't want to photograph anything except bridges, remarking how he always photographed things she never took time to see. There exists the capacity for wonder in the bold, unfamiliar structures which aren't the usual "correct" answers, yet are well-situated within dense cityscapes. I believe that we too often assume that the duty of architects and engineers is to solve a problem in a way that has been assumed long before the problem was actually discovered. We assume that an ordinary simply-supported beam is an expected solution just waiting for a problem like a river to appear, that it is a correct solution regardless of the problem. Granted, not every single road or bridge we approach should startle nor astonish, yet pessimistic conservatism has often removed the root "ingenuity" from the engineering of civic landscapes.¹⁹

Most contemporary infrastructure projects still tend either toward conventional designs with thickened beams in concrete and steel without being too challenging nor memorable, or toward “artistic” designs, isolated gestures of expressionism conceived sculpturally. Particularly in pedestrian bridges with light loads, structures such as those by Frank O. Gehry and Associates at Chicago’s Millennium Park have been fertile ground for exploring creative forms inserted over typical heavy beams. I would contrast these with the Parisian bridge by RFR completed last year at Bercy, a lenticular design using its depth to undulate paths between dual levels. These approaches challenge assumptions by the public and by those who educate future designers. The radicality of synthesizing technological optimism with technical optimization is not that structures need to have unusual shapes, but that at the root of optimized and responsible structures are opportunities to make elegant works for people to experience. As structural design educator Edward Allen states with such conviction, this proves “once again that form matters in structures. That’s the radical premise. . . radical because this truth is not taught in engineering curricula.”²⁰

Bridges exemplify visually how design can be understood as the removal of unnecessary material and the strengthened articulation of connections. This is a conception of design accommodating both the advent of “space” in our modern vocabulary and centuries-old geometric conventions. These guidelines for form-finding have motivated designs from compressive masonry vaults to lightweight steel and concrete masterpieces of the last century. Conceiving design as creating space for people, space in the form of lightness and thinness, and space to reflect efficient resource management, allows designers to demonstrate their ingenuity and imagination of deploying material, to demonstrate how urban construction can not only evoke authorship or authority in name, but enrich civic quality through everyday experiences. As Moses wrote in 1944, public projects should maintain the “highest standards of design” because “bridges and other structures are the most conspicuous features of. . . improvements[. . .]”²¹

Within the broader “tension between the practice of the artist and that of the interpreter”,²² Moses attempted to act as both the commissioner and the appraiser of public design. His works executed through TBA in this period exemplify several contradictory approaches, from the imaginatively exuberant to the ordinary. Even Moses’ stated commitments to design quality could not make him immune from the mid-century divergence of form and forces which permeated the design professions executing his vision. Without attributing too much evil nor good to Moses, independent from broader historical trends,²³ we can understand his works presently as a rich topography demonstrating

the value of public structures' forms and experiences, structures that assert imaginative ways to bridge between visual and technical understandings of urban construction. They both fulfill stated purposes and add "something new to the spatial dimensions of a town or landscape."²⁴

In Rilke's poetry of experiencing twentieth-century urban landscapes, bridges capture this optimism of imagination over contradiction:

Now build the unimagined bridge's
Sternly calculated arc. . .
Take your practiced strengths and stretch them
Until they reach between two contradictions. . .²⁵

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NOTES

¹ Gadamer, Hans-Georg. "The Relevance of the Beautiful," in *The Relevance of the Beautiful and other Essays*, ed. R. Bernasconi (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986)

² Caro, Robert. *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York*. (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), p. 516.

³ Yochelson, Bonnie. *Berenice Abbott Changing New York*. (New York, NY: New Press, 1999).

⁴ Moses, Robert. *Public Works and Beauty: The Philosophy of Triborough*. (New York, NY: Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority, 1966).

⁵ Moses, Robert. *Pedestrian Bridge to Ward's Island*. (New York, NY: Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority, 1949).

⁶ Moses, Robert. *The Triborough Bridge Authority Fifth Anniversary*. (New York, NY: Triborough Bridge Authority, 1941).

⁷ Caro, Robert. *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York*. (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), pp. 230–231.

⁸ Caro, Robert. *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York*. (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), pp. 230–231.

⁹ Force polygons and funicular polygons of graphic statics date from 1725, and Maxwell's methods for graphically analyzing trusses were elaborated in Robert Bow's 1873 publications. Allen, Edward and Zalewski, Waclaw, *Shaping Structures*. (New York, NY: Wiley & Sons, 1998), p. 215. See also Allen et al. *Form and Forces*, 2009.

¹⁰ Giedion, Siegfried. *Space, Time, and Architecture*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1941), analyzed in Berman, Marshall., *All That is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity*. (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1982).

¹¹ Wilkinson, Alan. "Up for Grabs—Wanna Buy a Bridge?," *The New Yorker*, 16 January 2006.

¹² Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Truth and Method*, Second Revised Edition, tr. J. Weinsheimer and D. Marshall (New York, NY: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2004), pp. 110–112.

¹³ Gadamer, Hans-Georg. "The Relevance of the Beautiful," in *The Relevance of the Beautiful and other Essays*, ed. R. Bernasconi. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 45.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

- ¹⁵ Vesely, Dalibor. *Architecture in the Age of Divided Representation* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), p. 334.
- ¹⁶ Gadamer, "Relevance," op.cit., p. 69.
- ¹⁷ Gadamer, "Die Aktualitaet des Schoenen" (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1977), p. 69.
- ¹⁸ Gadamer, "Relevance," op.cit., p. 21.
- ¹⁹ Smith, Christine. *Before and After the End of Time: Architecture in the year 1000*. (New York, NY: George Braziller, 2001), p. 64.
- ²⁰ Allen, Edward. Conversation with author 9 January 2007.
- ²¹ Moses to Charles K. Panish, Army Corps of Engineers, November, 30 1944 (NY Municipal Archives microfilm, see also Pressley 2006).
- ²² Gadamer, Hans-Georg. "Composition and Interpretation," in *The Relevance of the Beautiful and other Essays*, ed. R. Bernasconi (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 66.
- ²³ Jackson, Kenneth. "Robert Moses and the Planned Environment: A Re-Evaluation," in *Long Island Studies: Robert Moses, Single-Minded Genius*, ed. Joann Krieg (Interlaken, NY: Heart of the Lakes Publishing, 1989).
- ²⁴ Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Truth and Method*, Second Revised Edition, tr. J. Weinsheimer and D. Marshall (New York, NY: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2004), p. 156.
- ²⁵ Rilke, Rainer Maria "Da dich das gefluegelte Entzuecken," in *Uncollected Poems* tr. Edward Snow (New York, NY: North Point Press, 1997), p. 177.

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JOHN STEINBECK'S *LOG FROM THE "SEA OF CORTEZ"*: ONE OF HUSSERL'S INFINITE TASKS?

ABSTRACT

In this paper, I argue that in *The Log from the "Sea of Cortez,"* John Steinbeck often speaks in a distinctively phenomenological voice. To substantiate this claim, I consider a number of his philosophical observations, aligning them with passages in the Husserlian corpus to draw out their phenomenological character. More specifically, I focus on two significant themes: the role and perspective of the scientist and the simultaneously absolute and relative nature of truth. The project is useful in two ways. First, it reveals the heretofore overlooked phenomenological tenor of Steinbeck's *Log*. And second, it brings new and helpful examples from Steinbeck's work to bear on Husserl's own work, which is often woefully frugal in the provision of examples.

INTRODUCTION

In 1940, John Steinbeck and his closest friend, Ed Ricketts, traveled aboard a seventy-six-foot sardine purse seiner on a six-week, four-thousand-mile expedition; the purpose of their trip was to collect marine fauna. With a crew of four, Steinbeck's first wife Carol, and the two men aboard, the *Western Flyer* (as their seiner was named) departed from Monterey Bay on March 11 and headed south.¹ By March 17, it had been registered with Mexican authorities and dropped anchor just off the southernmost tip of the Baja Peninsula, where the group began their littoral, or coastal, collecting. From there, the vessel rounded the tip of the peninsula and continued northward along the western shore of the Sea of Cortez, travelling as far as Refuge Port before cutting across to the eastern shore, skirting that coastline heading south, and eventually returning to the open waters of the Pacific. Along the way, the group made approximately twenty-five stops and collected over five hundred different marine species, fifty of which had never before been identified. Ricketts, a renowned tide-pool biologist, kept an extensive journal of their expedition, which Steinbeck eventually used, along with the journal of the seiner's captain, as the basis for *The Log from the "Sea of Cortez."* That book has come to be regarded

as Steinbeck's most important work of nonfiction, for it contains the central tenets of Steinbeck's worldview.² In it, Steinbeck considers many important and philosophical themes, among them, the role and perspective of the scientist, the simultaneously absolute and relative nature of truth, the nature of naming, the situatedness of consciousness, relational contemplation, and the advantages and disadvantages of cognitive sedimentation. What is philosophically striking is the phenomenological character of many of Steinbeck's insights.³

In this paper, I will argue that in *The Log*, Steinbeck often speaks in a distinctively phenomenological voice. To substantiate this claim, I will consider a number of his philosophical observations, aligning them with passages in the Husserlian corpus to draw out their phenomenological character. More specifically, I will focus on two significant themes: the role and perspective of the scientist and the simultaneously absolute and relative nature of truth. This project will be useful in two ways. First, it will reveal the heretofore overlooked phenomenological tenor of Steinbeck's *Log*. And second, it will bring new and helpful examples from Steinbeck's work to bear on Husserl's own work, which is often woefully frugal in the provision of examples. In the end, I believe we will see that *The Log from the "Sea of Cortez"* can be reasonably regarded as a phenomenology of coastal navigation and biology.

THE ROLE AND PERSPECTIVE OF THE SCIENTIST

In Steinbeck's "Introduction" to *The Log*, he says that "the design of a book is the pattern of a reality controlled and shaped by the mind of a writer."⁴ In the same spirit, the scientist also comes to bear on the objects of his inquiry, a fact that is often overlooked by the scientist himself. Such oversight, however, is a naïveté that Steinbeck intends to overcome. Thus, he describes the "mental provisioning" of his expedition in these terms:

We said, "Let's go wide open. Let's see what we see, record what we find, and not fool ourselves with conventional scientific strictures. We could not observe a completely objective Sea of Cortez anyway, for in that lonely and uninhabited Gulf our boat and ourselves would change it the moment we entered. By going there, we would bring a new factor to the Gulf. Let us consider that factor and not be betrayed by this myth of permanent objective reality. . . . Let us go," we said, "into the Sea of Cortez, realizing that we become forever part of it; that our rubber boots slogging through a flat of eel-grass, that the rocks we turn over in a tide pool, make us truly and permanently a factor in the ecology of the region. We shall take something away from it, but we shall leave something too."⁵

What Steinbeck is speaking to here is the pretense of anonymity that is the norm, indeed the ideal, among scientists. This pretense plays out in the assumption that the scientist is able to observe and study the object of his inquiry

without needing to fully account for himself. Only in this way, the scientist maintains, is he able to provide an account that is *objective*, not *subjective*. Of course, for nearly all scientists, objectivity is not only desirable but also requisite for their work to be deemed genuinely scientific. One check that is in place to assure objectivity is that scientific experiments must be replicable: what one has discovered must be discoverable by others. And yet, as Steinbeck is here suggesting, the work of the scientist is at least incomplete if he is not able to account for the role that he himself plays in his inquiry.

Later in the text, Steinbeck recounts his impression of Cape San Lucas, where his expedition began in earnest. He says, "Many people had come to Cape San Lucas, and many had described it. We had read a number of the accounts, and of course agreed with none of them."⁶ The accounts to which Steinbeck here refers are specifically scientific accounts, for he proceeds to consider the assumption that "unscientific people" make about scientific writing, namely, that it enjoys "a common plateau of perfectionism."⁷ Of course, Steinbeck rejects this assumption out of hand, claiming that it is patently (and unfortunately) false. He says, "The reports of biologists are the measure, not of the science, but of the men themselves."⁸ Steinbeck goes on to enumerate the various respects in which scientific writing can fall short: it is the work of ordinary-minded people, is vague, or omits relevant detail. The mark of the genuine scientist, however, can be found in the clarity with which he expresses his ideas. Thus, Steinbeck tells us that he has "not known a single great scientist who could not discourse freely and interestingly with a child."⁹ He asks: "Can it be that the haters of clarity have nothing to say, have observed nothing, have no clear picture of even their own field?"¹⁰

The role and perspective of the scientist is also a theme that occupies Husserl. Indeed, the whole of his phenomenology might be reduced to accounting for the structure of our own consciousness, accounting, that is, for intentionality—and the intentionality of the scientist plays an important role in human life. In fact, Husserl often refers to phenomenology itself in scientific terms: it is rigorous science, the science of the soul, the science of rationality, the science of pure consciousness. But it is what phenomenology accomplishes that the partial sciences overlook that sets it apart from them and, indeed, allows it to ground them. In the *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl elaborates on this theme when he examines the idea of genuine science. He discovers that all sciences are guided by the Cartesian ideal of an all-embracing science, one that attains perfect universality. Thus, far from being satisfied with merely relative and shifting truths, the sort of truths that ordinary evidence provides, the scientist seeks "truths that are valid, and remain so, *once for all and for everyone*."¹¹ And while de facto this ideal remains unrealized, it nonetheless guides all

scientific pursuit. As Husserl goes on to show, however, only transcendental subjectivity is adequate to the task of supporting the edifice of universal knowledge. Given that phenomenology is a science *of* transcendental subjectivity, only it can account for the transcendental ego that is able to make truthful scientific claims, but is also able, within the transcendental attitude, to account for truth itself. In this way, phenomenology completes the work of the positive sciences, which, for their part, are only concerned with objective and natural being. By accounting for the ego as the world's nominative and dative of disclosure, phenomenology enables science to be accounted for both objectively and subjectively and so to satisfy more fully its own demand for rigor.

The difficulty that Husserl sees with the so-called partial sciences is the same difficulty identified by Steinbeck: that they do not take into consideration the role of the scientist. But beyond leaving the sciences incomplete, Husserl discovers that this oversight plays out in another significant and costly way. In *The Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, Husserl addresses the devastating consequences of science without philosophy. He argues that the partial sciences have fallen into a kind of positivity, which their success obscures. He says, "The exclusiveness with which the total world-view of modern man . . . let itself be determined by the positive sciences and be blinded by the 'prosperity' they produced, meant an indifferent turning-away from the questions which are decisive for a genuine humanity."¹² Put differently, Husserl is acceding to what he calls the "constant successes" of modern science. And yet, these successes have become so influential in defining our worldview that we have overlooked their failure to provide meaning for life. Husserl says, "The positivistic concept of science in our time is, historically speaking, a *residual concept*. It has dropped all the questions which had been considered under . . . the concepts of metaphysics, including all questions vaguely termed 'ultimate and highest'."¹³ Thus, he says, "positivism, in a manner of speaking, decapitates philosophy."¹⁴ And yet, recalling from above that phenomenology does not seek to displace science but to complete it, we can anticipate at least one repercussion of science without the aid of philosophy, namely, that it fails to be genuinely scientific. Beyond this unfortunate fact, however, we find another and perhaps more disturbing repercussion: that without philosophy to complement it, science remains cut off from its more human and "metaphysical" concerns and so becomes deeply unsatisfying. It is only when we recognize the correlation between reason and being that we can properly contextualize the partial sciences within the whole, a theme, incidentally, that Steinbeck touches upon repeatedly in *The Log*.¹⁵

As Steinbeck and Husserl agree that the scientist must be aware of his own role in the activity of science, so do they agree on the importance of avoiding

vagueness. For Steinbeck's part, we recall his suggestion that a scientist who cannot express his ideas clearly has nothing to say, has observed nothing, has no clear picture even of his own field. For Husserl, avoiding vagueness is also paramount, for it is the very condition of being able to articulate a verifiable judgment.¹⁶ In *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, Husserl speaks to the phenomena of vagueness, distinctness, and clarity. When we judge vaguely, Husserl says that "not the slightest bit of an *explicit performance belonging to judicative spontaneity* need take place."¹⁷ Our act of judging is carried out confusedly; it occurs unthinkingly. When we proceed to judge explicitly, however, and a synthesis of fulfilling identification takes place between what we originally judged vaguely but now judge explicitly, "the confused meaning or opinion '*becomes distinct*'; now, for the first time, something is *properly judged*; and the judgment, which previously was meant only expectantly, now is *properly* and itself *given*."¹⁸ It would seem that the clarity to which Steinbeck himself refers is akin to Husserl's notion of distinctness, not clarity. This is because on Husserl's account, judging clearly presumes that we are judging distinctly, but it further designates that we are judging in the presence of what is judged.¹⁹ Thus, while distinctness requires that the judgment itself be given, it certainly can be given in the absence of what is judged. In contrast, clarity provides for the givenness of the subject matter of the judgment. When Steinbeck speaks to the clarity of expression required for responsible scientific writing, he is not suggesting that the scientist must write in the presence of what is being written about. Rather, he is saying that the writer must overcome the confused thinking of vagueness in order for his claims to be understandable to his audience, who can either trust what he says or go to the subject matter themselves to either confirm or deny the truthfulness of his claims.

THE ABSOLUTE AND RELATIVE NATURE OF TRUTH

In the "Introduction" to *The Log*, Steinbeck writes about the Mexican sierra, which at another point in the text he describes as a "golden fish with brilliant blue spots," ranging in size "from fifteen inches to two feet," with flesh that is "white and delicate and sweet."²⁰ He says:

The Mexican sierra has "XVII-15-IX" spines in the dorsal fin. These can easily be counted. But if the sierra strikes hard on the line so that our hands are burned, if the fish sounds and nearly escapes and finally comes in over the rail, his colors pulsing and his tail beating the air, a whole new relational reality comes into being. . . . The only way to count the spines of the sierra unaffected by this second relational reality is to sit in a laboratory, open an evil-smelling jar, remove a stiff colorless fish from formalin solution, count the spines, and write the truth. . . .²¹

Steinbeck proceeds to recount various episodes from the expedition, including one involving a fleet of Japanese shrimp boats, fishing off the coast of Guaymas with overlapping dredges and thus catching all of the shrimp in the area, but devastating its ecology in the process. Steinbeck suggests that his own expedition, as well as the Japanese fleet, as well as the war being waged in Europe—we recall that the expedition took place in 1940—all factor into the “huge pattern” of things. To discern the truth about the Mexican sierra, then, either one can isolate the fish and disregard all else or one can attempt to see the fish over and against the bigger pattern of which the fish is itself only a part. Steinbeck and his fellow travelers determine to do both. Steinbeck says:

We determined to go doubly open so that in the end we could, if we wished, describe the sierra thus: “D. XVII-15-IX; A. II-15-IX,” but also we could see the fish alive and swimming, feel it plunge against the lines, drag it threshing over the rail, and even finally eat it. And there is no reason why either approach should be inaccurate. Spine-count description need not suffer because another approach is also used. Perhaps out of the two approaches . . . there might emerge a picture more complete and even more accurate than either alone could produce.²²

It seems that what Steinbeck is speaking to here is the apparent competition between an absolute, that is, objective and scientific, account of the Gulf, or one that is relative and takes other concerns (like experience) into account. Steinbeck rejects the dichotomy, insisting on the legitimacy of both approaches.

In *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, Husserl also considers the absolute/relative dichotomy and, like Steinbeck, dismisses it as false. In his discussion of truth in its relation to evidence, Husserl speaks to the fact that truth is never an absolute achievement. In preparation for concluding his transcendental criticism of logic, Husserl turns to the “usual theories of evidence,” which maintain that if an absolute grasping of truth were impossible, we would be unable to have or strive toward truth and science. Because this is unacceptable, Husserl claims that these theories take absolute truth, as well as its correlate, absolute evidence, for a necessity. But what, he asks, “if truth is an *idea*, lying at infinity?”²³ He proceeds to explore the possibility that with regard to world-Objectivity, it is not an accidental matter resulting from our limited cognitive power that truth is an ideal, but an eidetic law, claiming that all truths, whether about the practicalities of everyday living or the most sophisticated of the sciences, remain essentially involved in relativities and refer to regulative ideas as their norms. In the following passage, Husserl expresses with unusual eloquence how important the role of relative truth is. He says:

The trader in the market has his market-truth. In the relationship in which it stands, is his truth not a good one, and the best that a trader can use? Is it a pseudo-truth, merely because the scientist,

involved in a different relativity and judging with other aims and ideas, looks for other truths—with which a great many things can be done, but not the one thing that has to be done in a market? It is high time that people got over being dazzled, particularly in philosophy and logic, by the ideal and regulative ideas and methods of the "exact" sciences. . . . Actually, they do not see the woods for the trees. . . . [T]hey overlook the infinitudes of life and its cognition, the infinitudes of relative and, only in its relativity, rational being, with its relative truths.²⁴

Given this understanding of truth lying at infinity, though accessible to rational beings in a relative form, Husserl goes on to claim that to judge on the basis of a naïve evidence, a giving of something itself, while continuing to make further distinctions is to judge in the same manner as an astute person who seriously seeks "to find out how matters actually are."²⁵ And this, Husserl holds, "is the beginning of all wisdom, though not its end; and it is a wisdom we can never do without, no matter how deep we go with our theorizings. . . ."²⁶ When we judge naïvely though authentically and ever supplement our beliefs with further inquiry, Husserl maintains "we have continuously anew the *living truth from the living source, which is our absolute life*. . . . We have the *truth* then, not as falsely absolutized, but rather, in each case, as within its *horizons*."²⁷

Indeed, we can see that both Steinbeck and Husserl value the work of science, but not at the price of other endeavors and their achievements. For both, the truth of science is legitimate, but it does not and should not render other truths obsolete. Steinbeck gives an example of truth in navigation, an example that Husserl would likely regard as a "market-truth." Steinbeck says of his captain:

Tony loves the truth, and the course is the truth. If the helmsman is off course he is telling a lie to Tony. And as the course projects, hypothetically, straight off the bow and around the world, so the wake drags out behind, a tattler on the conduct of the steersman. If one should steer mathematically perfectly, which is of course impossible, the wake will be a straight line; but even if, when drawn, it may have been straight, it bends to currents and to waves, and your true effort is wiped out.²⁸

What Steinbeck is suggesting here is that some activities do not admit of perfection, do not admit, that is, of "absolute truth." Rather, they demand a rigor that is appropriate to themselves. In the case of navigation, the "truth" consists, not in steering a perfectly straight course, but in reaching your destination. Two manners of accomplishing this are steering by an object or steering by a compass point. "If you steer *toward an object*," Steinbeck says, "you cannot perfectly and indefinitely steer directly at it."²⁹ Otherwise, you run your object down. Alternately, it is possible to steer by a point on the compass, which you can do "indefinitely."³⁰ And yet, even when you steer by a compass, Steinbeck points out that it is necessary to correct your route by vision as you approach your destination. Thus, he explains, "the working out of the ideal into the real is here. . . . The compass simply represents the ideal, present but

unachievable, and sight-steering a compromise with perfection which allows your boat to exist at all."³¹ In the case of a successful compromise, you reach your destination, and this, Steinbeck maintains, is the "fulfillment" of the ideal, the fulfillment, that is, of steering by a compass point, but it is a fulfillment that is enabled only by the incorporation of "real" sight-steering.

In Husserl, we likewise find the intermingling of real and ideal expressed in terms of fulfillment—and, as with Steinbeck, we find that Husserl denies the possibility that fulfillment can ever be perfect. While these terms have a technical meaning for Husserl, it is nonetheless striking that he, too, describes the accomplishment of truth in terms of a fulfillment of the ideal in the real. In Investigation VI of the *Logical Investigations*, Husserl provides his famous account of categorial intuition. According to Husserl, categorial acts are "many-rayed" intentions in which we count, connect, collect, relate, or otherwise "syntacticize" our experience. In them—as the etymology of the Greek *katēgoreō* suggests—we say something of something, thus articulating our object. More specifically, we relate different intentional objects under a categorial point of view. Such acts are thus acts of synthesis, and they are founded upon the simple acts that they bring into a unity.

The objective correlates of categorial acts are not "real" objects, and neither do we manipulate or modify real objects to constitute them. Husserl says,

The new objects [categorial forms] create are not objects in the primary, original sense. Categorial forms do not glue, tie or put parts together, so that a real, sensuously perceivable whole emerges. They do not form in the sense in which the potter forms. Otherwise the original datum of sense-perception would be modified in its own objectivity. . . . Categorial forms leave primary objects untouched: they can do nothing to them. . . .³²

Categorial objects are what Husserl calls "states of affairs" or "predicatively formed affair-complexes." They are higher-order objectivities that are constituted in the very process of categorial articulation. Husserl explains, "What we have are acts which, as we said, *set up new objects*, acts in which something *appears as actual and self-given*, which was not given, and could not have been given, as what it now appears to be, in these foundational acts alone."³³ According to Husserl, such objects are "ideal." This does not mean that they are essences or forms of some sort, for while Husserl recognizes what he calls "purely categorial concepts," that is, those from which all sensibility has been abstracted, he insists that "in an absolute sense, sensibility underlies, and provides the matter for, all acts of categorial form which are built upon it."³⁴ When Husserl says that categorial objects are ideal, then, he means to contrast them with the real, empirical objects that are given (and need not be constituted) in

sensuous experience. He says, "Sensuous or real objects can in fact be characterized as *objects of the lowest level of possible intuition*, categorial or ideal objects as *objects of higher levels*."³⁵

Given that sensibility underlies all categorial acts, providing for their matter, Husserl considers how empty categorial intentions, those executed in the absence of what they articulate, can find fulfillment in intuition. To address this question, we must first distinguish between the material cores of categorial objects and what Husserl calls their "syncategorematic" components. According to Husserl, syncategorematics are the deposits of categorial activity. They do not belong to the material of our act, but arise in our articulation of the categorial object. When we intellectually collect two objects, *A* and *B*, *A* and *B* are themselves the matter of our collection, while "and" is its syncategorematic component, the deposit of our collecting. Similarly, when we judge that the ball is red, the ball and its redness provide the material core of our act, while "is" serves as the syncategorematic deposit of our predicating. While we could imagine that sensuous intuition could provide fulfillment for the matter of our categorial intentions, how could it provide for their syncategorematic components? What sensuous intuition could give, not just *A* and *B*, but both of them, together, as a collected unity? In the same spirit, how could sensuous intuition provide, not just for the ball and its redness, but for the *being* red of the ball?

According to Husserl, the fulfillment of empty categorial intentions is to be found in a form of intuition that is specifically categorial. Such intuition is not cut off from its sensuous counterpart, for, indeed, empty categorial intendings cannot be fulfilled in the sensuous absence of what they intend. Rather, categorial intuition is *founded* on sensuous intuition. Thus, Husserl says, we "bring to maturity *a new awareness of objects which essentially presupposes the old*."³⁶ In categorial intuition, our acts of simple perception are absorbed, for while necessary, so too are they insufficient to the task: to perceive *A* and *B* is not to collect *A and B*, and to have the ball and its redness cannot account for the *being* red of the ball. In order to categorially perceive these complex objects, Husserl maintains that the states of affairs must themselves be given. This has two implications. In the first place, it requires that the simple objects that are the material components of our categorial objects are themselves given, while in the second place, it requires that our categorial intendings are properly (that is, distinctly) executed. Thus, to have the state of affairs, *A and B*, given, we must be able to sensuously perceive both *A* and *B* and, at the same time, collect them. When the two are sensuously given but only languidly collected, they remain absent as a state of affairs, while when they are energetically and thoughtfully collected, though in their absence, they likewise remain only emptily intended.

It is only when the simple objects of our complex intending are sensuously perceived and thoughtfully articulated that the state of affairs is itself given, and categorial intuition obtains.³⁷

Just as Steinbeck asserts that truth is realized in the “compromise” of the ideal and real, so does Husserl maintain that truth is achieved in the meeting of ideal and real, for in fulfillment, truth obtains as the correlate of having what previously was only meant. And like Steinbeck, Husserl also maintains that such fulfillment is a mediation, an unrealizable perfection. Indeed, Husserl discusses the *process* of fulfillment, describing its “gradations” and the “levels of knowledge” that correspond to them. We have to read Section 37 of the Sixth Investigation where Husserl explores the ideal of fulfillment rather closely to see that while perception is the form of intentionality that provides for the thing itself in a direct presentation, it could never *actually* provide for the thing itself, for to do so would require that external perception be capable of adequacy. And yet, in the following sections, Husserl goes on to develop his famous four-fold account of truth, whose correlate, self-evidence, is nothing other than the pre-eminent act of perfect fulfillment. In other words, Husserl maintains that perfect fulfillment is only an ideal, but he proceeds to define evidence and truth in terms of that ideal. Thus, absolute truth remains ever beyond our grasp. Like Steinbeck, then, Husserl acknowledges that in many matters, indeed, in most matters, we must be content with a relative truth, one that we can ever supplement with further evidence, one that allows us to approach the ideal of truth, but to do so always asymptotically.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this paper, I have attempted to sketch what I consider important parallels in thought between Steinbeck and Husserl. Although I have limited my discussion to the themes of the perspective of the scientist and the nature of truth, these represent just a sampling in a series of striking similarities between two of the most distinguished thinkers of the last century. There is certainly more work to be done here, especially in terms of the parts/whole thinking that seems to occupy Steinbeck and is at the core of Husserl’s account of categorial intuition. In his famous study of Husserl and Heidegger, Ernst Tugendhat writes, “For the first time since German Idealism, [Husserl] orients human life as a whole towards truth and understands philosophy as the radicalization of this orientation.”³⁸ In *The Log from the “Sea of Cortez”*, Steinbeck echoes this belief as he considers just how to respond when interested young boys inevitably inquire into the purpose of his littoral collecting. He writes:

The very posture of search, the slow movement with the head down, seems to draw people. "What did you lose?" they ask.

"Nothing."

"Then what do you search for?" And this is an embarrassing question. We search for something that will seem like truth to us; we search for understanding; we search for that principle which keys us deeply into the pattern of all life; we search for the relations of things, one to another. . . . These little boys and young men on the tide flat do not even know that they search for these things, too.³⁹

Indeed, Steinbeck goes on to praise the young boys who would gather around him and his colleagues as they collected specimens along the coast, describing these young onlookers as "the best collectors in the world."⁴⁰ He remarks:

Perhaps we only practice an extension of their urge. It is easy to remember when we were very small and lay on our stomachs beside a tide pool and our minds and eyes went so deeply into it that size and identity were lost, and the creeping hermit crab was our size and the tiny octopus a monster. Then the waving algae covered us and we hid under a rock at the bottom and leaped out at a fish. It is very possible that we, and even those who probe space with equations, simply extend this wonder.⁴¹

Like Husserl, then, Steinbeck recognizes the basic orientation of human life toward truth. He also sees that while science can go a long way towards bringing us insight into the nature of things, understanding requires that we account for ourselves even as our direction is focused without. Only in this way are we able to honor the wonder that helps constitute us in our very being, drawing ever nearer to a truth that is always just beyond our grasp.⁴²

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NOTES

¹ Throughout the text, Steinbeck uses the first person plural, presumably to refer to himself and Ricketts. Interestingly, though, while he mentions each crew member by name and includes an appendix to *The Log* entitled "About Ed Ricketts," nowhere in the text does he mention that Carol Steinbeck made the trip. For some plausible explanations of this omission, see Warren French, *John Steinbeck's Nonfiction Revisited*, Twayne's United States Author Series, ed. Frank Day (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1996), p. 36. For an interesting and helpful account of the relationship between Steinbeck and Ricketts, see Eric Enno Tamm's book-length study of the subject, *Beyond the Outer Shores* (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 2004).

² For a description of early criticism of the work as well as contemporary perspectives on it, see Jeffrey Schultz and Li Luchen, *Critical Companion to John Steinbeck: A Literary Reference to His Life and Work*. (New York: Facts on File, 2005), pp. 191–193.

³ While Steinbeck does make explicit reference to various philosophers in this work—philosophers such as Schiller, Goethe, Hegel, and even Lucretius—there is no evidence to suggest that he had any familiarity with either Husserl or his version of (non-Hegelian) phenomenology.

⁴ John Steinbeck, *The Log from the "Sea of Cortez,"* with an introduction by Richard Astro (London: Penguin Books, 1995), p. 1.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 2–3. For a fascinating collection of essays that consider Steinbeck and the environment, see Susan F. Beegel, Susan Schillinglaw, and Wesley N. Tiffney, Jr., eds., *Steinbeck and the Environment: Interdisciplinary Approaches*, with a foreword by Elaine Steinbeck (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1997).

⁶ Steinbeck, *The Log*, p. 61.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, tr. Dorion Cairns (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1995), p. 12.

¹² Husserl, *The Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, tr. David Carr, Northwestern University Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy, ed. John Wild (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), pp. 5–6.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ See, for instance, Steinbeck, *The Log*, p. 224, where in the penultimate paragraph of the text, Steinbeck says, "The laws of thought seemed really one with the laws of things." See also *The Log*, p. 219, where he says, "We tried always to understand that the reality we observed was partly us; the speculation, our product. And yet if somehow, 'The laws of thought must be the laws of things', one can find an index of reality even in insanity." Husserl would likely be disinclined to accept this last statement, as the objectivity of the world serves as a limit on the things that we can say about it. Certainly, though, he would agree with the sentiment in general.

¹⁶ In Husserlian terms, to overcome vagueness is to judge distinctly. When Husserl initially describes the phenomenon of distinctness in § 16 of *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, he defines it simply in terms of proper, that is, explicit, judging. In §§ 87–89, however, he recognizes that for a judgment to be distinctly executable, it cannot entail contradiction, but neither can its "syntactical stuffs" have nothing to do with one another. In other words, in distinctness the form of the judgment comes into play, but so does its content.

¹⁷ Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, tr. Dorion Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1978), p. 56.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* In "The Origin of Geometry," included in *The Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* as Appendix VI, Husserl cites the "seduction of language" as the lure that leads to vagueness. He says: "It is easy to see that even in [ordinary] human life, and first of all in every individual life from childhood up to maturity, the originally intuitive life which creates its originally self-evident structures through activities on the basis of sense-experience very quickly and in increasing measure falls victim to the *seduction of language*. Greater and greater segments of this life lapse into a kind of talking and reading that is dominated purely by association" (Husserl, *The Crisis*, p. 362). Robert Sokolowski suggests that indeed "association has its proper excellence, but it is lost when it tries to masquerade as thinking: honest thinking is dissociation" (Sokolowski, *Husserlian Meditations: How Words Present Things*, Northwestern University Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy, ed. James M. Edie [Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974], p. 61). It is interesting to note that the very bodily dimension that renders language possible can also serve to drag it down into passive association. In the *Politics*, Aristotle

seems to point to this distinction between language and the sensibility of language when he differentiates between "mere voice" and "the power of speech": "Nature, as we often say, makes nothing in vain, and man is the only animal who has the gift of speech. And whereas mere voice is but an indication of pleasure or pain, and is therefore found in other animals (for their nature attains to the perception of pleasure and pain and the intimation of them to one another, and no further), the power of speech is intended to set forth the expedient and inexpedient, and therefore likewise the just and the unjust" (Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253a9–15).

¹⁹ In the context of *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, Husserl distinguishes between actual and prefigurative clarity. The former can be understood as the bodily givenness of the predicatively-formed affair complex, while the latter is its imagined givenness. Husserl maintains that within the sphere of formal logic, only the clarity of prefiguration is permissible.

²⁰ Steinbeck, *The Log*, p. 128.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 3.

²³ Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, p. 277.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 278.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 278–279.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 279.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Steinbeck, *The Log*, p. 32.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, 2 vols., trans. J. N. Findlay (New York: Humanities Press, 1970), p. 820.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 787.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 817, 818.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 787. It is important to offer two remarks here. First, according to Husserl, categorial activity does indeed "do" something to its object, not by altering its content, but by affecting its mode of presentation. Husserl says, "The object does not appear before us with new real (*realen*) properties; it stands before us as this same object, but in a *new manner*" (*ibid.*, p. 796). Second, we must also note that the syntheses that are here effected cannot be arbitrary or "of our own choosing." Rather, they must be permitted by the objects themselves, which limit what we can say about them. Thus, even in this "ideal realm," Husserl remains very much a realist.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 787.

³⁷ In "Authentic Thinking and Phenomenological Method," Steven Galt Crowell assesses the philosophical import of categorial intuition. He writes: "At first it seems odd to identify a philosophical breakthrough with a theory of *intuition*, since philosophy's strength is usually taken to lie in thinking, the *logos*, the power that reason exercises *over* intuition. Certainly, philosophers such as Hermann Cohen and Heinrich Rickert would follow Kant's dictum that intuitions alone are 'blind', a night in which all cows are black, a mythical 'given'—to use Wilfred Sellars's term—that has no authority in the 'space of reasons'. To hold thought accountable to intuition is to ask the sun to reflect the moon. And yet Husserl's breakthrough to phenomenology lies precisely in his recognition that both neo-Kantianism and its empiricist opponent operate with an unclarified view of thought and intuition—specifically, a view that holds them to be distinct *kinds*, distinct 'faculties'. For Husserl the genuine contrast is not between thought and intuition, but between *signification* and intuition . . . —that is, between empty or 'merely symbolic' intentions and intentions that are

fulfilled in the way appropriate to them—and this allows him to determine the concept of thinking in a wholly new way” (Crowell, “Authentic Thinking and Phenomenological Method,” *The New Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy* II [2002]: p. 25).

³⁸ Ernst Tugendhat, *Der Wahrheitsbegriff bei Husserl und Heidegger* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1970), p. 6.

³⁹ Steinbeck, *The Log*, pp. 91–92.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 92–93.

⁴² I would like to thank my husband, Chris Webber, who bought me *The Log* (on our anniversary, and a whim) and so enabled this line of thinking in the first place. I would also like to thank my teacher and friend Richard Velkley for reading over a final draft of this paper. Finally, I would like to thank my mentor, Robert Sokolowski, who taught me everything I know about Husserl. All that is truthful in these pages comes from him; the mistakes, however, are mine.

RECONFIGURING OLDENBURG AND VAN
BRUGGEN'S *FREE STAMP* (1982–1991)

ABSTRACT

Commissioned in 1982 by SOHIO for its corporate headquarters in Cleveland, the Oldenburg's *Free Stamp* was to stand on a pink granite ink pad, echoing the shape of the monument across the street and Terminal Tower on the other side of the square. This article relates what happened after SOHIO was bought by BP and that corporation's rejection of *Free Stamp* along with the ongoing media furor about the sculpture. Aesthetic issues and legal ones (including artist's rights) form the core of the study. The resolution, including a new location for *Free Stamp* at Cleveland's City Hall, has bearing on two controversial public site-specific sculptures of the 1980s: Maya Lin's *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* (Washington, DC) and Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc* (New York).

Originally commissioned in 1982 by Alton Whitehouse and other executives of Standard Oil of Ohio (or SOHIO) for its new pink granite corporate headquarters on Cleveland's Public Square, Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen's *Free Stamp* was designed to face the *Soldiers and Sailors Monument* (1886–1894).¹ The sculpture was to stand vertically, its red handle above the stamp on its pink granite ink pad, echoing the shape of the late Victorian monument across the street and of the *Terminal Tower* (1927–1929) on the other side of the Square.² Both artists clearly saw *Free Stamp* as a means of unifying the diverse and somewhat chaotic juxtapositions of architectural styles lining Public Square as well as making the florid *Soldiers and Sailors Monument* less visually overpowering.³ This was to be a very public monument commissioned by a major private corporation and its story bears examination. What follows outlines what happened when big business commissioned big art in Cleveland, Ohio.

According to Oldenburg (who had been born in Sweden and brought to this country when he was seven years old), *Free Stamp* stood for the fact that Americans were free and that people born elsewhere became free when they became citizens of this country.⁴ As such, the sculpture spoke to and resonated with the sacrifices of those commemorated by the *Soldiers and Sailors*

Monument near by. *Free Stamp*, a major public work by a major Pop Artist, was to be a “gift” to the city and citizens of Cleveland by the founding company of the Standard Oil Corporation. It is extremely unlikely that Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen, his wife and collaborator, intended any overt criticism of American values in this sculpture.

This statement should not be extended to suggest that *Free Stamp* was without current political meaning—this is the early 1980s! Or that *Free Stamp* was not confrontational or, as originally designed, was without overt sexual overtones. In 1962, Oldenburg stated, “I am for an art that is political—erotic—mystical, that does something other than sit on its ass in a museum. . . . I am for an art that takes its form from the lines of life itself, that twists and extends and accumulates and spits and drips, and is heavy and coarse and blunt and sweet and stupid as life itself.”⁵ He could have been describing *Free Stamp* as designed in 1982. It is also a mistake to hold that *Free Stamp* is simply an enlarged rubber stamp, i.e., an iconic version of a prosaic everyday object.⁶

Indeed, in the initial design for *Free Stamp*, visitors were supposed to enter the almost 50 foot tall monument and ascend to the interior of the handle where they could view some sort of exhibit (perhaps objects with similar shapes—not unlike the *Ray Gun Museum* Oldenburg had been assembling since the late 1950s).⁷ By the time his design was finalized and presented to the executives of SOHIO for their approval in 1982, Oldenburg had modified this, eliminating any entry into *Free Stamp*. This may have been due to the *Soldiers and Sailors Monument* right across the street: it has interior spaces where plaques listing the names of the men who fought and died in the American Civil War could be seen.⁸ In changing his initial idea, Oldenburg was being sensitive to likely criticism about *Free Stamp* mocking the heroes of this war. The revised design was approved and sent into production at Chicago Bridge and Iron Company in Kankakee, Illinois.⁹

Before the sculpture could be installed, British Petroleum (BP) bought up the final shares of SOHIO and took control, renaming the merged corporation **BP–America**.¹⁰ All of the assets of SOHIO were now the property of British Petroleum: the new board of directors set about closing SOHIO laboratories, eliminating redundant jobs and ruthlessly cutting costs. This was a blow to the local economy in Cleveland, not to mention to local history. John D. Rockefeller, the founder of Standard Oil was a native Clevelander and is buried in Lakeview cemetery there. By 1989, **BP–America** also instituted a uniform design for all of its service and gas stations throughout the Cleveland area. Some early Bauhaus inspired SOHIO stations, designed in 1930–1931 by Alfred Clauss and George Daub were among those destroyed

before 1991 so **BP–America** could project a harmonious corporate image.¹¹ Under its chairman Robert B. Horton, **BP–America** kept the new pink granite 45 story skyscraper on Cleveland's Public Square as their corporate headquarters. The building, designed by the firm of Hellmuth, Obata and Kassabaum, was completed by 1985, but when it was officially dedicated as the *BP Building* in 1988 *Free Stamp*, which had been completed as commissioned before 1987, was still not installed.¹²

Robert B. Horton, who was notorious for his cost-cuttings, did not like Oldenburg and van Bruggen's cheeky painted steel sculpture and refused to accept it or have it installed on its pink granite "ink pad" in front of his corporate headquarters. Horton especially disliked the "out-moded" or old-fashioned business model (and office equipment) implied in *Free Stamp*: **BP–America** was modern and up-to-date (a "cutting edge" international corporation), it did not use rubber stamps.¹³ When the artists sued Horton and **BP–America** for breach of contract regarding *Free Stamp*, articles covering the dispute appeared in *The Plain Dealer*, Cleveland's newspaper, and reports on the local news programs on Cleveland television and tended to focus on the divisive issues of taste and iconography (e.g., what "the man-on-the-street" thought of the sculpture and its implications of a "rubber stamp bureaucracy") rather than on the contractual agreements signed by both SOHIO (now **BP–America**) and the artist.¹⁴ At the same time, the press reported, but did not comment on, the ongoing economic fallout of the BP–SOHIO merger.

Oldenburg, who had worked as a beat reporter in Chicago after leaving Yale University in the early 1950s, may have relished the press coverage (especially the "man-in-the street" interviews) about the sculpture and his law suit.¹⁵ It is less likely that he enjoyed how his sculpture and the dispute with **BP–America** were handled by the local television reporters. TV coverage is subject to a different system of editing than newspaper stories and TV coverage is directed to a different audience as well.¹⁶ As one of the major Pop Artists (and one of the earliest artists to do Happenings in New York City), Oldenburg certainly knew the "power of the press." What were more disturbing were the call-in responses on the local TV news. These functioned as a kind of "trial by the public" outside of any court of law, and the TV audience tends to include those whose only source of news is the television (and these individuals are subject to manipulation by the local newscasters—in sum, the audience tends to identify with the people presenting the news to them).¹⁷

The law suit with **BP–America** was settled in favor of Oldenburg and van Bruggen, but local media kept stirring up public opinion and criticisms. Viewers of the local television news programs were continually asked to take sides about the out-come of the law suit, but the legal questions—issues of

contract law—were ignored in favor of those of taste and ideas about what is art—specifically, what is acceptable public art.¹⁸ Significantly, television viewers and the readers of Cleveland’s newspaper were never asked their opinions about the changes being made by **BP–America** to the local economy—about the loss of jobs and the destruction of familiar institutions and landmarks. For example, the only interest about the destruction of those Bauhaus inspired gas stations—the first such buildings in the United States and important historical monuments—came from a reporter for the *Akron Beacon-Journal* and her story was killed by her editor, who did not consider it important enough.¹⁹ Local television viewers actually sided with Horton, the chairman of **BP–America** (the man William Glaberson, business writer for *The New York Times*, called “**BP–America’s** Hatchet Gentleman” for his cost-cutting on the dedication celebrations for its new pink skyscraper on Public Square), and against the artists!

BP–America had to accept the finished sculpture and had to pay Oldenburg and van Bruggen, but the corporation kept *Free Stamp* in storage.²⁰ Meanwhile, Horton and his board of directors also looked for a museum or public institution that would take the sculpture off their hands. Eventually, John Browne, who followed Horton as chair of **BP–America** in 1989, settled on the idea of giving the sculpture to the City of Cleveland—and getting a tax write off in return.²¹ Oldenburg and van Bruggen found Willard Park, close by City Hall, the ideal spot for their reconfigured sculpture. But it was only after the elections in November of 1989, which ushered in a new mayor (Michael White replaced George Voinovich, later Governor and now Senator from Ohio) and a new city government coupled with Oldenburg and van Bruggen’s threats to destroy *Free Stamp*, that a suitable place was found in Willard Park, adjacent to City Hall, facing the Federal Building between East- sixth and ninth Streets.²²

The original vertical configuration (i.e., *Free Stamp* sitting on its ink pad) made no sense in this new site. At Willard Park the pink and red *Free Stamp* rests on its side as if embedded in the green lawn with the handle pointing towards the lake to the North, and the word FREE (in reverse), but legible on the pink stamp, vaguely facing the Federal Building across the street. There is no ink pad. It looks as if the sculpture had fallen to the ground from some gigantic or heavenly desk or had landed there after having been thrown away by the director of **BP–America** as he sat in his pink *Tower* on Public Square.²³ This new arrangement neutralized some of the earlier negative readings of *Free Stamp*, while enhancing its ironic ones. The sculpture actually works in a totally different way in its new site, although knowing its earlier history helps to see the humor of the piece in its new location. *Free Stamp* has become one

of the “must-see” sites of downtown Cleveland and it remains controversial. Moreover, the sculpture is the meeting point for protests of all kinds.²⁴ People either like *Free Stamp*, or they do not. *Free Stamp* lives!

How Oldenburg and van Bruggen handled the controversies surrounding *Free Stamp* contrasts directly with how Richard Serra responded to the criticisms and complaints about *Tilted Arc* (1980–1989).²⁵ Both sculptures underwent “fire by the media” during the same time span (ca. 1980–1985), law suits about their commission and “permanent placements” (ca. 1986–1988) and very different resolutions in 1989: Oldenburg and van Bruggen’s *Free Stamp* was taken out of storage and reconfigured for a new site; while Serra’s *Tilted Arc* was destroyed because he insisted that it could only be seen at the site for which it was designed. Both sculptures were “site specific,” i.e., designed for a specific site so that the forms of the sculpture could enhance those of the surrounding or so that the forms could only be appreciated in the context of the site.²⁶ After prodding by the artists—in the form of their threat to destroy it if the Willard Park site was not confirmed—*Free Stamp* got a new lease on life, thanks to sympathetic politicians (Mayor White and City Council President Westbrook) who understood that the sculpture enhanced the public face of Cleveland.²⁷

A third major sculptural commission for a public space within the same time span (ca. 1980–1985) also generated similar controversies and may have pointed the way to Oldenburg and van Bruggen’s reconfiguring *Free Stamp*: Maya Lin’s *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* on the Mall in Washington, DC (1981–1984).²⁸ Privately commissioned and funded by The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Inc., Lin’s memorial was designed for three acres in Constitution Gardens adjacent to the National Mall near the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC. Criticisms were leveled even before ground was broken in 1982.²⁹ Design changes (the addition of Frederick Hart’s *The Three Soldiers* (1982–1984) and a flag pole) were mandated by the commissioning body to satisfy the vocal opponents (mainly various veterans’ groups, congressmen and conservative political commentators) to Lin’s spare design of black granite walls inscribed with the names of the conflict’s fallen.³⁰ Lin objected to these changes, but did not prevent them from being incorporated into the memorial. Time has proven that Lin’s original abstract design was superior to the figural addition: people remember the two walls filled with names and they leave personal items at its base.³¹ A half-sized version of Lin’s design was made in 1984 and put on display in Tyler, Texas. A portable version of the memorial was made in 1987 (and another made in 1989) and these travel to small towns across the United States so people unable to get to Washington can experience this emotional work.³² Neither Hart’s three figures nor the other figural

group of the *Women's Memorial*, added in 1993, are included in these portable versions. Lin's memorial lives!

Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen supported Richard Serra during the hearing about *Tilted Arc* in March 1985 and they have continued (as has Maya Lin) making sculpture commissioned for public spaces and all (the Oldenburgs, Serra and Lin) have fostered the rights of artists to the present day.³³ Oldenburg and van Bruggen, however, tend to take a more restrained and less combative, but no less aggressive, stance than many artists including Richard Serra. Perhaps because Oldenburg is a naturalized American citizen (since the late 1950s) and perhaps because of his family background and that of his wife, the couple are better able to put into non-offensive and un-challenging words exactly what the rights of an artist should be.³⁴

Oldenburg and van Bruggen were able to bring some resolution for *Free Stamp* by threatening to destroy the sculpture if a new site could not be found. This contrasts with Serra's actions trying to preserve *Tilted Arc* on its site at Foley Square. Serra, a feisty native-born American from a very different family background, brought law suits against the GSA administrator who wanted the sculpture removed. Serra would not accept a new site for *Tilted Arc*—he held that it could only exist at the site for which it was designed—and when he lost his suit the sculpture was dismantled and put in storage. He and his wife continued a campaign of criticism against the Federal government and its GSA Art-in-Architecture program over the next several years. Both Oldenburg and van Bruggen have worked with clients and patrons to facilitate the reading of their piece or to make it more acceptable to the viewing public.³⁵

Their words from the March 1985 hearing about *Tilted Arc*, speaks volumes about how Oldenburg and van Bruggen work.³⁶ Oldenburg had cited his own experience with the GSA (Government Services Administration) commissioning of his *Batcolumn* (1977) in Chicago and van Bruggen followed with: "None of our public sculpture has been free of controversy. In 1977, the *Batcolumn* for Chicago received the annual "Golden Fleece" award for conspicuous government waste from Senator William Proxmire, among other attacks. Despite this, there was no wavering on the part of the government in support of the work. We regard controversy as positive and a necessary part of the GSA Art-in-Architecture Program, which does not seek to maintain a status quo of dead art but to inspire the community with change and new experience. A good sculpture is true and critical and with an edge, uncensored and unregimented, and is an example of free expression. Its acceptance by the community is mainly an educational problem, one of overcoming established prejudices of "beautiful" and "useful" as they apply to art."³⁷ Both Oldenburg and van Bruggen hold that *Free Stamp* was one of their most difficult commissions, although neither has been very forthcoming about the whole ordeal.³⁸

With the resolution of 1989–1991 outlined above, the story of *Free Stamp* seems to have ended, but the saga of **BP–America** and the ramifications of its corporate takeovers continued through the 1990s and into the 2000s. BP's next big acquisition was Amoco (originally Standard Oil of Illinois) and in 1998, the **BP–Amoco** corporate headquarters were moved from Cleveland to Chicago.³⁹ This caused more closing of local facilities and the loss of over 1000 more jobs in the city of Cleveland. The big pink skyscraper, commissioned by SOHIO and dedicated as *BP–America Tower*, was sold to the Chicago-based Equity Office Properties Trust in 1996 and again in 2005 to Harbor Group International and is currently known as 200 Public Square.⁴⁰ Law offices and other concerns are now housed in the skyscraper. The only remaining clue to **BP–America's** ownership is the original granite “ink pad” for *Free Stamp* in front of the building on Public Square—now covered in green plants. *Free Stamp* lives!

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NOTES

¹ Ida Gianelli and Marcella Beccaria, eds., *Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen: A History of Sculpture* (Geneva: Skira, 2007) and, for the BP Building (formerly the SOHIO Building), see «clevelandskyscrapers.com» and «en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BP_Building».

² See «city.cleveland.oh.us/around_town/city_highlights/landmarks/freestamp» and Deegan, Gregory G. and Toman, James A. *Heart of Cleveland. Public Square in the 20th Century* (Cleveland, OH: Landmarks Press, 1999), pp. 101–103, especially the photograph on p. 103 showing the façade of the Standard Oil Building (SOHIO Building) and the remains of the granite ink pad near its entrance. For Terminal Tower and Public Square, see Rarick, Holly W. *Progressive Vision. The Planning of Downtown Cleveland 1903–1930* (Cleveland, OH: The Cleveland Museum of Art, 1986), especially pp. 53–60.

³ Grabowski, John J. and Grabowski, Diane Ewert. *Cleveland Then and Now* (San Diego, CA: Thunder Bay Press, 2002), p. 12 (showing the monument and its surroundings ca. 1900) and p.13 (the monument with the SOHIO Building (BP Building) ca. 2000). Doezema, Marianne and Hargrove, Jane. *The Public Monument and Its Audience* (Cleveland, OH: The Cleveland Museum of Art, 1977), pp. 35–39 and Deegan and Toman, op. cit., pp. 10–13 and 99 discuss the construction of this monument and its importance to Public Square.

⁴ In the original configuration, no one could read the word on the stamp, although one would be able to figure it out from the four different sides. According to the city website (see note 2), van Bruggen “suggested the word “Free” to represent liberty and independence and to make a positive statement in the heart of the city.”

⁵ Rorimer, Anne. *New Art in the 60s and 70s. Redefining Reality* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2001), p. 31.

⁶ *Ibid.*, “. . . Oldenburg endowed recognizable objects of daily life with an heroic aspect. By giving anthropomorphic, eroticized form to the household appliance, the teddy bear, the hot dog, etc., Oldenburg was able to poke fun at aggrandizing monumentality by means of monumental sculpture itself.” Compare Brown, Bill. “Thing Theory,” *Critical Inquiry*, 28 (Autumn 2001), pp. 14–16, especially p. 14: “. . . the grossly mimetic character of Oldenburg's work draws attention to the

discrepancy between objectivity and materiality, perception and sensation, objective presence (a fan, a Fudgsicle, a sink) and material presence (the canvas, the plaster of Paris, the vinyl) as though to theatricalize the point that all objects (not things) are, first off, iconic signs. (A sink looks like a sink.)” Also see “World’s Largest Rubber Stamp” at «worldslargest-things.com/easterntour/freestamp» and «roadsideamerica.com/attract/OHCLstamp».

⁷ Oldenburg’s *Ray Gun Museum* was recreated at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Vienna during the summer months in 2003. Ray Gun came from the initials R. G. (for Red Grooms), another Pop artist and colleague of Oldenburg. All of Oldenburg’s large scale sculptures depend upon visual puns, see Graham, Dan. “Oldenburg’s Monuments,” *Artforum* 6 (January 1968), pp. 30–37; Robert Doty (editor) *Oldenburg/The Inverted Q* (Akron, OH: Akron Art Institute, 1977); Brown, “Thing Theory,” p. 14; and “The Language Employed by Oldenburg” at «shakti.trincoll.edu/~awertz/oldenburg/language».

⁸ According to the city website (see note 2), the design was changed because SOHIO was concerned about maintenance. A model or mock-up of an early stage of *Free Stamp* (ca. 1982–1985) was recently offered for sale on the Internet («artprice.com/ps/artitems/?id=1399439») under “Claes and Coosje van Oldenburg & Bruggen, Sculpture-Installation, Art Auction” (read March 23, 2007).

⁹ «oldenburgvanbruggen.com/freestamp» who credit J. Robert Jennings, engineer, and Donald Lippincott, project manager at Chicago Bridge and Iron Company and, compare “Free Stamp” at «sculpturecenter.org/0091/sculpture».

¹⁰ The following articles appeared in *The New York Times*: “British Petroleum Extends Offer for Standard Oil of Ohio” (April 24, 1987); “B.P. in 7.82 Billion Deal for Standard Oil of Ohio” (April 27, 1987); “B.P. now Holding 95% of Standard Oil of Ohio” (May 14, 1987) and “B.P. Acquisition of Standard Oil of Ohio” (June 30, 1987).

¹¹ Reuters, “B.P. America Sets New Brand Name,” *The New York Times*, January 7, 1989. For a photograph and plan of these early SOHIO stations, see Hitchcock, Henry-Russell and Johnson, Philip. *The International Style: Architecture Since 1922* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1932; rpt., 1966), pp. 112–113.

¹² The SOHIO Building was completed in 1985 and dedicated as such in early 1986, but *Free Stamp* was not installed on its pad. The city website states: “Just as construction on a revised design [of *Free Stamp*] began SOHIO underwent a change in management. The new managers did not like the idea of placing a massive piece of pop art on Public Square, especially a 50-foot stamp. Several opponents of the *Free Stamp* feared that the message conveyed by the work would invite jokes about the condition of the downtown, which during the 1980s was in need of revitalization. SOHIO gave Oldenburg and van Bruggen the opportunity to relocate the stamp, but the artists did not want to move it. The location at Public Square added to the artistic expression of the work in a way other locations could not. Production of the Stamp was halted for several years and pieces of it were placed in storage in Indiana. As BP America assumed management of SOHIO [in 1987] executives wondered why the company was paying so much to house a huge stamp.” In January 1988, **BP–America** dedicated its corporate headquarters on Public Square, see Glaberson, William. “B.P. America’s ‘Hatchet Gentleman’: Robert B. Horton; Cost-Cutter with a Soft Touch,” *The New York Times*, January 10, 1988. Oldenburg and van Bruggen’s law suit against SOHIO (and Horton and **BP–America**) was filed shortly afterwards, see the *Free Stamp Archives* at Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio.

¹³ Throughout the 1980s and 1990s BP and **BP–America** tried to polish its public image as an efficient, modern corporation, see “NetBenefit” at «academic.emporia.edu/smithwil/005pmg456/eja/coder» and Robert, John. “Organizing

for Performance: How BP Did It." *Stanford Business Magazine*, February 2005 at gsb.stanford.edu/news/bmag/sbsm0502/feature_bp.

¹⁴ For these, see "BP: A Legacy of Apartheid, Pollution and Exploitation" at [«multinationalmonitor.org/hyper/issues/1992/11/mm1192_11»](http://multinationalmonitor.org/hyper/issues/1992/11/mm1192_11), especially the sections "BP's America" (Grace Waite Jones provided the information); "Leading in Contamination" and "Disgraceful Labor Record." All of the incidents cited date to 1987–1991.

¹⁵ Wheeler, Daniel. *Art Since Mid-Century: 1945 to the Present*. (New York: Vendrome Press, 1991), pp. 141–145 (for Oldenburg's career to 1976); and Rorimer, op. cit., p. 31 (for bibliography on Oldenburg's activities in the early 1960s). Add, Haywood, Robert E. "Heretical Alliances: Claes Oldenburg and the Judson Memorial Church in the 1960s," *Art History* 18 (June 1995), pp. 185–212.

¹⁶ See Rubin, R. B., Perse, E. M. and Powell, R. A. "Loneliness, Parasocial Interaction, and Local Television News Viewing," *Human Communications Research* 12 (1985), pp. 155–180; Rubin, A. M. and Rubin, R. B. "Interface of Personal and Mediated Communication: A Research Agenda," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 2 (1985), pp. 36–53; Rubin, A. M. and Perse, E. M. "Audience Activity and Television News Gratifications," *Communication Research* 14 (1987), pp. 58–84; Rubin, R. B. and McHugh, M. P. "Development of Parasocial Interaction Relationships," *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media* 31 (1987), pp. 279–292; and Perse, E. M. and Rubin, A. M. "Chronic Loneliness and Television Use," *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media* 34 (1990), pp. 37–53.

¹⁷ See, in particular, Rubin, Perse and Powell (as cited in note 16).

¹⁸ As someone who moved to Cleveland in 1984, one of my sharpest memories of this period (from 1985 until the resolution in November 1989) was how the coverage in the news media—whether print or television and radio—continued focusing on these issues of taste rather than of those of contract law. These parallel the criticisms of Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc* in the local news in New York, see Clara Weyergraf-Serra and Martha Buskirk, eds., *The Destruction of Tilted Arc: Documents*. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), p. 7.

¹⁹ Conversation with Dorothy Shinn, arts reporter for *The Akron Beacon-Journal*. At this time (ca. 1985–1991), *The Cleveland Plain Dealer* was without a full-time arts reporter. Steven Litt, who currently fills that position, was hired in early 1992, just before the symposium honoring Oldenburg and van Bruggen (and *Free Stamp*) sponsored by John Carroll University, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland State University and The Cleveland Museum of Art.

²⁰ Exactly how long *Free Stamp* was in storage is open to debate, see the extended quotation from the city website in note 12. There is no mention of the law suit brought by Oldenburg and van Bruggen against SOHIO and Horton and **BP–America** (which took almost 2 years to settle) in the city website.

²¹ The city website (as in note 2) credits Mayor George Voinovich with initiating this donation *before* the elections of 1989. **BP–America** still owned *Free Stamp* until after the elections of November 1989 (actually, until it was set up at Willard Park in April 1991) and [«oldenburgvanbruggen.com»](http://oldenburgvanbruggen.com) lists *Free Stamp* as a "Gift of BP America, Inc. to the city of Cleveland." The sculpture's provenance as listed with *The Sculpture Center's Ohio Outdoor Sculpture Inventory* is "Donated by Standard Oil of Ohio, currently British Petroleum" and the date "April 1991," [«sculpturecenter.org/00si/sculpture.asp?SID=159»](http://sculpturecenter.org/00si/sculpture.asp?SID=159).

²² The city website (as in note 2) skirts the political nature of this resolution. As I remember, the announcement of the Willard Park site came within days of Michael White and Jay Westerbrook taking office in November 1989. One wonders if the Willard Park site appealed to Oldenburg and van Bruggen because of its position midway between the *Galleria at Erieview Plaza* (at Superior and East 9th Street) and the *Bond Court Hotel* (on the opposite corner), both newly built or under

re-construction, and the lake front (then scheduled for redevelopment that began with I. M. Pei commissioned to design the *Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum*).

²³ According to the city website (as in note 2) “Oldenburg and van Bruggen [altered] the position of the *Free Stamp* so that it would lie on its side, as if it had toppled over on someone’s desk. Van Bruggen felt that the new design reflected the *Free Stamp*’s history as it was “flung” from Public Square only to “land” in Willard Park.” On its side, the stamp with the word “Free” actually faces the *BP Building* on Public Square.

²⁴ Since 2001, a “Peace Show” sponsored by the Cleveland Nonviolence Network Artists for peace, the Catholic Workers Community and the InterReligious Task Force on Central America has been held at *Free Stamp* on Labor day. The Cleveland Department of Public Health also holds events at *Free Stamp*, like the June 2006 free testing for HIV/AIDS, for which see “News Advisory” at «city.cleveland.oh.us/mayor/press/2006/200606/06_26_2006». *Free Stamp* is also a popular tourist site, (see «Cleveland.citysearch.com/best/result/7719» for “Best of Citysearch 2002:Best Free Attraction in Cleveland”).

²⁵ Weyergraf-Serra and Buskirk, op.cit., esp. Richard Serra’s Introduction, pp. 3–17. In the Fall of 1989, when they threatened to destroy *Free Stamp* if a suitable place for it was not found at Willard Park Oldenburg and van Bruggen were very aware that Serra’s *Tilted Arc* had been destroyed in March 1989.

²⁶ Oldenburg and van Bruggen’s interviews, in Weyergraf-Serra and Buskirk, op.cit., pp. 77–80, give an excellent traditional definition of site-specificity. See Kwon, Miwon. *One Place After Another. Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), pp. 56–80. Significantly, the travails of *Free Stamp* are not discussed by Kwon, perhaps because it was commissioned by a private corporation and because Oldenburg and van Bruggen designed its site-specificity (for both configurations) in a traditional way.

²⁷ *Free Stamp*’s new location established East 9th Street as the major financial center of Cleveland. Moreover, the sculpture now served as a gateway to the developments at the lake shore (including I. M. Pei’s *Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum*, which opened in 1995, the Museum of Science and Technology, also opened in 1995, and the new football stadium, built in the late 1990s).

²⁸ Wagner-Pacific, R. and Schwartz, B., “The Vietnam Veterans Memorial: Commemorating a Difficult Past,” *American Journal of Sociology* 97 (1991), pp. 376–420 and “Vietnam Veterans Memorial” at «en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vietnam_Veterans_Memorial» which, like the memorial itself, is updated continually.

²⁹ Among these criticisms were racial ones directed to Maya Lin and based upon emotional responses to the Vietnam War (and earlier Asian wars). Like Oldenburg and van Bruggen, Lin is a naturalized American citizen, but she is of Chinese ancestry. Maya Lin was not even mentioned as the designer of the monument during the memorial’s November 13, 1982 dedication ceremony.

³⁰ Frederick Hart’s *Three Soldiers* was added so that Lin’s design could be formally approved. The flag pole came later, see the chronology in the website (cited above in note 28). Also see «en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Three_Soldiers».

³¹ Palmer, Laura. *Shrapnel in the Heart*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1987) preserves some of the letters and mementos left at the site. Selected items left at the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* are on display at the American History section of the Smithsonian Institution. Nonperishable items left at the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial*, with the exception of miniature American flags, are collected daily and stored at the Museum and Archeological Regional Storage Facility of the National Parks Service.

³² There is also *The Virtual Wall*, an on-line memorial. One of *The Moving Walls* (or *Traveling Wall*) was on display in Elyria, Ohio in early June 2007.

³³ Oldenburg and van Bruggen together with Serra are signatories to the 1998 *Amicus Brief* in the case of The National Endowment for the Arts, et al., Petitioners, v. Karen Finley, et al., Respondents (No. 97321), see "Freedom of Expression at the National Endowment for the Arts" at «csulb.edu/~jvancamp/doc.24».

³⁴ Oldenburg's father was a Swedish diplomat and his brother, Richard E. Oldenburg, served as Director of the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Coosje van Bruggen is an art historian.

³⁵ Like Christo and his wife, Jeanne-Claude, Oldenburg and van Bruggen seem to enjoy working out the details of a commission with clients and patrons, seeing it as part of the creative act. Although, like the Christos, the Oldenburgs are not reluctant to fight for their ideas, they prefer to work out differences.

³⁶ Both Oldenburg and van Bruggen describe their personal working relationship as a collaboration, see Oldenburg's "Convocation Address at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design graduation ceremonies, April 2005" at «nscad.ns.ca/alumni/oldenburg1.php»: "Coosje . . . is a writer who can set down what life is all about but she had always longed to be an artist. After having written a number of books in which her vision made all things clear, she brought that vision to a collaboration of inside and outside. Form and content. Not that she can't make form as well if she wants to. And I too can make content. But we compliment each other. Extend the range. The complete human being must be both of many things . . . many seeming opposites: male and female, western and eastern, northern and southern. You name it. Synthesis. We expressed this on a public scale at first, with the slogan *private art in public places*; the combination of our feelings and what we intuited of a particular community. . . . At first it was a principle: avoid the exploitation of galleries, ignore critics, create directly for the people. Art is a response to life and we did this in many places for many years."

³⁷ Oldenburg and van Bruggen's interview, in Weyergraf-Serra and Buskirk, op. cit., pp. 77–78.

³⁸ In city website (as in note 2), "Artists Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen . . . admit that it was one of the most difficult works of art they have ever created." Similar statements were expressed by the artists during the April 1992 Symposium in Cleveland. Also, see *Free Stamp Archives* at the Western Reserve Historical Society, etc.

³⁹ See the articles in *The New York Times* written by Yousef M. Ibrahim "British Petroleum is Buying Amoco in \$48.2 Billion Deal" (August 12, 1998); Stephen Labator "Federal Regulator Approves British Petroleum Purchase of Amoco" (December 31, 1998); and Alan Cowell "BP—Amoco Says It Will Cut Annual Costs by \$4 Billion" (July 16, 1999). "Standard Oil: Today" at «us-highways.com/sohist1999» provides additional information on this merger, as does Robert "Organizing for Performance: How BP Did It" (cited in note 13).

⁴⁰ See "BP Tower" at «en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BP_Building».

AESTHETIC AND HISTORICAL CONTOURS
OF RUSSIAN MANOR AS A GENRE

ABSTRACT

The development of the Russian manor has been shown to mirror the history of the Russian culture, national history and heritage, as well as the Russian mentality and ancestral memory. This study emphasizes that its history records “rigidly observed structures of power”. Chekov’s dacha in Melihovo provides an example of the perceived change from dacha to manor. Like a dacha, the dwelling was located in the village, it had no front yard, nor was it fenced from the street. Yet the Chekov family perceived it as a manor and used it as a theatre for their own nobility. Bakhtin is absolutely right in supporting that the main genre-forming factor is historical time with its social and ideological distinctions.

“It’s a strange thing, but there is a kind of special and unique fascination in this tale of the past, which, perhaps, might be transparent only to a Russian in origin: a fascination of bearish popular print, a miracle of folksy Russian word, a fairytale of village descants or rakish steps of Russian dance. All of those are on the background of antique temples with columns overarched by caps of Ionic, Dorian or Corinthian Orders. A dance of Russian barefooted Malashkas and Dunkas in a “Temple of Love”, a masquerade of ploughboys dressed as ancient gods and goddesses. . . What else could be more farcical and amusing, sad and wise?” N.N. Wrangel, “Old Manors”.

Russian manor is the entire culturological universe embedding multilayer phases of formation of national history and heritage, Russian mentality and our ancestral memory. The formula of Russian Manor is a quintessence, virtuality of the universe as “patrimonial estate” with its provincial culture of humdrum and way of life, with its philosophy of cultural leisure and coziness through the unity of a human being with nature, social service and individual life style of enlightened citizen of the motherland. Following the contemporary academic and artistic way of thinking, the aesthetics of the manor culture might be perceived as a mirror, which focuses various aspects of socioeconomic and family life tenor of Russian reality.

However, the world of a manor is not just an aesthetic well-fit dwelling space; this is a “rigidly observed structure of power”, a “lymph gland” of national culture. This is the most successful nodule out of those self-reproducing cultural elements, which have been created for centuries. And, indeed, it is still self-reproducing. This is confirmed by humanitarian community, which has always been impassioned with the fate of Russian Manor. It was in the beginning of XX century, when P.P. Weiner, editor and publisher of “Past Years” was one of the first who realized the acuity and actuality of manor problem, while V.V. Zgura after the events of 1917 unified the best representatives of intellectuals in the framework of the Society of Studying Russian Manor (1922–1931), and through 1992, when with the help of creative endeavors of Professor L.V. Ivanova the activities of this Society was reestablished and broadened through publishing of scientific treatises, carrying out of scientific and theoretical conferences and excursions. The library sphere of exploring the conglomerate of Russian Manor is consistently growing thanks to untiring work of the best representatives of humanitarian elite of XX–XXI, who were trying to “restore stereometry of analytical vision when viewing Russian manor illuminated and consecrated with historical memory”. Today, different variations of manor space museification allow us organizing music festivals “Sheremetyev’s Seasons” in Ostankino and Kouskovo, “Open Air Concertos” in Arkhangelskoye Manor, various exhibitions, including personal vernissages, as well as literature evenings in Ostafyevo, Melihovo, Tsaritsyno, in the Museum of manor culture in Kouzminki, Zaharovo-Bolshie Vyazemy etc.

On the background of today’s social and cultural situation the manor philosophy is being written by young and talented Russian architects, who create concepts of exclusive development fashion on the crest of this architectural-economical wave. Some of them are pragmatically focusing their creative look on the genre model of old Russian Manor, thus germinating an ultra fresh manor’s style of “architectural archeology”.

Presentation of the new magazine “Living in a Manor: Now and Then” in Arkhangelskoye Manor or well-organized and interestingly arranged exhibition under intriguing epithet “Who is Doing Well at Dacha? Revival of Good Olden Time” held in the All-Russia Exhibition Center; scenic canvas of Igor Revenko in the Museum of antique furniture dedicated to the mysterious beauty of Russian Manor,—this empirically “live” material broadens the scientific-aesthetic spectrum of contemporary manor themes. The professionals pose and analyze questions, such as revival of national traditions in intensive creative life; a dacha for compatriots is the place for recreation and creativeness, rather than a kitchen garden; the art of living outside; aesthetics of dacha lifestyle.

They reconfirm the fact of “self-reproduction” of the Russian Manor’s spirit. “Blooming like a flower on the pages of decent books, the Russian Manor, therefore, keeping its God blessed image, once again demonstrates its fundamental affiliation with national culture, which is identified by persistent survivability—the most substantial feature of a national culture. . . In this new century (I wish to believe it) Russia will never leave this wonderful bloom of Russian Manor without an ovary”.

From both philosophic and, specifically, aesthetic point of view, the new scientific-theoretical potential of modern Russian manor culture contemplates, to my mind, the following questions and their solutions:

- Drafting of architectural-manor genre typology;
- Cultural dialogue of Russian Manor, Italian villa, English country mansion, French geometric landscape and Japanese symbolic garden both in a historical context and at present;
- Defining the dynamics of manor styles;
- Aesthetics of memory (manor memories);
- Semiotics of manor as symbolic character;
- Analysis of manor as museified space-exhibit.

Undoubtedly, each of the above problems requires a separate deep and comprehensive scientific analysis. Using an epitomic approach to discourse, let us review the typology of the architectural-manor genre, the principles of which reflect historical stadiality and continuity of manor development. Projection of “genre” category over the manor culture allows us supposing that some of its highly valuable aesthetic constituents might be acknowledged as works of art. Genre denomination of manor/work-of-art correlates the same with some architectural-stylistic norms, identifies certain over-individual and persistent features. First of all, the architectural-manor genre acts as a classifier. We may singularize the following array of such genres: Russian manor, Italian villa, English country mansion etc. Specifically, genre differentiation of Russian Manor might be represented by a manor-patrimonies, palace-park ensembles (Peterhof, Pavlovsk), noblesse and merchantmen manors; later on—dachas, then—cottages and villas.

However, the classificatory, the most obvious function of architectural-manor genre is not the only one. Authorial genre denominations, creative signature of an architect-artist presuppose mutual understanding between the manor and its owner, as well as the visitor as a spectator. A problem of communication arises. The genre in manor art operates as a symbol of architectural tradition. The Manor as a monument, as a museified space is apprehended

under the “laws” of the genre based on analysis of its antecedent archetypes. This apprehension has been given by the customer, the owner, the visitor and the audience of the manor–museum. Similar genre “expectation of readers” of the manor’s “text” exercises a significant influence on the creativeness of architect–artist.

As I believe it, methodologically, it is wise to build the system of architectural–manor genre on the basis of the Hegelian philosophic genre concept, which derives from the stadiality of social evolution and observes “general status of universe” being the ground of such genre. The case in hand is about the fruitfulness of sociohistorical approach to manor culture in general and to its genres in particular. The historicism the Hegelian thinking might be philosophically fit on architectural–manor genre analysis. Various genres of manors might be considered, first of all, as artistic projection of certain phase in social evolution. In support of the above, let us historically trace the evolution of Russian architectural–manor genre.

Starting from XVI century—the time of development of landed gentry system and emergence of seigniorial estates and up to rich manor–patrimonies of Muscovy in XVII century and thereafter towards to XVIII century—“The Age of Enlightenment”, which enriched formal and contextual parameters of manor life. That was the time of the birth of new genre—Tsar’s palace manor–residence, aristocratic manor, such as Kouskovo, Ostankino or Arkhangelskoye. In the person of their enlightened owners the Sheremetyevs, Golitsins or Yusoupovs, who were striving for self–prominence and eminence of personality, such fates acquire an individually inimitable and personified overtone.

Manifesto on Liberty of Noblesse in 1762 opened up a vastitude for thousands of well–educated gentry for arrangement of their own patrimonial estates in accord with European humanitarian ideals and philosophic principles of naturality (“Back to Nature!”, Jean Jacques Rousseau). The second half of XVIII and the first half of XIX century was the time of efflorescence, peaking ascent of rural noblesse manors, not only large aristocratic, but also modest “patrimonial estates” of landed gentry (Dvoryaninovo Manor of A.T. Bolotov’s). Thus, that was a beginning of a new manor genre. That was the period of shaping–up of truly haut–manor aesthetics, a time of creation of the greater part of splendid examples of architectural–landscape ensembles, the foundation of realistic philosophy of Russian Manor, which as a mirror reflected the emancipated personality of educated noble and their aspiration for self–expression in social, economic and spiritual life. In this context the original concept of A.N. Veselovskiy’s has much in common with the Hegelian genre typology, and which correlates the genre history with historical personality

development. According to the scientist, a certain stage in relationship of an individual and the society induces a content of a work of art, i.e. the Manor.

Culturological image of a manor would not be ever completed without its economical constituent. Actuality and undeniable importance of studying socioeconomic and household characteristics of manor lifestyle was clearly acknowledged by art critics, historians and philosophers. It was the manor's space that formed the stratum of rural intelligentsia. The owners of town houses introduced new elements to agricultural and industrial-craft production; they developed new agrotechnical culture and laid the basis for efficient environmental management. Manors have influenced the formation of cultural-economic landscape of Russia. The process gained its utmost intensity after 1861, when some part of noblesse's manors passed into the hands of new owners—the merchantry. In most of cases merchants used to buy out the “noble nests” rather than building new manor ensembles. Impressive wealth and remarkable managerial capacities of those new Russian promyshlenniki (industrialists) allowed expanding the culturological functionality and adding value to merchantmen manors—a new architectural-manor genre. Taking advantage of literary criticism's categories, one may say that there was an apparent process of “cross” genre attraction between noblesse's and merchantmen's manors. This was due to modernization of manor's economic-entrepreneurial activities, as well as thanks to a modish crush (which became a norm) of inviting famous architects, artists, composers and writers. In those days it was quite fashionable and praiseworthy to establish favorable conditions for their creativeness out in the country and to nourish a very special spiritual aura of confidence on the background of a manor's walk of life.

In the light of solving problems with manor genres, it is interesting to dwell upon a question of rapprochement of manor culture with dacha's one, which was first put by G.U. Sternin, who analyzed it using the example of famous Abramtsevo Estate. Moreover, there was not only a movement “from manor to dacha”, but vice-versa too—“from dacha to manor”. Dacha of A.P. Chekhov in Melihovo is a good example of that.

In Abramtsevo Manor's atmosphere, in spite of quite high artistic professionalism, however, the owners cultivated dilettantism or amateurism, which was indigenous specifically for the theatrical hobby of the participants of artistic circle established by Mamontov. The very “cult of dilettantism” justified the movement of Abramtsevo's “from manor to dacha”. Such a tendency was quite naturally embedded into the general context of manor's life in the beginning of XIX century with its typical ludic primordium, penetrating occasionally the most prosaic and everyday aspects of the same, which, to a certain degree,

“theatralized” manor’s routine and added an inimitable touch of charm and vibration to its separate fragments that in aggregate comprised the complete and organic whole.

In Chekhov’s Melihovo the cult of “dilettantism” was even much more articulated: the dwelling facility was located amidst the village and was neither fenced from the street side nor had it any front yard; the cultural order was, first of all, the dacha’s order. Nevertheless, A.P. Chekhov and his family perceived Melihovo as a manor.

The process of moving from “manor” to “dacha”, conversely, was exposed to the pressure of complicated social changes in then reforming Russia. However, it testified both to the decay of haut-manor culture, especially the old noblesse’ one, and triggered emergence of certain positive momentums such as patronage of the arts. Applying the manor dilemma of “manor-dacha” to genre problems, one may obviously notice a kind of “dialogue” between these two manor genres. Genre concept of M.M. Bakhtin’s splendidly explicates the internal and external interlocutory feature of “manor’s multilingualism”. Manor-genre and dacha-genre, according to Bakhtin, may be perceived as types of socially-historically substantiated “statements”, as participants of social dialogue.

The objective of a researcher is in listening to the “voices and dialogical relationships between them”. The problem of “genre expectation”, analyzed by M.M. Bakhtin, in relation to manor’s work of art demonstrates a dialogue between the architect and the customer, between the author and the audience. In XXI century—as historical time–space—the architectural-landscape character is not identified exclusively by variations on a theme “dacha’s fever”, “a wooden house with “amenities” or a “small farmery”.

The dominating architectural-manor genres of nowadays in Russian manor culture are again represented by imitations of old noblesse manors, castles, villas, cottages and manors. Such a tendency in the national artistic and architectural-landscape “environment” of out-of-town dwellings can be compared with the genesis of Italian villa, starting from the Renaissance, and English country mansion, which also has long historical traditions.

M.M. Bakhtin is absolutely right in his supposing that the main genre-forming factor is the historical time, its social and ideological distinctness. Reasoning about the sustainability of genres, their continuity and historical actuality of genre content, the researcher of genius arrived at an idea of the efficiency of studying the “genre memory”. From this point of view, the manor in its genre diversity is the most sustainable imaginative stratum of Russian national culture, the “representative of creative memory” with its long genealogy.

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ORTHODOX MONASTERIAL COMPLEX IN CONTEMPORARY
SOCIOCULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

Ilvitskaya Svetlana Valeryevna

Actuality of studying the monasterial culture has been predestined by the revival of Orthodox culture and spiritual consciousness of compatriots on the background of essentially complete loss of experience in monasterial development in Russia in XX century. The revival of spirituality in our society and impetuous booming of hieratic construction are justified by insufficient knowledge on monasterial ensembles and temples, which simultaneously are the guardians of spiritual and creative memory in artistic and cultural heritage of the country in a uniform Ontopoesis of Life, as well as the places of pilgrimage and informative tourism.

The methods of interdisciplinary exploration of orthodox monasteries in contemporary cultural situation are connected with deep and extensive working out of a considerable volume of factual material, part of which for the first time in history is being introduced to scientific turnover.

Over a period of 1000-year history of Orthodoxy, the monasteries performed a mission of social self-actualization and development, keeping a dialogue between the past and the future. They have been centers and disseminators of cultural values, moral and ethical norms of people, faith and education, which exerted influence on the level of intellectual and artistic life of the society; they have been the custodians of unique architectural-artistic monuments.

At present, the monasterial complexes are regaining their strength as carriers and disseminators of orthodox religion, as well as sociocultural and educational centers. Their major religious role in mentoring spirituality and morality of contemporary society is supplemented by secular functions: cultural-educational (tourism and museums), social-philanthropic and economic activities.

The issues of studying monasteries in the Balkans (Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia and Rumania), vital activities of which were never interrupted in XX century, and which successfully adapted to modern environment (for instance, broadening of pilgrimage and development of tourism), as well as the issue of defining the practicability of their positive experience for restoration of monasteries in Russia—are of great significance for our country.

It is necessary to highlight the positive side of interdisciplinary studying of orthodox monasterial complexes: application of historical-architectural, culturological and other methods of developing modern approaches to organizing tours on monasterial ensembles taking into consideration their adaptation and expansion of monasterial functions, as well as inclusion of monasteries into new travel routes.

As a result of exploring the contemporary cultural situation in Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia, Rumania and Russia, the researchers have identified three major trends in development of monasterial architectonics, which were laid in the foundation of creative concept of architectural activities in the field of reconstruction and monasterial development:

1. Emergence and development of secular directions in monasterial activities and their adaptation to modern environment based on a new functional-typological foundation and architectural-spatial structure (creation of architectural spaces related to the functions of tourism and museums), taking into consideration modern architectural-constructional requirements (new technologies in construction and development along with innovative materials);
2. Restoration of ensemble structure of functioning monasterial complexes, based on safeguarding of architectural heritage: creation of an expressive aesthetic-phenomenological image of a monastery taking into consideration new stylistic impacts and its harmonious amalgamation with terrestrial environment;
3. When constructing a new monastery: creation of an open system of its activities with high level of accessibility and comfort, including unrestricted space for low-mobile groups of population, as well as organization of social and engineering infrastructure of services, taking into consideration local occupational levels and development of profitable economy, crafts and workmanships.

Integrated and comprehensive approach to studying of the monasterial ensembles' issues is presently based on the concept of a monastery as a uniform sociocultural, territorial-landscape and architectural-compositional complex, spiritual core of which is identified by religious, moral-ethical and philosophic-aesthetic priorities in the whole ontopoetic continuum of Life.

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MEMORY IN POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE MOTIVATION OF AN INDIVIDUAL

Poselskaya Ludmila Nikolayevna

What engenders and specifies direction of specific activities of an individual?

In order to understand and characterize the activity of a human being, it is advisable to explore the "depths" of his/her consciousness, track down

the ancestry existing on a genetic level as a memory of generations, i.e. to define the determinants of his/her self-individualization in a uniform onto-poetic process of becoming a vital creative phenomenon.

The activity has always been connected with sophisticated mental processes and their avatar—the consciousness. From the point of view of trivial consciousness, the activity is defined as subjective–objective phenomenon and is a process, which precedes consciousness, and can be observed proximately. Such a presentation on activities may cause certain critical judgments.

There is also quite an acceptable assertion on its overindividual nature, that is, human activity is not an attribute of a certain human being, but rather an underlying universal integrity. This may mean only one thing: it is not the activity, which belongs to a community of people, but the people that belong to such activity, i.e. it “captivates” them and makes them behave in a certain way, though it is realized by individuals through relevant acts.

The activity contemplates the presence of subject–object and subject–subject relationship. However, this brings up the question, whether consciousness is a derivative of sensual-actual contacts of an individual with outward things and genesis of consciousness in activities, or vice versa, whether consciousness preconditions the activity and, therefore, self-individualization of a personality in such activity aimed at relevant result thereof (either positive or negative).

PHENOMENOLOGY OF NON-ADAPTIVITY OF PERSONALITY

The impelling force of any acts of a personality, both positive and negative, is contradictoriness, a conflict between an objective and the result, an impulse and the output of such activities. This conflict has always been, regardless of the consequences thereof, a determinant of the activities’ development in their progression.

Genesis of non-adaptivity reflects a genetic, psychological and legal virtuality of an activity, both from the point of view of its own progression and realization of already existing motives, objectives and purposes of such activity. At the same time, both constructive and destructive tendencies may prevail. The nature of a human being, features of personality, reasons and motivation of activities are substantiated by genetic properties of a human being, by unique genetic and psychological memory of generations, his/her social behavior and social responsibility.

In general, this problem is of interdisciplinary character, i.e. of philosophic, ethical, medical and legal nature.

LEGAL CRITERION OF POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE
ACTIVITY OF AN INDIVIDUAL

A personality lives and acts in a world, which can be relatively conscious and cognizable by an individual through the “past”. The law in the world of humans includes legal certainty and orderliness of existence, the objective reality, legal approach to essential relationships and social dispositions. The origins and development of legal norms in historic retrospective justifies the perception of legal norms through a phenomenon of personal consciousness as generally recognized category substantiated by historical practice of social development, rather than a formally existing statute. The law in society does not act on itself. It is being effectuated through relevantly lawful or illegal activities of individuals, who act in concord with their free will, which identifies social self-organization and self-individualization of personality in legal space and society in general.

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SECTION II
THE MESSAGE OF ART IN THE EVOLUTION OF
CULTURE

BETWEEN A ROCK AND A SOFT PLACE: FINDING
CREATIVITY IN THE FACE OF OPPRESSION

ABSTRACT

The essay identifies several ways in which an artist's identities intersect with the creativity from which artistic expression emerges. It considers the juxtaposition of theories of social construction and those of agency, testing these theories against narratives of artists in South Africa as they dealt with the history of apartheid and its aftermath. The essay begins with a presentation of ideas of Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka concerning the process by which the creative forces of the logos of life surface in individual human agents with a double-sidedness of social embeddedness and revolt. The narratives of South African black artists are then investigated for elements of socially constructed historical identities (pre-colonial, colonized, and post-colonialist) and then for traces of individually constructed identities (artist, individual, co-creator of the new South Africa). The investigation uncovers a wide variety of identities, mixed and mobile, rather than finding any one identity predominating.

We are all of us, artists or not, living a life of intersections—the personal and the interpersonal, the inward and the outward, the individual and the social-cultural, the momentary and the historicized. Creativity bounces between these, inspiration can be found in or bound by one or the other in varying degrees. When the social-political situation is made complex due to past and current suppression of certain identity groups, for example those marked by skin color or ethnic origins, artists face more complex tensions in making art. For example, in South Africa, Black artists may find their inspiration in past struggles during apartheid, in the current movements of integration and reconciliation, or in the recovery of identity from traditional Africa, but also they may find their artistic source in individual values seemingly detached from these aspects of Black life.

We could say that the person which one is in each moment includes an intersection of these various strands of existence, an intersection that is itself constantly shifting, so that some strands become more intensified or emboldened in their influence on current decisions and behavior—or creative impulses. Some theorists would emphasize an autonomous intersectionality

that is primarily constructed by the social-cultural milieu, rather than the artist as agent, while other theorists would emphasize the centrality of agency, of freedom, within the obvious strands of facticity that inform any person's life. I would like to test this juxtaposition in the paper by looking at the narratives of artists, trying to seek out the ways in which the "outer" arena of the social construction or the "inner" arena of the personal agency are expressed in artists' creativity.

In order to do this, I will look at interviews with, and statements by, Black South African artists where they speak about their creativity and inspiration. These artists face demanding experiences in their attempts to find and assert their place as legitimate artists in societies that marginalized and still marginalize Black peoples. For these artists, the place in which they find themselves is complex, where the singularity of their muses is caught up in the cultural-historical circumstances, pulling them to redefine their people's lives and identities as free, such that this singularity can be both an expression of those circumstances and a stand of freedom outside it. It is the artist acting in freedom, but both freedom from—previous definitions and current cultural expectations—and freedom to—an authentic singularity of the individual artist. I will use these artists' self-understanding to test the ideas of philosophers who emphasize the freedom of creativity, for example, Tymieniecka, and those who insist on a reduced freedom due to the effect of social construction. I will briefly look at these ideas, then articulate the themes of identities that might emerge in artists' statements about their creativity and artwork, and finally move to these statements themselves.

TYMIENIECKA AND THE LIFE OF CREATIVE EXPERIENCE

Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka's work traces the unfolding of the logos of life as it is driven by the *imaginatio creatrix* to constant metamorphosis. The end types of this metamorphosis find the living human agent engaging in the ever ongoing creativity of intellectual, artistic, and other undertakings.

The logos of life is prompted always by the *Imaginatio Creatrix* which with its forces and synergies inspires and carries along to their completion innumerable virtualities... These forces and synergies are mainly responsible for the wealth of our projects, ideas, tendencies and their competitive display.

These creative forces are not anonymous, [but] ... proceed from the specifically outfitted human mind, crystallized within a human person, the final processor of the logos... (Tymieniecka 2006, p. xiii)

The creative forces of the logos of life thus surface in the individual human agent who illustrates the double-sidedness of this reality which is always in process—it finds itself embedded in a reality that already is specified, but it is nevertheless creative or, to some degree, free from remaining fixed in that specific reality. Tymieniecka describes this double-sidedness—the moment from which creativity emerges and the “revolt” that this emergence is:

[T]he creative yearnings burst forward in the midst of the habitual pursuit of livings’ tasks and satisfactions, aiming at a radical revolt at the world of life within the individual being, at everything that is familiar therein and in which he/she sees his/her life inscribed. It is a yearning after an “other world”, an imaginary sphere in which everything would be “different” and in which these yearnings could be satisfied. It is an innermost urge to redeem the insufficiency, the pointlessness of everydayness which fails to indicate any escape from the repetitiveness of the trivial course of life. (Tymieniecka 2006, p. xiv)

The point about “failing to indicate any escape” from life as it is will appear as a particularly apt phrase with which to juxtapose the creative move for those artists who have lived and continue to live within oppressive systems, both real political ones that limit their lives and other discursive ones that attempt to limit the descriptions of their lives. Thus, Tymieniecka reminds us of the explosion of freedom that creativity can be:

The aspiring artist seeks in his/her artistic endeavor to find a new sense of life, deeper, more authentic, more “true”: better corresponding to his/her longings than the one he is living in. The creatively engaged logos explodes in a vertiginous interrogation seeking to reach beyond itself. Hence in the work of art we find the *locus* in which the *radical metamorphosis* of the logos of life finds expression. In the exemplary work of art, we find indeed the creative logos of life reaching the peak of its metamorphosis. (Ibid.)

While the artwork is such a “radical metamorphosis,” it is still something rooted in the conditions of the artist’s life, expressing the artist’s “constant concern with that encounter between the nascent work and the world, for the finished work erupts into the world by blowing up the framework it had found there” (Tymieniecka 1988, p. 115).

In detailing this double-sidedness of creativity, Tymieniecka refuses the theoretical claims of many postmodernist writers who would deny the possibility of the radical metamorphosis, claiming an artist’s work moves forth in determination solely by the surrounding world, the “textualities” of the familiar and habitual which, for them, are what construct the individual through their intersection at the time/place of this person. But feminist writers, after seeing feminist pursuits excoriated by postmodernists claiming to be feminists, in turn denounced the postmodernists as attempting to limit free debate, including that about persons’ freedom to turn their lives into creative expressions. For example, Somer Brodribb reminds us of a major pitfall faced in identity politics—the

re-instituting of hegemony within what is offered as hegemony's alternative: "It appears that a certain authoritative consensus is being promoted and recirculated [by postmodernist feminists], a somewhat totalizing postmodern feminist meta-narrative about the history and the potential of feminism. . . . The game here is the absorption of all critical space by postmodernism" (Brodrribb 1992, p. xxvi). Part of the critical space for artists is institutionalized sources of funding and exhibition which are often politically co-opted by art critics and other arts establishments, including schools of art. If the artist allows herself or himself to be absorbed into this world and "create" for this world, s/he may find herself in what Brodrribb calls "oblivion." Brodrribb urges a move that takes us "out of oblivion," an oblivion that would diminish or punish originality, and suggests an alternative: "We must open the door and leave the Masters' House of theories of subjectivity and consciousness, ideology and power, ethics and desire" (Brodrribb 1992, pp. 146–147). Artists, while still living in certain ways in these "Masters' Houses," can only truly be artists if they make this move.

THEMES OF IDENTITY

Before looking at artists' statements on their understanding of the sources of their creativity, I would like to lay out the broad themes concerning identity that surface in these statements. These themes appear to fall into two areas for grouping aspects of an individual's identity. The first is identity as historically or culturally determined or constructed, the second as individually constructed. For Black South African artists, this first identity is at least threefold:

- (1.A) An historical identity as a member of a group of people who were subject to oppression for decades/centuries by white colonists of the geographical area (Dutch, English, Spanish, French, etc.) and their white descendants, oppression that included social ostracism, segregation, and apartheid. Okwui Enwezor speaks to how those Black artists who created work drawing on this identity were among the first to gain visibility beyond South Africa: "Throughout the 1990s artists in South Africa took on enunciating the relationship between memory and history. . . . During this period in which a relatively large number of South African artists became visible in the international art scene, bearing witness to the memory of the dim years of apartheid became de rigeur for work seeking admittance into exhibition possibilities" (Enwezor, 2004, p. 33). E. G. De Jager indicates some of the material circumstances that determined Black South Africans' artistic production during Apartheid—forcible segregation into the Black townships, for example,

so that the genre of “Township” art originates from these particular urban surroundings (De Jager 1992, p. 4).

- (1.B) An historical identity which predates colonialism and is connected to traditional tribal or ethnic or pre-colonial nation-structures—this identity might connect to some remaining cultural manifestations in present-day society. Thus in South Africa there were the pre-colonial identities of Zulu, Xhosa, Tswana, and Khoisan, for instance. These identities emerge in both critics’ and artists’ spaces in two ways—one, in their being understood from the perspective of the colonizers and thus having their art labeled “primitive” and, second, as an identity to be recovered as valuable despite the perspective of colonizers and thus to be revalued. Katy Deepwell reports that the conference held in 1996 by the International Association of Art Critics aimed at continuing “the dialogue with British art critics, as many people felt that the context in which contemporary art from Africa was received remained overshadowed by the debates about ‘primitivism’ in Modernism; by anthropological perceptions of traditional African art and by misconceptions about the ‘ethnic Other’ in Europe” (Deepwell 1996, p. 10).
- (1.C) A post-colonialist identity, which has been in process, in formation, since the end of apartheid in South Africa with its beginnings of full-fledged multicultural democratic governmental system (1992). This identity also can be double-sided—on the one hand, an individual artist may feel a demand from the critical establishment to inhabit this identity in a certain way and, on the other, may find a real freedom in the openness of this identity. David Koloane comments on the former: “Black artists are today expected not to surrender to, nor assimilate western influence. The artist is expected to be angry and militant by those who sympathize with the struggle for liberation” (Koloane, p. 70). Colin Richards also notices this move to prescribe the appropriate identities for Africans:

We need to develop a discourse which does not automatically set the material against the metaphysical, where the metaphysical is not an evasion but a vision, where spirit is not soft focus dogma but more like the pulse of situated fluid desire. We need to find a way through the Manichaeian world of black and white, without resorting to lurid celebrations or rainbow ‘hybridity’ or other confections of post-colonial, post-apartheid discourse. (Richards, p. 83)

This is a call to “a *mobile* [discourse] which deals critically and productively with rather than is assimilated by either rampant globalisms or entrenched parochialism” (Richards, p. 83).

The second side of identity is one which is individually constructed, in a sense freely or creatively chosen or fashioned, but with strands from one's given individual and social conditions brought forward in creative ways, not just as these are socially constructed. These might be one or more of the following strands for the Black artists to whom we will be listening:

- (2.A) an identity as artist and more broadly a creative person; this identity might also be more specified to the type of artist—performance artist, sculptor, architect, painter, etc.;
- (2.B) an identity as individual, with various facets which manifest uniquely as aspects of this individual's identity: for example, a spiritual facet, a gendered facet, one related to education or professional position (other than simply artist—for example, “art professor”); and
- (2.C) an identity as co-creator in the new South Africa and its cultural expressions, where this identity grows in part from the individual's identity as artist (2.A), but is more interactional—operating in concert with others in the society, including institutions and organizations working both consciously and pre-reflectively on the new South Africa.

LISTENING TO NARRATIVES OF CREATIVITY

My primary source for Black South African artists' statements is a work published by the KwaZulu Natal Society of Arts: *A Community of Artists: A Photographic Book of 106 Kwazulu Natal Artists in Their Studios and Workplaces* (2005) [this work has no page numbers; artist statements appear in alphabetical order]. The work is recent and contains a range of artists, both Black and White, male and female, older and younger.

IDENTITY OF HISTORICAL OPPRESSION (1.A)

I found no artist in my current selection of narratives that spoke to this identity, but De Jager (1992, p. 180) describes the work of one such artist, Helen Sebidi, whose urban scenes “are about the dislocated and exploited in her society, those lost between the old and the new ways,” a remainder, as it were, of the times of apartheid. Yet the artist herself is positioned individually in a post-apartheid identity, capable of comment on this other identity from having lived through it herself earlier in her life—De Jager notes how “her urban scenes . . . contain a large measure of protest or confrontation” (De Jager 1992, p. 180).

PRE-COLONIAL IDENTITY: THE SEARCH FOR IDENTITIES "RESTORED" (I.B)

Zama Dunywa, a Black female South African artist, notes the problems of relating to her Zulu identity: "Zulu cultural values including our language are fast becoming neglected with our people adapting more global and universal ideologies." Her work draws on Zulu women's beadwork: "Traditionally Zulu women occupied a society which did not provide them with a platform for self-expression, so naturally they found alternative yet effective ways to voice their innermost sentiments by using beaded work. Beadwork became a form of communication." In bringing her current-day perspective—the post-colonial self—to bear on this pre-colonial female Zulu identity, Dunywa situates her art between two identities: "Through Western ideology I claim a platform, the terrain to express myself in order to seek for my African image. A quest for identity as it may" (KNSA).

Langa Magwa, a black South African male artist, particularly acknowledges his search into the mixed tribal heritage of Zulu, Swazi and Xhosa, which he hopes to understand and embody in his work: "My work is deeply saturated in African customs embedded in the use of skin (human or animal) as a form of expression and communication" (KNSA).

Lindelani Ngwenya, a black South African male sculptor, articulates his approach to sculpting with the religious heritage of the Zulus: "Sculpting around an emptiness of space is an attempt to made the invisible, visible. My concern is to break through boundaries between my mortal part and my immortal parts, thus reviving Zulu religious systems, which express oneness between the living and the dead" (KNSA).

Nonnie Vakalisa, a black South African female artist, also looks back to the pre-apartheid period, especially in relation to how that relates to herself in present-day South Africa: "My work is mainly about finding my roots, . . . In this work I play around a lot with the notion of the pre-apartheid era because I believe this era has played a huge role in denying the black South African population the right to cultural identity. My roots are vague to me as a young black contemporary South African" (KNSA).

Of some interest here is that the history of artists in Africa yields a bridge between artists as individual creative sources and this pre-apartheid or traditional South African cultural source. P. S. O. Aremu tells how in traditional African nations, artists were supported by rulers, such that "the idea of isolation and the encouragement of the individual mode of expression have tended to support creativity," because "this type of isolation tended to favour a closer contact with creative forces, . . . the fountains of creative energy" (Aremu 1993, p. 134). Thus a pre-colonial heritage yields an identity that grants artists

whatever freedom they need, including freedom from social prescriptiveness as to what their art should be.

*POST-COLONIAL IDENTITY: THE SEARCH FOR A
NEW SHARED SOCIAL IDENTITY (1.C)*

Thando Mama, a black South African male artist, draws on the post-colonial surroundings in all its facets: “For my subject matter, I tend to look at the social as well as the political discourse, that is, by way of investigating the relationships of the body and male (myself, including racialized self), state (bureaucratic governance), institution (educational, religious, political and media) and popular culture (film, video, music and literature and photography) and the impact they have on my perception, understanding and interpretation of life” (KNSA). This turn to the post-colonial political and social environment is more sharply drawn by those artists who point to the complexity and constant need to question what a post-colonial identity is—and whether their freedom should carry them beyond this “post-colonial identity” to something else—we return to this point in 2.C below.

THE ARTIST AS INDIVIDUAL CREATOR (2.A)

Dineo Seshee Bopape, a Black African woman artist, says, “I have a desire to share my humanity with others. . . and that is why I am an artist.” She finds a variety of strands which run through her providing “material” for this art and in identifying the strands in the way she does indicates how each of us is artist and creator, even when not manifested in an artwork: “What makes me an artist . . . I constantly have things, stories, faces, unsayable words, theories. . . . A clutter of thoughts that flood my head aching to transpire and be constructed into visual form. I am trying to find ways in which I can understand my surroundings, thoughts and experiences and those of other people’s . . .”—Here we find much of what happens inside all of us, and much of it from the inter-workings of ourselves and our surroundings, our social surroundings. But it is Bopape’s need to bring this mental hodge-podge “into visual form” that marks her more specifically as an artist—using “different processes of constructing, dis-assembling and re-configuring” (KNSA).

Mduduzl Xakaza, a Black South African male artist, draws upon his appreciation of nature for his inspiration, as have many artists around the world throughout all histories: “Nature, with all her elements of beauty and the sublime, offers me a wide range of interesting possibilities. Through its inherently evocative qualities, nature challenges and encourages me to look, meditate and

then make a visual interpretation of that experience” (KNSA). The extent to which nature figures as important is manifest in how Xakaza frames this aspect of his identity as artist, including the way in which nature is a springboard for his creativity: “Although what I record on canvas is normally a personal, subjective revelation of my inner world, the physical world at my disposal remains a point of departure in this journey into my artistic essence” (KNSA).

Gabisile Nkosi, a Black South African female artist, not only searches through various aspects of her identity, including her gendered side as woman and mother and daughter (etc.), but also uses her art to see how these aspects can function as or through masks. Art then becomes a way for her removal of masks and an invitation to the viewer to do so: “Unveiling the ‘other me’ is about sharing my inner-self with the outside world. The works are drawn from everyday details of my life and the unveiling occurs by the removal of the ‘masks’ which we all wear. These masks represent the different roles that I play as daughter, sister, mother, friend, teacher, an independent woman and an artist. My work examines the impact of African culture on my life as a South African woman” (KNSA). Here the artist notes clearly the double-sidedness that marks Tymieniecka’s understanding of the work of the *Imaginatio Creatrix* in the individual human agent: Nkosi as artist finds herself “constructed” by South Africa culture, yet in her mask imagery recognizes that her creativity is a critical voice seeing this culture as masking our deeper selves. Nkosi “blows up the framework,” as Tymieniecka puts it (1998, p. 115).

*THE ARTIST AS MANIFESTING MULTIPLE
IDENTITIES OR STRANDS (2.B)*

Zama Dunywa (discussed in 1B) is a Black female South African artist who places herself centrally in academia: “My culture as a young African (Zulu) academic female artist is saturated in heterogeneity based on my personal experiences and my perceptions towards my vanishing Zulu culture.” So this culture of current-day South Africa is crucially linked to the “vanishing Zulu culture.” But Dunywa also wants to emphasize her gendered identity, in order to recover the traditional Zulu female expressions of creativity through beadwork—but in a way also coherent with today: “The purpose of my work is to investigate the role of the African female within a changing society, her position as well as her contribution in creating what I call an African female image(ry)” (KNSA)—where the notion of “an African female image(ry)” points to Dunywa’s positioning within the sphere of an art-critical academic outlook. This positioning and the contemporary art-critical vocabulary available due to it allow Dunywa to help in the revaluing of traditional Zulu female

artists, to rename them, in fact, “artists” rather than merely “beadworkers.” In this way, Dunywa is also contributing, with her colleagues in academic art circles, to the new South Africa, in this case, one which recognizes the values of traditional culture when placed within the contexts of contemporary (academic) life; traditional culture and its values can stand up to the demands placed by academia for work to count as art.

For several artists the identification of a spiritual side to their art was important: Njabulo Hlongwane, a Black South African male artist, referring to his artwork incorporating headless and floating beings, says that this artwork “seeks to portray a spiritual place where the mind relaxes and wonders.” The artwork then can become an invitation to viewers in a way important to the current situation in South Africa: “The artist hopes that people will be able to understand the artist’s spiritual journey through life and also learn to be tolerant and appreciate other people’s views whether those be spiritual or not” (KNSA). There is a suggestion, then, that this spiritual side, with its roots in traditional African cultures, may be important for creating the new South Africa (our next topic). Romeo Zamani Makhanya, a Black South African male artist, also emphasizes the spiritual aspect of art: “The soul is in search of satisfaction of spiritual needs. To satisfy it, it has recourse to deep and superior spheres that reason cannot grasp. Only art can do it. Thus my art wants to be an activity of deepness, a search that is realized by elevation of soul” (KNSA).

*THE ARTIST AS CO-CREATING THE NEW SOUTH
AFRICA: IDENTITIES IN FLUX (2. C)*

In this last theme of identity, I point to the limitations of the culturally prescribed notion of South Africans living in a “post-colonial” time, an identity that is both historically accurate but also limited by the discourse of post-coloniality that extends almost globally by the beginning of the twenty-first century. South Africa was in some ways “post-colonial” when it gained independence from British rule; but in other ways, with whites exercising power over other racial and ethnic groups in the “post-colonial” period, South Africa was post-colonial in a different sense. The new South Africa is engaging in discussions of all of these periods—a variety of colonialisms in its different regions, as well as a variety of post-colonialisms, enters the questions on identity, but so does a search for something perhaps beyond these identities, something creatively emerging from the various synergies of the post-apartheid era.

Nkosinathi Khanyile, a black South African male artist, recognizes that his art is contributing to the creation of society beyond the artwork itself: “I combine traditional and modern techniques to indicate the dynamism within

contemporary culture. My work aims to reflect the new South Africa's embrace of diversity of cultural traditions" (KNSA). It would seem, then, that, like Dunywa with her beadwork-influenced artworks, Khanyile understands the new South Africa to be a dynamic blend of traditional and more current understandings of art and, more broadly, culture, a blend which if not currently fully existent will be recaptured and renewed as South Africa and its artists continue fashioning their today's culture.

Langa Magwa, a black South African male artist, also recognizes his role in pursuing a complicated identity for the new South Africa: "Living in a time of changes, the time of reconciliation and together-ness, I use my art in searching for a new identity for the people of South Africa as whole." Yet this art, as well, grows out of his own quest for an understanding of his personal history—one where he comes "from a mixed heritage of Zulu, Swazi and Xhosa," thus growing up "with the problems of not knowing my true background and tribal customs" (KNSA). His art then draws on all these strands of his background, just as South Africa's new identity will grow from the varied strands of its peoples.

Themba Shibase, a Black South African male artist, especially understands the difficulties that this type of search for identity can involve: "My work is an attempt to engage and expose the conflict and ambiguity, maybe even the subtlety, which is part and parcel of attempting to define an 'African Authentic Identity' in this complex global village." Shibase finds his inspiration and materials in this global village as it manifests in the urban landscape he encounters each day, in "images which are informed by my daily life experiences in the city which includes anything from newspaper articles, photos, even mundane objects that may be found on the streets" (KNSA). For is that not where the reality of the new South Africa will be found, beginning with the heartbeat of the streets of Johannesburg and Soweto, moving outward to the diasporic communities that are found in the wider global village.

The difficulties of forging new identities affects even younger artists in South Africa. Mlu Zondi, a young Black South African male artist, gives us a peek into this artistic process: "My creations are my own confrontations with issues that haunt me. Identity, relationships and childhood memories. The past and present are so intertwined it has to be dealt with for a clearer future. Suppressed emotions come out during creations and performances. It's therapeutical in its artistry. When demons come out to play and they get crushed" (KNSA).

Recent commentators on the art scene for South African artists attest to both these demons still at play in the artistic and critical communities, as well as some attempts to move past any singular post-apartheid or post-colonial South African identity. As Liese Van der Watt puts it: "After 10 years of

democracy, we are impatient to move on and to revel in our radical differences and contradictions. These are the fraught spaces out of which we make art. These are the power and poetics of our lives” (2004, p. 53). The artists whose narratives we have discussed, whether they are engaging in one or another aspect of their identities, show us how they reflectively recognize their cultural conditioning, yet they all seek in one way or another “to find a new sense of life, deeper, more authentic, more ‘true’ . . . than the one” in which they currently live, as Tymieniecka describes the creative movement (2006, p. xiv). This deeper sense of life is linked inexorably for many of them with South Africa, engaging their creativity in a number of ways—in their art, in their creation of a new society and culture, and in their ongoing discovery of themselves.

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MIRROR, MIRROR ON THE WALL

The cultural-historical Tornii¹ dream of a time-traveller

ABSTRACT

Our man stands with his face turned towards bygone times. He must spin around to catch a glimpse of the new days waiting to rise. The tornithologist has also arrived at the very essence of his own being, the point of embarkation, from which he can set off in search of the roots of each present moment. For the Tornii, being a tower involves a twin-layered perceptual dimension. The height of the tower allows views to far-off places. From the top the gaze of an observer can pick out distant landscapes. Rising into the heavens also means standing out from one's surroundings and this makes it impossible for a tower to conceal itself. In other words, it is gazed from and gazed upon. Even though this matter may seem simple, it is a basic axiom of tornithology with a strong influence on day-to-day life. Gradually the tower becomes a part of the landscape of one's mind. It becomes the Tornii.

I

In these times we all think of Vyborg. We are beginning to understand that soon it will be time to abandon Vyborg.[...] Vyborg, my hometown. You are almost like some living being to me. No one who has lived in Vyborg can imagine anything more crushingly beautiful than springtime along the ramparts of Vyborg. All the longings known to man can be found there—the longing for the sea, the longing for hope, the longing for things Karelian and the longing for history. Walking on the ramparts of Vyborg any youth will feel within himself the profound ecstasy of all existence.[...] And the castle of Vyborg. It is the joy of all Finland. The memory of its mystic beauty is carried in everyone's heart. Thousands and thousands of times I have looked upon it as if the act of looking would give me strength. Must we lose you to strangers who cannot look upon you in the right way, because they have not loved you for such a long, long time? No love ever starts as truly emotional; only memories make it tender. (Bergroth 1940, p. 19.)

¹*Translators' note:* 'Tornii' is the Finnish word for 'tower'. The word also refers to a famous Helsinki hotel, 'The Tornii', or 'Tower Hotel', which is the subject of this article.

But what about the painter, some might say, if he makes houses? This is exactly right, because he does *make* houses. In other words, he creates on the canvas the mental image of a house and not the sign of one. The house that appears embodies the entire polysemy of real houses. (Sartre 1948/1967, p. 19.)

II

Our man gets up from his bed and steps into the brightly shimmering water. He wades deeper in: leaping over years, decades, he even crosses the edges of millennia. All of existence becomes a hum in his ear. Our man, a tornithologist, leafs through the pages of a book of life, telling of the mortal journeys of several generations.

Suddenly there arrives the spring of death, the biting frost and the winter sky eerily glowing blue. It is the year 1918. Tampere and Helsinki are either occupied or liberated. The word used depends on the point of view of the person you ask. Something is lost, perhaps never again to return. It is as if some part of the idea of innocence has been sacrificed forever on the altar of war. The poet Juhani Siljo becomes a symbol of all this. His steadfast striving spirit also shapes the very notions of existence that future generations entertain. Their essence is crystallized in his mottos:

I am no 'natural born poet', I am no 'poet by the grace of God'. Nature has not blessed me in birth. Nature bestowed upon me nothing more than—my own nature. I am a poet because my nature *drives* me to it.

My artistic production has been the history of constructing my own sense of myself. Any poetry that is not essentially the history of constructing my sense of myself holds no value for me whatsoever.

In the eyes of critics and the public alike, artists compete *amongst themselves*. In my opinion, an artist *can* and *may* compete only with *himself*. (Siljo 1919, pp. 163 and 177.)

For something fresh to begin, something old must end. The summer of death in 1918 gave birth to a new kind of youth. A time began which abandoned the past and reached out from the present moment toward the future. Our man stands with his face turned towards bygone times. He must spin around to catch a glimpse of the new days waiting to rise. The tornithologist has also arrived at the very essence of his own being, the point of embarkation, from which he can set off in search of the roots of each present moment.

Were it not for the war and for Siljo, things may have taken a very different course. Perhaps the foundations would have been laid for an entirely different view of the world and of time. Now, however, everything was ready for that life-filled air that our man was breathing. He relished the strong scent of that late 1920s summer, redolent of the thrill of the search and the joy of pure curiosity.

Throughout all of existence, the exultant cry of youth echoed: “Another war, nevermore!”

The first and perhaps most essential requirement for any tornithologist is absolute and complete honesty to himself and his own being. Without this there can be nothing else. That is why our man humbly reads the words that so accurately describe the poet Siljo:

The poet’s all-seeing eyes reveal the inner essence of life. Thus art is one of the highest pursuits of the human spirit. In fact, in romance the artist often has a special position: The artistic genius resides far above other people because his eyes see broadly and deeply, and because he, with his artistic perception, continues God’s work of creation, as it were. In a way he is God-like. (Krohn 1956, p. 25.)

III

In the late 1920s, there was a serious attempt to sever the ties to a violent past. Even so, as a science, tornithology may not sever any ties. Otherwise it would lack any theoretical foundation: teetering island-like on the edge of reality. A new field of science must look for its role models in existing sciences. In this case, two separate fields can prove useful: (a) ornithology, meaning the science of birds and (b) pathology, with its special narrow meaning of the science of routes or paths. The Greek word *logos*, meaning knowledge, is naturally present in both. Thus, the core of tornithology becomes the science of a building that is considerably higher than it is wide; the science of towers. In addition to this general definition, an essential component of tornithology is the need for a cultural product, the need to voice the spirit of times and places. In a word, a tornithologist studies such mirroring or reflective phenomena that are marked by pathways to both visible and invisible elements: signs of days that have been, are here now, or are yet to come. Thus, tornithology combines cultural philosophy and cultural research. Its essence is multidisciplinary and it is simultaneously an indispensable tool for observing everyday life.

The time was ripe for the appearance of something higher and broader than its width (Figure 1). In fact, one could almost say that its appearance was absolutely imperative and necessary. In addition to this, people were needed who had the capacity for great visions and who dreamt of defying and transcending the mundane. One such person was the young Olavi Paavolainen. He glowed with an irresistible strength to build a living mirror of metaphors: a looking glass of time and place that conjures up inspiring reflections. The names “mirror of experiences” and “mirror of days” could also be considered. The nigh on prophetic visions did indeed take on the flesh of words in the closing moments of the 1920s:



Figure 1. Museum of Finnish Architecture, Photo Archive. Photographer Apollo, 1931

...and as Paul Morand one would want cry out: 'Rien que la terre!' What would we not give for the knowledge that the earth is not round, but an infinite plane that we could roam across, eastwards and westwards, to the north and to the south without ever fearing that we might return to the same spot. There would always be new countries, new peoples and new wonders awaiting? Is there nothing for us to traverse but the Earth? When will the time come when boundless space opens up to us? When will there be an airship at the foot of our stairs waiting to carry us off to another star...? (Paavolainen 1929, pp. 149–150.)

The beauty of machines and the brisk pace of city-life enchanted Paavolainen, who had himself been feverishly seeking his own present day.

They excited his curiosity and served as natural drives for his enthusiasm to write. It is as if he had a crystal ball which revealed not only things that were present but also the future. Its surface gleamed with the near and distant here-after. You could even think of calling it an information superhighway. The poem “To an Old Pullover” could be described as the battle hymn of the new era.

Do you remember our wondrous joy:
we were young.
Do you remember our wondrous faith:
the land is beautiful.
Our command:
love life!
Our desire:
forward!
Our kingdom—yours and mine:
on the tender,
at the head of an express
in the flickering of bridge arches, in the smoke of tunnels,
from the side of the track, the echoing cry of yellow billboards:

VISIT EGYPT!
SUNSHINE, HEALTH, ROMANCE.” (Waltari and Lauri 1929, pp. 54–55 [poem #30].)

The sleepwalker has finally reached the threshold of something very meaningful: the mirror of existence is already whispering in his ear about a new budding skyscraper in this world. It feels as if an observation or lookout tower for examining temporal plains is about to burst into flower upon reality. The traveller cautiously opens a newspaper describing the event.

IV

As 1930 came, it brought with it the depression, which in turn shut down several prominent cultural journals, including Aitta [The Storehouse], Sininen Kirja [The Blue Book] and Tulenkantajat [The Torchbearers]. All intellectual life felt their loss greatly. It must be said, however, that there was a shortage of many other essentials. Perhaps everyone did not feel it was necessary to mourn the passing of some of the publications.

The time-traveller commands the mirror. Mere persuasion will not suffice. Only so will the mirror do its master’s bidding and let its surface reflect words of truth. A storyboard, a times table, is spun into existence, a linguistic cradle containing the origin of the Torn:

And at every step that is taken forward—and upward—one will regularly encounter ‘height’, passive resistance and delay. Among many examples of this is the long-lasting and currently unresolved discussion over the reconstruction of the Kinopalatsi building on the corner of Pohjoisesplanadi and Keskuskatu. Another example is the doleful battle over the famous tower of Oy Tornii. In Stockholm the Kungstorn skyscrapers have been built opposite each other on either side of Kungsgatan. They are as high as the Tornii building and even have restaurants and cafés on their top floors. All around the world people are building Tornii-like structures as much as five times the height of the Tornii, 68 meters. Even with all these examples around us, here they would force us to tear down our slender, graceful Tornii. The birth of this tower would provide the beautiful capital of Finland with a most splendid belvedere on a highpoint in the centre of the peninsula, where old Helsinki lies. Abroad, for example in Germany, cities are actually funding the creation of such viewing towers, because they provide splendid views both to inhabitants as well as to domestic and foreign travellers. Here though, they would force the demolition of the Tornii and with it the destruction of significant economic values. (von Wendt 1930, pp. 71–72.)

For the Tornii, being a tower involves a twin-layered perceptual dimension. The height of the tower allows views to far-off places. From the top the gaze of an observer can pick out distant landscapes. Rising into the heavens also means standing out from one’s surroundings and this makes it impossible for a tower to conceal itself. In other words, it is gazed from and gazed upon. Even though this matter may seem simple, it is a basic axiom of tornithology with a strong influence on day-to-day life. Gradually the tower becomes a part of the landscape of one’s mind. It becomes the Tornii.

Our man is in a better position than those who lived in the days of the Tornii’s genesis, for he also knows what will happen in the future. His perception is broader, in the same way that a film audience knows more about the true state of affairs than the characters do. This is simply due to the fact that the audience is privy to plot twists before they actually occur. A character in a film is always tied to his present moment on film. A dream-walker, on the other hand, can cross between different time continua with total ease.

However, the tower is still only in the process of becoming the Tornii. Its final relevance is still a mystery. That is why, in the year 1930, people have to rely on conjecture and hunches rather than precise information. Nevertheless, it is appropriate to gaze briefly once more into the storyboard revealed by the mirror:

“When returning to the centre of the city, walking from Aleksanterinkatu to Heikinkatu, one can make out the outline of a tower-like building, Helsinki’s first “skyscraper”. The tower has been designed by the Jung & Jung architects’ office; that is to say, by the architect brothers Bertel and Valter Jung. At the time of writing, it is not possible to fully evaluate this building, which in our own present situation is quite special. Nevertheless, it would have been a shame, had permission for this building not been granted, for our city skyline needs

elevated features, such as towers. We have too few of them. Just think how they add to a city's charm, as can be seen in Tallinn and Stockholm, to mention but the closest examples. (Wennervirta 1930, pp. 23–24.)

So far, the sleepwalker has stayed on the ground. Now he must rise to great heights, so as to change his perspective on a tower being a tower: this is how looking becomes seeing and visibility vista.

V

Our man has already acquainted himself with Professor Arvi Kivimaa, soon-to-be important force in the world of theatre. His phenomenal ability to capture the spirit of the times in his writings was impossible for anyone literate to miss. Now the help of this young and passionate torchbearer is needed once again.

Helsinki's new skyscraper rises so far above the city that even faraway sounds can be heard at the top. It measures off time around the world (Figure 2). For the tower, being a tower is tied up very closely with being the Torni, when a view of the entire capital spreads out before one's eyes. A moment of multilayered vision is present. The dream-walker can hear the hum of the present moment up there on high, as it whispers to him a story from the past. He can almost touch the opening of windows to Europe, the technological progress and the glamour of travelling; they are so close now.

Songs on the radio,
dark sounds from England call
and above the black box
arise the concrete church walls:

An organ sounds—
boisterously filling the archways so grey,
I pray silently,
Somewhere, a maiden surely waits beneath the sky.

Of this world she is
I hear the sounds far away
A storm strikes Niagara,
and the waves like fire play—
and above New York
a great plane is in flight.
Like a giant gull, with glowing wings,
it would circle the Earth.

I will fly with you!
The stony ocean beneath us.
—We will not crash into skyscrapers,
but in seeking new, new lands



Figure 2. Helsinki City Museum, Photo Archive. Photographer K. Havas, early 1930s

we shall see the locomotives
 that have conquered the wilderness,
 and the great cities
 that shall never know humankind.—(Kivimaa 1930, p. 44.)

Our time-traveller lives through the boredom of prohibition and the feisty sporting spirit of breaching it. Finally comes 1932 and prohibition is abolished. Finally, Kivimaa can enjoy a glass of red wine without sailing outside Finland's territorial waters. He sits in the Tornio, toasting Paavo Nurmi and Wäinö Aaltonen with a sparkling glass of beverage number 705: Château Pontet-Canet, M.d.C., Pauillac 1924 (Viinilista, p. 1). For dessert they enjoyed

a smidgin of the fatherland, now so distant and lost. The dream-walker, too, can taste the soufflé. Les Soufflés de Petsamo melt the different present instants into a single Tornio moment, at the centre of which the future is already striking up its dangerous melodies. (see Talvi 1981, p. 34).

The new arrivals have something which can no longer be attained. Might it be lost and gone forever? “Petsamo has 5,000 inhabitants. Fishing, sheep and reindeer herding are the primary sources of livelihood, but there are also significant nickel and uranium deposits in the area. With the rise of tourism, jobs in the service sector are also increasing. On the shores of the Arctic Ocean in Liinahammar, motorists can buy bumper stickers of polar bears.” (Kesä 1939, p. 86.)

The Tornio sun rises while the sun of Finland still shines at its zenith. The time traveller resonates on the same youthful frequency as Kivimaa. This kind of emancipation of the heart is possible only on the lofty heights of the Tornio:

The night is Blue. Golden lights.
Earnest eyes. Steps.
The street eyes the silent houses with wonder.
The night is glass, it fears the steps.

Above the rooftops a reddish glow:
Hearts imprisoned now rush away!
Endless longing floods from the windows:
An invitation and salute to the dawn! (Kivimaa 1933, p. 58.)

VI

Things go on improving and one of the highpoints of cultural history is slowly slipping into the present. As a dream-walker, our man is already close to the final exam that will test his tornithological competence. Still, before gaining this wide-ranging degree, he still has to complete a host of various assignments. The brief moment of Now in the 1930s can be considered some kind of intermediate phase, so full of longing and life. The former premises of the volunteer fire brigade have truly been reshaped into a thoroughbred belvedere, for observing not only the surrounding city skyline, but also the foremost manifestations of contemporary life.

Having passed his apprenticeship, the tornithologist and the poet Kivimaa stand side by side on the upper storeys of the Tornio. Before their very eyes, far beneath them, lies Helsinki in all its existential glory (Figure 3). As Kivimaa belts out his song to the beautiful capital of a young Finland, the time-traveller realizes he is still but an apprentice. The words touch him and he is moved:



Figure 3. Helsinki City Museum, Photo Archive. Photographer O. Sundström, 1931

You have the beauty of the sea,
its brightness and freshness,
our youthful Helsinki!
We, the clan of great Finland's lands,
through our toil and through our deeds,
lifted you high as our shield to Europe.
In the granite of your face,
your people's yearning was carved,
but your gardens and your sea
whisperingly sing your song,
and across the centuries,
your memory swells in them.
You have the beauty of the sea,

the freshness of winter and summer,
our youthful Helsinki!
Lucky is he who once has reached
your life of radiant sunlight,
of which we dream evermore! (Kivimaa 1935, pp. 116–117.)

One could say that the Torní is now more than merely a tower. The rules of etiquette must be observed, as required by its sophisticated ambiance. It is no longer at all a trivial matter how one is dressed. Our man has now progressed in his studies and is examining fashion. The end result may well depend on minutiae. The time-traveller is pleased with his outstanding essay on fashion, while gaining a yardstick for evaluating his own sophistication:

The prejudice long held by gentlemen against brightly coloured handkerchiefs has now been overcome. As with shirts, handkerchiefs have slowly moved towards a uniform basic colour. This summer, colourful handkerchiefs in particular will conquer the great fashion capitals of Europe. Modern taste has matured to the point that it can distinguish athletic fashion from other kinds of fashion. This means that next summer a white handkerchief is no longer acceptable in the pocket of a light summer jacket, be it made of flannel or a coarser hand-woven fabric. But it is vital that the handkerchief match either the shirt or the tie. The handkerchief's edges can be burgundy, blue or even brown, in other words, the same color as fashionable shirts these days. If the shirt has dark stripes, the lighter base colour should determine the colour of the handkerchief. This is because a light-coloured, cotton handkerchief is much more pleasant to use than a dark one. And finally, as everyone should already know, the times have long since gone when it was appropriate to show more than the very tips of the handkerchief. (Miehen Muoti 1934, p. 2.)

The tornithologist's well-groomed appearance is part of a profound understanding of customer culture. The Torní is fully entitled to demand sophisticated manners from its guests. If we can justifiably compare the staff's professional competence to the craftsman ideal, then the same standards could be applied to the dream-walker in his role acceptable customer. Fortunately, the Finnish Association of Ornamental Artists, Ornamo, had agreed to guide him. Its yearbook had become an almost irreplaceable source of strength and support for him. Our man went so far as to memorize its short description as the guiding principle for his studies.

With its diverse activities, the association has furthered the development of fine taste in our country. Presently it is trying to bring the arts and industry closer to each other and has eagerly furthered this cause. It is greatly to the association's credit that industrial companies make increasing use of an artistically trained workforce, both permanently and in the short term. (Ornamo 1936, p. 5.)

When seeking something unique and inimitable, production using an automated assembly line can never be the ideal. This is why industrial companies had also awoken to the need to emphasize the artistic in their activities. Our man recalls his basic tornithological studies, which examined the core and

essence of beauty. Alas, now it was time to put his theoretical knowledge into practice. Should anyone ask why it is possible to consider the Tornj beautiful, it would be extremely important to be able to say something in reply. And not just anything, but something deeply meaningful and impressive. This is the duty of every tornjologist proud of his profession.

As the time of the feast grows near, the time-traveller stands before the Tornj. He eyes the building that rises into the skies. For what reason should this building, with its ever narrowing shape, its outline clear against the pale blue sky, be considered beautiful? The answer is simple enough: “The beholder becomes the Tornj, and the Tornj enters the beholder, becoming a part of his innermost being.” The building becomes itself. It acquires its own being and its own soul and the beholder breathes life into it. This must be what was meant in the lecture on beauty, when the following was so strikingly emphasized:

Our aesthetic life would be considerably poorer than it really is, were we not able to aesthetically experience another perfection—i.e. appropriacy and harmony—than that which we perceive in the beings created in our image. We can have an empathic relationship with the world outside humankind, believing then that we exchange emotions with external phenomena. If these are lifeless, we breathe life into them in our aesthetic fantasies. Such is the inner structure of our being that we cannot understand our environment without putting our own life into it. (Hirn 1914/1949, p. 103.)

VII

1937 arrives, and the Tornj banquet, which speaks so eloquently of cultural history, is held. As protocol requires, the event is organized for all to see, high above the roofs of Helsinki. The location resembles a figurative view of divinity with the sky hanging outstretched across the landscape. It sees everything, and everything, the whole of beingness, is reflected in it. Nothing is excluded. Heaven and earth as well as gods and mortals mirror each other. The observing eye is eternally open. Its lid never closes.

One more seemingly extraneous part of our man’s theoretical studies is completed. He no longer needs to wonder about the meaning of that puzzling section in his textbook. Our man nods and reads the text aloud:

On the other hand, modern people, who are no longer dominated by animist thoughts, simply see beauty in all such nature that arouses images of a selfless freedom, repose, peace and perfect harmony in the onlooker. We can consider the archetype of this aesthetic manifestation to be the landscape that prevails in Runeberg’s poetic world: a lake in summer, its waves lapping gently and, stretching above it, an azure blue sky. (Hirn 1914/1949, p. 105.)

A polyphonic reality assumes an ability to look at this shared world from different directions and a capacity for genuine dialogue. It also includes the idea of cooperation: the creation of a reciprocally constructed verbal landscape. The same insight is also linked to the goal of team activity. Yet the ideals of both linguistic and temporal understanding lie at the core of tornithology. For this reason our man ends up by choosing another word for ‘team’, a dialect word that comes from Eastern Finland meaning a ‘workgroup’ or ‘squad’. As a sleep-wanderer he has had the opportunity to take part in the activities of a catering service. You could perhaps call him a banquet chef who follows events from the sidelines. The people seated at the banquet table have been carefully chosen. The banquet repartee later gave birth to a masterpiece that we can justifiably—and perhaps also a little playfully—call an intellectual repast, festive food for thought. Even the foreword reveals something essential:

Conversation is undoubtedly one of the most delightful activities in human life. Even if we do not go to the lengths of the English gentleman who hated all games and other similar forms of socializing, considering them merely poor substitutes for conversation, every person blessed with the gift of normal speech must admit that conversation has provided and still provides some of the most heartfelt moments of joy. And at its highest level, conversation becomes a creative art, perhaps the most creative of all, because it is constantly creative: thoughts fly like sparks into the powder chamber of someone else’s brain, causing an explosion, which in turn releases more sparks, and so on. One thought begets another, and in this excitement values are created . . . These values may only be the vanishing trail of a rocket in the night sky, they can be enduring, fruitful—the fate of all art. (Kivimies 1937, p. VII.)

At times the intensity of the meandering conversation was such that our man felt like slowing it down with a special banqueting grip wax. The very location of the banquet, the Tornî itself, played an essential part in the success of the occasion. Had this been missing and had it been arranged elsewhere, the whole brilliant plan could have gone awry. The cover of the book is extremely significant: there the observing eye is placed in that previously mentioned divine location where the unfolding view extends to every point. The Tornî simply protrudes high above the surface of the earth below. Its facade gleams in a beam of bright light and its shadow stretches as far as Finland’s eastern border. In the background, like some huge framework of existence or premonition, there lies Finland, undivided, land of green gold. The totality exudes a powerful feeling of unbroken existence.

It was no coincidence that these particular people were invited to the occasion. A short quotation from a contemporary’s description is now appropriate:

Three years later, in 1937, the book ‘The Tornî Banquet’ appeared, edited by Yrjö Kivimies. This included typical discussions (The Myth of Finnish National Character, The Compass Point of Our Culture, A Culture Looking Backwards, Literature and Literature, A Sick Soul in a Healthy Body,

The Battle of Minds). The participants in this feast are a group of young intellectuals, former torchbearers, members of the Finnish Finland group, including the then President of the Republic, the academician Vilkuna, and so on. They are all referred to by their cover-names, which are fairly easy to guess. Helvi Hämäläinen, 'the little lady', who took part in the discussion of literature, wrote the correct names in my book, which as far as I remember I received from her. (Tuulio 1969, p. 316.)

The philosopher was unable to participate in the second part of the discussions, "The Compass Needle of Our Culture", because he had to travel away from Helsinki. For this very reason, the group had recruited a new member: Madam Doctor. The time-traveller's curiosity is aroused. Was there a particular reason for using this Madam title? Or is it just a matter of a supposedly humorous image? One of the fundamentals of tornithology is the necessity for wide-ranging interest. Somewhat earlier our man had been able to delve into the secrets of social life. He thinks he has found some similarities between the text he had read and his current observations. The sleepwalker is unusually alert when recalling the newspaper article he saw:

If, on the other hand, a woman also uses her own name when she gets married together with her husband's, and she has occasion to mention her degree or other title, then she should unquestionably have it printed on her card:

SIEVÄ PÄÄSKY-LINTUNEN
M.D.

But a married woman may often have a third kind of card, the 'family card', which she uses with her husband 'as a family', i.e. when appearing together, for example:

DIRECTOR AND MRS LINTUNEN

In this case a married woman appears 'merely' as the wife of her husband, and there is no mention on the family card of her own academic degree or other titles. Nevertheless, given our own circumstances, it seems somehow pretentious to use family cards where the husband's first name is mentioned alone, but not the woman's: 'Doctor and Mrs Jalo Lintunen', even though they are quite common abroad. (Hopeapeili 1937, p. 31.)

Our man is still slightly unsure what he should think of titles like Little Lady and Madam Doctor. Does this treatment mean there was sexual denigration? Or can it in fact all be traced back to humour? The word 'Mr' does not appear even once with a man. Perhaps we should just think that each prevailing culture is an incorruptible mirror of its own age. You cannot judge it with hindsight. Arvi Kivimaa ceaselessly sought his present moment and his words point our sleep-traveller forward on his time travels towards the 1940s:

Again the advertising garland of lights
flashes on the granite-lined street
and the evening blazes with electric fire.
I wander alone to the city (Kivimaa 1937, p. 84.)

VIII

The decade begins tempestuously. C.G. Mannerheim pronounces his solemn words that were meant to encourage:

Commander-in-Chief's Order of the Day. Soldiers of Finland's esteemed army! Peace has been reached between our country and Soviet Russia, a harsh peace which has ceded to Soviet Russia almost every field of battle upon which you have shed your blood for the sake of what we hold precious and holy.—Our fate is hard as we are forced to leave to a foreign race, a race which has a different view of the world and other moral values, the land which we have cultivated for centuries with sweat and toil. But we must take a firm grip on things so that we can, on the land that remains to us, prepare a home for those who have become homeless, and a better livelihood for everyone, and, as in earlier times, we must be ready to defend our smaller fatherland with the same steadfastness and the same toughness that we showed when defending our undivided fatherland.—Mannerheim. (Aseveli 1940, pp. 1 and 3.)

The sleep-traveller finds himself in a totally new situation in his tornithological studies. The spring of 1940 somehow already offers a presentiment of days yet to come. After fleeting success and a feeling of happiness, the ultimately bitter truth arrives. There is no longer any return to an earlier time when Finland was whole. Somehow we just have to try to manage and to adjust to our new narrower state of existence. In his search Kivimaa speaks from the heart and writes figuratively about the beauty of an apple tree:

Do memories veil my eyes,
do days of yore still linger on in them?
No longer the month of flowers, no longer autumn—
only the sparkle of snow beside me.
And yet it is as if I see a lush garden
of trees ablaze with colour.
I banish that vision to winter like an illusion—

Oh burning heart, surely you will find peace?
Oh tree of white blossom, you stretch
your trunk from the soil of this harsh land:
Your ample fan of perfumed buds I will not see
with bedazzled eyes until the spring.
Two, three days only—and children's feet
already trample on the snow of blossom.
So the land receives the purest of your petals—
They sow dreams of beauty in me.

—
—Oh little tree of Finland, buried in snow,
dreaming mutedly of your spring,
what visions you offered me,
as I wandered into the searing fire of pain?
As one heart among all your hearts, humanity,
I am in your struggle, in your pain.

Looking at your beauty, your ugliness
I may dream on here for a moment. (Kivimaa 1944, pp. 113–115.)

In its own quintessential self, the Tornii was obliged to concentrate on being visible. An extra nuance has been added because being visible also included the knowledge of possibly being under the watch of strangers' mindful glances. Nobody could forget the constant presence of the watchers: it was the birth of Tornii the Watchtower. The time traveller sniffs the air of autumn 1944. In the air there lingers the pain of loss, the sorrow at the death of those nearest, the longing for a lost home and, like a slashing wound across the chest, the uncertainty of whether life would go on. The tornithologist, who has humbly looked into the matter, listens to the words of his teacher:

The centre of Helsinki was strongly 'manned'. The Control Commission occupied the Tornii as well as two former hotels: the Cosmopolite at the bottom of Kalevanakatu, and the Karelia on the corner of Kaisaniementie and Mikonkatu, in what was called the Lackman Building. It also occupied number 6 Simonkatu, close to the Tornii, and some apartment blocks used as living quarters.

If the Tornii had so far been some kind of symbol of Helsinki's modern city centre, it was now in a way a symbol of danger. It was looked upon with fear and anticipation. And it was also hated. Outside, the police stood guard night and day. On the inside, Soviet troops stood guard night and day. (Talvi 1981, p. 54.)

As a sleep-wanderer, our man had trouble holding himself back: he would have liked to intervene in the course of events. This, however, was not possible even though tornithological studies had included a special section on holding back and holding forth. For this film of life, someone somewhere had written the sort of screenplay that people probably didn't like. Perhaps there wasn't even a reason. Yet everything seems to have had a key role in deepening cultural understanding and shaping the post-war mood. It would have been extremely simple to hate. The time-traveller knew this all too well. It was more expedient to try something else. For this purpose too, film was a suitable medium. The most essential thing was to build a valid basis. With that in place it would be possible to put together a working outline of a plot:

The screenplay or scenario is the soul of film. Shooting starts with the scenario and it is there that it constantly returns. Around the scenario there revolves the whole machinery needed and mobilized in order to capture the screenplay on celluloid. Until the final scene, whether happy or sad, the screenplay creates life. (Elokuvan aarreaitta 1945, p. 9.)

Besides film, life is also sometimes reminiscent of dance. Then it is important to know the sequence of steps and to keep to the rhythm. Your whole being moves to the tempo of the music. Manipulating the atmosphere could also well be called the public and openly goal-directed shaping of opinion. In the 1940s during the Tornii's estrangement this was probably inevitable. The war was still

too near, just within touching distance. The victors called the tune and one had to dance to it. Nevertheless people had to try and see something positive in them: something worthy of respect. Our man was now at the cultural education stage of his tornithological studies. Open before him lay a text describing a folk dance from the neighbouring country and its character:

The eternal and profound juxtaposition of strength and beauty, of passion and virtue, of man and woman. Men and women very seldom dance together. In these folk dances the man has to take the initiative, express feelings, make an offer. The woman's role is to listen and watch, to wait, to give shy downward glances ? and only then when each has 'chosen' the other does the joyous dance together begin.

It is precisely this principle of choice and competition that gives these folk dances the healthiness and purity, in fact the morality, that so surprised the onlooker. Some enthusiastic moralizers would learn a lot from the performances of this dance group.

Every expression of sexuality, of genderedness, that comes from the folk soul and from folk customs is pure. (Paavolainen 1946, p. 14.)

It requires considerable time to carry out an education in good manners and tolerance. In the short term it is not possible to achieve anything permanent. This is what our man has noticed in his somnambulations. For this reason he will complete the final exam of the tornithology cultural course by citing a short extract from a dialogue. Maybe it is a professional insight to note that our man has perhaps pushed into the far reaches of his mind a reminder that it is impossible to love one's own culture if at the same time you hate all that is strange. The most fundamental ingredient of humanity is an understanding of mutual respect. You must also be able to give your word and keep to it, to live up to it:

ARISTOFILOS.

What do you think the main thing in life is?

EUBULOS.

The same as you think: a profound manliness." (Kaila 1943/1954, p. 187.)

IX

Dawn is breaking. The sleepwalker has had to speed up along his time axis. Nevertheless, there is still a huge part of the journey to complete. The 1950s were a decade of intense rebuilding and he has waded through them with huge steps. There have not been too many opportunities to stop and deliberate upon the way of the world. He has just had to hasten onward so that he reaches his destination before dawn.

Along with Kivimaa, now in mature manhood, we have bid farewell to the decade enlivened by rock music. The words of the butler responsible for advanced studies in tornithology are a suitable piece of travel advice:

Looking at the kind of the journey you are embarking on,
 I don't think you will need very substantial food.
 Broth and dessert are the things you lack.
 With a good taste in your mouth it is easier to set off on a journey,
 whose stages are not sure.
 I would also point out that the champagne of selfishness
 will be good for washing down our dessert.
 For our regular customers we ask just this once
 To be allowed to serve the champagne free:
 the remarkable kind of customer relations we have had
 do indeed require celebrating at this moment of separation. (Kivimaa 1959, p. 52.)

Our man must press onward in his bid to graduate. He starts to study the decade at hand. Yet he knows something from earlier: McLuhan published his sensational work in 1964, the book that somehow characterized the whole of the 1960s. It was translated into Finnish in 1968. Even then he was regarded, and would also come to be regarded later, either as a great cultural philosopher or as a fanciful futurologist. McLuhan wrote about the cinema in the same way as Olavi Paavolainen, fascinated by machine romanticism, did in the late 1920s:

In England the movie theatre was originally called 'The Bioscope,' because of its visual presentation of the actual movement of the forms of life (from Greek *bios*, way of life). The movie, by which we roll up the real world on a spool in order to unroll it as a magic carpet of fantasy, is a spectacular wedding of the old mechanical technology and the new electric world." (MacLuhan 1964, p. 310.)

The entire time journey, the educational excursion into the recesses of tortnithology, has been reminiscent of unspooling a world reel or a reel world where many pasts have presented themselves for re-evaluation. The sleep-wanderer has indeed noticed that no other method leads to the roots of modernity. Furthermore, no other way makes it possible to deepen understanding of one's own present moment.

Now come the decisive tests. Bartender Ström has promised to act as a guide. Our man is ready for some tricky questions and learns a few facts in advance. He doesn't want to fail. One description in particular has impressed itself on his consciousness:

We have no information about who mixed the first cocktail. Opinions on the matter differ greatly: some people claim that the Americans are the originators, others are of the firm opinion that mixed drinks were being served on the banks of the Nile as long ago as the time of Sinuhe the Egyptian. The best-known was perhaps a concoction called a 'crocodile tail'. Whatever the truth, one thing is certain: cocktails and other mixed drinks have assumed such a role on this planet of ours as dispellers of initial stiffness and as social sweeteners that we can no longer just shrug the matter off. And because simultaneously there has grown up a cocktail science which is to be taken

very seriously and the basics of which are a part of one's general education, it was deemed necessary to commit things to paper and publish this international cocktail information guide that you are now holding in your hand. Supplement it with an entourage of some mixed drinks. (Ström 1964, p. 7.)

The words of the head bartender at the Hotel Tornî reveal a thorough professional education. Only now does the time-traveller realize the difference between social sweetening and consuming alcohol as an end in itself. He smiles to himself at the memory of a very atmospheric advertisement. But its gentleness is beginning to appear rather superficial. The essential criterion for evaluating the tornithologist's practical test is the ability to see beneath or behind hypocrisy. Nevertheless, our man has to admit that the text touches his feelings:

The mood of this moment is strong, soon you will taste the first mouthful of food with Lahtelainen beer foaming in your glass. Lahtelainen is always a part of pleasant things and a relaxed feeling—it gives each moment the perfect touch. (Kotikokki 1965, p. 17.)

The degree course is all but complete, just one more question and his studies will have reached their end. As he writes the decisive words on the paper, our man's hand is trembling slightly:

When the food has been carefully prepared and nicely brought to the table, albeit unostentatiously, it is important to try not to spoil its taste and nutritional value by letting it stand and wait. It is good to remember the appropriate temperature. You should avoid food that is too hot or too cold.

Finally, the best spice when eating is a peaceful atmosphere and a relaxed mind. Without these you will not enjoy even the best food. (Kitunen 1960, p. 13.)

The dawn of the new millennium has already broken, its gleam bathing his eyelids in light. Our man receives his degree certificate to show he has completed his tornithology studies. It is handed over by the grand master in the field, the instructor of all sleepwalkers. In the graduation ceremony the head tornithologist recites Kivimaa's poem:

I am not at home on these soft, engulfing carpets,
my eyes grow tired under these crystal chandeliers.
Montreal? The World Expo? *Credo ut intelligem?*
Frühzeit der Kultur?

Is my peace greater if I find myself on the pine-covered heaths of Eastern Häme
and hear the timeless sougning of those homely trees?

I want to feel my tiredness in the heather beneath you
and feel the summer-dry warmth of the ground.

I am close to the graves of my deceased relatives,
I deaden my consciousness, I seek a state of being
where time will no longer wound

and there is a red willowherb between my fingers. (Kivimaa 1969, p. 55.)

“Mirror, mirror, on the wall. You glass of truth, speak out. Tell us all!” Our man hears these words in the no-man’s land between sleep and wakefulness. His inner flow and time in the outside world are fleetingly present in the same moment.

Our man gets up and sits on the bed. Everything is so beautiful that he is close to tears, his heart close to breaking. He is dazzled by the pure white metal surface that reflects reality so clearly. The view from the window stretches as far as the blue of the sea. The whole of Helsinki rests in the lap of our man sitting on high.

Above the end of the bed there is a magic mirror. It reflects the blue shimmer of the city morning. Our man loves this hotel and these enchanted rooms on the tenth floor even more fervently than before. On his sleep journey he has seen the soul of the Tornio. The mirror has told him of beauty, of bygone days, and of the cultural history of his native land. Even the name, the Tornio, is a tribute to Finnishness and the Finnish language.

75 years, what do they mean? Certainly not old age but rather eternal youth. Despite its fascination, an elegant exploration of web pages can never match the genuine hotel experience. The blood-red has to be seen and experienced. Otherwise the interior of the rooms can only be felt vicariously. Once you have experienced inimitability, its absence or disappearance will light an everlasting flame of longing. Only loss makes one’s love for the Tornio tender. This sleep journey has helped our man to grasp the deep meaning of those initial quotations. In the end he has returned to where he started: the wheel has come full circle.

Our man salutes the Tornio and passionately recites aloud Koskeniemi’s early words. Then they—our man and his favourite hotel—are one:

Who in Helsinki hasn’t sometimes been moved by lyrical feelings for the city, like a presentiment of what is to come? Standing on the deck of a ship on a clear autumn morning, returning from a journey abroad, with the familiar white silhouette of Helsinki rising above the waves, surrounded by a belt of forest, the roofs shimmering in the first frost, he has sometimes compared the view with the most beautiful in the world. Setting foot on Helsinki’s ground and seeing Engel’s colonnades open up before him, he has called his city all those names that home-sickness has dictated to him. He has called it the Athens of the North where Apollo himself, god of light, could reside fleeing from the laurel groves to the lands of Hyperborea. (Koskeniemi 1914, pp. 97–98.)

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THE PAIN OF THE SEER IN THE CIVILIZATION OF
THE BLIND: FAULKNER AND SALINGER

ABSTRACT

In *Seymour, An Introduction*, J. D. Salinger's character Buddy Glass juxtaposes words of a literary artist (Kafka) and a philosopher (Kierkegaard) in Buddy's agonized attempt to understand the suicide of his brother Seymour, a suicide that echoes in many ways that of William Faulkner's character Quentin Compson. Both of Salinger's quotations depict an author's inability to fully realize his or her vision of characters, depicting this failure as the defiance of the characters against the author. Buddy says that the ideas reflect danger to the eyes, a reference that calls to mind Jacques Derrida's interpretation of Rousseau—that civilization advances at the price of blindness to its inhabitants. Interestingly, Faulkner's Quentin also fears for his eyes at one point. Both the Quentin section of William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* and J.D. Salinger's "A Perfect Day for Bananafish" lead up to a suicide which shocks the reader, and then each author wrote other works to reveal the back-story as if to help explain the suicide. Both story and novel-section have parallels in action (the main character spends time before the suicide with a little girl), image (fish), and character (both are aspiring authors and "seers"). Both Quentin and Seymour regret the idea that girls must grow into women, and both see flaws in their respective societies too well to live comfortably in them. Quentin sees the heritage of slavery and racial hatred that has formed the South of his day, and Seymour sees the aspects of society that are hostile to the imagination. While not fully explaining Seymour's suicide, the similarities of "Bananafish" to the Quentin section of *The Sound and the Fury* provide a suggestive background that makes Seymour's suicide more comprehensible, and especially why Seymour chose to shoot himself in the head over the sleeping form of his wife Muriel, rather than to slip quietly into deep water as Faulkner's Quentin did.

At the beginning of the novella *Seymour, An Introduction*, J. D. Salinger's character Buddy Glass juxtaposes words of a literary artist and a philosopher in Buddy's agonized attempt to understand the suicide of his brother Seymour, a

suicide that echoes in many ways that of William Faulkner's character Quentin Compson.

The first is from Franz Kafka who calls the literary characters he creates "actors":

The actors by their presence always convince me, to my horror, that most of what I've written about them until now is false. It is false because I write about them with steadfast love (even now, while I write it down, this, too, becomes false) but varying ability, and this varying ability does not hit off the real actors loudly and correctly but loses itself dully in this love that will never be satisfied with the ability and therefore thinks it is protecting the actors by preventing this ability from exercising itself. (quoted in *Seymour* 95)

Buddy's quote from a philosopher comes from Søren Kierkegaard:

It is (to describe it figuratively) as if an author were to make a slip of the pen, and as if this clerical error became conscious of such. Perhaps this was no error but in a far higher sense was an essential part of the whole exposition. It is, then, as if this clerical error were to revolt against the author, out of hatred for him, were to forbid him to correct it, and were to say, "No, I will not be erased, I will stand against thee, that thou art a very poor writer." (quoted in *Seymour* 95)

Artist and philosopher here lament how a true artist knows that his or her creations do not measure up to what the true artist sees in the world, but also lament how the artist cannot bring himself or herself to discard the creations, because the artist has fallen in love with them: "Isn't it *clear*?" Buddy demands. Using the passages from Kafka and Kierkegaard as examples of cries of pain, Buddy asks: "Don't those cries come straight from the eyes?" (105; Salinger's italics).

Working obliquely toward an interpretation of Seymour's suicide, Buddy asks, "isn't it plain how the true artist-seer actually dies?" (105). Buddy gives his answer: "I say that the true artist-seer, the heavenly fool who can and does produce beauty, is mainly dazzled to death by his own scruples, the blinding shapes and colors of his own sacred human conscience" (105). We note the irony of Buddy's paradox: most of us are blind, but the few among us who, through talent and agonizing struggle, have achieved the status of seers become "blinded" in reaction to what they see, and thus they take a step in a process that kills them. Buddy, presumably, refers to the true artist's conflict in having a vision and wishing, but failing, to make his or her beloved creations match the vision. Buddy's comment about being dazzled to death, perhaps, refers to blindness of a different order from what he thinks the "seer" overcomes. However, the issue of *scruples* and *conscience* has wider scope when placed in the context of an aspect of the thought of another philosopher, Jacques Derrida.

The theme of the dependence of civilization's birth on blindness—and, by implication, the need for those who *can* see, the seers—appears in Jacques

Derrida's *Of Grammatology*, which provides a wider context for understanding the significance of the so-similar characters created by Salinger and Faulkner: Seymour and Quentin. Derrida starts discussing the "blindness" trope by drawing the reader's attention to Rousseau's analysis of how humanity abandons its "natural life" (148; Derrida's italics). Humanity becomes "servile to man's industry" (148). Derrida quotes Rousseau's metaphor of how humanity "goes seeking" to the "entrails" of the earth in mines and "*flies from the sun and the day, which he is no longer worthy to see*" (148; Derrida's italics). These are Rousseau's words, from *Reveries*, quoted by Derrida, but Derrida has put them into italics. "Man," says Derrida, has thus "put out his eyes, he blinds himself by the desire to rummage in these entrails." And returning to quote Rousseau, Derrida calls attention to humanity's "punishment": mankind "buries himself alive" (148). Derrida asks his readers to contemplate that as humanity moved "toward the entrails of the earth," humanity encountered "the moment of mine-blindness." Clearly, blindness is a negative for Derrida, even though an inevitable one. Derrida asks his readers not to forget that the invention of metallurgy "is the origin of society" (149).

Derrida announces that he wishes to use the passages from Rousseau for their "paradigmatic value" (149). In a fundamental sense, the invention of language generates civilization: "the languages" are "born at the same time as society" (149). In acquiring language, humanity loses direct access to "things" and exchanges this access for "the regulated substitution of signs for things"; i.e., humanity becomes blind to things (149).¹

Although the old saying goes that in the kingdom of the blind, the one-eyed man is king, under the influence of insights from both literary artists and philosophers, Buddy's (and perhaps Salinger's) claim would better reduce to a different adage: In the civilization of the blind, the seer is destined to suffer pain.

This analysis prompts a comparison of how two literary artists, William Faulkner and J.D. Salinger, illustrate this intersection of artistic and philosophic insights. When J. D. Salinger published "A Perfect Day for Bananafish" in *The New Yorker* in 1948, the story's ending posed an enigma. In "Bananafish," Seymour Glass, an emotionally unstable WWII veteran who loves poetry, commits suicide in a Florida resort hotel room by blowing his brains out next to his sleeping wife, Muriel. There have been a number of attempts to make sense of Seymour's suicide.² However, we find ourselves more intrigued by the manner of his suicide—in particular, why kill himself in a way that would maximize Muriel's fright and horror? Salinger himself seems to have felt some need for explication, for over the course of the next seventeen

years he wrote several more short stories or novellas featuring Seymour Glass, filling in the “back story” that led up to Seymour’s startling suicide.³

In doing so, Salinger may have been deliberately following the example of William Faulkner, who in *The Sound and the Fury* (1929) told the story of the suicide of Quentin Compson from several perspectives, and then returned to Quentin in *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936) to tell more of Quentin’s “back story” leading up to the day of his suicide. Whether we have here a deliberate case of art imitating art or not, a comparison of Salinger’s Seymour-related *oeuvre* with Faulkner’s Quentin-focused stories does shed some light on why Seymour would blow his brains out in Muriel’s presence instead of choosing a quieter, more private way to die.⁴

We find striking parallels in the narrative elements, some of them rare, in Salinger’s “A Perfect Day for Bananafish” and Faulkner’s Quentin section of *The Sound and the Fury*, and their related works. Most of these narrative elements fall within the categories of action, image, and character.

1. *Action.* In both “Bananafish” and the Quentin section, the principle male character, in the time period shortly before committing suicide, spends a considerable percentage of the length of the work in the company of a little girl who not only is unrelated to him but is unknown or little known to him. This parallel is closer than that between Quentin and Holden Caulfield of *Catcher in the Rye* which others have noticed.⁵ In both “Bananafish” and the Quentin section of *The Sound and the Fury*, the innocence of the little girl attracts the main male character. Quentin feels torment in the knowledge that the girl, like almost all humans who reach adulthood, will someday lose this innocence. Seymour feels that society will close down upon the imaginative openness that Sybil now shows (as when she sees the imaginary bananafish), shaping her in the mold that made Muriel and Muriel’s mother.⁶ Just as the physical process of moving from sexual innocence to experience torments Quentin, the move from imaginative openness shown by Sybil (and most children) to the banality evident in Muriel (and most adults) oppresses Seymour.⁷

Furthermore, each young man assumes a forced jocularity with the little girl, and reveals both a desire and a reluctance to go swimming. Quentin says aloud, “Hear them swimming sister? I wouldn’t mind doing that myself.” And then he thinks: “If I had time. When I had time” (170). In comparison, when Sybil suggests they “go in the water,” Seymour says, “I think I can work it in” (13).

2. *Image.* Both stories present a thematically important image of a fat fish, surely not an often-used literary image.

The Quentin section of Faulkner’s novel features a fat-fish image, as Quentin sees “a shadow hanging like a fat arrow stemming into the current” (144). In addition to using the term “fat” to describe the fish, Quentin emphasizes

its slow movement, rising to the surface so sluggishly that it appeared to be getting bigger rather than closer: “the arrow increased without motion,” until it “lipped a fly beneath the surface with that sort of gigantic delicacy of an elephant picking up a peanut” (144).

Faulkner’s fish is thematic. Otherwise, what does a reader make of Quentin’s two conversations about it with a group of boys, along with Quentin’s meditations about it first between the two meetings and then after the second one? The fish that he and the boys watch is “a neighborhood character” and a very self-satisfied creature (145). Besides its girth, the insulting leisureliness of its movement, and its apparent immunity to being caught, as the boys claim, it is “the only fish in the pool” (147). Thematically, the satisfaction in its own comfortable life situation that the fish exudes is the mood into which Quentin fears he may fall, a mood he feels he must actively reject, believing it wrong to accept the comforts of the civilization created by the Sutpens of the South.⁸ However, the life of an upper-class or even middle-class white Southerner inescapably provides this comfort—this is Quentin’s inner conflict, and he only resolves it by killing himself.⁹

The image of the fat fish in Faulkner’s work gives us a context to interpret Salinger’s fat fish. In “A Perfect Day for Bananafish,” Seymour suggests to Sybil that they see if they “can catch a bananafish. ... This is a *perfect* day for bananafish” (13, 15). These creatures swim into banana holes where they eat too many bananas, he tells the little girl. “Naturally, after that they’re so fat they can’t get out of the hole again” (15–16). They die of “banana fever” (16). If the parallel with Quentin is valid, Salinger’s Seymour is the fish and the banana hole Seymour has entered is the soft life that he rejects yet cannot bring himself to leave, a life represented by Muriel.¹⁰

3. *Character.* Faulkner identifies Quentin as a potential author. Though this identification is not found in *The Sound and the Fury*, it is an important element of *Absalom, Absalom!* Near the opening of that novel, Miss Rosa Coldfield tells Quentin “you will enter the literary profession” and “some day you will remember ... and write about” the Sutpen story she is about to tell him (9–10). Rosa must have seen that Quentin was bound to become a special kind of literary man, what we call a seer, because Quentin realizes that “if she had merely wanted it told, written and even printed, she would not have needed to call in anybody” (11). Rosa could easily have written down the surface facts; she was even known as “the town’s and the county’s poetess laureate” (11).

Aunt Rosa knows the facts but realizes that the real story, behind the facts, has eluded her understanding. To see the real story behind the facts requires more than literary talent; it requires someone with special insight, a seer. Rosa chose Quentin to retell her story because she knew he was a person who not

only possessed literary talent but would also be driven to see the truth behind the story she told him—and that only this kind of literary person could retell it in a way that would let others see and “*know*” (11; Faulkner’s italics). The subsequent action of Faulkner’s *Absalom, Absalom!* proves that Rosa was right about Quentin being driven to see the real story behind the facts and to tell this real story, at least to himself, if not to the world. And since the final scene of *Absalom, Absalom!* is set only shortly before the action of the Quentin section of *The Sound and the Fury* and Quentin’s suicide, it is possible that Quentin’s insight had some bearing on his suicide.

Seymour, like Quentin, is not only an author, but also a seer. Buddy tells us in “Seymour—An Introduction” that Seymour writes poetry; in fact, as we mention above, on the day of his suicide Seymour wrote a haiku in Japanese (155). We are arguing that, in creating Seymour, Salinger has picked up Faulkner’s Quentin as a type, as a figure, and fashioned Seymour into a different but equally specific manifestation of the same type—a seer. Seymour is a poet and his name homophonically means “see more,” as Sybil Carpenter points out: “‘Did you see more glass?’ said Sybil” (10). Both Quentin and Seymour are mentally and emotionally shaken by what they see, and what they see pushes them toward suicide.

The word “seer” is vision-oriented, and a threat to the eyes forms another link between Seymour and Quentin. During Quentin’s stroll with the little girl, Faulkner’s artist-seer remembers how his sister Caddy had tried to scratch out his eyes (172). And Buddy Glass in “Seymour: An Introduction” emphasizes this crucial part of Seymour’s body. “In a seer, what part of the human anatomy would necessarily be required to take the most abuse? The *eyes*, certainly,” says Buddy (105; Salinger’s italics). Rollo May, among others, identifies art as a “new way of seeing nature and life,” and he points out that “Alfred Adler used to say that the artist teaches mankind to see” (233). Since art is the seeing of new possibilities for responding to the world, symbolically the eyes are the artist’s most important organ.

Buddy Glass reveals why he thinks the eyes are so important when he implies that ears have failed humanity: the members of the “current ruling intellectual aristocracy ... don’t listen properly to cries of pain when they come.” Buddy adds, “They can’t, of course. They’re a peerage of tin ears” (104). Modern humanity needs an understanding of the source of pain. “Where *must* ” this understanding “come from?” asks Buddy, “Isn’t the true poet or painter a seer?” Isn’t this person, “actually, the only seer we have on earth?” he continues (104; Salinger’s italics). Since Buddy considers Seymour a true poet, Buddy’s insistence that a “seer” sees more than the rest of us supports the “Seymour—see more” interpretation, despite its being first spoken by a child; and thus Salinger

slyly announces his character's crucial quality as one who sees more, while simultaneously delaying the reader's recognition of this by giving its annunciation to Sybil. But, as Buddy insists, the artist's enhanced vision is dangerous to his eyes.

Buddy started "Seymour: An Introduction" with the two quotations that open this essay, one from Kafka and the other from Kierkegaard. These lament how a true artist knows that his or her creations do not measure up to what the true artist sees in the world, but also lament how the artist cannot bring himself or herself to discard the creations, because the artist has fallen in love with them: "Isn't it *clear*?" Buddy demands. Using the passages from Kafka and Kierkegaard as examples of cries of pain, Buddy asks: "Don't those cries come straight from the eyes?" (105; Salinger's italics).

And here we see the value of the insight in *Of Grammatology*, which we mentioned earlier. There, Jacques Derrida says that the invention of language generates civilization: "the languages" are "born at the same time as society" (149). In acquiring language, humanity becomes "blind." It loses direct access to "things" and exchanges this access for "the regulated substitution of signs for things" (140). Most people are blind, in this formulation, implying the benefit, if it were possible, of a few people who can see, but also implying the high price that such seers would have to pay if they were artists. Seeing what is beyond language but feeling compelled to express their vision in language creates an intractable dilemma.

What is it that the poet-seer sees which gives him or her such a stricken conscience? In the case of Faulkner's and Salinger's characters, why do the things they see disturb them and drive them toward suicide? To put it in abstract terms, we could say that in Quentin's case, he sees the injustice of profiting from the suffering of others and he recognizes that the only way to live morally is to refuse the benefits of exploitation. Yet the only escape in life from the benefits of exploitation would entail condemning the civilization of the South, an escape that his love for the South prohibits. And in Seymour's case, he has a quasi-Buddhist vision that life is suffering, suffering is caused by desire, and the way out of suffering is to free oneself from desire. Yet he cannot free himself from desire as represented by his wife, Muriel. As an artist, each young man is driven to express his vision through specific images and stories. As a moral agent, each feels convicted by his vision of living an inauthentic life, and thus of immorality.

Faulkner wrote the entire novel *Absalom, Absalom!* to delineate what Quentin *saw*, and what his society was blind to—the corrosive consequences of slavery to society and its people, and the cancerous heritage of racial attitudes that go with slavery. The sight seen by Quentin, a driven and unwilling seer,

causes him so much conflict that the novel ends with his desperate claim to his roommate, and, even more, to himself that he does not “hate the South”:

“I don’t hate it,” Quentin said, quickly, at once, immediately; “I dont hate it,” he said. *I dont hate it* he thought, panting in the cold air, the iron New England dark; *I dont. I dont! I dont hate it! I dont hate it!* (378; Faulkner’s italics)

The obligation to condemn the South here conflicts with Quentin’s desire to love it. Is this not an instance of what Buddy Glass called the “scruples” of the poet-seer (105)? At the least, “the blinding shapes and colors of his own sacred human conscience” are preventing Quentin from living in comfort in a society he has seen too clearly but which he loves too dearly (105).

Seymour sees a problem with his society that is parallel to Quentin’s. Seymour sees the poetry-destroying, soul-deadening quality of American civilization. A reader guesses that Seymour gives the example of the bananafish as an oblique explanation for why he is planning on killing himself, hinting that Seymour sees himself as the bananafish and that in marrying a beautiful but conventional upper-middle-class young woman, he has entered the banana hole.

A passage from “Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenter”—written after “A Perfect Day for Bananafish” but set before it—supports this supposition. “Bananafish” occurs in a fancy beach-side-hotel setting, and in “Raise High,” an entry about Muriel from Seymour’s diary, quoted by Buddy Glass, relates to the setting in “Bananafish”:

Her marital goals are so absurd and touching. She wants to get a very dark sun tan and go up to the desk clerk in some very posh hotel and ask if her Husband has picked up the mail yet. (71)

Seymour recognizes that Buddy “would despise” Muriel “for her marriage motives as I’ve put them down here.” Of course, a typical reader intuits that Seymour also implicitly despises Muriel’s entire mindset even though his desire for Muriel makes him back off from his own insight. Here is what Seymour says: “But are [Muriel’s marriage goals] despicable? In a way they must be, but yet they seem to me so human-size and beautiful” (72). Muriel is well on her way to becoming much like her mother, and thus Seymour necessarily sees Muriel much as he sees her mother: “A person deprived, for life, of any understanding or taste for the main current of poetry that flows through things, all things. She might as well be dead, and yet she goes on living” (72). Seymour lays out his conflict: he condemns the mother for her shortcomings and nevertheless affirms “I love her,” claiming that he finds “her unimaginably brave” (72).

Facing the world cut off from the “current of poetry” requires unimaginable courage, Seymour insists to himself. Seymour thinks this of Muriel’s

mother, but its applicability to Muriel easily finds support in the action of “Bananafish”—the opening phone conversation reveals that Seymour had sent Muriel a book of poems (in German, a language which Seymour knows she does not understand). “[H]e *asked* me about it,” she complains to her mother; “He wanted to know if I’d read it” (6). Muriel reveals that Seymour calls her “Miss Spiritual Tramp of 1948” (5). Also, in “Raise High,” Buddy reveals that Seymour stood Muriel up at the altar of a society wedding, after telling Muriel that marrying her would make him “*too happy*” (39; Salinger’s italics). Fulfilling a desire makes a person “happy” in one sense, but a Zen adept such as Seymour knows that it is an illusory happiness and that real salvation lies in the direction of freeing oneself from desire. Also, Seymour knew that marrying Muriel meant entering an anti-poetic world that he dreaded; yet he could not overcome his desire.

Perhaps Seymour loved Muriel, but it is a desire-laden love, and he knew that entering the trap he later called the banana hole was an inevitable concomitant to marrying this woman. Marrying Muriel would cut off his soul from the only thing that can nourish it; this marriage would break his soul’s connection to the “main current” of poetry—yet after avoiding the staged wedding he then eloped with her, skipping the reception which went on as scheduled. Muriel is Seymour’s point of entry into a whole society of adults who are blind, who are cut off from the main current of poetry. Seymour wants desperately to avoid desiring this society and what it produces (Muriel), but he can’t. Seymour, the poet-seer, ultimately could not accept the upper-class comfort—accept being “too happy”—in this corrupt situation.

While it is entirely plausible that Salinger had read Faulkner and consciously imitated him, the more exciting and likely explanation is that the juxtaposition of the artistic seer with the philosophic insight that we live in a civilization of the blind provoked two great writers to similar exposition of the result. Both their characters see flaws in American culture and their consciences will not allow them to accept comfort and other benefits from these flaws. That they each see a different set of flaws does not change the implication that it is what they see that kills them.

These similarities in action, image, and character allow us to see in Seymour’s suicide an echo of Quentin’s.

That both authors chose suicide as a means to dramatize the pain of the seer need not imply that all seers are doomed to kill themselves. A seer might be strong enough to live out his or her life in pain, as did both Faulkner and Salinger. But what remains to be explained is the difference in the mode of suicide. Salinger set his story at the seaside and could easily have had his character slip quietly into the water as Faulkner’s Quentin did. Seymour’s shooting

himself over the sleeping form of his wife Muriel connects to what Zoey Glass tells his sister Franny in the novella "Zoey": that Hamlet's Yorick had an honorable skull. Zoey also wants "an honorable goddamn skull when I'm dead ... like Yorick's" (199). He tells Franny that he knows that she, too, wants an honorable skull "when you're dead," and he is sure that she knows "what you have to do to *earn it*" (199; Salinger's italics). She has to achieve "Detachment ... Desirelessness. 'Cessation from all hankering'" (198). Zoey insists that he learned this wisdom from Seymour. So wouldn't the requirement to achieve freedom from desire in order to live an honorable life also apply to Seymour? In his attachment to Muriel, his desire for her and the mode of life she represents, his hankering for her, Seymour could not earn his honorable skull. As a seer, he must have seen this all too clearly.

The parallels between Quentin and Seymour provoke clear answers to a series of questions. Could Seymour continue to accept the fruits of satisfied desire, achieved at the price of losing his connection to the current of poetry? Would not what his brother Buddy, in "Seymour: An Introduction," called the "scruples" of a poet-seer prevent him? Surely the "blinding shapes and colors of his own sacred human conscience" bar him from accepting the life lived by Muriel and her mother ("Seymour" 105). However, he had also seen too clearly that his desire would keep him from escaping the banana hole. Seymour can neither suppress nor resist the desire. Desirelessness is the only way to salvation—without which one "might as well be dead."¹¹ That is what Seymour taught both Zoey and Franny, and what Zoey reminded Franny to save her from her breakdown. Muriel inspires desire in Seymour, not only lust for her, but more subtly a lust for the pleasures of the blind, antipoetic civilization that she symbolizes. She is the reason for his failure to free himself from desire. She represents the victory of the poetry-less world over him. Her presence, her existence, is a constant, goading symbol of his failure to earn an "honorable skull" when he is dead. His blasting his skull into pieces in front of her is his seer's reply to the siren call that dooms the bananafish.

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NOTES

¹ Knowing Derrida's fondness for puns, and understanding that he speaks English, we might even suggest an implied pun: "mine blindness" for "mind blindness."

² Among those who have tried to make sense of Seymour's suicide are Alsen, Beller, Bellman, D'Ambrosio, French, Galloway, Grunwald, Lane, Miller, Mizener, and Weibe.

³ The back story is laid out in “Franny” (1955), “Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters” (1955), “Zoocy” (1957), “Seymour—An Introduction” (1959), and “Hapworth 16, 1924” (1965). These works present Seymour as a precocious and omnivorous reader, especially of books on God and religion; a Yoga adept with remarkable control of mind over body; a believer in reincarnation and a practitioner of meditation to the point of enlightenment; and a polyglot who wrote poetry in several languages (including Japanese). In fact, his brother Buddy tells us in “Seymour—An Introduction” that on the day of his suicide Seymour wrote a poem in Japanese (155). Buddy also insists that Seymour was unfailingly considerate of others, a kind of Zen saint. We also learn that Seymour served as an Army translator in the European theater in WWII, suffered a nervous breakdown, tried to commit suicide several times, and was confined to the psychiatric wards of Army hospitals for the better part of three years. For a good chronology of the events of Seymour’s life, see Alsen, “Seymour: A Chronology.”

⁴ “It is anybody’s guess, of course, whether Salinger had the whole, still unfinished history of the Glass family in mind when he wrote ‘A Perfect Day for Bananafish,’” says Arthur Mizener, “but my guess is that, much as William Faulkner has apparently always had at least the main outlines of the McCaslin family history in mind, Salinger has known about all the Glasses from the beginning” (26). One could say the same about the Compson family history, much of which Faulkner told in other sections of *The Sound and the Fury*—though he returned 17 years later to add a historical appendix to the novel.

⁵ Parallels between Faulkner’s Quentin and Salinger’s Holden support the general idea of Salinger being influenced by Faulkner. Robert Hamblin points out that Quentin Compson and Holden Caulfield both “project their sexual anxiety onto their sisters, adopting a defensive ‘big brother’ attitude and seeking to bar their sisters’ entrance into carnal knowledge” (1). We know from the novel’s opening that—at some period after the narrated events—Holden was institutionalized for a breakdown. But was he suicidal when he was spending time with Phoebe? Concerning suicide, at a point about a third of the way through the narrative, as Hamblin points out, Holden says, “I felt so lonesome I almost wished I was dead”; also Holden views mummies in a museum and recalls a classmate who had killed himself while wearing a sweater Holden had lent him, “making him Holden’s alter ego,” Hamblin claims (7). However, Holden is not in the immediate suicidal crisis that we see in Quentin and Seymour; Holden does not, in fact, commit suicide, as we can see from the fact that he is narrating the novel; further, Holden’s spending time with and being concerned about his younger sister is less remarkable than the time Quentin and Seymour spend with girls they have recently met as an immediate prelude to killing themselves.

⁶ We feel that Seymour’s reluctance to face the knowledge that Sybil will grow up is similar but not identical to Quentin’s reason for resisting the idea of his sister Caddy’s maturation, even though Leslie Fiedler speculated on a reason that is almost exactly that of Quentin’s: Salinger “demands that we accept this ambiguous love-making,” between Seymour and Sybil, “as a moment of sanity before suicide, that we read the child as the embodiment of all that is clean and life-giving as opposed to the vulgar, destructive (i.e., fully sexual) wife” (28).

⁷ “Bananafish” was reprinted as the first story in the collection *Nine Stories*. The very next story hints at the mechanism by which this closing off from imaginative openness occurs. In “Uncle Wiggly in Connecticut,” a child’s mother angrily refuses to allow the child to make room in bed for an imaginary friend—a metonymy for how the adult world crushes the imaginative faculty in children.

⁸ In *Absalom, Absalom!* Quentin learns Sutpen’s seedy history, partly from Rosa Coldfield and partly from his imaginative reconstruction of what, in his eyes, must have been Sutpen’s story.

⁹ We might note that the effect of the parallels is cumulative. A central image of a fat fish is rare, and when a young man talks about a fat fish in the presence of a little girl while contemplating suicide, the rarity increases by accretion.

¹⁰ Margaret Salinger, the author's daughter, reports that her aunt Dora, J. D.'s sister, remembered that when Sonny (J. D.'s nickname) and she "were very little, Daddy used to hold Sonny and me around our middles, out in the waves, and say, 'Keep your eyes peeled for the bananafish.' Boy, did we look and look" (19). This reveals the biographical origin of the phrase, which, we feel, Salinger uses in a symbolic way in the story.

¹¹ Teddy, the title character of the last story in *Nine Stories*, a boy with striking parallels to the young Seymour, also advocates freedom from emotions and contends that a person can love without emotion. Thomas Beller asserts "that Love," in Salinger's world, "is the most exalted condition, so exalted no mere mortal can perform it, or that those who really can, such as Seymour, can't survive in our world" (148–149). However, we think the implication of Zooey's statement is more likely that seers have more difficulty surviving in this world than do lovers—seers like Seymour and probably Teddy as well.

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CONSTANCE PIERCE

OPUS CORDIS: REFLECTIONS
OF A CONTEMPORARY ARTIST EMBRACING
THE DRAMA OF RELIGIOUS IMAGERY

ABSTRACT

As a painter and printmaker, I am compelled by Biblical narrative that I express in a contemporary idiom. I often work with images of pilgrimage, lamentation, betrayal and absolution. Such archetypal themes flesh out parable and reveal to me the ancient stories, once again reborn, in our world of dissonance and division. These sacred stories, in their mythic and consuming drama, are forever played out in our most inward journeys. The moment of crucifixion or transfiguration is not ancient history, but reenacted anew within each soul in its own way. Through the work of my hands I am petitioning an otherness. The creative act becomes an *Opus Cordis*, a work of the heart. A dialogue begins.

As an artist, my primary language is imagery. All of the important ruminations of my conscious mind and the archetypes surfacing from my unconscious imagination have been pondered through the language of imagery. Perhaps, it is childlike, this wordless cognition. Yet it is my personal ritual of processing consciousness in a way that satisfies and fulfills my soul. Working with my hands transforms the silence of my studio into a richness of solitude, a kind of cloister.

Images arise in my work that are sometimes most unexpected. My images disclose to me my interior life and its innate connection to the sacred whole. In trying to express my process in a vocabulary of words, I hope to communicate my creative ritual as a form of divine play. I believe an artist's surrender to the forces of darkness and light, in the tangible medium itself, becomes an enacted metaphor. The creative process, at its best, has a sacramental overtone.

In my own art I am often compelled by Biblical narrative that I express in a contemporary idiom. I work with images of pilgrimage, lamentation, betrayal and absolution. Such archetypal figures flesh out parable and reveal to me the ancient stories, once again reborn, in our world of dissonance and division. I believe that these sacred allegories, in their mythic and consuming drama, are played out in our most inward journeys.

Due to my Roman Catholic childhood in the mid-twentieth century, I was deeply marinated in a rich collage of crucifixion and resurrection imagery.

The medieval colors of deep blue and dark crimson pervade my memory. The church seemed immense to me. The “stations of the cross,” so far above me on the wall, and the paintings bordering the altar, seemed rife with a visceral drama. Through this thundering imagery, rather than the dogmatic catechism of the 1950s, I came in touch with the forces of good and evil and the notion of a mystical transubstantiation of spirit into form. About this time I began to draw.

Throughout the following decades, I sporadically chronicled much of my process in the sketches and notes of my journals. Looking through these pages I find I can relive the creative beginnings of many works, and in particular my largest painting “The Betrayal.” In my diary notes I recount that I begin by placing the 5’ by 6’ canvas flat on the floor. I then take in the geography of the surface from all sides. For a few hours I pour oil colors from glass jars onto the canvas. I tilt the stretcher frame this way and that. I watch the stains slowly bleed into the texture of the canvas. I encourage layers of color to touch each other and overlap. Finally I lift the large canvas upright, leaning it against my studio wall. I turn out all the lights in the room.

The late evening window only faintly illuminates the canvas now. I wait quietly. The surface of the canvas becomes a proscenium. In the nighttime shadows my eyes begin to perceive a theater of images. I am like a child in the dark staring at a bedroom wall that has suddenly come alive with myriad characters. I wait and listen, half expecting sounds to emerge from the shadowy figures.

I’m not certain how many minutes I watch, before I pick up my long-handled brush. A few days earlier I had extended the handle considerably by taping it to a three-foot wooden dowel. I approach the canvas now and quickly attempt to trap the mysterious figures with my brush as they disposed themselves across the surface.

Out of the odd and unintentional stains of oil color and the rather awkward searching strokes in the dark, I begin to see a drama unfold before me. I see the figure of Christ and I also see the Judas. I know in that moment that the Christ and the Judas are both within my own soul, and in the soul of my generation.

In that dark room this painting begins and many others to follow. I am ever reminded of the virtues of companioning the darkness. Walking on the water. Encountering the unknown. Honoring the unexpected. From the synchrony of that creative interaction I learn something I would not have fully realized through intellect alone. The moment of betrayal, crucifixion or resurrection is not only ancient history. It is reenacted anew within each soul in its own way.

The figures on my canvas, born in the dark that night, had informed me. The next day, in the light, I continued to develop the largest canvas I had ever painted, engaging a theme I had never intended. I returned to this painting,

on and off, for a few years. It always seemed to call me back. That encounter taught me something about transubstantiation of a spiritual concept into image and form.

What is the language of imaging if not, in one capacity at least, a form of divine play? I sometimes find myself wondering if it was not the play and pleasure of mark-making that prompted the evocative lines of the cave drawings millenniums ago? Did those eyes see a particularity of shape in a rock wall that intimated the flight of an animal, just as I had seen the shadow forms in the dark room intimating the Christ and Judas? Did the ritual conjuring of image draw the human heart to something beyond the fleeting earthbound-moment?

The spiritual incarnation of idea into image is often prompted by a sensual pleasure. The flowing washes of oil paint migrating across the rough texture of canvas pull the creator into the dance irresistibly. There is also contemplation of the exquisite beauty of the empty spaces. The aesthetic is participatory. The sensibility of mark making can be suggestive and luminous or apocalyptic and shattering. I experience this as a divine dance. There is a trinity in this collaboration: the artist, the medium and the tangible mysterious presence of the unknown.

Nowhere do I personally experience the collaboration with the unknown more tangibly than in the practice of monotype printmaking. Several years ago I stumbled onto the rudiments of monotype in an unsuspecting way. When I finished painting for the day, there were often disparate smears of oil color left on my palette. I sprayed the oils lightly with solvent and began to clean them away, then hesitated. Once again, the beauty of the marks stunned me. I glided a finger through the colors. I grabbed the nearest scrap of paper and pressed it onto the surface. I peeled it back. What I saw would change the course of my image making for many years to come. I had unexpectedly created my first primitive monotype. I had apprehended the amazing intercession of the unexpected that is integral to this process.

I quickly found that monotype, however, as an art form, engages far more than paint and the simple pressing of paper. There is an array of nuance in timing and medium, which is often unpredictable and ephemeral. I had to take into consideration the viscosity of the printing inks, the humidity of the day, the dampness of the soaked and blotted paper, the pressure of the etching press, and the mindfulness of timing. For me, the Biblical metaphor in the monotype process itself is Old Testament and fierce. I am wrestling with the angel.

That is exactly what it most often feels like: I am Jacob wrestling with the angel. "I will not let thee go until thou bless me!" I paint with oil color, manipulating the pigment over the surface of a copper or Plexiglas plate. I use brushes, sticks, rags and even my fingers to provoke the paint to speak back to me, to set

in motion a creative dialogue. An evocation of mood swells with an intensity of gesture and color. The images begin to emerge.

Visiting images rise in the pigment and then abandon me. The vestige of lost images sharpens my sight. I work more rapidly now with my brush. Time announces itself as my opponent as I feel the pigments beginning to dry. I work faster and faster. Time is running out. The final image that endures in the wet paint can now be transferred. The painted surface is pressed on, and impregnated into, the dampened paper through the fateful pressure of an etching press. This is the last step in my communion with chance.

It is precisely here that I must let go. I must relinquish my willfulness and assertion. I begin to crank the large spoke wheel of my press. It looks and creaks like an ancient steering wheel of a ship. Hand over hand I turn the giant press wheel. The monotype slowly accepts its fate. I surrender all to chance, all that I have painted, as the paper is pulled under the heavy steel rollers. Many times changes occur that are unforeseeable. I am led in directions I might not otherwise have gone.

When the rollers stop I slowly peel back my paper. An image that I willfully hunted down and trapped in the wet paint just moments earlier, suffers a radical transformation. The figure of a Judas has been altered into the unmistakable image of Christ under the weight of pressure. Radical transformations occur often, in this process. I am urged into dramas I did not intend to enter.

At special times a sense of divine intervention takes over. In the act of surrendering to chance I am petitioning an otherness. I rely on the synchronicity of grace, the grace of improvisational collaboration. This is something I cannot demand, but that I attempt to court. Through the accidental elements of the monotype process unpredictable configurations and markings occur that are not possible by working directly onto paper or canvas. This communion with chance provides fertile ground for revelation.

A dominant theme that I have often witnessed arising in my monotype imagery over the years is the eruption of the Divine into ordinary life. Perhaps, the metaphor of unexpected imagery erupting from the monotype process, itself, opened me to this concept.

“On the Water” is a monotype in which the collaboration of the press played a significant part. If there is a brush stroke of oil paint that sits higher on the painted plate, the inevitable flattening weight of the steel roller presses into it, impregnates the viscous oil color deep into the paper, and spreads it as a rich flat sheet of color down the composition. Though always risky, and sometimes even reckless, an artist can invite this effect to occur.

Peter, a familiar archetype arising from my own soul, is here defined by a minimal gesture of brush strokes in dark Prussian blue and black. He steps

from the boat and begins his walk upon the water. I depict the power of the storming sea and sky in an abstraction of dark sienna. Peter's moment of doubt becomes manifest in the sheet of crimson color spreading down the composition. This is also a moment of profound darkness. The Biblical story fleshes out the universal and pervasive conflict of the divided heart. Peter has been distracted from his miraculous walk upon the water. In a heartbeat, he succumbs to the menacing sensual reality of the raging storm. The entrance of the Divine is immanent.

I have often noted that the sudden presence of the Divine in ordinary life is not always welcome, or even recognized, and more often than not results in a paralyzing fear. So Biblical angels often begin their conversation with "Fear not!" In my monotype, "Road to Emmaus," the stranger apprehended in the road ahead is seen as startlingly alien. In the story, the disciples, so lost in their own doubt and despond after the crucifixion, cannot at first recognize Christ, even as he approaches, and then companions them, on their sojourn. What is longed for is present and even next to them, but they fail to perceive this.

My monotype, "Flight into Egypt," is primarily concerned with the entrance of the Divine by way of a prophetic dream. The Holy Family is expressed in rapid gesture as it moves quickly into the foreground of the composition, towards us, and toward a land of escape. The viewer becomes the land of Egypt. The Divine message has erupted in a dream that makes all the difference.

A Hebrew student, a friend of mine, interprets this monotype entirely differently. She sees the drama of the Old Testament narrative when the Israelites are escaping not toward, but rather from, Egypt. My desire is to create images in a non-illustrative manner that allow for dualities of interpretation. The expressive qualities of the monotype process nourish this approach.

Another theme that has haunted my work from the beginning is the drama of healing, which is also a way the presence of the Divine is perceived in ordinary life. My monotype "Absolution and Healing" almost never happened. After a disastrous print came off the press, I began rather mindlessly to wipe off the printing plate with solvent, not wanting to bear the failure of what just occurred. In my sketchbook that day I chronicle the following notes.

I hesitate, just as I did years ago, in that first monotype experience. Quickly I drop my rag and pick up my brush. The soft pools of solvent have completely altered the surface of the image. An unexpected vestige of a nude female is barely intimated in the oil color residue. I know I have only seconds before the solvent will erase forever this suggestion. Very quickly I take up my brush and sketch in the figure. For some reason, I cannot say exactly why, I also press my palm print into the lower corner, perhaps, to blot the evaporation.

Back to the etching press, back under the rollers, now with a new piece of dampened print paper. This time the resulting monotype bares well the gestured nude rising over the elusive qualities of the “ghost image.” A “ghost image” is the subtle residue of the first, and in this case, failed composition.

“Heal me Oh Lord, for my body is in terror. My soul, too, is utterly terrified. Oh, Lord, how long!” This is the anguished cry of the wounded soul in Psalm VI. She is also a familiar archetype arising from my own core. I recognize her. Now, I reconsider what this archetype has to teach me. Once, again, the creative work of my hands has lured me into a place I might not have found by intellect alone. The failure of the first print is germinal to the discovery of the second.

How am I informed by this image? What is this terror in the releasing of the wound that I observe in the figure? So often, when I imagine healing in the Biblical sense, the image conjured is one of sudden joy and restoration. The subject is caught up in an overwhelming transformation. Not so here. The nude female, gestured in Prussian blue oil has my fingerprints all over her. I had forgotten, in the anxiety of trying not to have her evaporate before I got her to the press, that I had abandoned my brush and molded part of her form with my fingers like a piece of clay.

Alizarin crimson, a color that often companions the Prussian blue in my work, is soaked and streaked in undulating marks through the levitating form. This I recognize as the wound still encased in the figure. She tries, with lifted hands, to signal acceptance of the healing offered, but the healing of a deep wound is difficult and slow. One’s identity often becomes fused with the wound. Learning to unclench the tight grip, to let go of the wound, is more arduous than anticipated. It can be a slow and delicate spiritual surgery.

There are other less distinct figures present and margined around her. I recognize them now as the midwives, the shamanistic angels, who bless and who carefully lead to eventual healing and absolution. I understand, too, why the first monotype had to fail, to be diminished to a pale residue, for the second monotype to be born and find its voice. The delicate recycled vestige of the first print plays a powerful role in the success of the second. Failure has its purposes. I could now see that with clarity. Why do I forget so often?

I also engage another approach to monotype printmaking often referred to as “hand-pressed” monotype. Rather than utilizing an etching press, the artist’s hand is the only pressure placed along the paper’s back. The effects are quite different. The oil color is not deeply impregnated into the paper. The thicker brushstrokes are not apt to spread and run down the page under simple hand pressure. The “hand-pressed” monotype often has a rougher improvisational look. The artist is also able to vary the pressure applied, or even lift the

paper half-off and add additional paint strokes and press once again. There are endless variations.

I recall one night in particular when the hand-pressed approach was essential. I have been working on the press all day. I have been pursuing the images of ancient martyrs, but nothing is coming through. All of my prints are failing. I begin to ruminate on the story of a young nun who was brutally murdered while ministering in El Salvador a few years earlier. I don't think I can get the sense of that image on a plate that fits the size of my press bed. I look around, but I'm not certain for what. Instinctively I move the rags and brushes from my six-foot drafting table and grab the huge piece of Plexiglas that protects the surface of the table. I slide it down to the floor. I had never thought of this Plexiglas as a printing surface before, but now it offers itself up to me.

I wet down the surface with a fine spray of solvent, tape another long wooden dowel to my brush, and begin to paint her image at the moment of death. I lift the piece up, let the paint drip downward, sketching over and over into the wet oil stains, establishing and relinquishing the image repeatedly until, through the layered pentimenti, I find the gesture I am searching for.

Again, I place the huge Plexiglas sheet on the floor and while the image is still wet, I press a large piece of heavy drawing paper over the surface. I crawl around the paper pressing on it from all sides. Time, my familiar opponent, is moving in on me. Finally I stand up, take off my shoes and step on the back of the paper selectively to successfully transfer the last bit of wet paint.

I pin the huge monotype to the wall. The long day in the studio has ended. I have been wrestling with the angel, once again. I sit down, longing for a few contemplative moments in the shadows. I can see the image I have wrought clearly now against the white studio wall. Racing through my mind is a strange juxtaposition. In my fatigue, I experience a sensation such as playing cards flashing back to front, back to front. I now see the monotype figure convulsing with inexplicable pain, arms flailing upward. The arabesque of sudden violence pervades. I am struck, however, by a polarity. There is a similarity in this gesture to that of dance. Now I can see the arms lifting passionately upward in a kind of epiphany.

Could it be that what I see as a moment of unbearable injustice is paradoxically the soul's breaking free from the earth? Is this a moment of spiritual epiphany? Can such opposites be flashing back and forth through a single moment of consciousness and we, with earthbound eyes, see only the physical diminishment of death?

In the days afterward, I worked further on the largest mixed-media monotype I had ever attempted. I added elements of collage that extended out from



Figure 1. Epiphany for Those Wounded (Collection of the National Museum of Women in the Arts (DC))

the surface to enhance the visceral effect of a duality of intention. “Epiphany for those Wounded,” (Figure 1) the image of a contemporary woman who is martyred, resides now in the collection of The National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, DC.

This initial experience with large-scale monotype prompted another of similar size and approach. The long handled brush, the dripping paint and the massive searching sketch conjured a new figure on the six-foot Plexiglas. Once again, on hands and knees, I pressed the image and transferred it onto the paper.

This new monotype, “Voice in the Wilderness,” (Figure 2) describes a figure in drenched garments rising from the water. In depicting this image I made no attempt to portray him as an historical illustration, but rather as a rough



Figure 2. Voice Crying in the Wilderness (Collection of Professors Catherine and Richard Freis (MS))

archetypal suggestion of John the Baptist. His motioning arms call me to an immersion. Wet and wild with his locusts and honey, he transforms an ancient ritual of purification into a new sacrament. He lives in the wilderness of our psyche. He is not afraid of alienation or solitude. He seeks it. The eruption of a Divine message is implicated.

What I hope to share through these eclectic reflections is the relationship of my creative process to the spiritual narratives that emerge. For me, the work of my hands provides a way of ruminating, contemplating and conjuring, so that I am able to imagine the ancient stories anew. Visual imaging seems an enriched alternate form of language. I experience my creative process, in all of

its darkness and light, as transformative and revelatory. For me, the creative act is an Opus Cordis, a work of the heart. It is also the petition of my soul.

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NOTE

For images referred to in paper: <http://www.constancepierce.com>; <http://www.youtube.com/constancelaundon> (Artist retains reproduction rights to her art).

ECCE HOMO: ON THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL
PROBLEMATICITY OF THE RELIGIOUS IMAGE

To my mother, In memoriam.

ABSTRACT

This paper deals with a problem that has been more and more perceptible since the eighteenth-century Enlightenment liberated whatever kind of image from the metaphysical framework of reality that had until then ruled artistic production, which took place together with the foundation of a philosophical aesthetics entirely grounded on a subjective feeling of pleasure: what is the status or sense of the religious image? This problem is axial for understanding the becoming of the religious image during the two last centuries and it must be set off and solved because that kind of image is by principle not a simple allegorical or artistic representation that rouses this or that state of mind in the beholder but the presentation of God Himself or of a celestial entity (whether the Virgin, an angel or a saint) that is endowed with a miraculous potency to help man in his tribulations: when the believer is before a religious image, he is supposed to be in the very presence of God, and that is why he can beg for mercy with the certitude that he will be comforted.

Thus, the thaumaturgic potency is the ground of the religious image and prevents it from being taken as a simple representation whose value hinges upon the beholder. However, in the light of the critic reduction of the metaphysical condition of whatever object to a purely subjective determination (which is the most important upshot of the Kantian thought that carried the Enlightenment to its culminating point), the image, whether religious or not, lost the potency that we have just mentioned and ended up being the symbol of an aesthetical experience that keeps at best the transcendental unity of the subjectivity.¹ In other words, the religious image cannot be anymore an object that works thaumaturgically in favour of the believer, but, as any other kind of image, a representation that everyone interprets in accordance with his sensibility and with his cultural baggage. Due to this reduction, on speaking of an image, it must be taken into account that the concept means at least three

very different things: first, an object that possesses a supernatural potency to assist the believer (this sense defines the religious image as such); second, an object that brings about an aesthetic experience (this sense defines the artistic image); third, a psychological representation (this sense defines the image by and large); as the reader will see, these three senses will be contextually differentiated through these pages. Now, since we are concretely interested in figuring out the sense of the religious image, we have chosen the one that stands better than anyone else for the whole genre, namely, Christ's. And since we want to grasp concretely the artistic and cultural transcendence of that image, we shall analyse it on a double plane: firstly, we shall set off the philosophical ideality that Christ's image possesses; secondly, we shall collate that ideality with the artistic sense of the image. On a colophon, we shall revert to the original question to ken what the current value of the religious image is.

I

The first time that I realized the metaphysical depth of life was before one of those images of Christ that make up one of the most impressive types of the Catholic imagery all the world over and above all in Latin America: I mean the image of a man brutally scourged, crowned with thorns and with a cane in the hand, that stares at the beholder with a sight that expresses an unfathomable meekness. After so many years, I still remember vividly my bewilderment while my mother told me that the image showed the horrors that Christ had suffered for his love to me, which I should requite wholeheartedly. I must confess that, instead of being edified, I was stark terrified because with the scant experience that I had at the age of four or five I could by no means understand that love had link whatever with such an atrocious heartlessness, since it had until then been for me synonymous of tenderness and care, not of sacrifice and vileness, and all the more because God had represented for me a father that assists His creatures bounteously, so that there was no reason for them to treat Him so impiously; that someone had ever dared to challenge the divine mercifulness with such a rage thrilled me with horror and at the same time with the intuition of a wickedness that I had never before guessed. Thus, I discovered all of a sudden that life was not the eternal ingenuousness of childhood, that it was subjected to sorrow and evil and that it was necessary to impetrate divine protection so as to avoid the host of diabolic potencies that besiege everyone, under whose sway God Himself had had to suffer. But beyond the commotion of a transcendence hardly understood, in that instant I made a discovery a lot more important, since I had for the first time a full intuition of my own conscience before the abysses of mystery, conscience that from then onwards has never stop unfolding; for although there is in childhood a blurry perception of

the troubles of the adult world, there is at the same time the certitude that one is safe from them and that nothing evil can go to meet us; but in front of that tormented Christ, I intuited that my age did not exempt me from sharing the common lot and that life was full of mysteries that everyone should somehow or other fathom.

I am sure that the experience that I recount is no exceptional at all, that most people would have felt something similar in such circumstances and that is the reason why Christ's image has provided Western culture and art for almost two millennia with the symbol by antonomasia of the supernatural union of God and man that has been the very ground of whatever kind of ideality of existence; independently of the sensibility or of some social conditions of the beholder, independently even of his religion, the image of a man that claims to be the son of God and God Himself has been axial in Western culture because it brings to light the ideals and recesses of the human spirit with a concreteness that no other religious or profane image can equalize; as a matter of fact, that Christ is simultaneously God and man, that he lived throughout what he chose to live and nothing more, that he was able to resist desperation and give love to a degree that none else could get both in the depth and in the multiplicity of manifestations, is reason enough to explain the transcendence of his image through time and how he has in every aspect carried life to its utmost expressiveness: whether as a newborn in the manger, as a lad wiser than the wisest divines, as a violent preacher among the unbelievers, as the ironic critic of the pharisaism and bigotry, as the scapegoat that when least expected cries out from the top of the cross, as the resuscitated man that ascends to glory among the bewilderment of his disciples or as the terrible judge that will brandish mercilessly the sword against the sinners in the doomsday, Christ has for good or for bad embodied all the ontological and moral possibilities within reach of man before the irruptive strength of existence, and his mildness or his anger stand for the alpha and the omega of passion even beyond their essentially religious sense, which is why, I repeat, he has been, for whomsoever has contemplated his image or reflected on it and whether the person at issue believes in Christ's divinity or not, the starting point of a complex process that perforce leads to the reflection on the own being and on the sense of existence, even when this is expressed through the final break with whatever form of Christian religiosity, as Nietzsche knew better perhaps than anyone else in the history of thought.² For if Christ embodies humanity as such it is because he also shows the weakness, the contradictoriness, the rebelliousness that everyone experiences when the fateful hour arrives; the only but crucial difference between him and any other man lies in the feature that I grasped in that unforgettable instant of my childhood: the meekness that he embodies has nothing to do with the sheer resignation in the deprecatory sense of the word that is tantamount to

self-contempt, but shows something utterly different: a bottomless absorption on the own being that solely God can attain. And it is precisely this feature why, according to Hegel, Christ has revealed a new form of imagining humanity that defines the further becoming of individual consciousness in Western culture:

Man does not appear like man in a merely human character, in a limited passion, in finite aims and achievements, but like the sole and universal God that knows Himself, in whose life and passion, birth, death and resurrection, it is also revealed to the finite consciousness what is Spirit, what is eternal and infinite in accordance with its truth.³

The extraordinary ideality of consciousness that Christ rouses in everyone confirms that he does not stand for a would-be metaphysical essence or, which would be just the opposite, for a natural possibility that can be carried out without further ado; on the contrary he embodies the potency for fulfilling the own being despite or even against the stints that reality imposes, potency that, in accordance with religion, the average man seldom perceives although he always has it close at hand, but that he can at any rate experience when he surrenders to the loving strength of God; thereat, the Socratic “know yourself” goes hand-in-hand with the Christian: “love God”, i.e., break the circularity of the normal perception of your own being and others as soulless objects ruled by mechanical forces and experience the transcendence of the individual existence with regard to nature and with regard to the selfishness that more often than not prevents everyone from realizing his real wants as a spiritual being, wants that lie in the participation of truth, that is to say, in the opening of the own being to God and to a spiritual life. Therefore, and from a phenomenological slant, Christ’s image always refers to the possibility or rather the metaphysical exigency of overcoming the abstractedness of a purely natural existence, which is why it fills by itself a whole spiritual category. Still more, it possesses a *sui generis* sense that must phenomenologically be differentiated from the narrow criterion of representation that is instead the ground of four notions that are apparently very similar to it: the idol, the symbol, the portrait and the figure. Firstly, unlike the idol (above all the Hellenic one, which is endowed with a human aspect),⁴ Christ’s image does not stand for the sheer compulsoriness of nature that ceaseless overwhelms man; it does not give an aspect to the strength of an element, of a territory, of a plant or animal, of a human passion such as love, as the heathen gods do, and whereby there is an insurmountable abyss between them and man, who is entirely at the mercy of them and only can have a very shallow emotional link with the divine realm beyond fear; in sooth, the idol does not inspire love, it just marks out a metaphysical difference that everyone has to take into account so as not

to trespass the divine sphere. Secondly, unlike the symbol, which points at a general value through a concrete element (as it occurs when a heart refers to love or a dove to peace),⁵ Christ's image means the concrete person through the metaphysical value of existence; it is from top to bottom the expression of how he was able to defeat evil and how his potency works in the soul of man even when the latter is an unbeliever or an apostate, which explains that even when Christ appears through a symbol (for instance, through a cross or a lamb), it has nothing to do with an abstract value (such as the undifferentiated strength of nature that the idol embodies) and is on the contrary for showing the concrete humanity of an incarnated God. Thirdly, unlike the portrait, which somehow or other tries to show the very being of the sitter whether through his aspect or not,⁶ Christ's image does without the features and just heeds the metaphysical potency that he had as the son of God, which everyone must on the other hand incarnate in order to be what God wants him to be: man is the living image of God and he must keep his likeness with his creator by his own effort so as to deserve redemption, so that Christ's image is at bottom the image of the own man that has broken his ties with the violence of nature and has found the ground of his existence in God through love. Lastly, unlike the figure, which means the physical presence and nothing more, Christ's image means the metaphysical being of his. Thus, this phenomenological complexity endows Christ's image with its uniqueness and prevents it from being mistaken with those representations or copies of the copies that the idols stand for and that scandalised Plato to the extreme that he considered them profanations of the divine transcendence.⁷ Of course, since the Platonic condemnation took for granted a conception of God alien to the humanity that Christ incarnates, it is useless for kenning how the image of the son of man makes the beholder conscious of the inescapable exigency of an ontological fulfilment even against the natural tendency to reduce existence to the satisfaction of one's basic needs. This exigency, which is the very root of the religious transcendence of the image and of its would-be miraculous power, is also the ground of whatever moral edification for the part of the beholder, who, even if he is not a believer, can avail himself of the idealizing strength of his own humanity that the image reveals, which is precisely what Hegel says in the fragment that we have quoted: the image sheds light on the metaphysical identity of God and man and on the transcendent fulfilment of life, which is how it transforms the evil tendencies into good ones and even helps to avoid the wretchedness that waylays at any moment. For in accordance with its most properly religious sense, the image is supposed to possess a great effectiveness over the soul of the believer, so that it rouses in him the resemblance with the divine potency that nurtures him.

II

Now, how does Christ's image do this? How does it bring to light divinity through the physical aspect of a man that, contrary to the heathen gods, who always shone with beauty and greatness, appears in the middle of the normal conditions of existence, among the throng of His followers, or utterly alone on the top of the cross, oppressed by the most awful bale? On the other hand, how does that image work as a mirror of the beholder's consciousness that is not a believer? *Prima facie*, by means of some external sign like the halo that surrounds the head of Christ, or by the majesty of His body, or by the attitude of his companions, whether angels or humans. These elementary resources are reinforced when the scene illustrates a scene of the gospels, in whose case the dramatic potency increases for the believer, as it happens in Piero della Francesca's *Resurrection*, which stands for one of the most beautiful images ever painted of Christ.⁸ The work is divided in two clearly differentiated sections that are however reunified by the motionlessness of light: in the lower one, it appears a group of four deeply asleep guards that are leant over Christ's grave; in the upper one, one sees how the resuscitated Christ stands majestically with a foot on the edge of His grave while with his left hand seizes the folds of a shroud that is rather a cloak that has slightly fallen, which lets see the naked torso of the Saviour, who with the right hand holds a white banner with a red cross. With his head crowned with a golden halo that is almost a crown and with a contrasting landscape in the background, whose left side is occupied by a leafless tree and whose right side shows a thriving one, Christ appears like a victorious emperor that has just defeated his enemies (in this case, death and sorrow) or, also, like the authentic axis of the world, situated on the demarcation line of God and man, of life and death, of sleep and vigil, for he is the only conscious person in a world wherein everyone else has yielded to the all-embracing sway of nature. This majesty is strengthened by the thoughtful expression of Christ's face and by the extraordinary beauty of his body, very similar to a antique statue by its soft musculature and its marmoreal whiteness: utterly self-conscious, he appears after having defeated death and shines victoriously, while his sight, which is a little oblique, goes upwards, carrying ours away with him. Taking all these details as a whole, one corroborates Hegel's appraisal of Christ's image: it comprises the radiant beauty of the heathen deities and the depth that the individual soul attains when it intuits itself, not against but beyond the seduction of the world. Christ alone fills a category in the history of the image or, rather, *he is the image as such*, considering that, independently of how an image means by and large its content,⁹ it always lies in a transcendental synthesis of sundry levels of reality, which in the case of

Christ cannot be other than the ontological levels that in principle differentiate, on the one hand, God and man and, on the other, man and nature, that all of a sudden end up being one and the same in the very experience of the believer. The union of these three elements, which in the secular life are always separated and even seem to be utterly contradictory, is in sooth the work of the image that rouses in the individual consciousness the want of shedding of the tyranny of nature, which Christ makes visible on resuscitating and simultaneously vivifying everything (remember that nature thrives in the backward of Piero's picture after his resurrection). Thereat, the exterior signs of divinity, such as the halo and the corporeal beauty, work like the ground of a consciousness that transcends whatever abstractedness and grasps its full concreteness, which demands that the image acts as the revelation of a transcendent identity that in principle remains unknown on the plane of the worldly life. Thus, the image marks out the end of the unconsciousness concerning the own existence as a free being and reveals a new way of living in accordance with that, which, as we have said, allows to link the Socratic exigency of self-knowledge with the Christian recognition of a loving bond with God and, through Him, with everyone and everything else: the self-consciousness does not mean then an individuality that opposes blindly nature (as the asceticism wants to set the question out), but an individuality that keeps a link with it and at the same time transcends it, which is precisely what the incarnation of Christ means.

When someone for his part embodies this and lives like Christ lived, he releases the divine strength that in accordance with a mythic vision of nature is latent in every aspect thereof and can make it work outside its regular course and against the usual narrow-mindedness of the others¹⁰; this strength, however, must somehow or other return to its original rise, i.e., the ideal of sanctity that Christ has revealed, and that is feasible through the image of his, whose likeness must be not physical but metaphysical and represent the virtues that he incarnated. The communication of this *sui generis* likeness endows the image with its effectiveness and continues through the believer's reverence; but since it was Christ himself who harbingered the possibility at issue, the image of whomsoever has fulfilled it is at bottom a reverberation of his own image and exemplifies the potency that he irradiates through the angel or the saint on the believer.¹¹ And with this we revert to the only aim of whichever religious image, above all of Christ's, which is the archetype of any other: to make visible the supernatural identity of God and man and to release in the soul of the believer the fortitude that the absorption in worldliness prevents him more often than not from intuiting and putting into practice. Thus, the vision of the sacred image gets the believer out of all that and shows him his own being without the interposition of the worldly appearances, which corroborates, on the one

hand, the total dissimilitude that exists between Christ's likeness and the sheer reproduction of an archetype and, on the other, what is called the miraculous or rather metaphysical strength of that likeness, which brings about a spiritual identity through a process identical to the erotic one as Plato describes it in the *Phaedrus* (249e and ff.): the lover remembers the vision of the supracellular place when he contemplates the image of the beloved one, while the believer becomes conscious of his metaphysical filiation with God when he stares Christ's image or the image of anyone that has emulated Christ's way of living. The image or metaphysical form superimposes itself to the figure or physical presence and acts freely upon the person that stares at it, who must grasp the transcendence that the image expresses.

This similarity of the religious and the erotic imaginative process is also perceptible in the case of the artistic one, which works upon the beholder (whether he is believer or not) and gets him out of the normal perception of reality, which is wonderfully exemplified in Piero della Francesca's *Resurrection*: whereas the guards are lost in the appearances of dreams (one of them even hides his face in his hands as if he refused to see and wanted to preserve his blindness), Christ opens his eyes towards heaven, just like the own picture opens the eyes of the beholder towards the clear vision of the metaphysical ground of existence. The work displays so on a visible plane what happens on the invisible plane of consciousness, and it fulfils its aim when it has captured the whole process, i.e., when it has shown the ideal strength of Christ, which takes place whether the beholder is believer or not, since the idealization does not hinge upon the particular beliefs of the person, on the contrary, the latter hinge upon the former. Why? Because *for consciousness, above all for the religious one, what matters is the experience of the ideal value of humanity that the image makes visible*, not the dogmatic value of the divine realm, and the same occurs with art, concretely with painting, that gives body and soul to a transcendental link that would otherwise be literally unimaginable and that without the plastic element would at any rate be an abstract determination. The strength of the image that we have so far explained is at bottom what art and concretely painting has always tried to grasp and communicate, and it triumphs over the particular religiosity of the beholder or even over his utter lack of religiosity as Christ triumphs over death, which, nevertheless, shows an aspect of the question that leads to a final break of the original affinity of the two kinds of transcendence, the religious one and the artistic one, which is perceptible precisely in Piero's masterpiece: what is more impressive in it, the portentousness of Christ without further embellishment, or, which is a thing completely different, the mastery of the artist that has created an unforgettable vision of the human beauty? Value and mastery should in principle be indiscernible, but the

fact is that they end up opposing each other in the absence of the metaphysical determination that every religious individual takes for granted, namely, the communication of the divine strength through the image. If the work lacked this element, the sense thereof would straightaway change although the idealization remained: we have said that Christ incarnates a self-conscious person and a humanity that has been released from nature, but it must be taken into account that, whether we believe it or not, his religious or metaphysical value lies in his being first and foremost the son of God and God Himself, which implies that his image has all the qualities that we have mentioned and that also possesses a metaphysical or rather miraculous sense that must work on a natural plane, whether this is dogmatically or critically interpreted, i.e., as the corpus of a doctrine or as the ground of a moral vision of existence¹²; however, if Christ is considered the mere symbol of a possibility that can be carried out in the secular world such as a purely aesthetical sight would imply, then his image loses its most proper sense and is reduced to an almost allegoric representation of the individual improvement, which does not require the participation of the divine strength and must rather be seen as a proof of the sheer human willpower. The image would at any rate be potent enough to work still as an ideal form but it would not reveal God anymore, at least with the personal identity and the intimate bond that he has with each man in accordance with Christianity; on the contrary, it would just illustrate the human transcendence in a world that either entices with a glorious but finally illusory harmony or that, on the contrary, has no room for it.

If the *Resurrection* by Piero della Francesca is the utmost instance of the former possibility (because it sets off the superb vision of man that the Italian Renaissance got through the unfolding of the own Christian theology),¹³ the *Crucifixion* by Grünewald stands in its own right for the latter, since it expresses the bale of Christ and the absolute loneliness of death with an appalling intensity that as far as I know no other picture has ever got.¹⁴ In diametric opposition to the diaphanous continuity of the divine, natural and human planes of existence that rules the *Resurrection*, wherein even the brutish heaviness of drunkenness is finally absorbed in the motionless light that floods Christ and the guards alike, the *Crucifixion* shows the lurid concreteness of a reality where the sky is as dark and compact as the earth and where the figures of Christ, his mother and three saints stand out as if they were anchored on barrenness itself. The Virgin, John the Evangelist and Mary Magdalene cluster at the left side of the work and share their sorrow, while John the Baptist, at the right side, points at the scene with a resoluteness that makes him oddly alien to it (impression that is strengthened by the allegoric lamb and the chalice that are at his feet and by the book that he holds with his left hand). Between these

two groups, the dead body of Christ hangs from a solid but twisted cross, covered with the wounds of his martyrdom; his head falls on his right shoulder as if it had been crushed by the enormous crown of thorns that he has on, his ribs are horribly perceptible beneath the tortured skin, his features express an unbearable sorrow and his hands, which are doubtlessly the most impressive element of the work, are opened upwards with contracted fingers as if death had not given him anything at all; they are not the hands of someone that was able to heal and work miracles, let alone the hands of someone that claimed to be the son of God; in fact, they do not seem to be hands of a human being, they rather seem to be the claws of an animal that died fighting, and their physical deformity is the best signs of the whole problem that Christ's image implies for the plastic art: *how to represent the humanity that encompasses the worst heartlessness and the utmost greatness*. The difficulty lies here, of course, in fathoming the contradictoriness of humanity, for although the depth and the subtleties of theology suggest the contrary, the fact is that the Christian concept of God is by no means as hard to accept as the Christian concept of man¹⁵; after all, the same transcendence of God prevents even the most daring metaphysicians and divines from lucubrating beyond the natural order of creation,¹⁶ whereas the complexity of human consciousness, which everyone experiences on a greater or a smaller scale, furthers the oddest interpretations of existence and of its would-be sense, which is perceptible in the abyss that exists between the illustrative plane of the *Crucifixion*, wherein one only sees bale and death according to the text of the Gospels, and the allegorical plane thereof, wherein one sees the outright index wherewith John the Baptist admonishes everyone: even without dispensing with the religious sense of the work, it is very hard to see Christ as the saviour of a world so frightfully sunken in sullenness, wherein he himself is subjected to an evil that seems to have sprung directly from hell, before which the holy book that Saint John holds in one of his hands seems to harbinger not a gospel of love and universal forgiveness but the triumph of a barbarous law that rides roughshod over man towards the consumption of every living being, law that would be the most frightful confirmation of the heathen conception of the gods and of the lack of value of human existence that is somehow or other implies.

Of course, it could be argued that the deformity of Christ's image and of the rest of the elements of the *Crucifixion* is by no means contrary to the sense of a faith that dismisses whatever outward determination and just heeds the innermost bond of the believer with God,¹⁷ and that Grünewald's merit as an artist lies precisely in having bereft the image of the redeemer of whatever ornamentation in order to show the humanity of him without the bodily beauty that the worldly man so earnestly pursues, so as to show the greatness

that Christ got by his martyrdom, which is emphasised by the disproportion existing among him and the saints that are at his feet¹⁸: according to this, the *Crucifixion* would make visible how the spiritual man keeps a certain nobleness notwithstanding the distortedness and the atrocity of death that the carnal man loathes because they remind him of the meaninglessness of his pretentiousness: before the *Crucifixion* someone could still perhaps question that Christ is the saviour of man, but none could question that the human image (which, as we have already mentioned, always comprises an ideality that brims over the mere physical presence) stands out over the worst wretchedness, which, however, sends us again to our starting point, namely, the difficulty that painting faces as an art on trying to capture the metaphysical, supernatural uniqueness of Christ's image and, for extension, of whomsoever had followed him, whose image would in any other case be a simple allegory of man with a certain cultural, aesthetical or even moral value, but would not be endowed with a spiritual strength that helped the believer if the case arose. This reduction of the image as a miraculous presentation to the image as a symbolic representation is perceptible when someone is before a masterpiece such as the *Resurrection* or the *Crucifixion* and he is only able to admire the artistic achievement without participating of the most important intention of the picture as a religious work that intends to remind the believer of his bond with God that is the spiritual ground of his own existence. Thereat, and whether Christ's image appears with a halo of glory or with a crown of thorns, it is very easy for the beholder to mistake the religious sense thereof for a representation of the human possibilities without reference to God, and that is a lot more feasible when the work strives to capture the sheer humanity of Christ without the array of allegorical and symbolical elements that have instead been the utmost limit of the Eastern plastic tradition,¹⁹ which corroborates our statement that the hardest aspect of the Christian vision of existence does not lie in the absolute transcendence of God but in the absolute immanence of man that *prima facie* belies the cornerstone of Christianity, the final identity of the Creator and the creature that Christ for his part incarnates and that painting strove to make visible from the times of the catacombs to the end of the nineteenth-century, when the image entered a new cultural framework.

This leads to a situation that would seem to confirm the soundness of Hegel's appraisal concerning the anachronistic character of the plastic representation of the divinity in the light of the kind of spirituality that Christianity itself brought about: for a time that has overcome the naturalistic conception of the gods that heathenism upheld, wherein everything must be determined by a consciousness free from the overwhelming determination of the natural law and wherein none can claim the would-be enmity of fate for justifying his acts but, on the

contrary, must face the absoluteness of responsibility and the very finitude of existence that endows death with a sense that would have been incomprehensible for Antiquity,²⁰ Christ's image challenges the capacity of representation of plastic art, concretely of painting, which has all the more been evident not after the final dissolution of the figurativeness that twentieth-century plastic art undertook but at the very genesis of a humanised vision of God in the bosom of the Renaissance thought and art, which, as I see the question, and utterly contrary to what is so usually and so wrongly said, did not strive for releasing man from God, a lot less for the revaluation of a heathen vision of existence, but for the liberation of the Christian faith from the quibbling of the scholastic theology and metaphysics, which the Renaissance considered a deviation of the true belief and a hindrance for the true piety.²¹ If we revert to the two works that have so far been our hobbyhorse, we shall see that the total motionlessness of Christ in the *Resurrection* and His convulsed grimace in the *Crucifixion* agree each to its own with the effort of Renaissance art to capture a self-consciousness that has overcome the tyranny of nature and of whatever social constraint in order to express limitlessly its glory or its bale, which should have strengthened the faith of the believer but that somehow or other ended up vying with the transcendence of God as so many instances of the painting of the time show, whereof we have just chosen two masterpieces in order to make clearer the exposition of the whole issue. This risk of making visible Christ's humanity beyond the properly religious field explains why the Reformation decided to banish whatever image from the temples and why the subsequent development thereof in the Catholic devotion led to so many problems regarding the appropriateness of representing visually the Son of God.²² The final upshot of this process has been that images that were supposed to rouse the religious piety just rouse the admiration for the human genius and the human presence, something that Plato, by the by, bore in mind on deeming painting as an art incapable of grasping the divine nature.²³

Does this mean that the pictorial or, by and large, the plastic representation of Christ should just be valued from a purely aesthetic slant independently of its religious import? Not at all. It rather means that the devotional transcendence thereof is always questionable and that it can easily be reduced to a purely artistic accomplishment since, unlike the naturalness wherewith the ancient man linked himself with the gods although he recognized his insurmountable difference regarding them (which implied by the by the risk of being crushed by them when least expected),²⁴ the Christian believer must start with the assumption that Christ shares in an unfathomable way both the divine omnipotence and the human mortality and that that raises by itself the question of how represent

Him so as not to mistake him neither with the heathen deities that stand without further ado for natural forces or human passions nor with the unfathomable God of Hebraism and Islamism that cannot by principle be represented. As the two masterpieces whereon we have remarked show, every artist strives to keep steady the pointer of the scales between God and man on representing Christ, whether by means of a conception of the image (such as the motionlessness that characterizes Piero della Francesca's figures, which makes visible the eternity of God, or as the lengthening and distortion of Grünewald's, which makes palpable the bale of man) or by resorting to allegory (such as the banner with the cross that Christ holds in the *Resurrection*, which underlines the victory of His over death, or as the lamb and the chalice that stand at the feet of Saint John the Baptist in the *Crucifixion*, which reaffirm the meekness and mercy of a God that has given his life for His creatures). Now, the problem of these resources is that both of them demand an erudite exegesis of the image²⁵ or impose an purely artistic, extra-religious sense that ends up breaking with the simplicity of the ancient religious representation that was on the contrary anchored on a naturalistic vision of God incompatible with the development of the Christian faith that in the Eastern iconic tradition was instead limited by the golden background of the image and that in the Protestant tradition dispensed with the plastic element that so easily leads the believer to worldly associations and unfolded through meditation and preaching.

COLOPHON

Taking into account the foregoing analysis, it could seem almost impossible to vindicate the existence of a consistent tradition of the religious image that shuns the risks that whatever visual representation of divinity implicates, bar perhaps the Eastern reiteration of some schematic motifs that are however alien to the theological and philosophical ground of the Western art that from the thirteenth-century onwards tried to evince the dual nature of Christ and to vindicate the potency of man for overcoming his stints and proclivity so as to attain a full union with God.²⁶ This was feasible thanks to the existence of a natural law that grounded the metaphysical continuity of creation and endowed the image with the thaumaturgic strength that has to date been the main sense thereof for the fervent believer that impetrates help from God and that disregards without further ado the beauty of the image provided that it embodies the celestial power that he wants in his tribulation. Now, after the fall of the natural law as a consequence of the intellectual revolution of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries,²⁷ the image remains either an artwork that is only for

an aesthetical delectation or a supernatural object whereto the believer resorts independently of its real aspect; in other words, for whom really takes the image for the presence of God, which is the only sense that matters in these questions, the image itself is simultaneously absolute and dispensable, a holy badge that deserves the utmost respect and a representation whose aspect is practically unimportant bar the general resemblance, which carries us back to the very reiterative nature of the Eastern icon or, also, to the symbolism that allows to recognize the heathen idol, two options that the Renaissance rejected on behalf of attaining a deeper communication of man with God through the visual manifestation of the humanity of Christ and of the intercommunication existing between heaven and earth. Thereat, the sole possibility of vindicating the religious image lies oddly enough in its furnishing the believer with a moral fortitude, not in its acting in his favour beyond the regular course of nature. *Vale.*

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NOTES

¹ The “Copernican revolution” that Kant sets out in the foreword to the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (B XVI) implies that the knowledge of whatever object does not hinge upon the nature thereof but upon the faculties of the subject, which have in consequence to be considered the transcendental ground of experience. This is in sooth the final formal determination of the subjectivism that the Enlightenment had pursued practically in every plane of experience, above all on the aesthetical one. Regarding this issue, vide the classical work of Cassirer, Ernest. *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, tr. R. Pettergrove (Princeton: PUP, 1968), p. 37 and ff., and the introduction to Dabney Townsend (ed.), *Eighteenth-Century British Aesthetics* (New York: Baywood, 1999), pp. 1–31.

² It is meaningful that Nietzsche distinguishes between the personality of Christ and the historic development of Christianity, and that whereas he rejects violently the latter, he still emphasizes the psychological interest of the former. Vide *The Antichrist*, section 27 and ff., and the last section of *Ecce Homo*, whose title harbingers doubtlessly the final confrontation of Nietzsche with Christ.

³ *Lectures on Aesthetics*, 2 vv., Spanish ed. and trans. Raúl Gabas, History/Science/Society 215 and 227 (Barcelona: Península, 1991), Vol. II, pp. 96–97.

⁴ Reason why Hegel considers it the philosophical ground of Western Art (Ibid., pp. 14–20).

⁵ On the philosophical concept of symbol and its religious importance, vide Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays*, tr. R. Bernasconi (Cambridge: CUP, 1986), above all p. 140 and ff.

⁶ For an elucidation of the subject, vide the introduction to the following book: Galienne and Pierre Francastel, *El Retrato*, Spanish trans. Esther Alperín, Cuadernos Arte Cátedra 3, (Third Edition, Madrid: Cátedra, 1995), pp. 9–16.

⁷ *Republic*, book X, especially 595a–608b. It is meaningful that the Platonic condemnation of whatever link of religion with painting and poetry has from time to time been vindicated through

history (let us remember that iconoclasm flourished in the very bosom of the Eastern Empire) and that it harbingers (although anachronistically) the problem wherewith we deal in this paper.

⁸ A wonderful study of Piero's work is: Angelini, Alessandro. *Piero della Francesca* (Florence: Scala/Riverside, 1991).

⁹ On the import of the concept, vide the corresponding entry of the following work: Mora, José Ferrater. *Diccionario de Filosofía*, 4 vv. (Barcelona: Ariel, 1994), Vol. II, pp. 1764–1766.

¹⁰ This shows that the religious image partakes of the metaphysical vision that tried to endow man with a thaumaturgic potency to transmogrify nature, an aim that is very evident both in the bosom of the Presocratic thought and in the Renaissance natural philosophy. Concerning this, vide the rich bibliography that appears in Conrado Eggers Lan (ed.), *Los Filósofos Presocráticos*, 3 vv., trans. Conrado Eggers Lan y Victoria E. Juliá, Biblioteca Clásica Gredos 12, 24 y 28 (Madrid: Gredos, 1978). Regarding the Renaissance approach to the subject, vide Rafael Argullol, *El Quattrocento. Arte y Cultura del Renacimiento Italiano*, BDT, 14 (Second Edition., Barcelona: Montesinos, 1988).

¹¹ This all-embracing unity of the sundry planes of divine and human action tallies with the metaphysical unity of reality that Foucault figures out in the second chapter of *Les Mots et les Choses. Une Archéologie des Sciences Humaines* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966).

¹² This difference between the two senses of religion, that we shall retake in the colophon of this paper, was firstly and most brilliantly set out by Kant in *Religion Within the Bounds of Mere Reason*, wherein the philosopher reduces the domain of religion to the moral realm and rejects earnestly whatever dogmatic learning thereof. Vide the edition of the work by Wood, Allen, and de Giovanni, George. tr. Allen Wood (Cambridge: CUP, 1998).

¹³ On this subject, vide my article “El Áureo Andrógino: un Acercamiento a la Poética de Miguel Ángel” in María Noel Lapoujade (Comp.), *Imagen, Signo y Símbolo. Segundo Coloquio Internacional de Estética* (Puebla: BUAP, 2000), pp. 403–415.

¹⁴ Gombrich, Vide E. H., *The Story of Art* (15th Edition, London: Phaedon, 1989), p. 350 and ff.

¹⁵ This was the kernel of Nietzsche's attack against Christianity that he undertook both in the works mentioned in the note two and in the first treatise of the *Genealogy of Morals*, wherein he opposes the healthy bellicosity of the warrior to the poisonous weakness of the priest.

¹⁶ This is the insurmountable limit of the human reason according to Saint Thomas Aquinas. Vide the introductory section of the *Summa Theologica*, 5 vv., ed. and trans. by Dominican friars (New York: Benziger, 1948), Vol. I, pp. 1–14.

¹⁷ I deal with the “interiority” inherent to some versions of Christian thought that stem from Saint Augustine in my article “Sobre la Invención Agustiniense de la Interioridad y la Reducción de lo Ético a lo Psicológico y Moral,” in *Imprescindibles de la Ética y la Política (Siglo V A.C.—Siglo XIX D.C.)*, ed. Alberto Constante and Leticia Flores Farfán. (Mexico: UNAM, 2006), pp. 83–106.

¹⁸ This insistence on the concrete, literally carnal nature of Christ is not only Grünewald's; far from that, it defines as a whole the artistic religious production of the Renaissance, as Leo Steinberg shows with an outright argumentation in *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion* (2nd Edition, Chicago: UCP, 1983).

¹⁹ On this issue, vide Gombrich, E. H., op. cit., pp. 133 and ff.

²⁰ Both Nietzsche (*The Birth of Tragedy*) and Heidegger (*Introduction to Metaphysics*) have brought to light from very different ontological slants the momentous difference that exists between the Pre-Platonic conception of death and the function that it plays thanks to the metaphysical affirmation of an afterlife that Christianity took to its fullest expression.

²¹ Concerning this, it is very useful the following book: Halkin, Léon E., *Érasme et l'Humanisme Chrétien* (Paris: EU, 1969). Another source for the same issue is the article of mine quoted in the note 13.

²² It is widely known that as a consequence of the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation the production of religious images was strictly supervised and most artists were compelled to limit their own imaginativeness so as to convince the powerful clerical authorities of the orthodoxy and convenience of their work. Among the sundry instances of the conflict of the artists and the clerical patrons I just mention two: Correggio should face the menace of destroying the wonderful *Assumption of the Virgin* that he painted on the vault of Parma's Cathedral, which some canons considered to be too offensive because it showed Christ, the Virgin and the Heavenly Host in a very odd position [Lucia Fornari Schianchi, *Correggio* (Florence: Scala/Riverside, 1994), pp. 54–62.], while Caravaggio had to rework his *Saint Matthew and the Angel* because of a similar situation [Giorgio Bonsanti, *Caravaggio* (Florence: Scala/Riverside, 1984), pp. 30–32].

²³ In addition to the Platonic source, which we have mentioned in the note 7, a very useful book on the subject is: Panofsky, Erwin. *Meaning in the Visual Arts*. (Chicago: UCP, 1982).

²⁴ On this subject, vide: Eagleton, Terry. *Sweet Violence. The Idea of the Tragic*. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003). Contrary to Nietzsche and to what he called the metaphysical theory of tragedy, Eagleton underlines the questionability of a vision of existence that delivers man to fate and to a transcendent social order.

²⁵ *In Painting and Experience Fifteenth-Century Italy. A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style* (2nd Edition, Oxford: OUP, 1988), Michael Baxandall shows downright how Renaissance painting compels the beholder more often than not to be very learned so as to grasp the import of a determined work, even when it describes scenes of the Sacred History that everyone would in principle recognize, such as the annunciation or the crucifixion.

²⁶ On this, vide the first chapter of the book mentioned in the note 23.

²⁷ Vide the corresponding chapters of the following book: Baumer, Franklin L., *Modern European Thought: Continuity and Change in Ideas, 1600–1950*. (New York: YUP, 1977).

SECTION III
ART AND TECHNE

CREATION VS. TECHNE: THE INNER CONFLICT
OF ART

ABSTRACT

Three foundational concepts can be extracted from the modern idea of “art”: the ancient concept of “*techne*” (becoming the corner stone to the history of the notion of “art,” representing skillful manual labor and indicating a specific knowledge), the concept of “creation” (as a result of the Renaissance synthesis), and the “institution” or “system” of “arts” as a modern social construct (based on the eighteenth century developments). In this paper I address the first two concepts as opposite concepts that, despite their contrast, became incorporated into the modern idea of “art.” The conflict between “*techne*” and “creation” manifests itself historically in the gradual disappearance of “*techne*” and its relevance to the practice of modern art while, conversely, the rise of “creation” becomes the relevant descriptor of the artistic act. The only solution to the inner conflict on which the modern concept of “art” is based involves the disappearance of particular art practices producing material artworks (objects). Thus, the concept of art “creation” becomes a subversive principle within the field of “art,” leading to the overcoming of all aspects of “*techne*” concept, in order to enable “full” actualization of “creation” as a metaphysical and axiological category.

In this paper I examine relations between “*techne*” and “creation” as concepts that constitute our modern understanding of the “visual fine arts.” My intention here is to show: (1) that there is a collision between the concepts of “*techne*” and “creation” and (2) that manifestations of this collision can be seen in the history of art, since these concepts became incorporated in the modern idea of “art.”

If we consult contemporary dictionaries of the English language in search for the meaning of the word “art,” we find many different definitions. If we look only at the entries that are related to what we call “fine arts” (and set aside meanings such as “liberal arts” or “sciences”), we see that the contemporary understanding of “art” as recorded by modern dictionaries can be summarized by three main categories:

1. Skill; skilled workmanship or workmanship as distinguished from nature; craftsmanship; practice; knowledge; conscious use of skill in production of an aesthetic object.¹
2. Creativity; creative activity; imagination; creative or imaginative power and resource; creative skill and imagination.²
3. Various branches or disciplines of the arts; the study of particular arts or human creativity; aesthetic principles, field, genre and category of art; fine arts as a class; the practice of exhibiting art products.³

TECHNE

The first meaning of the word “art” indicated above is based on the ancient (Greek) concept of τέχνη (*techne*), which represents the earliest stage of the development of our modern (western) understanding of visual art. Although the content of the word “art” (*ars* in Latin) has permanently been changed over the course of history, it has never lost this original meaning, even in our modern perception, as dictionary definitions show.

Techne explains not only how the ancient Greeks looked upon different occupations, such as sculptors, painters, craftsmen, stonemasons, etc., but also shows the way in which they understood the world and human existence in it. The Greek world (“cosmos”) was not “created” but rather formed from pre-existing material (“chaos”).⁴ Greek “cosmos” (order) is not a state of freedom but rather a necessity that both gods and human beings face. The way in which “cosmos” exists implies that neither gods nor humans are ontologically free from it.⁵ William Hasker clarifies this point, relating it to Plato’s Demiurge:

“The Demiurge is not ontologically supreme, but clearly is subordinate to the Forms. The good intentions of the Demiurge are limited and often frustrated by the recalcitrant matter with which he must work, but which he had no part in creating.”⁶

Since gods are not ontologically free from the world (cosmos) they are not able to perform a genuine act of creation, which means that they can be characterized as “demiurges,” i.e. those who reshape pre-given material rather than those who “create” it. Consequently, the human activity in the world in the Greek model is limited to *techne*, that is to *reshaping* the material already given by nature (first to produce something useful and then something beautiful too), which is a task that requires knowledge and skill to accomplish.⁷

CREATION

The concept of “creation” was associated with “art” much later. “Creation” or “creative activity” as a western concept has its roots in the Judeo-Christian idea

of “creation out of nothing” (ex nihilo).⁸ In contrast to the ancient Demiurge, the Christian God creates the world “out of nothing” and is free from any constraints or pre-giveness.⁹ Although “creation” in its absolute meaning was the concept associated primarily with the Divine creation “ex nihilo,” from the very beginnings of Christian thought creativity was also perceived as a human capacity (together with freedom or rationality).¹⁰ Since the human being was created in the “image and likeness of God” (Gen 1: pp. 26–27), which is exclusively the privilege of the human being among all creatures, he/she also possesses the capacity of freedom and creation as human abilities for overcoming the boundaries of the created world.¹¹

Human capacity for creation was first recognized in language use—in poetry and literature—human activities that can be encompassed by the collective term “word based production.” This is not a surprise if we keep in mind close relations between the word and God in Christianity: God creates by “saying” (Gen 1: pp. 3–29) and God is identified with the “Word” (Jn 1:1). Consequently the concept of the “author” as someone who *creates with words*, was used to address both God in his creative capacities and man in his act of (word based) creation.¹² *Creation*, however, was not a concept that included the artist, who was still *technites*—performing *techne*.

TECHNE—CREATION

It was necessary to wait until the Renaissance to connect the concept of “creation,” as the human capacity of producing something new and original, which has never existed before, with visual arts. This transformation did not happen at once but represents rather a longer evolution, the origins of which can be traced back to this period. The change is most clearly visible in the “new type” of the artist that began to emerge.¹³ In this new paradigm, painters, sculptors and architects are not perceived only as craftsmen but as men who perform “spiritual,” “intellectual” and “creative” activities, possessing even “divine powers.”¹⁴ This process of adopting *creation* into the concept of art (while preserving *techne* as well, which is manifested primarily in looking for “perfection” of artistic execution and an imperative to imitate nature) was basically the process of merging the concept of the “author” and his capacities with the concept of the visual artist, which resulted in a new concept of “artist as author.”¹⁵ Although it was only the beginning of this new meaning of art (*techne* + *creation*), the contrast between *techne* and *creation* had already appeared. Thus, Leonardo, one of the greatest “masters” of Renaissance art, became more interested in conceptual problems, the solutions of which he attempted to find in paintings rather than in skilled, manual and physical aspects of labor. Once he solved a problem, he had no interest in doing the “technical” side of the

work, which resulted in many unfinished works. This contradiction of creative work in the visual arts records Vasari too, ascribing to Leonardo the words that “men of genius are sometimes producing most when they seem least to labor, for their minds are then occupied in the shaping of those conceptions to which they afterward give form.”¹⁶

According to Michael Wetzel, this Renaissance contribution to the new (expanded) understanding of the concept of art became fully recognized in eighteenth century.¹⁷ During the middle and second half of the eighteenth century, artists were generally perceived as possessing creative capacities, freedom, imagination, originality or ingeniousness.¹⁸ The artist became a “creative spirit” or “genius,”¹⁹ someone whose “spiritual,” “free” and “creative” capacities differentiate him from the craftsman.²⁰ This change was parallel to the final split between the “fine arts” and “crafts” that took place in eighteenth century, which marks the formation of the “modern system of arts,” as Oscar Kristeller calls it.²¹ This was the time of yet another (third) rising meaning of art, as acknowledged in the beginning of this paper—art as “institution” or social construct.²² Thus, the concept of “art” began to denote all three things together.

The eighteenth century also brought the first strong indication of a sharp contrast between *techne* and *creation* as concepts that were already incorporated into the concept of art at that time. This was through seemingly a paradoxical idea of the “artist without work” that Michael Wetzel uses as a paradigmatic image of the new artist ideal:

“Zusammen mit der säkularisierenden Theodizee-Deutung als authentische Auslegung der unvollendeten Schöpfung durch das Subjekt kommt hierin die im Sturm und Drang rezipierte spinozistische Dynamisierung der natura naturata als natura naturans in einer Weise zur Geltung, für die ‘der absolute Vorrang der Autorindividualität vor ihrem Werk’ im Ideal des ‘Künstlers ohne Werk’ gipfelt. Die Vorstellung vom melancholisch, in reiner Kontemplation befangenen, untätigen Künstler hat ihren epochalen Ausdruck in der Figur des Werther gefunden, der sich nie als ‘größerer Maler’ empfindet, als wenn er keinen Strich hervorbringt; eine Referenz auf rein geistiges Schaffen ohne handwerklichen Anteil, wie sie kurz zuvor schon Lessing in der *Emilia Galotti* als Ideal eines ‘Raffael ohne Hände’ gebraucht. . .”²³

Accentuation of “pure spiritual creation” without the involvement of “manual labor” in the field of visual arts, becomes from this moment a topic that will reappear periodically throughout the modern history of art. This “inner conflict” of art, which comes from an inability to fully connect *creation* with manual, skilled work, is manifested in its future development through five phases:

- I Accentuation of the artist's personal capacities of creation, freedom, ingenuity, originality and imagination, and, consequently, a decrease in comprehending the significance of skilled and manual work for the condition of art;
- II A claim for the "autonomy" of art as a field free from any preconditions and utilitarian ends, in which "pure" artistic creation becomes the central motif;
- III Disappearance of the mimetic approach as the universal artistic methodology;
- IV Disappearance of manual and skilled labor in the production of art;
- V Disappearance of artwork as material object;
- VI Disappearance of the artist and "emptiness" as art.

I

In further developments, both art practice and theory continued in significant part to claim freedom and creativity as the artist's capacities. Romanticism brings a specific concept of the artist that is based on the accentuation of the subjectivity and autonomy of the artistic work and of the artist's personality, while concepts such as genius, creation, inspiration, imagination and freedom are inherited from earlier times.²⁴ These concepts stress the "non-technical" (manual) qualities of the artist's work as essential. Michael Wetzel even observes that the very understanding of the (visual) artist was identified with the author concept, in terms of his capacities and the features of his art.²⁵ Despite the character of the categories by which the artist and his art were described in this time, it was only the first step in the modern project of liberating art from its *techne*-components.

II

Another symptom of the decline of *techne* aspects in the field of visual arts can be found in the nineteenth century in the *l'art pour l'art* idea. Promoters of *l'art pour l'art* claim, first of all, the "autonomy" of art. This "autonomy," which defines art as a specific field of human creation and freedom that should not serve any other end, will become the most influential idea in modern art, and even "the most important project" of the whole modern art, in Filiberto Menna's view.²⁶ In the field of the visual arts, *l'art pour l'art* has come to mean not only liberation of art from its social (bourgeois) or religious services, but liberation from the mimetic definition of art as well. Art is no longer considered as something that necessarily "represents" something else, or a field of human

activity whose basic function is the imitation of a certain motif or illustration of a narrative, but as something that has its own “content.” If we consider this idea in a historical perspective, we are able to see that mimesis as both artistic theory and practical methodology has been incorporated into the concept of *techne* from its very beginning. Therefore, rejection of the mimetic definition of art means also an implicit negation of *techne* as the foundation of art. Painters such as Whistler searched for ways of implementing this doctrine. In his “Nocturnes,” he comes to the edge of abstraction, negating not only the significance of a narrative represented in a painting, but also the significance of the mimetic approach generally.²⁷ Reciprocally, the visual phenomena and their arrangement on the canvas become increasingly significant. Thus, the exploration of “art’s own means” and artistic personal capacities come to occupy the whole understanding of the concept of art, while *techne* aspects, via negation of mimesis, become marginalized.

The whole Symbolist project can also be seen as a quest for freedom and creation outside the mimetic boundaries of art.²⁸ The artist’s creation is even compared to God’s creation, again on the basis of stressing the non-*techne* components of art.²⁹

III

By the end of nineteenth and during the early twentieth century, “art’s own means” became one of the most important preoccupations of artists as well as of thinkers on art. With his “Nocturne” canvases, Whistler showed the path that led art practice into complete rejection of the mimetic approach in the visual arts, including the appearance of any recognizable forms. The most remarkable experiments in this sense were those of Vasilij Kandinsky, who turned his work into “abstract,” non-figurative and non-mimetic art. Even more interesting is the case of Kazimir Malevich, whose strategy was to expel all the constraining factors from the field of art, so that “pure” creation could be reached. To achieve this aim, the first confrontation was with the sphere of objects and the mimetic understanding of art.³⁰ To get to “absolute” or “endless” freedom and creation,³¹ Malevich was forced to take a further step, and to reduce his art to the logical minimum of the phenomenal manifestation of a painting—to an almost totally empty canvas, or “white on white.”³²

However, even this was not enough, since the canvas, although abstract and thus non-mimetic, has still been too closely tied to its *techne* heritage: after all, it was still a material object that the artist painted with his hand. It was necessary to reduce another remaining aspect of *techne*: the manual execution of a piece. Although this will be the strategy of future art, Malevich foresaw it in his own work. He stopped painting for a couple of years, soon after his

most important Suprematist works were made (1923–1927). Such a strategy can be understood as reaching the point of “freedom” and “creation” in art. To demonstrate and further explain them, Malevich continued to deal with art, not as painter but rather as writer on art.

IV

The emancipation of the artist from manual and skilled work can be seen in the example of Marcel Duchamp’s “ready-mades.” For the first time, artistic creation and creativity had nothing to do with the manual execution or physical labor of the artist. On the contrary, in this case creation consists in a “decision” to “make” art.³³ Therefore, everything can “mystically” be transformed from non-art into art by virtue of the artist’s decision, which is a genuine act of creation not bound to anything. It can also be said that material objects are merely a way by which artistic creation becomes visible, while the creation itself has nothing to do with objects. The artist here creates in a way very similar to God’s creation. It is enough for him to “say” *let it be* art, and anything becomes art.

Although Duchamp’s art significantly transcends *techne* aspects of art, such as mimesis, skill and manual labor, it is still connected with material objects. Artistic objects are not made by the artist, their physical characteristics are also not a limiting factor for the artist’s creation, but they are a material manifestation of creation, which comes out of the artist’s mind.

Reduction of this final remaining (material) aspect of the *techne* concept in the field of art was the subject of the next phase, generally called the “dematerialization” of art.

V

Liberation of art from every possible *techne*-aspect, for the sake of free creation, arrived definitively with conceptual art. Joseph Kosuth claims that “objects are conceptually irrelevant to the condition of art.”³⁴ Consequently, any skilled work which would transform the pre-existent material, including any arrangement of perceptible (visual) elements within the artistic media, is for Joseph Kosuth a “pure exercise in aesthetics” that has nothing to do with art. It is clear that this rejection of all visual elements is also the rejection of the entire visual art tradition. But here precisely the whole contrast between *techne* concept and *creation* becomes visible, since the whole history of art as a history of *techne*-art has to be rejected in order to enable the emergence of *creation*-art history. To be able to artistically create means for Kosuth to lay aside everything that can be connected with *techne*.

Another sign of “dematerialization” are art practices such as performances, actions or happenings that do not use any material objects or skilled (manual) execution to *create* art. Artists try rather to “perform” art which consists of bodily actions, interactions between human beings and their surroundings, and among living human beings themselves. *Techne* is negated by the very fact that a “piece” is removed and replaced by a “process” or “something “happening” among the persons involved.

VI

The final stage of reduction of all *techne*-aspects that prevented art from full manifestation as “free creation,” can be seen in the *absence of the artist’s body* from art and complete *emptiness* as art.

Keith Arnatt performed his “Self-Burial” in 1969, a “work” in which the artist gradually disappears under the ground level until he becomes completely invisible. An even more radical example is Andy Warhol’s “Invisible Sculpture” of 1985. This “work” consists literally in “nothing.” He stood in a corner in the club “Area” in New York, and then he moved away. It is not the action that produces a work, but rather this “emptiness” relieved of any presence as such, or, in other words, this “nothing” out of which art meaning and creation appear.

Yves Klein was the most important figure in the second half of the twentieth century who pointed to emptiness as the “material” of art production. With his “The Void” exhibition (Iris Clert gallery, Paris, 1958), Klein exhibited *nothing* whatsoever as art. In this exhibit, everything is removed: any manifestation of mimesis, manual or skilled labor, artworks as objects, the artist. Complete absence becomes the “zero” point of creation, the final logical consequence of the expulsion of *techne* from art. Art as *techne* ends in nothingness, so nothing now becomes the pre-condition of artistic creation. The parallel to God’s creation is remarkable. In order to be able to create unconditionally, the artist had to come to “nihil” which alone can guarantee a free and genuine act of creation. But unlike God’s creation, this reduction of art to nothing goes hand in hand with the vanishing of the artist, i.e. of the creator who is supposed to perform the creation.

CONCLUSION

The concepts of *creation* and *techne* are two opposing concepts associated with art. Their collision can be traced in the history of art through approximately six phases of gradual disappearance of the various aspects of *techne*. This

process is not the only one that can be seen in the development of modern art. There were also number of other, even opposite processes in the history of modern art (such as revival of the “crafts,” “skilled,” “technical” and “industrial” approaches to the arts during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries). But this process I consider one of the most important, if not the crucial process in the course of modern art history. I think that this process is precisely what led art into its “death,” as perceived in contemporary art discourses.³⁵ However, instead of identifying one “death,” when one looks at this process as a process of historical actualization of different layers of meanings incorporated into the concept of art, art potentially becomes the subject of various “deaths” and “resurrections.” The “deaths” and “resurrections” of art can be seen in a slow separation of the three components that formed our modern understanding of “art.” We can, thus, speak of “art” as “art-skill,” based on the remaining aspects of its original meaning. On the other hand, with “art-creation” the “liberated” concept of art can be addressed—the concept which overcomes the scope traditionally known as art. Finally, we can also speak of “art-market” as a concept which includes all important institutions that utilize “art” (together with particular works) as goods. Separation of one aspect of art from the general concept represents the “death” of other components. Thus, *Kunstgeschichte* becomes the *Kunstgericht* via constant attempts to liberate the “art” concept from its roots that lie in the field of necessity. In our modern perception, as long as “art” is, at least partially, *techne*, it cannot fully be *creation*. So if “art” ceases to have any physical manifestation, it is not necessarily in order to become a “theory” or a social construct, but possibly to try to attain freedom from any pre-given materials or conditions.

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NOTES

¹ See ART in I—*Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus*. (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 5; II—*Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*. (6th Edition, Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), I 3, II 6, III; III—*Webster’s New Explorer College Dictionary* (Springfield: Federal Street Press, 2003) • syn SKILL, CRAFT; IV—*Oxford Dictionary of English*. (2nd Edition, Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 1; V—*Random House Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary*. (2nd Edition, New York: Random House, 2001), 5, 9, 12; VI—*Webster’s Ninth Collegiate Dictionary*. (Springfield: Merriam-Webster INC., 1990), 3, 4a; VII—*The Oxford English Dictionary*. (2nd Edition, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 5, 6, 19b, c; VIII—*Webster’s New World Dictionary of American English*. (Cleveland/New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988) 2.

² Ibid. I—1, 3; III—● syn ART; IV—1; VI—4a; VIII—1, 5, 6, 7.

³ III—2, 5; IV—1, 2, 3; V—2, 3, 4; VI—4b; VIII—11-2.

⁴ Explaining the meaning of these concepts in the context of ancient Greek thought and etymology of the word, Bianca Theisen notes the following understandings of “chaos” as basic ones: “Die stoische Ableitung des Wortes ‚chaos‘ von cheō (gießen) impliziert über die Konnotation des Fließenden (Wasser) eine stoffliche Ungeschiedenheit und zielt auf einen Begriff der Vermischung, aus der sich die Elemente dann ausdifferenzieren. (...) Daß es Leeres gebe und damit einen Raum, der keine Körper enthalte und also etwas von ihnen Unabhängiges und Selbständiges sein müße, während umgekehrt alle Körper nur in einem Raum denkbar seien, sieht Aristoteles durch Hesiod bestätigt, der mit dem Chaos den ‚leeren Abgrund‘ als Erstes setze und damit anzeige, daß alles Seiende sich nur in einem Raum ausdifferenziere, der Raum also ‚allem vorgeordnet‘ sei.” See in Bianca Theisen, “Chaos und Kosmos,” in *Ästhetische Grundbegriffe*, ed. Karlheinz Barck. (Stuttgart/Weimar: Verlag J. B. Metzler, 2000), Vol. 1, p. 753.

⁵ The concept of “ontological freedom” I use here in the same meaning in which the coinage appears by John Zizioulas. In his study *Being as Communion*, John Zizioulas states that the ancient understanding of “cosmos” and “chaos,” both in a philosophical and in a broader cultural setting, has direct implications towards the concept of freedom. He also argues that “ontological freedom” is unthinkable in the Greek world, and that the direct repercussion of the very concept of “cosmos” is the lack of the idea of freedom from the pre-existent material and absence of the idea of creation as a unique “bringing into being.” See Zizioulas, John. *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church*. (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1985), pp. 27–33.

⁶ Hasker, William. “Creation and Conservation,” in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward Craig. (London/New York: Routledge, 1998), p. 695. It might seem that the only exception from this rule is the poetry, or poetic (or poietic) activities that are embraced by the Greek concept of ποίησις (poiesis) and the verb ποιεῖν (poiein). Although this concept was later used to address the Christian concept of “creation” (compare to Septuagint “ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποιήσεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν,” Gen 1:1), there is not any clear evidence that it originally implied creation in the absolute meaning of the word. The concept ποιεω can be translated as “to make,” “to produce,” “to perform,” “to work,” “to manufacture,” “to execute” etc. (Compare to *Lexikon des Frühgriechischen Epos*, ed. Bruno Snell (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004), Vol. 3, pp. 1313-1317; Passow, Franz. *Handwörterbuch der griechischen Sprache*. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1970), Vol. 2, pp. 973-977; Majnarić, N., Gorski, O., *Grč ko-hrvatski rječnik*, Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1960, 455. *A Greek-English Lexicon* from 1968, explains the same concept as “used in two general senses, *make* and *do*”-*A Greek-English Lexicon*, ed. Henry George Liddell. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 1427. This lexicon further interprets the concept as “create, bring into existence” (ibid., p. 1428, Section A 2), but this “creation,” from the context in which it appears, implies more “to bear” or “bring something into being by birth” than creation as such. N. Majnarić and O. Gorski warn that the concept ποίησις was also used in the meaning “to adopt” a son for instance, i.e. to give him new “being” or new “birth” (compare to N. Majnarić and O. Gorski, ibid.). In the classical period the noun is used to describe the activity of a poet, who writes or tells his poetry by “divine madness,” as Plato puts it. Therefore, it is not a concept that describes genuine creation as such, but rather something that comes from Muses and gods who tell the poet or orator what to express. So, despite the difference in the meaning between *poiesis* and *techne*, there is no reason to understand any of them as implying a genuine act of “bringing something into being.”

⁷ Compare to the analyses of the *techne* concept by Kockelmans, Joseph J., *Heidegger on Art and Art Works*. (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1985), p. 6; and Bošnjak, Branko. “Techne

als Erfahrung der menschlichen Existenz: Aristoteles—Marx—Heidegger,” in *Kunst und Technik: Gedächtnisschrift zum 100. Geburtstag von Martin Heidegger*, ed. Walter Biemel and Friedrich-Wilhelm v. Herrmann. (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1989), pp. 94–96.

⁸ The first explicit mentioning of creation “ex nihilo” in the Bible we find in the second book of Maccabees (“...look upon heaven and earth, and all that is in them: and consider that God made everything out of nothing” 2 Macc 7:28).

⁹ Both Bianca Theisen and William Hasker note this contrast between the ancient understanding of the world as basically static and not-created and the Christian idea of the world as being created by God: “In der christlichen Theologie verbinden sich die antiken Chaosvorstellungen mit den biblischen des Tohuwabohu; da die kosmologische Vorstellung einer Schöpfung aus dem Chaos jedoch mit dem christlichen Schöpfergott unvereinbar ist, wird der emergente Aspekt des kosmogonischen Chaosbegriffs gestrichen und durch die Vorstellung einer Schöpfung aus Nichts mit ihren theologischen Folgeproblemen ersetzt”. Bianca Theisen, op. cit., p. 754; “On the contrary, creation ex nihilo means precisely that there is no pre-existing ‘stuff’ whatsoever—that things have come to exist solely because of the Word and creative power of God.” William Hasker, op. cit., p. 696.

¹⁰ Compare to Georges Florovsky’s analysis of the human creative capacities in respect to the early patristic theology in Florovsky, Georges. *The Eastern Fathers of the Fourth Century (The Collected Works)*, ed. Richard S. Haugh. (Belmont: Nordland Pub. Co., 1987), Vol. VII, pp. 135–166. See also Zizioulas, John. “Human Capacity and Incapacity, a Theological Exploration of Personhood,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* (1975), Vol. 28, pp. 401–448; and Džalto, Davor. *The Role of the Artist in Self-Referent Art*. (Berlin: Dissertation.de, 2007), pp. 29–33.

¹¹ For further explanation of the human capacity of freedom in early Christian theology, see Zizioulas, John. *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church*, ibid, pp. 27–35.

¹² Donald E. Pease explains the medieval notion of the “author” as implying “initiative, inventiveness, autonomy, creativity, authority and originality— see Pease, Donald E., “Author,” in *Authorship: From Plato to the Postmodern*, ed. Seán Burke. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), p. 263. Creation and creativity are the concepts that Oswald Bayer also recognizes as attributes of the “author,” being related primarily to “God as Author,” but also to the “writer” or “poet” as terms that can be attributed, and in fact were attributed, both to God and to human beings—see Bayer, Oswald. *Gott als Autor: zu einer poetologischen Theologie*. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), pp. 2–3. According to the same author, the identification between God’s and human creative capacities can be established if we think of God as “Der Poet der Welt.” God does not simply create but his creation is free and performed with words “Als ‚Poet‘ ist Gott Schöpfer und Erzähler zugleich; et tut, was er sagt, und sagt, was er tut.” (Oswald Bayer, ibid, p. 30). For further investigation of the concept see Steiner, George. *Grammars of Creation*. (London: Faber and Faber, 2001) and Bennett, Andrew, *The Author*. (London/New York: Routledge, 2005).

¹³ Rudolf and Margot Wittkower call it, for example, the “new ideal of the artist”—see Rudolf and Margot Wittkower, *Born Under Saturn—The Character and Conduct of Artists: A Documented History from Antiquity to the French Revolution*. (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1963), pp. 14–16. See also: Badt, Kurt. *Kunsttheoretische Versuche*, (Köln: M. DuMont Schauberg, 1968), pp. 39–95; Baker, Emma, Webb, Nick and Woods, Kim. “Historical Introduction: the Idea of the Artist,” in *The Changing Status of the Artist*, ed. Emma Baker. (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 7.

¹⁴ Vasari, for instance, speaks of Leonardo’s ability to “create in his imagination”—see Vasari, *Lives of the Artists, Biographies of the Most Eminent Architects, Painters and Sculptors of Italy*, ed. Betty Burroughs. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946), p. 192. On many places Vasari refers

to the Renaissance artists as having “divine powers.” Moshe Barasch also sees the capacity of creation (“the ability to produce a work of art that has not existed before”) in the field of visual art as the crucial concept of the Renaissance. See Barash, Moshe. *Theories of Art, From Plato to Winckelmann*. (New York/London: New York University Press, 1985), pp. 174–190.

¹⁵ In my study *The Role of the Artist in Self-Referent Art*, I analyze the concepts of “freedom” and “creation” as concepts that became associated with the artist through connecting the labor of the visual artist with the “word-based” production in the Renaissance period. That enabled new perception of the artist I called “artist as author” (see Džalto, Davor, *ibid.*, pp. 23–27).

¹⁶ Vasari, *ibid.* The question about Leonardo’s unfinished paintings Lazar is also raised by Trifunović, whose answer points to the contrast between abstract, intellectual, spiritual activities and manual labor: “Here, in the beginning of Leonardo’s art we can observe paintings left unfinished, as the very feature of his work. Why did he do that? . . . A painting for him was finished. . . when all problems in it were clearly fixed. Further work on it and completion were merely a matter of technique and patience.” Trifunović, Lazar. *Leonardo da Vinci* (Belgrade: Knjiga za nas, 1964), p. 10.

¹⁷ “Andererseits etabliert sich erst im 18. Jh. der Begriff des Künstlers als Freischaffender im allgemeinen Sprachgebrauch nicht nur gegenüber dem Kunsthandwerker, sondern vor allem als Allgemeinbezeichnung für alle im Bereich der Kunstakademien Ausgebildeten bzw. Tätigen. Und wieder ist es das Modell des Dichters als geistiges Schöpfender, das für die ästhetische Begriffsbestimmung des Künstlers zum Vorbild wird.” Wetzels, Michael. “Autor/Künstler,” in *Ästhetische Grundbegriffe*, *ibid.*, p. 513.

¹⁸ Compare to Wetzels, *op. cit.*, pp. 510–519, and Kristeller, Paul O., “The Modern System of the Arts: A Study in the History of Aesthetics (II),” *Journal of the History of Ideas* Vol. 13, (1952), pp. 17–46.

¹⁹ “Deren ideologische Emanzipation vollzieht sich in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jh. für den Künstlertypus maßgeblich in drei Figuren eines Rollenwandels: als wissender Künstler oder ‚peinture philosophe‘, als schöpferischer Geist oder Genie, schließlich aber als bildender Künstler in dem von der deutschen Klassik geprägten universalen, für Text- und Bildmedien gültigen Sinne.” Wetzels, Michael., *op. cit.*, p. 515.

²⁰ “Diderot geht in seinen Enzyklopädie-Artikeln ‚artisan‘ und ‚artiste‘ zwar auch vom Unterschied des Künstlers als Inbegriff des geistig frei Schaffenden gegenüber der rein mechanischen Arbeit des Handwerkers aus, betont dabei aber zugleich den Bezug ihrer intellektuellen Fähigkeiten auf praktische Realisierung als Besonderheit derjenigen. . . .” Wetzels, Michael., *op. cit.*, pp. 515–516.

²¹ See Kristeller, Paul O., “The Modern System of the Arts (I),” *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. XII (January 1951), pp. 496–527., and “The Modern System of the Arts (II),” *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. XIII (January 1952), pp. 17–46.

²² By “art as institution” I mean the new social role of art that is entirely the product of modern (eighteenth century) synthesis. The new role includes the whole set of new institutions and occupations that deal with art, such as museums, galleries, art academies, new disciplines that analyze art, critiques and journals that all together select, define, preserve, exhibit, analyze, evaluate, publicize, advertise and sell art—compare to Shiner, Larry. *The Invention of Art* (Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), pp. 75–152. Thus, our modern understanding of the concept of “art,” does not include only skilled execution or creation, but also the whole “system” of arts or the “world” which deals with art, encompassing not just artworks or artist, but a whole set of other institutions and social roles. Full affirmation of this component of art came in the second half of twentieth century with the idea of “artworld” (Arthur Danto) and “institutional theory of art”

(George Dickey), where this aspect was theoretically strongly developed and used to denote art almost exclusively.

²³ Wetzel, Michael., op. cit., p. 516.

²⁴ Compare to Wetzel, op. cit., p. 520.

²⁵ “Dem widerspricht schon Delacroix, der als romantischer Gegenspieler zu der von Ingres repräsentierten klassizistischen David-Schule gewissermaßen zu einem ‚spiritus rector‘ für Balzacs Künstlernovelle wurde, indem er den Blick des Künstlers nach innen, auf die ‚imagination‘ lenkt, die der Ursprung ‚des tableaux, des images‘ sei. Er verweist damit zugleich auf die schon von Gautier betonte Orientierung des Künstlerbegriffs an der literarischen Autorfigur, die bei ihm zwar nicht—wie bei seinem jüngeren Zeitgenossen Eugène Fromentin—zu einer Doppelkarriere als Dichter und Maler geführt hat, aber immer wieder Überlegungen zum Verhältnis von Autor und Künstler in den Vordergrund rückt.” Wetzel, Michael., op. cit., 527.

²⁶ “Here we can observe that modern art, since the end of the last (nineteenth—D. Dž.) century, tries to build its own system of expressive means and to ascribe them specific autonomy.” Filiberto Menna, *Analytical Line of Modern Art*. (Belgrade: Clio, 2001), p. 14.

²⁷ In the context of symbolist art, Michelle Facos addresses the interrelation between the conceptual aspect of Whistler’s paintings and its repercussions on the formal structure of the canvas: “Whistler’s desire to evoke rather than to describe produced compositions that were radically simplified in form and color.” Facos, Michelle. *Symbolist Art in Context*. (Berkley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 2009), p. 55.

²⁸ Michelle Facos addresses this question, making parallels with literature and poetry: “Like their writer colleagues, Symbolist artists sought to clothe ideas in perceptible forms, while believing that art should direct viewers toward immaterial entities and metaphysical truths. The particular artist’s goals, instincts, and imagination determined the specific forms that these creations assumed.” Facos, *ibid.*, p. 13.

²⁹ “The assertion that an artist’s creative powers were divine, arrogant though it might seem, found a measure of support in contemporary scientific findings. The research of the Russian scientist Ivan Pavlov in the 1870s suggested that animals could draw logical conclusions about experiences and modify their behavior accordingly. Pavlov’s findings required the formulation of new criteria for differentiating human intellect from animal thought processes. Many researchers concluded that the decisive criterion was creativity rather than a capacity for rational thought, as had long been assumed. According to this hypothesis, because the greatest act of the Creator had been the genesis of the world, the artist who drew on his imagination to envision new worlds took full advantage of human potential. As Gauguin explained in an August 14, 1888, letter to Émile Schuffenecker: “think more about the act of creation than about the rest; it is the only way to ascend to God while imitating our divine master in the process of creation.” Facos, Michelle., *ibid.*, pp. 33–35.

³⁰ “In referring to non-objectivity, I merely wished to make it plain that Suprematism is not concerned with things, objects, etc., and more: non-objectivity in general has nothing to do with it. Suprematism is a definite system in accordance with which color has developed throughout the long course of culture. (. . .) The artist too must transform the color masses and create an artistic system, but he must not paint little pictures of fragrant roses since all this would be dead representation pointing back to life.” Malevich, Kasimir. “Non-Objective Art and Suprematism,” in *Art in Theory 1900–2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood. (Malden/Oxford/Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), pp. 292–293.

³¹ In his text “Non-Objective Art and Suprematism” Malevich refers to the artist as “free creator” (“an artist is under obligation to be a free creator”) who should achieve “absolute creation” (“Only in absolute creation will he acquire his right”). In the next line he explains the methodology by

which “freedom” and “absolute creation” can be reached: “And this is possible when we free all our art from vulgar subject-matter and teach our consciousness to see everything in nature not as real forms and objects, but as material masses from which forms must be made, which have nothing in common with nature.” Kasimir Malevich, “Non-Objective Art and Suprematism,” op. cit., p. 175.

³² “Our world of art has become new, non-objective, pure. Everything has vanished, there remains a mass of material, from which the new forms will be built.” Malevich, Kasimir. “From Cubism and Futurism to Suprematism: The New Realism in Painting,” in *Art in Theory 1900–2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ibid., p. 181. “I have ripped through the blue lampshade of the constraints of color. I have come out into the white. Follow me, comrade aviators. Swim into the abyss. (...) Swim in the white free abyss, infinity is before you.” Malevich, Kasimir. “Non-Objective Art and Suprematism,” op. cit., p. 293.

³³ “Weather Mr. Mutt with his own hands made the fountain or not has no importance. He CHOSE it. He took an ordinary article of life, placed it so that its useful significance disappeared under the new title and point of view—created a new thought for that object.” Duchamp, Marcel. “The Richard Mutt Case,” in *Art in Theory 1900–2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ibid., p. 252.

³⁴ Kosuth, Joseph. *Art After Philosophy and After: Collected Writings 1966–1990*. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), p. 18. *Art After Philosophy*, Ibid., p. 26.

³⁵ *The Death of Art*, ed. Berel Lang. (New York: Haven Publishers, 1984); Belting, Hans. *Das Ende der Kunstgeschichte?*. (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1983); Danto, Arthur. *After the End of Art: Contemporary Art and the Pale of History*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

VINCENT VAN GOGH'S *IRISES*: VENTURING UPON
DIZZY HEIGHTS

They all have an intensity of color you have not attained before... and while others do violence to the form in order to pursue symbolic ideas, I see that you have achieved that in many of your canvases by conveying the quintessence of your thought about nature and living beings, which, you feel, are so closely bound up with them.

—Theo Van Gogh, letter on *Irises*¹

A small town surrounded by countryside filled with yellow and purple flowers—you can imagine, very much a Japanese dream

—Vincent Van Gogh, letter on *Field with Flowers near Arles*²

ABSTRACT

Vincent Van Gogh's still life floral paintings seem to explore the place of empty space and branches and floral stalks in an unconscious indebtedness to Japanese painting values. Van Gogh's reliance on, particularly, Japanese woodblock art, such as his "*Bridge in the Rain (after Hiroshige)*," is well-known. His "*Almond Blossom*," however, is simply comprised of the tops of blossoming branches against a vast blue sky and reflects, in essence, nothing so much as the oriental aesthetics of floral studies where, for example, a section of bamboo stalk surrounded by empty space comprises a painting. His "*Sprig of Flowering Almond in a Glass*" is another example. While retaining some elements of the traditional floral still life, he revolutionized the form through his emphasis on blocks of bright color and the oriental values of open space, minimalism, and natural form, even in his famous sunflowers and irises.

What were Van Gogh's thoughts about nature and living beings? Was his work in Arles and southern France like a Japanese dream? This paper will concentrate on the iris paintings at Saint-Remy and other still lives and some related landscapes to explore the place of empty space, color, treatment, and emotion to propose both a conscious and unconscious indebtedness to Japanese painting values.

Van Gogh's and the French Impressionists' attraction to, particularly, Japanese woodblock art, such as evoked in Van Gogh's *Bridge in the Rain (after Hiroshige)*,³ is well-known.⁴ Vincent and Theo collected hundreds of

these. Van Gogh's identification with Japanese culture was such that he sent a painting of himself as a Japanese priest to Gauguin.⁵ His *Starry Night over the Rhone*⁶ mirrors the atmospheric affects and distanced treatment of the Hiroshige and similar paintings. Van Gogh lived a life similar to that depicted in the *ukiyo-e*, the woodblock paintings of the "floating world" or pleasure centers, a life of the French bohemian spent in bars and in alliances with courtesans, for example in his *Night Café*.⁷ In a letter to Theo he asserts that "the most ordinary Japanese prints, colored in flat tones, seem admirable to me for the same reason as Rubens or Veronese."⁸

Van Gogh's *Almond Blossom*⁹ is comprised of the tops of blossoming branches against a vast blue sky and reflects, in essence, nothing so much as the Japanese aesthetics of floral studies where, for example, a section of a bamboo stalk surrounded by empty space comprises a painting. The vividness of this partial landscape offers a key to the revolutionary nature of the still lives of Arles in its treatment of bright color, open space, and floral subjects. A review of the still life tradition shows how Van Gogh was working within as well as transforming that tradition.

In the recent Solomon R. Guggenheim exhibit *Spanish Painting from El Greco to Picasso, Time, Truth, and History*, still life aesthetics were highlighted, including the derivation of the Spanish term "still life."¹⁰ The word *bodegones* is related to *bodegs* which are related to the French *nature morte* or "dead nature," a standard definition of the still life. Embedded in the Spanish is *bodega* or "storeroom" and provisions are one of the most common subjects of the still life tradition. This tradition was in sixteenth century and seventeenth century north European painters, including the Netherlands, connected to the Ecclesiastes and *memento mori* concern with the vanity of human desire and consistently expressed it in a symbolic way in such paintings. An unknown seventeenth century French painter's *Vanitas Still Life*¹¹ is filled with straightforward images of such desire: money, a musical instrument, a weapon, books, playing cards, dice, and so forth. The moral implication is represented by the destiny of life, a skull reflected in a mirror and a potted floral plant and oranges, which are subject to decay. A modern version of this approach is Picasso's *Still Life with Skull, Sea Urchins, and Lamp on a Table*,¹² all in somber grays, blacks, and off-whites.

Another aspect of the still life tradition, in the words of the still life authority Sybille Ebert-Schifferer, is, for the artist, "just what constitutes the real essence of a piece of fruit, a flower, or a utensil and how it might be portrayed."¹³ From Albrecht Dürer's nature drawing *Large Clump of Grass*¹⁴ to Fillipo Napoletano's poetic nature study *Two Citrons, Shown Life-Size*¹⁵ to Gustave Courbet's political testament *The Trout*¹⁶ the phenomenological essence of the

still life subject, often colored by a painter's highly personal emotion, as in Courbet's imprisonment, is brought forth.

Often, however, the still life becomes a matter of decorative form centered on food and the storehouse tradition as in Fede Galizia's *Peaches in a White Ceramic Basket*,¹⁷ with its sculpted looking arrangement or Luis Egidio Melendez's "*Still Life with Fruit, Cheese, and Containers*,"¹⁸ a celebration of an inviting full larder.

Van Gogh's still lives embody all of these directions, including that of a popular seventeenth century Dutch still life style based on poor households, as in Christopher Paudiss's *Still Life with Herring*,¹⁹ with some onions and oil hanging from the wall, the herring on a wood board, and a lit pipe. Van Gogh's *Potatoes*²⁰ resonates with the depicted poverty of this style in its simple wicker basket spilling over with potatoes while capturing the essence of this plain but life-supporting vegetable.

The French Impressionists and their precursors had an immediate affect on Van Gogh. One stream, through Henri Fantin-Latour, formulated the still life in a decorative style imbued with class values. A scholar on the beginnings of the modern still life suggests that Fantin-Latour was as much concerned with "representing the space between things as the textures and sheen of the objects themselves."²¹ His 1886 *Still Life*²² sets a small basket of fruit, a vase with four blossoms, individual pieces of fruit, a cup and saucer, and a book on a little table just so, as if chess pieces. Although the three fruit in *Plate of Peaches*²³ appear realistic in treatment, their arrangement on a white plate next to a black-handled knife suggests the same over-orchestrated arrangement of *Still Life*. His *The Betrothal Still Life*²⁴ is likewise over-orchestrated in its placement of a fruit bowl, a glass of wine, and an oriental designed vase overflowing with various flowers. Criticized by his contemporaries for his overuse of space, Fantin-Latour and his predilection for the decorative and class representation can be found in Claude Monet's *The Tea Set*,²⁵ which highlights the current interest in Japan, an oriental style blue and white china tea set on a Japanese lacquer tray against a silver spoon and a blue and white china pot with a blossomless plant. The checkered squares of the table cloth overemphasize the arrangement here.

Another stream clearly focuses on the unadorned essence of things, such as Jean-Francois Millet's *Pears*,²⁶ three gleaming red, brown, green, and black pears set against a black background. Millet's contemporary Frederick Bazille's *Still Life with Fish*²⁷ places against a similar black background a basket of mussels, a shining orange and gold carp, and a pink and silver gray pike on a plain wood box. Auguste Renoir's *Onions*²⁸ offers the same emphasis on the realistic treatment of the subject highlighted with lustrous accents, here,

against a bright background, a group of onions on a simple white cloth. This painting according to some critics may have influenced Van Gogh's Still Life: Red Cabbage and Onions.²⁹

Van Gogh's bright *Sprig of Flowering Almond in a Glass*³⁰ embodies these streams while exploring Japanese aesthetic values. A broken-off sprig is set in a simple glass. The sprig is highlighted by a red line along the beige wall and lavish empty space. There is no formal decorative intent. Van Gogh's name, also in bright red, hovers above the sprig in the upper left as if a symbol of hope. Van Gogh has transformed the still life with the help of these values. He has imbued a form predicated on death to one focused on life and possibility. His use of bright color reflects this. There is an individual, and hence essential, character to his subject, a sprig of almond buds and opening blossoms. This still life resembles the Japanese art of flower arrangement, ikebana, in its simplicity and evoked hopefulness as well as in its formal use of empty space.

The evident pleasure Van Gogh took in the flowing forth of nature, as in the almond sprig still life, is predominant in his landscapes, such as *Wheat Field with Crows*,³¹ despite its ominous overtones, which he describes as "vast fields under troubled skies."³² The painting, which Kurosawa's film *Dreams* brings to life in an actual landscape with animation crows, is alive with the forceful brush strokes that delineate individual wheat stalks and grass blades, one stroke per stalk or blade. The strokes clump together to form a dirt road, clouds, and the sky. The painting however is centered by the brilliant yellow of the wheat which juxtaposes the crows flying over and into it. Identifying with the Japanese painters he had collected, he wished to live, in his words, "close to nature, like the ordinary man in the street."³³ In a letter describing Japanese painting practice, he discusses the central point concerning nature:

He [a Japanese painter] studies . . . a single blade of grass. But this blade of grass leads him to draw all the plants—then the seasons, the grand spectacle of landscapes, finally animals, then the human figure. This is how he spends his life, and life is too short to do everything.

So come, isn't what we are taught by these simple Japanese, who live in nature as if they themselves were flowers, almost a true religion.³⁴

Although many critics refer to his romanticized version of Japan, Van Gogh seems close to a true identification with the embedded principles of Japanese art and culture. Ranging from the values of an agrarian culture, to its nature worshipping principles in Shinto, to the poetics of haiku that mandates a seasonal image in each poem, the inner Japan is not too distance from Van Gogh's celebration of nature.

Van Gogh's swirling brushstrokes and forms that are instantly associated with him, however, indebted to pointillism, are standard features of Japanese painting. Van Gogh's *The Rock of Mont Majour*³⁵ illustrates such strokes in a

neo-Japanese landscape style, with its trees perched on an outcrop surrounded by open sky. The busyness of the strokes in Van Gogh translate into the busyness of the life force. In Japanese painting this is literally true, where the stroke reflects the inner energy, or *ki*, of the painter or calligrapher. Juxtaposed to this life principle is the pathos or moodiness that sometimes, like the crows, appears in a Van Gogh painting as a natural balance. Yet this moodiness which Van Gogh seems at times to appreciate is a valued Japanese aesthetic principle *sabi*, a kind of deep, perhaps Buddhist, existential loneliness.

Van Gogh's landscapes may be thus categorized as centered on the life force or upon pathos. Pathos is often directly identified with humanity registering emotion like the symbolic crows in *Wheat Field with Crows*. In Van Gogh much of this pathos concerns the life of the poor farmers who he worked with as a lay preacher. Just as he imitated the Japanese woodblock paintings for their simplicity, nature identification, and use of color, he imitated Millet's paintings of the poor farmers, such as in *Peasant Women Binding Sheaves (after Millet)*³⁶ where the woman, whose expression is hidden, seems almost one of the standing bundled wheat waiting to be bound. This seemingly pastoral scene is dominated by its true focus, the woman's bent back. Van Gogh was staying in the asylum depicted in *The Garden of Saint-Paul Hospital*.³⁷ Although he thought the scene was peaceful,³⁸ the twisted tree trunks, the central one with a broken main limb, seem ominous as do the empty branches and the tiny, undefined patients dwarfed by the trees.

The neo-Japanese *Pine Trees against a Red Sky with Setting Sun*³⁹ is likewise centered on trees with broken limbs and crowns. The solitary, tiny hunched-over woman with an umbrella is clearly modeled on Japanese woodblocks.

The life forth is impressively embodied in Van Gogh's floral presentations like *Almond Blossoms* and *Sprig of Flowering Almond in a Glass*. In the landscapes fruit trees and wild flowers depict the life forth in brightly lit blossoms highlighted by blue sky as in *The Pink Peach Tree*⁴⁰ and *Blossoming Fruit Garden with Apricot Trees*,⁴¹ as do traditional looking pastoral scenes of farm fields, like *The Harvest*,⁴² a Brueghelesque orderly landscape, *Wheat Field with Mountainous Background*,⁴³ composed of delicate blues, greens, and whites with conservatively swirled strokes, and *Field Of Wheat with Cypressess*,⁴⁴ where the swirling brush strokes and forms depict nature animated. That animation in a more placid treatment is found in what Van Gogh had called his "Japanese dream,"⁴⁵ *Field with Flowers near Arles*.⁴⁶ The line of multi-colored wild iris a full third of the painting dominates it by their size, shape, and color. This line is mirrored in the top third by a line of relatively small trees, a few buildings, and the gray-blue sky. The iris swirl but the trees don't. The middle third separating them is a low meadow of bright yellow and

white buttercups. The treatment of these iris and other landscape blossoms help to transform Van Gogh's idea of a still life.

In Japan the central image of beauty is cherry blossoms, *sakura*. When the word flower, *hana*, is used generally, it is understood that *sakura* is meant. In fact there is a national holiday dedicated to these blossoms and their viewing. A typical Van Gogh floral still life carries the aesthetic reflected in *Almond Blossoms* yet is also isolated for aesthetic reasons in a way developed in *ikebana*, Japanese floral arrangement. In each Japanese home there is an alcove, or *tokonoma*, containing a vase and a spare, symbolic floral arrangement. Behind this arrangement, hanging from a plain wall space is a scroll with some short philosophic or religious statement. These floral arrangements, which were originally offerings at Buddhist temples, were oriented on a vertical plain, the floral stems linking the earth and the heavens, with humanity in between. There are many *ikebana* schools, but issues of harmony, rhythm, color, and naturalness are stressed. Van Gogh's floral still lives appear to explore many of these values, but he had to transform the traditional still life in order to develop his unique manner of expression.

*Still Life with Pipe*⁴⁷ is directly indebted to the *vanitas* tradition, with his father's pipe and tobacco pouch, a single Dutch shoe, and some dead leaves beneath a vase full of fading flowers. The decorative and class value aspects of the traditional still life are exhibited in *Still Life with Pears*,⁴⁸ in which yellow pears with bright highlights are posed against a luminous green tree trunk which perhaps stands in for the opulence of a velvet coverlet. The overabundance associated with the tradition of European still life, filling a vase and a canvas with a multitude of flowers, is exhibited in the tipping blossoms of *Still Life with Carnations*,⁴⁹ the bursting bouquet of *Still Life with Roses and Anemones*,⁵⁰ and the spilling out blossoms of *Still Life: Vase with Roses*.⁵¹

Van Gogh's still life exploration reaches fruition in Arles with his famous sunflower and iris paintings. Bright light and color are two aspects of these paintings. At Arles he finds, in his words, a placid and bright landscape "like Japan."⁵² He notes that his *The Bedroom at Arles* is "painted in bright flat tints like the Japanese prints."⁵³ This light and bright color offer the immediate appeal of the still lives. Space is another. The best floral still lives appear as if in their own *tokonoma*. The emptiness surrounding the individual vase and flowers is characteristic of the Japanese aesthetic that allows objects in a painting to breathe, to project their own essential natures. Treatment of the painting's subject is yet another aspect. The Japanese Zen idea that less is more applies here. Van Gogh considers this aesthetic of simplicity in a letter to his brother on Japanese painting technique: "Their work is as simple as breathing, and they do a figure in a few sure strokes as if it were as easy as doing

up your raincoat.”⁵⁴ In his words, “exaggerate the essential, leave the obvious vague.”⁵⁵ A final aspect is the subject chosen. That subject is nature and the life force. As Van Gogh exclaims, there is a “terrible lucidity [in Arles] because nature is so beautiful.”⁵⁶

Color and the individuality of blossoms help define the artistic accomplishment of the 1888 and 1889 studies of twelve and fifteen sunflowers,⁵⁷ as do the Japanese painterly values suggested by them. The many versions of these still lives are basically the same, but for the number of blossoms, the presence or placement of the signature on the vase, and lighter or darker aspects to some of the blossoms. A group of 12 or 15 sunflowers in brilliant shades of yellow and gold, each blossom defined by a particular shape and color, are set in a simple yellow–brown clay vase. The lower half is left unfinished. The upper half is glistening with bright highlights. The lower fifth of the painting is a flatter yellow–brown. The line where the floor or suggested table meets the wall perhaps symbolizes the earth. It lies just below the painted line dividing the vase. A pale aqua wall, perhaps symbolizing the sky or heavens, appears behind the blossoms and the vase. The table or floor and the wall are really only slabs of color to ground and highlight the vase of sunflowers. The sunflowers themselves offer the beauty of their brightness. But like the short-lived sakura, they are impermanent, and perhaps symbolize humanity and its relatively short existence. Humanity in its particularity lies between the abstractions, blocks of color really, of earth and the heavens, yin and yang.

The 1888 *Still Live: Vase with Oleanders*⁵⁸ evokes this symbolism and treatment also, and, in a direct bow to the Asian aesthetics, a fanciful oriental lion is painted on the vase.

The still live irises differ from the sunflowers in that they retain the quality of wild irises in a natural setting. Sunflowers appear on long stalks and usually in rows, each stalk maintaining its individuality. Iris are clumped together in haphazard arrangements in their natural settings. *Irises*⁵⁹ depicts such a natural setting with the variously oriented purple blossoms, and one white one, taking up all but two small corners of the canvas in an expression of extravagant liveliness. *Iris in a Vase (YellowBackground)*⁶⁰ retains the busyness of *Irises* while experimenting with, in Van Gogh's words, “divergent complementary colors,”⁶¹ the purple blossoms and yellow vase, wall, and floor. It also repeats the arrangement and symbolism of the sunflower still lives. An added broken blossom on a stem here however upsets the painting's balance and would have been forbidden in ikebana for that reason. The iris in this and other iris paintings were discovered while Van Gogh was a patient in the Sainte-Remy asylum and may evoke additional emotional content in this respect. The iris's liveliness and the symbolic value of Van Gogh's transformation of the still life

are impressively expressed in *Still Life: Vase with Irises*.⁶² The small band of light green floor anchors the cream vase and purple blossoms on green stems. The huge band of cream wall highlights the huge group of blossoms while maintaining space for the blossoms essential natures to radiate, more heaven here than earth. In essence the painting has a lively, airy quality that resonates with hopefulness.

Some qualities of Japanese poetics transfer well to Van Gogh's unique aesthetics. Among them is *wabi*, a pleasurable regard for simple and weather-worn things, an aspect of feeling that well serves agrarian societies like pre-modern Japan and the Netherlands' and French countryside of Van Gogh's era. Though associated particularly with haiku, *wabi* has been seen to permeate the Japanese sensibility in general.

Van Gogh's *Road with Cypress and Star*,⁶³ for example, grounds his subject, a country road, in the ordinariness that permeates *wabi* sensibility. Van Gogh calls his painting, accordingly, "romantic . . . but also very typical of Provence."⁶⁴ Two workmen simply walk down the road. Further back is a one horse carriage. Behind that is an inn. A huge cypress stands beside the road at the center of the painting. Layered behind it are a wheat field, mountains, clouds, the sun and day moon and star, all treated in the swirling stroke style. What he calls "romantic" is perhaps a connection with simplicity, baring the vivid stroke style. *Still Life with Potatoes*⁶⁵ could not be more straightforward: a pile of potatoes, the staff of life to European poor, in a wooden bowl suffused with bright tones of yellow, brown and green and displayed exactly like one of his sunflower still lives. *Haystacks in Provence*⁶⁶ portrays its subject's reality in a celebratory way like the potatoes. The central stack and the hay still growing in the field are suffused with golden light to emphasize some perhaps transcendent quality in this subject. The ordinariness of the scene includes a miniature farm woman walking toward the stacks and ladders leaning against another stack, a scene that had been reenacted for centuries. *Olive Gardeners*⁶⁷ is a closer look at a similar scene: three women picking olives in a grove. The women, one on a ladder, are small and, as with the haystacks, the true subject is the olive trees and their harvesting. In *Thatched Houses in Cordeville*⁶⁸ the old, moss-covered house in the foreground is almost engulfed by the lush gardens and trees surrounding it. The approaching storm clouds underscore the plente of nature and its extravagant life force. There are no visible people but the house becomes the emblem of how humanity, for Van Gogh, should blend into nature.

Van Gogh expressed a deep sympathy through a detached manner in his early drawings and paintings of peasant life, such as *Two Women in the Peat-Field with a Wheelbarrow*.⁶⁹ There is a moodiness here that conveys the concept of

sabi, a sense of loneliness. It is a dark painting with two women bent over to the field under low dark clouds. Behind them is an empty wheelbarrow that will contain what they collect. Some overall expression of the fate of humanity is pondered here. Van Gogh expressed this sense of moodiness and insight in a letter: "How good it is to walk along an empty beach and look at the gray-green sea with its long, white streaks of waves, when you are feeling depressed."⁷⁰ This moodiness is a cure for depression, not depression. Both *Avenue of Poplars*⁷¹ and *Avenue with Poplars in Autumn*⁷² also convey in the lines of denuded winter poplars in the first and of somber-colored falling leaves in the second, each with a solitary figure between the lines, a sense of *sabi*. *Sabi* also permeates *Four Peasants at Meal*,⁷³ a study of a poor family eating in a grimy room, the only light from a dull lantern. The figures are reduced to hands and faces, the only parts of them that shine with the light. The hands and faces reflect their simple essence of endurance and hopefulness.

This moodiness is found also, on a second look, in *Basket of Potatoes*,⁷⁴ where phenomenological presence is expressive of the social reality it derives from, and the famous *Wheat Field with Crows*,⁷⁵ where the life force of animated wheat takes on a moody aspect through the blackness of the crows and the storm clouds. Of the latter painting, Van Gogh notes: "I did not need to go out of my way to try to express cheerlessness and extreme loneliness in it."⁷⁶

Contrasting with the later magnificent sunflower still lives, *Four Cut Sunflowers*,⁷⁷ with its drying heads and predominant broken stems, is filled with a similar moodiness. Likewise, the central object in the *The Tree*,⁷⁸ painted in a strange blue-green hue, elicits *sabi* through its solitariness and its trunk, which is cut off by the painting's top at its lowest branches. Perhaps most stunning of all in its *sabi*-like character is *The Stone Bench in the Garden of Saint-Paul Hospital*.⁷⁹ The empty bench is surrounded by two trees also cut off at their lower limbs by the painting's top. These trees with twisted trunks are like the inhabitants of the asylum in their various states of suffering. There are no people in the garden, and the overall mood is one of cheerlessness.

Yet Van Gogh above all needed people to share his thought and to express his feelings to. His lifelong relationship with his brother Theo was dominant. That with Gauguin with whom he lived for two months in Arles was another. He in fact welcomed Gauguin to his house in Arles with the famous sunflower paintings. His idea was to set up an artists colony where there would be a continuous exchange of artistic thought and practice. In Japan such exchanges are common and often one painter would add another's poem to his work or one poet would collaborate with another on a poem. Most Japanese poetic forms were meant to be shared, and Van Gogh's lifelong exchange of letters, drawings, and paintings suggest this impulse. Such an impulse is memorialized

in the companion paintings *Vincent's Chair*⁸⁰ and *Gauguin's Chair*.⁸¹ Both allude to the *vanitas* tradition, Vincent's with a pipe and tobacco and sprouting onions and Gauguin's with candles and books. The disorientation of the perspective in each, with odd angles and orientations, along with the garish color and floor patterns in the Gauguin, impose deep, even turbulent, emotion on each. These two still lives transform the values of existential ordinariness and philosophical speculation into a vehicle, however disturbing, of psychological expressiveness.

When Theo marveled at his brother's breakthrough intensity in the Arles paintings like *Iris*, he worried that Vincent "risked everything in venturing to the very brink . . ." ⁸² Vincent's response, "Never fear that I shall venture upon dizzy heights of my own free will . . .," ⁸³ reflected the internal awareness of a controlled artistic process, however belied by the chair paintings.

His overall artistic triumph, though, is found in the brightness of his colors, the simplicity of his treatment, the evocativeness of his natural life force imagery, and the vividness of his expressed emotion. Perhaps in part subject to the *Japonaiserie for ever* credo of his times, ⁸⁴ even romanticizing it, he found his way to aesthetic values close to those of traditional Japan. The audacity of trying to live like the romanticized Japanese nonetheless turned out to produce some of the most highly regarded pieces of modern art.

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NOTES

¹ *The Letters of Vincent Van Gogh*, ed. Ronald de Leeuw and tr. Arnold Pomerans. (London: Penguin Books, 1996), p. 447.

² *Vincent Van Gogh, A Self-Portrait in Art and Letters*, ed. H. Anna Suh and tr. Alayne Pullen, Alastair Weir and Cora Weir. (New York: Tess Press, 2006), p. 188.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

⁴ *The Letters*, p. 311.

⁵ *The Letters*, p. 356.

⁶ Cutts, Josephine, and Smith, James. *Van Gogh*. (Bath, UK: Parragon Publishing, 2002), p. 93.

⁷ *Vincent Van Gogh*, p. 225.

⁸ *The Letters*, p. 407.

⁹ *Vincent Van Gogh*, pp. 296–287.

¹⁰ The exhibit was from November 17, 2006 to March 28, 2007.

¹¹ Ebert-Schifferer, Sybille. *Still Life, A History*, tr. Russell Stockman. (New York: Harry R. Abrams, 1999), p. 225.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 363.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

- 16 Ibid., p. 289.
- 17 Ibid., p. 77.
- 18 Ibid., p. 217.
- 19 Ibid., p. 131.
- 20 Ibid., p. 315.
- 21 Przyblyski, Jeannene M., "The Making of the Modern Still Life in the 1860's," in Eliza E. Rathbone and George T.M. Shackelford, *Impressionist Still Life*. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2001), p. 32.
- 22 Ibid., p. 32.
- 23 Ibid., p. 71.
- 24 Ibid., p. 81.
- 25 Ibid., p. 83.
- 26 Ibid., p. 23.
- 27 Ibid., p. 57.
- 28 Ibid., p. 123.
- 29 Ibid., p. 122.
- 30 Ibid., p. 163.
- 31 *Vincent Van Gogh*, pp. 312–313.
- 32 Cutts and Smith, p. 254.
- 33 *The Letters*, p. 396.
- 34 Ibid., p. 410.
- 35 *Vincent Van Gogh*, pp. 210–211.
- 36 Ibid., p. 268.
- 37 Ibid., pp. 274–275.
- 38 Ibid., p. 275.
- 39 Ibid., p. 280.
- 40 Ibid., p. 184.
- 41 Cutts and Smith, p. 107.
- 42 Ibid., p. 125.
- 43 Ibid., p. 185.
- 44 Ibid., p. 189.
- 45 *Vincent Van Gogh*, p. 188.
- 46 Ibid., pp. 188–189.
- 47 Ibid., p. 137.
- 48 Cutts and Smith, p. 84.
- 49 Ibid., p. 245.
- 50 Ibid., p. 249.
- 51 *Vincent Van Gogh, The Paintings* (retrieved 12/20/2006: <http://www.vggallery.com/painting>).
- 52 *In a Brilliant Light: Van Gogh in Arles*, narrator, Ronald Pickvance (The Metropolitan Museum of Art Home Video Collection).
- 53 *The Letters*, p. 418.
- 54 Ibid., p. 410.
- 55 *In a Brilliant Light*.
- 56 Ibid.
- 57 *The Paintings*.
- 58 Ibid.
- 59 Cutts and Smith, p. 175.
- 60 Ibid., p. 219.

- 61 Ibid., p. 218.
- 62 *The Paintings*.
- 63 *Vincent Van Gogh*, p. 303.
- 64 Ibid., p. 302.
- 65 Cutts and Smith, p. 99.
- 66 Ibid., p. 129.
- 67 Ibid., p. 191.
- 68 Ibid., p. 235.
- 69 *Vincent Van Gogh*, p. 101.
- 70 Ibid., p. 69.
- 71 Ibid., p. 120.
- 72 Ibid., p. 131.
- 73 *Vincent Van Gogh*, p. 141.
- 74 Ebert-Schifferer, p. 315.
- 75 *Vincent Van Gogh*, pp. 312–313.
- 76 Ibid., p. 254.
- 77 Ibid., p. 73.
- 78 Ibid., p. 133.
- 79 *The Paintings*.
- 80 Cutts and Smith, p. 159.
- 81 Ibid., p. 161.
- 82 *The Letters*, p. 447.
- 83 Ibid., p. 447.
- 84 Ibid., p. 313.

ON THE POETICS OF CINEMA IN THE LIGHT
OF THE PRESENT CULTURE

It is funny how the colours of the real world only seem really real when you viddy them on a screen.
A Clockwork Orange.

ABSTRACT

This paper deals with the subject enunciated in the title thereof according to a ground thesis: that cinema stands for the symbolic framework of the social coexistence insomuch as it (independently of the existence of the so-called “art cinema”) is essentially a mass spectacle whose main function is to level down the differences of the individual sensibility and allow to perceive the world of objects and functions wherein average existence unfolds as a whole and independently from the personal choices, which is a lot more necessary for a culture that furthers the individualism and is permanently threatened by the atomization, as it happens with the final phase of Modernity, which is what we call “the present culture”. We shall set out this thesis as follows: in the first section, we shall clarify the symbolic weight of cinema through the analysis of a cinematographic work; in the second one, we shall differentiate the scope of cinema with regard to television and literature; in the third one, we shall dwell upon how the cinematographic language builds up a reality that is simultaneously within the reach of everyone and is for defining aims that go beyond the average imagination; in the fourth one, we shall proceed the subject in order to take up the specific making of the film; in the fifth one, we shall show why cinema implicates perforce a dramatism that oddly enough goes hand in hand with a universal efficaciousness of the present culture; in the sixth one, we shall round off that with an analysis of the *sui generis* dualism existing between the immanency of the situations that cinema depicts and the boundless projection of the characters that participate in them; finally, in the seventh and last section, we shall explain why the category “action” stands for the very kernel of the conception of individuality that support the cinematographic symbolism.

I

In the central scene of *A Clockwork Orange*, Kubrick shows us what is perhaps the best representation of the symbolic potency that cinema possesses: Alex, the protagonist of the picture and the most fascinating embodiment of the modern antisocial individual ever filmed, appears tied in a straightjacket and with some horrible spiders-like devices that prevent him from closing his eyes; albeit an assistant in a white coat is seated beside him and dampens eagerly his eyes with a dropper, he gives the impression that he is utterly alone in the foreground of the shot, while in the background, at a considerable distance, a group of physicians blends with the shadows of an auditorium that serves as a cinema. The protagonist sees towards the screen, whereon, however, we have taken over the space of the picture and of the imaginative projection thereof, which is a lot more meaningful because the speech of Alex alludes directly to the brutal realism of the performance: cinema puts everything within the reach of the audience with an intensity that is unimaginable without the screen, which in the protagonist's personal case means the images that unfold what he has until then considered the most pleasurable: a thrashing, a rape, etc., which are after all phenomena belonging to that socio-cultural horizon that the average cinema spectator so eagerly tries to put behind when he goes to the pictures. Thus, the interposition of the showing that Alex attends and the spectator of Kubrick's film, whereby the latter takes over from the former, establishes a *sui generis* circularity through the double face of the screen and suggests the idea that what we, the spectators, see is just the reaction to the violence wherein we are always immersed, *id est*, the fascination wherewith everyone attends the socio-individual permanent unbalance, which is displayed on the screen thanks to what has so fittingly been called the "magic" of cinema, which in essence is *the power of the image to reveal a reality that would otherwise go unnoticed*.¹ Whether they are colours or objects, memories or daydreams, the screen endows everything with a strength that compels us to dwell upon it as if it were no more subjected to all those abstractions and conventionalisms that ravage whatever kind of originality: the screen liberates so the reality together with the corresponding socio-individual consciousness that, vice versa, provides the spectator with a concentration that he would hardly get outside the performance. Still more, this intertwining or rather identification of reality and spectator is emphasised in the scene that we are glossing by the fact that the sole function of the physicians that remain at the back of the auditorium is to observe carefully the reactions of Alex before, during and after the showing, which, making the most of the interchange of positions between the character, the image that he sees and our own presence, works as a perfect representation

of how the individual consciousness that unfolds together with the showing of the picture simultaneously reinforces the social order and brings to light the not so hidden possibilities of being crushed by it. This tension between identification and criticism is represented in the scene at issue by that lurid close up of Alex's left eye framed with the spider-like contrivance while he tries desperately to close it, which he cannot do because of the limits imposed by the repressive system that the protagonist so foolishly and contradictorily tried to challenge.

Now, to fathom this symbolic image of the complex unity of society, objectivity and individuality, we must bear in mind both the interplay that we have just set out and the terrible reaction of the protagonist to the performance once his original delight has passed: when he is utterly engrossed in the violence that the pictures show, he starts to experience an awful sensation because of the drugs that the doctors of the institution where he is secluded have administered to him, which are supposed to suppress all those criminal drives that carried Alex away to murder and prison; according to the doctors, he will easily and fast get rid of those drives by associating them with a sickness as dreadful as death itself; of course, the process of training or, as the physicians call it, of "healing", must be carried out so as to work even against Alex's will, so that it precludes him from giving free rein to his violence again whether he is under surveillance or not.² But the process is not only aimed at orientating in another direction the impulses of the youth: it is actually aimed at unfolding before the eyes of his how violence shapes the whole nature of man, for it shows how the same vital strength overflows whether in sex, in crime, in the totalitarianism of the modern state or in the horrors of the genocide, which are the subjects that appear on the successive films that Alex sees. Now, to make things worse, he realizes while sickness seizes him that the background of the showing is no other than the fourth movement of his most beloved piece of music, Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, the work that more than anyone else praises the boundless scope of human will and the final union with nature that (according to the eighteenth-century Enlightenment and the German Idealism that were the double ground of Schiller's poem that furnished the lyrics of Beethoven's work) man will come by despite whatever individual stint or perverseness.³ As it can be supposed, the mixture of wickedness and artistic beauty unsettles Alex and he starts to cry that he is aware of all the evil of his past life more clearly than of the images that take by storm his field of vision, images that intensify reality as he has said in the passage that we have quoted on the epigraph of this paper. Yes, in a world wherein everything is blurry, shapeless, overwhelming, pricking, where desire can only be expressed when it brings to light the most dreadful animality and where history is solely another name

of a universal decadence (which is an outright denial of the Enlightened zest about individual reach and of the rationality of history that Hegel so eagerly upheld),⁴ it is surprising the portentous strength wherewith cinema binds the multiplicity of elements that an average perception sets literally out of focus; even more, due to that “magic” of cinema whereto we have already alluded, the picture can put upside down the utmost beauty and the sublime of the own sentiments so that they accrue to the horrors of violence and history and, which is axial, to the critical reconsideration of the vital experience in the light of the social orderliness, in such a way that cinema ends up working as the everlasting unfolding of an symbolic reality that, in the case of *A Clockwork Orange*, adapts the individual that has lived on the fringe of normality to a society whose main features are the anonymity and the utilitarianism, and the way to do it is resorting to the beauty of art that does not stand anymore for the utmost form of spirituality on the plane of sensibility, which was nevertheless how Hegel and the nineteenth-century metaphysics saw it:

Fine art is not art in the true sense of the term until it is also thus free, and its *highest* function is only then satisfied when it has established itself in a sphere which it shares with religion and philosophy, becoming thereby merely one mode and form through which the *Divine*, the profoundest interests of mankind, and spiritual truths of widest range, are brought home to consciousness and expressed.⁵

Unlike this ideal, well-nigh supernatural identification of the individual with the rational framework of history and society, cinema works as a general medium of levelling down the in principle irreducible diversity of the individuals, so that the *Ninth Symphony* is for breaking the resistances and securing the obeisance, perhaps not so much to the law that articulates the social life (which would agree with the Hegelian approach to the issue inasmuch as it requires a conscious participation to be carried out) as to the most abstract wants of control and training of the population for the part of the government, which the central scenes of *A Clockwork Orange* set forth together with the destruction of the spontaneity of the individual, which is why the picture could as a whole be considered as a symbol not of the wretchedness that befell a delinquent that is something of a sybarite but of the part that cinema plays in culture as the most encompassing dramatization of the individuality, which, of course, brings to mind the coincidence between, on the one hand, the apparition of cinema at the end of the nineteenth-century and, on the other hand, the systematization of the mechanisms of regulation of the individual life that modern society requires in the lack of a natural law such as the one that ruled the ancient hierarchy.⁶ Thus, availing ourselves of the fact that these socio-cultural phenomena are relatively contemporary and fit together, we are going to set them out in the light of what

we have called in the introductory abstract of this paper the “symbolic framework of the social coexistence”, a term that means the array of representations that is for securing the social unity and the individual experience whose purport must agree with that framework, which is a lot more determinant for the societies that are made up by atomic individuals and run permanently the risk of breaking up.

II

Now, how does cinema articulate the framework at issue? By that intensification of reality whereto the phrase of Kubrick’s picture refers, which, as we have hereinabove said, calls for a specific concentration on the part of the spectator, who must set aside that shallow perception wherewith he attends the everyday business, and become immersed in a representation that transcends the narrow realm of privacy. Of course, the intensification whereof we speak does not mean at all that the spectator develops a kind of conscience that transcends the average socio-cultural plane in order to come by a really personal approach to it such as the philosopher’s; it rather means that he will thanks to cinema be able to grasp concretely and efficaciously the realm wherein he coexists and works, which (just to mention the most illustrious counterpart of cinema) has nothing to do with privacy notwithstanding the obvious similarity of both of them. For independently of the questionable informative quality of a television programme, the spectator thereof always remains within the scope of day-to-day and domestic worries, even when he, for instance, watches the news bulletin, which reduces the problems of the world to events more or less related with the home scope, which also is propped by the illusory success that promote the quizzes of all kind, or by the vulgar sensibility inherent to the soap operas, or by the would-be efficaciousness of the police, the hospitals or whatever other social institution that is the subject of a determined series. For its part, and contrary to this reduction of the information and the social life to the domestic realm, *cinema sets forth the unity of a character and a circumstance by means of an action with a social recognition that is not comparable at all with the wants and worries of home*. Therefore, whereas a television programme will ever be circumscribed to the domestic interests that have a framework of their own, a film intends more than anything else to show that it is feasible to come by a certain identity by oneself or to live an outlandish adventure when the individual is able to overcome the hindrances or the prejudices that go to meet him, or even the weirdest drives that have held sway over him until then. Concerning this, in the final scenes of *A Clockwork Orange*, we see how the protagonist overcomes all his past and his wretchedness whether by recovering

his original cynicism or maybe by his dying (in my opinion, his final image, when he winces while he listens again Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*—which is followed by the last shot whereon we see a kind of erotic daydream— suggests both ends). Thus, the aim of whatever picture is to display all the possibilities that someone has within his reach and how his choice or his peripeteias make sense in the light of factors that are not always understandable *prima facie* but whose likeliness hinges throughout upon their comparison with the would-be order of real life; indeed, although the picture sets out circumstances well-nigh unbelievable (think of the countless botches devoted to praise the petty heroism of every kind), they must be solved in a way that allows the spectator to identify himself with them and keep so the thread of the action in his own imagination, which is what explains why the concentration that, in accordance with us, cinema demands, does not necessarily entail an intellectual awareness but, on the contrary, fosters more often than not the perfunctoriness of the average sociability. For as it shows the scene of Kubrick's film whereon we have so far commented, the character of a film, instead of contradicting the normality of real life, strengthens it but on a superior plane, whereby, *albeit cinema and television partake of the framework of real life, they articulate it in a utterly different way.*

The foregoing remarks show why even when the television programmes have a superb production, an amazing cast and a passionate subject, they have nothing to do with the cinematographic works that are for spanning the differences between the private and the public determination of the individual life. Of course, this does not belie the original community of sense between television and cinema, for both of them resort to the only element that orders existence: the double dimension, visual and objective, of language. However much it does without the usual links of images, words and action (whereof television makes instead the most so as to agree with the domestic aims and stints), cinema shows that, in order to fathom what is happening or how he must act, a character always has to follow the disposition of the objects that make up the visual framework of the situation or also the presumable attitude of the others with regard to it, just as it happens in real life, where the articulation of all that is work of language, which provides the intertwining of objects, characters and sense that enables everybody to ken the leading motives of the interlocutor of the moment or, on the contrary, precludes him from discovering them when the other wants to keep them hidden, in which case they must be fathomed (again, as in real life) starting from some exterior signs and/or by the consequences thereof, which cannot be forestalled because they stem from the individual intentions and not from the revelation of the whole situation, a feature that, by the by, opposes the narrative framework of cinema to literature's.

As a matter of fact, whereas the former follows the visual and operative objectivity that prevails in reality, the latter puts aside the visual background and the bodily presence of the protagonists, as it happens with all those characters that notwithstanding they never appear in a novel or in a tale, are at any rate axial for the unfolding or for the ending thereof (the instance *par excellence* of this is, of course, *Waiting for Godot*, where the homonymous hero never goes on stage). Instead, although it is possible that the action in a picture implies the participation of someone that never appears (think of Hitchcock's *Rebecca*, where everything turns on a woman that has died before it starts the action that the work depicts), the reference cannot be other than the sheer absence, which literature for its part metamorphoses with no problem into a perfectly concrete presence by means of the unfolding of the other characters towards the absent one, whereto cinema cannot resort since its visual and objective condition demands that the character at issue is present at least as a daydream, a shadow or an obsession that must nevertheless be reified, as one sees in one of the most infamous upshots of the magic of cinema, that scene of *Ghost* (a picture that made the most of the basest platitudes of sentimentalism) where the spirit of the dead lover possesses the body of a woman that is the best friend of his former affianced so as to make love to her. Thus, as the botch that we have just mention shows, the solution of continuity between the inner and the outer planes of consciousness and the concomitant difference of the mental and bodily planes of reality, makes that the cinematographic representation shares the relativity and ambiguity that define the coexistence in real life, whereon we must dwell a moment.

III

It is always necessary to emphasise that however much verbal language provides the all-embracing ground of coexistence, communication and comprehension, it would practically be unintelligible without the visual background that allows to articulate the vital experience: with no concrete object to show, the word, instead of furthering the understanding, hinders it because it can very easily be considered as a reality in such, as the ancient identification of honour, person and word shows so well. Now, this seems to entail a contradiction, inasmuch as the same element is simultaneously the ground of a common experience and the hindrance to it: on the one hand, the unity of visual background and objective reference that verbal language supplies makes up the frame wherein experience unfolds and, on the other, it stands out as a barrier that prevents the individuals from coming by a full comprehension, since everyone

sees reality from his own standpoint and only accepts to change it (if he happens to do it) when he becomes convinced of the unsoundness thereof, which requires the whole configuration of language and, consequently, the vital experience that lives on the possibility of discovering new perspectives, objects and shades that can be set forth together with other individuals, provided that they also are ready to change their former assumptions, which is not easy at all and requires sensibleness and reflection, two conditions that are more often than not alien to average individuals. Of course, the very dynamics of language, which obeys throughout the wants of existence, helps to overcome the difference thanks to what is meaningfully called the “common sense”, and everyone can come by the recognition of his position if he is able to show that it accrues to anyone else’s.⁷ Thereat, despite the ambiguity that could have made difficult the process, the final upshot will at best fulfil the expectations of everyone or, if it does not, will anyhow make up for that, as it occurs, for instance, when a very dangerous situation is solved as if by magic in real life or when—to revert to our main subject—a very thrilling film ends in the most conventional way, which, far from implicating a failure, means that the logic of real life has triumphed again over the unlikelihood or over the preposterousness, and that the situation will follow the conventionalisms that enable to partake in an average coexistence. This fulfilment or compensatory satisfaction is mostly due to the link wherewith verbalization together with visualization furnishes everyone so as to deal with immediate experience: one expects to get or literally to *see* what one had originally thought that were going to happen, both in cinema and in real life, and even when that is not possible, one still wants a unity of sense that allows to put into practice what one has seen, independently of having really grasped the process step by step, which corroborates that cinema can do without the reflective consciousness that literature imposes insofar as it is determined by written language (and independently, of course, of the particular style or technique of the writer at issue); at any rate, cinema cannot do without the demand of satisfaction and reassurance that the average individual imposes, which is all the more blatant in those films that challenge the logic of real life, a subject that we shall hereinafter retake; for the moment, we just want to underline that the characters act in a film as everyone is wont to do in real life, wherein one expects to succeed following one’s original assumptions even when they are contestable or utterly wrong, provided that there will be a way to make them agree with the *vox populi*.⁸ And because of this prevalence of the conventionalisms and truisms, when someone intends to clarify a vital situation on a general plane, he must resort to the common sense and even to the prejudices that prevail in his socio-cultural environment, which will be

easier if he has chosen a motley background that helps to distract the interlocutor, as it occurs in those films that are devoid of a real interest but resort to a spectacular scenography, to a wonderful setting or to a masterful soundtrack to hide it. Still more, the same logic must be applied when the situation is personal or demands the deepest intimacy, which cinema can solely show by reconstructing the framework of real life in accordance with the average way of imagining it, and when an element resists the procedure or rather the levelling, the picture simply changes it into a prop of the social framework or bereaves it of its proper meaning, as it happens in the scene of *A Clockwork Orange* that we have so far taken up as our hobbyhorse, wherein the protagonists is aghast at listening the way Beethoven's utmost masterpiece is used as the soundtrack of a film that deals with war and genocide: yes, even the greatest creation can serve as the background of the most vulgar showing. Thus, the identification of objective situations and common sense within a visual framework is a feature that cinema shares with the natural condition of language, and that is why it is so important the scenography, which, as we have reminded a moment before, can be the decisive factor for the total effect of a film just like the background is for the accomplishment of a situation in real life, where everyone tries to lead surreptitiously the emotions of the others, as it proves one of the deepest and wittiest approaches to the identity of cinema and real life that I have ever seen: I mean Woody Allen's *The Purple Rose of Cairo*, which unfolds the original identity of the dramatic want of satisfaction that leads the average spectator to the cinema parlour and the way the pictures follow the conventionalisms of modern sentimentality and also of the covetousness that is doubtlessly the only strength that defeats the amorous drives: in the face of a brilliant career in the film industry that demands that he betrays his innermost convictions, the actor that personifies the lead character of the picture within the picture (who, let us remind it, has abandoned the film to enjoy love as a real live man), also betrays the heroine, a girl that is ready to go the whole hog provided that she will be free from her dreadful husband and from her misery; nevertheless, the logic of real life imposes itself and, although the film hero is loyal and has become real just to make equally real the felicity that the girl is after, she surrenders herself to the actor, before which the hero decides to come back to the screen and retake his wonderful imaginary life. Now, this array of betrayals and disappointments would be unbearable if the picture did not furnish the way to make up for it: in the final scene, when the girl has realized that the actor has left her in the lurch, she gets over her loss seeing a love picture that shows all that easy merriment wherein she would have wanted to become immersed. At the end of the picture, it only remains the sole link of cinema and real life: a tepid illusion.

This instance confirms what we had already pointed out, *id est*, that cinema carries to a general or symbolic plane the visual and objective framework of existence that lives of the common sense; now, since this framework is always subjected to the particularity of perception, the communicative process and the mutual acknowledgement is perforce complicated and problematic for everyone, which, oddly enough, explains the want of dialogue and coexistence: thereat, when one speaks face to face to someone, above all when there is something momentous at stake, one intends to orientate the dialogue through a verbal and visual field where one must sound out the other and avail oneself of whatever possible distraction of him to impose the own standpoints. At any rate, there is no way of being utterly sure whereof the interlocutor thinks, and the communication must go on throughout in that kind of relativity wherein everyone remains beyond one's exegeses, which on the one hand allows everyone to preserve his liberty and, on the other, compels the others to figure out the innermost motives in order to strengthen the coexistence or to finish it when it is convenient for him. Of course, inasmuch as this *sui generis* hermeneutics hinges upon the personal ability of overcoming the shades inherent to the visual and the verbal determinations, it is practically impossible to apply it successfully with the ones that we most care for, with whom we share beforehand the situation and cannot be objective enough, which is why the immediate coexistence goes on more often than not in the middle of that odd abstruseness of the most elemental vital links, which is a lot more overwhelming when one is very imaginative but weak and tends to project the own wants in the others' (as it happens to the heroine of *The Purple Rose of Cairo*). That is to say, due to the double determination of natural language, life normally oscillates between a shallow perception and a blind projection, whereby it is almost impossible to define the individuality of others and even of oneself beyond the drive of a moment, which entails the danger of mistaking others with the image that we have formed of them.

IV

Because of this danger, cinema must find out a way to clear the ambiguity, which is no other than the camera, whose lens works as the sight that sweeps the environment and determines both the order wherein the sundry objects will be placed and the perspective that they must offer so as to make up the image that the director wants to come by, just like everyone does in real life on imagining the site of a meeting; there is however an axial difference between the artificial shot of the camera and the natural vision of the eye, since in the former case the whole visual relation of individuals and objects appears within

a certain frame, whereas in the latter it just appears from the perspective that each one is following and nothing else; that is to say, cinema brings literally to light the scenario of a coordinated action or situation, whereas the eye solely perceives what makes sense within the reach of the individual's intentions, whereby the spectator of a picture must discern the objects within the multiplicity of the background and, in real life, everyone must rather define his position with regard to it. Thus, cinema offers to the spectator a standard to perceive the objects in a determined situation and to shape his opportunities of acting in accordance with a generalized vision,⁹ whereto the camera works as the common sense that levels down persons, objects and possibilities so that they can integrate the action within a framework whose steadiness is, on the contrary, so difficult to secure in real life, wherein everyone gets carried away very easily and loses the thread of what he is doing. In cinema, instead, however bizarre the vision or however bewildering the situation are, the camera keeps the general framework thereof, which is, for instance, what happens in the oneiric atmosphere of *Eight and a Half*, wherein the daydream of the protagonist, he himself a director, gives room for showing the barrenness that the average contemporary artist is supposed to find out in his life and in his highest ideals, which is visible by the odd succession of scenes and characters, above all the feminine ones, that despite their oddity manage to make sense because of the camera, which allows to see the imaginative train wherewith everyone amuses himself in a traffic congestion in the middle of a bypass as a liberation of the burden that the own life stands for (wherewith it is again evident how cinema shapes the perception of the social environment). This privilege of the camera lies in its capacity of dwelling upon an object that would otherwise go unnoticed or upon a situation that would easily be dismissed in real life: who would have thought that taking a bath, an action that the modern lifestyle has bereft of the array of values that it has had in the most diverse cultures, could be changed into what is perhaps the hub of all the history of cinema, *id est*, the scene of *Psycho* wherein Janet Leigh is brutally stabbed to death by Anthony Perkins? In this scene, the camera brings to light each one of the elements of the environment before, during and after the crime, with an alacrity that seems morbid or even disgusting: the toilet, the shower, the curtain and the plughole of the tub follow each other on the screen and for an instant fill our sight the same as the grimaces of terror of the victim, her contortions and her last gesture, the attempt to draw the curtain as if she were trying to hide her naked corpse from our sight. What is more startling in the sundry shots of the scene is, as we have just said, how they make us perceive the items that make up the bathroom, which go usually unnoticed because of the utilitarian function that they carry out and, above all in the case of the toilet, for their association with the bodily

needs that had until the time Hitchcock filmed the picture been reduced to the realm of what has to be done in the utmost secrecy, to what must practically be invisible,¹⁰ which goes hand in hand with showing how an action or a set of gestures that are more often than not carried out mechanically or perhaps shamefully possesses nevertheless an sense of its own: the simple fact of taking off the dressing gown and reveal the whole body is in itself tremendously perturbing, much more in this case for it is the prolegomenon of a murder, and although one never sees the nakedness of the girl as such, since the camera takes her body always slantwise, like a flash in the middle of the stabbing, that is enough for suggesting both the rest of her nakedness and also the horror that she experiences when the killer draws back the curtain all of a sudden and starts to stab her, concerning which it is very meaningful that he appears as a shadow with no face and that the dagger or knife is the sole object that one perceives, for then the stabbing seems the attack either of a wild beast or of a diabolic being that has sprung from who knows where, which, powerfully strengthened by some shrilling strains of violin, contrasts brutally with the vulgarity of the setting but agrees perfectly at bottom with it when one reminds that both the bodily needs and the individual unsettlement are subjected to a nature that we have hardly fathomed despite the systematization of the modern life, which is symbolized in the most famous shot of the scene, when the camera follows the thread of blood and water that runs to the plughole and dwells upon the circular cavity that metamorphoses into the empty pupil of the corpse that stares us while the camera spins lightly and slowly to adjust the image on the horizontal plane of our vision and moves back so as to allow us to perceive the whole face of the dead girl on the floor of the bathroom, next to the toilet; over the corner of the upper eye, one sees a drop of water that is about to run down the face and feels intensely the tension of the surface and the resistance of the skin together with the grin of the face, halfway between a frozen agony and that disappointment of finding out that death is after all just the end of everything and not the beginning of a deeper way of being. The awry position of the corpse, its being next to an item identified with the basest wants of existence, the weird drop of water, everything is simultaneous lurid and ironical, considering that the victim had decided a moment before her taking a shower to return the money that she had stolen, which appears portentously in the final take of the scene, wrapped up in a newspaper on the bedside table of the room that communicates with the bathroom through the door that the killer left open. If one follows the movement of the camera and the narrative thread that it unfolds, it is evident that there is an absolute unbalance between the theft that the victim had committed and the intervention of a haphazard that falls upon her with all its violence, and that that haphazard gainsays the lifestyle that makes everyone believe wrongly

that good and evil hinge entirely upon the standpoint of each one and that one can do as one pleases because there always will be a way to get out of trouble; on the contrary, the sequence of the take shows that the violence of the sheer irrationality waylays behind the world of contrivances and amenities wherewith the modern individual tries to secure himself against the unforeseeable.

The foregoing analysis corroborates that making visible the insertion of the individual in a world of objects and strengths that challenge the shallow vindication of everyone's will as the sole ground of existence is for cinema inseparable from proposing a way of seeing and valuating the own expectations and responses to the very immediacy; in other words, cinema provides a standard to measure the limits of the own potency within a socio-cultural or symbolic framework that everyone passes over more often than not at projecting imaginatively his own intentions with regard to the possibilities at hand in a reality wherein the action of haphazard must be bore in mind however much the comfort and normality of modern life try to gainsay the simple fact that bane can pounce on everyone when least expected. Of course, this capacity that cinema possesses to show on a superior or symbolic plane the complexity of the world of objects wherein we live and the singularity of the links that we establish inadvertently or precipitately, by no means is tantamount to say that it demands on the part of the spectator a special sensibility such as the one that, instead, literature requires inasmuch as the act of reading implies that one puts aside the common sense that orders the visual and objective framework of reality so as to articulate the narrative aslant a reflective consciousness that is superfluous in the case of cinema inasmuch as the latter shares the framework that we have just mentioned. Thereat, it must be stressed that the main goal of cinema is to reinforce the common sense on showing its efficaciousness in the oddest situations and according to the sundry genres that cinema offers: for instance, the more the thread of a love picture resembles what the average individual expects to live, the more it will be likely to be a box-office success, provided that it shows what one must do to land a good match or to live a thrilling romance, which implicates that the scope of the illusion must somehow accrue to the individual's possibilities. *Id est*, albeit most pictures, whether of love or of any other genre, set forth situations preposterous or unbelievable, they keep a resemblance with the situation that the audiences want to live: it would be a miracle that, even in a time when royalty has lost its last lustre, a crown prince married the humble maid that dreams of him, but in a love picture that showed such an absurd situation, he would be endowed with the sensibility and the preferences that would make up the kind of husband that would be delighted to lead to the altar the girl at issue: he would be a labourer disguised as a prince.

V

As we see, cinema works as the privileged kaleidoscope of illusion, desire and success: it magnifies or makes visible the reach of each one according to the conditions that determine his existence, which on the other hand brings to light his whole life and in such a way allows him to deal with it beyond the hardness or the meaninglessness that so frequently threaten the would-be equanimity of the average spectator even when he is cultivated and really sensible. This potency to endow life with an interest that is so difficult to find out in a society wherein efficiency is tantamount to unsettled productivity and leisure is synonymous of waste of time is why cinema evinces, the same as life, that dramatism that seems preposterous when it is objectively analysed, but that is doubtlessly axial for strengthening sociability; we mean, of course, all that sentimental truisms that are set forth or carried out simply in order to partake in a social life and without any further intention, which, oddly enough, goes hand in hand with the assertion of the highest values as the touchstone of existence: the absolute sincerity or the everlasting love, for instance, stand out against domestic conflicts, petty tragedies and childish flurries that would very surely be assessed sheer bathos in any other context, above all when one considers that no relationship would endure those values as such, that is to say, with the impetus wherewith they fill the screen, and that is why in the everyday coexistence or in the situations that pictures show, everyone must search time and time again the weirdest ways to keep values like the most overpowering passion or the sincerest friendship as ideals that are undeniably desirable but just insofar as they are unattainable, because that is the condition *sine qua non* to strengthen the illusion and the subjectivism within, of course, the limits of normality and productivity; in other words, values like a deep love or an unbreakable loyalty appear as the final aim or as the original ground that evolve inwardly, since on the surface of life there is no other option for everyone than the ephemeral situation that arises, by the by, on the innumerable fringes of the work and professional establishment that everyone maintains while being supposedly unsettled: therefore, the individual or the character can be utterly heartbroken and even so behave according to the most impersonal or conventional trends, which, on the other hand, does not evince self-possession but imperviousness, shallowness or also the intervention of a *deus ex machina* that is going to make up the individual for his grief: for instance, someone that has cruelly been abused by the ones that he trusted, will find round the corner someone else that will be loyal and supportive practically to the end of time; or, to go to the other extreme, someone that revels in the utmost welfare, feels all of a sudden that he does not care that and needs to find the “real sense” of his

life. . . without relinquishing, of course, his status, which, as Woody Allen has shown better perhaps than any other creator, can be set out either seriously or parodically: for instance, in *Alice*, the homonymous protagonist of the film tries desperately to find out a vital sense that allows her to link the shallow comfort that she enjoys as the wife of a very successful man with the deep moral and social ideals wherewith she was raised and that she later lost together with the religious faith; now, thanks to the intervention of a Chinese doctor that stands for that millenarian wisdom of the East whereto the average Westerner resorts (without being disposed to fulfil the moral ideals that it implies), the heroine rediscovers her faith and her love to life: she relinquishes her tawdry marriage and her pseudo felicity and starts to work in something bound with the social welfare, which, despite its doubtless beauty, is all the same a fairy tale, a kind of daydream more akin to the wonderland that other Alice discovered than to the world of the sophisticated middle-aged rich women that notwithstanding the barrenness of their life are utterly ready to carry out the American dream, which, needless to say it, is the choice of the respective protagonist of most of Allen's greatest films, which are doubtlessly the two darkest ones of his: *Crimes and Misdemeanours* and *Match Point*, wherein the protagonist wrecks albeit he manages to escape the punishment that he deserves.

VI

This divorce or, rather, this dualism of values and existence, which would *prima facie* be absurd in the light of the progressive reduction of existence to the sole standard of success, is oddly enough a requirement of the same film medium, since it is for reinforcing the common sense approach to love: as a matter of fact, pictures show life from a subjective plane, and that is why they set forth an inner absolute and an outer relativism, which is a askew way to agree with the individualism and the undifferentiated alacrity that are the touchstone of cinema, inasmuch as the latter is before than anything else a mass spectacle aimed at audiences whose cultural and socio-economical differences must be adequately levelled down in order to secure the functioning of society and, together with it, the satisfaction of the concrete individual, who, whether he is learned or not, wants to rely on an array of easy contrivable archetypes such as the ones that cinema proposes for every realm and every plane of existence. Thereat, in the case of the love films, above all of the most successful ones, the situations can be conventional or thrilling but the feelings must indefectibly be sublime or heartrending, for that is what the spectator claims at bottom; in other words, the spectator literally expects an imaginary meeting potent enough to efface whatever previous disappointment with a new passion, as it happens, for

instance, in all those pictures wherein an embittered or a hardhearted person is miraculously touched by the grace and spontaneity of a newcomer that, who knows why, devotes himself to resurrect the original effusiveness of the protagonist; or also, according to a variant of the same formula, to bring back to life the illusions that the weight of years and routines have crushed. Of course, this does not mean at all that the concrete carrying out of the archetype has perforce to be trite or tearful, as it happens in Cameron's *Titanic* or in any of the sources or consequences thereof; on the contrary, the artistic merit of a picture can lie precisely in the way it metamorphoses the commonplaces of bathos into an original approach to sentiment; for instance, Kieslowski's *Brief Film about Love* shows how an inexperienced lad that has fallen in love with one of her neighbours, a woman elder than him that has had plenty of fleeting romances that have just made her feel more and more lonely, is nevertheless able to reveal her the possibility of a true, almost virginal love that she, hardhearted as she is because of her reiterated failures, mistakes for the foolishness of a philanderer; in this case, the difference among the three ends that Kieslowski filmed for the story (the first one, included in the celebrated series *The Decalogue*, wherein the lad, disappointed by the mock of the woman, finally dismisses her; the second one, which Kieslowski chose for the single edition of the film, where she finally visualizes (through the lenses of a telescope that reminds that the lenses of the cinematographic camera are the support of all the story) how the love that the lad offers her means the end of her forlornness; and the third one, wherein both of them got tired of the business) displays the sentimental options that the spectator has at hand after his seeing the picture and, together with that, the shades and imaginative richness that whatever love link possesses, which are determinant for the success or the failure of an experience that has simultaneously to be inner and common: the illusion that allows the lovers to come by a consciousness of their respective existence and the relationship that, whether successful or failed, stands for the fulfilment of the common sense whereto everyone must resort so as to share a socio-cultural world overwhelmed by the relativism and the incapacity of most people to overcome it.

As we see, if the vindication of the immanency of life and of the average sensibility implies more often than not that cinema wrecks into the marshes of conventionalism whereof Hollywood's industry has taken time and time again so much advantage, cinema possesses a doubtless cultural value inasmuch as it sets out the stints of the personal judgement and the cost of whatever vital choice, which everyone must pay one way or another, even when it demands to pass over the utmost moral law, as it happens in that masterpiece by Cronenberg very meaningfully entitled *A History of Violence*, wherein the double plane of value and existence that we have set out in the foregoing paragraphs comes

by a rare clarity aslant the confrontation of a man with the past that he has tried to leave behind and that all of a sudden goes to meet him; in this case, the confrontation of a present life with the dark past of the character compels him to turn a deaf ear to the call of blood in order to secure the existence that he has chosen with his family in a remote town of the American West. When the moment of truth comes and he must probe that Fate is meaningless face to a conscious liberty, the character does not doubt: he kills his brother in cold blood provided that he will be free from all that the former stands for: crime, violence, impersonal relationships. Fratricide, however, is not enough, for the life of the character is not only his: he must still get the forgiveness of his wife and his children, which is what takes up the final scene of the picture, where he comes home when his family is having their supper: in a sequence of an unforgettable intensity, the protagonist expects standing on the threshold of the dinner room the forgiveness of his beloved ones; while his wife looks down, his little daughter takes the initiative and spontaneously sets the place of the protagonist on the table and his son offers him the bread; his wife finally gazes upwards and the two spouses interchange a sight full of a sentiment that is *to be seen, not to be described*. The picture ends.

It is needless to say that this limitless possibility of overcoming whatever natural order, whether it is the weight of blood or of time itself, whose exposition is for us the main goal of cinema, goes hand in hand with the bathos inherent to the average sentimentality of nowadays, whereby we have kenned it in the genre of the love pictures; nevertheless, it must be pointed out that its proper field is not located there but in the so-called action films, where the wrongdoers always are defeated without further ado by the innermost convictions of the hero, who must, for his part (as *Die Hard 1, 2, 3, 4* and *Umpteenth* show better than any other instance), preferably be an average individual, almost a scrub or at any rate a low-class employee that has by the most preposterous chance discovered that the peace of all the world hinges exclusively upon him, who in that very moment also discovers that notwithstanding his having been until then a person without great passions (bar, of course, the grudge wherein it has been changed his love for an incomprehensive former wife that betrayed him because she felt abandoned by him), always has kept a sacred love for justice in his heart. . . albeit "justice" in this case is a synonymous of "America Way of Life". Thus, the picture goes on in order to show that the double plane of ideals or values and facts can be merged thanks to the adamant will of the preposterous hero, notwithstanding there is hardly a logical link between both planes beyond the attractiveness of the protagonist and even more of the stunts. Thereby, the more one tries to discern the link of values and of facts, the more one will discover that the final unity of the picture lies

in revealing a would-be total sense in a supreme moment that, oddly enough, must be tantamount to a conventional situation such as marriage or crime punishment (there would be a third possibility, which would lie in the wreck of all the situation and the wretchedness of the leading characters, which is, nevertheless, an extreme that must be passed over because of a blatant reason: it threatens the objective and productive order that cinema shares with real life).

VII

These remarks lead us to another aspect of the question, i.e., that the interplay of genres and the interposition of dramatic threads that articulate above all the action pictures (albeit are equally perceptible in all the rest), demand a projection of the leading characters beyond the specific situation that the work sets out and anticipates so the numberless reiteration of the same common sense heroism, which is so blatant in that phenomenon whereof Sylvester Stallone has availed himself perhaps more than anyone else with the character of Rocky, which has been so successful because it has always bring to the foreground the illusion of “being somebody” (whatever this means) and the corresponding want of personal depth that gainsays so outright the ancient notion of hero: as a matter of fact, this notion has traditionally allowed people to identify themselves with the fulfilment of an exploit that transcends the temporal and the spatial determinations of the individual existence, which metamorphoses the latter into the millitary stone of a new epoch and of a new way of being that spreads beyond the differences of age, sex or status, thanks to the recognition on the part of the individual of the symbolic values that the hero impersonates and that his allies admire the same as his most out-and-out enemies; in other words, the heroism, at least as the tradition kenned it, furnished the ground for a mutual recognition that allowed that everyone obeyed certain rules independently of the side of the fray where he were; think, for instance, of the figure of the epic warrior that overcame whatever preceding stint of his to lay the foundations of a greatness that even his enemies vindicated, as we see time and time again in the *Iliad*, wherein Tyrians and Trojans share the same code of honour.¹¹ However, the exploits of the film heroes by no means can be up to the all-embracing dauntlessness of someone such as Achilles, simply because those exploits are ruled by the difference between subjective beliefs and an objective justice or rather judicial system that has in a way or in other been unfair to the hero, whereas in the case of the epic warrior the inner motor of the deed is determined by the cosmic order. Unlike that, the hero of the action films can impose his will or his desire on defending the peace of the world but he cannot vindicate any other *a priori* value as a justification of what he

does, whether it is sustained in a historic myth, in a religious creed or in the personal farsightedness; at bottom, he acts all the time exclusively on the basis of arbitrary choices or preposterous intuitions that although can be shared by everyone because of their being commonplaces, never bring forth neither lucidity nor greatness. Concerning this, it would be enough a shallow comparison of the behaviour of Achilles with the one of the average film hero to evince that the former acts by a real gallantry that, as we have just emphasised, even the antagonists of his admire, whereas the latter is driven by a recklessness that even who are on his side condemn outright and that would wreck the whole situation if it were not by the sudden intervention of the *deus ex machina* whereto we have time and time again referred, which saves the hero when he is within an ace of disaster, a solution that despite its preposterousness is applauded because it stands for the unyielding faith or willpower of the character that the average spectator would like to share: in other words, the action works as a reification of an inner strength that the spectator praises because he sees how the character challenges whatever authority, duty or logic without batting an eyelid.¹² And inasmuch as the would-be exploit spans between the inner intention of the character and the objective or rather abstract social system whose representatives are indefectibly prepotent, the exploit of the hero must be as astounding as possible, whereby it will take place in the middle of police pursuits, international conspiracies, interplanetary invasions and so on, which has nothing to do with the action of the traditional hero, inasmuch as the latter unfolds through a world that is extraordinary by itself and does not require in consequence to dazzle anyone with escaping the whole police force of a metropolis or with beguiling the most sophisticated wrongdoers or with facing the past, present and future extraterrestrial armies with his sole courage or, which is perhaps the most preposterous of all the variants of the issue, with defeating evil itself despite the simple fact that the protagonist never has endured spiritual discipline whatever before his exploit and, above all, will go on after it just exactly as he had always been, i.e., an average citizen that must after all take care of his retirement insurance as everyone else.

This odd mix of fantastical, almost maddening transcendence and day-to-day, almost pedestrian worries, which oddly enough stands for the very kernel of the film representation of life, reaches its height when the action that the picture sets forth combines with the love story whose framework we have hereinabove taken up; this mix of action and love is for showing the intimate side of the hero's personality, which must work as the standard for everyone else's. As a matter of fact, in the same way that everyone is supposed to hide the soul of a hero however much he had never been bore in mind for anything (let alone for saving the universe!), so everyone feeds in his innermost bosom (whatever

this mean) the heart of the most passionate lover however much he had not had the slightest experience of the sentimental complexities or of the interpersonal relationships bar the inevitable and mostly burdensome family bonds. Now, this resort to love offers an interesting alternative that agrees somehow with the odd dualism of meaningless situations and sublime values that we also have underlined: either it appears as the symbol of a sublime feeling that no lust, selfishness or previous disappointment could spoil, or it brings to light the grimmest penchants of man. As instances of the first kind we could mention the numberless pictures that depict how the hero discovers the strength of love precisely when he notices that the world is on the point of being destroyed by a sinister potency or, also, when he tries wholeheartedly to fight the latter; in this case, it is usual that the hero at issue is a middle-aged man that happens to share the investigation of the crime or the discovery of the imminent destruction of the world with the only one that believes him, who is, obviously, an attractive young woman that after some initial reluctance on the part of the hero (who is still crushed by a lifelong loneliness or by the recent betrayal of some other woman) will help him to accept that he, as anyone else, wants a companion that props and understands him; in this case, the mixture of professionalism and tenderness works wonderfully whether the enemy is a mean criminal or an awry extraterrestrial power that is ready to destroy mankind, and the final is foreseeable from the onset, as we see in *Mission Impossible 1, 2, 3* and *Umpteenth*, where Tom Cruise metamorphoses masterfully the fight for justice and the unyielding professionalism into a tenderness and a sex appeal that perhaps explain as a whole why he defeats all his enemies effortlessly while he himself falls into love's trap. On the contrary, when the love story is about one of those awry passions that unsettle all the preceding vital experience of the characters, the very conflict prevents them from reasoning and recovering the somewhat boring life that they had led until then, as it happens in *Fatal Attraction*, a work halfway the action and the terror films, which exhibits both the advantages and the stints thereof: two middle-class persons whose encounter should have been as conventional as the rest of their life, are all of a sudden carried away by the most devastating passion that the man is nevertheless able to overcome thanks to his being a respectable *pater familias*; unfortunately, the woman becomes a frantic psychopath that throws her very successful life overboard to come by the man she wants, who, for his part, has to kill such a madwoman to save a family whose wonderfulness he has learned to appreciate thanks to the bane that his weakness has sparked off; when the horror ends, he discovers a new opportunity thanks to the comprehensiveness of his wife, to the respectability of his circle and, why not, to the fact that he himself has got rid of his pursuer.

This last instance confirms that the “action” must not be taken up as one cinematographic genre among others but as the very ground of the poetics of cinema in the light of the present culture, which, as we have said in the introductory abstract to this paper, is culture defined by the fall of the ideality of human existence and the absolute predominance of a technical articulation of the individual creativity that oddly enough goes hand in hand with the most clamorous vindication of the common sense vision of existence according to which everyone has a limitless right to everything by the sheer fact of occupying a place in the world. This opposition between the technical efficaciousness and the absoluteness of the immediacy (which, in other words, could be set forth as the opposition existing between industriousness and leisure) agrees wherewith we have called the double plane of values or ideals and existence, and the opposition thereof would be insurmountable if it were not by the mediation that the category “action” supplies, whereby the inner motives and the outer regulations identify one another with no problem within an everlasting cycle whose continuity, like the Sphere of Empedocles, is only for an instant interrupted albeit it has the property of reinstalling itself straightaway. The instantaneous interruption is, however, absolute, and the catastrophe that the action wards off is endowed with a dramatic strength that goes beyond the knacks of the performer, who, without his batting an eyelid, faces the most terrible potencies of the universe or thwarts the most complicated schemes. Still more, *what is really perturbing is that the action does not entail metamorphosis whatever on the part of the performer*; as we have repeatedly emphasised, the hero goes on after his exploit as if it had never taken place: he retakes his previous routines, he is for his favourite baseball team, he is very successful with women but he has eyes only for his sweetheart, he has a dog, he goes to the gym and takes care of his feeding, he believes fervently that democracy is the sole natural framework of society and uses unrestrictedly all the devices that teem the home of an average citizen, whereby the action is hardly perceptible in the whole course of his day-to-day life, which is, after all, the only plane that he can comprehend considering that with so many things to do and so many enemies to defeat, he has no time at all to reflect on his own existence. Briefly, concerning the vital transcendence of the action that articulates cinema, we should speak of carrying-out more than of fulfilment: the aim of the action is not that the hero comes by a deeper consciousness of his own being together with the complexity of the socio-cultural and natural reality, it is rather that he confirms that his slant with regard to this or that specific issue (for instance, the fairness of the *status quo*) was utterly right and that he has been able to contribute to the upkeep of the social welfare, which, on the other hand, due to the predominance of the common sense and the concomitant rejection of whatever kind of

reflection that smacks of a theory alien to the own experience, prevents him from coming by a vision of the value of his exploit that can be generalized: at bottom, he did what he did because he wanted to do it or because he considered that it was right, not because he *knew* that it was fair. Of course, because of this *sui generis* impossibility of coming to a reflection beyond the instant of unsettlement and heroism, the appraisal of the action remains all the same a sheer standpoint that, furthermore, every spectator can use to focus his own experience and to vindicate his behaviour within the realm of the interpersonal links and of the vital strengths that impel them, whereof the most important is by far love, inasmuch as it leads to its utmost the tension between subjective drive and socio-historical determination that is the very kernel of modernity and that in the last half century (which coincides wherewith we have called throughout these lines the present society) has witnessed the fall of whatever universality, whether it is the logical soundness of reason or the ideal framework of love and of sensibility in general, which have been reduced to sundry forms of material satisfaction:¹³ sex, pleasure, possession and so on, which make up the desiderative world of the hero of the action pictures, whose sole resort so as to experience the momentousness of life is to engage in the following adventure fully aware that it will be the everlasting return of the same.

Before finishing, I would like to revert to our remark on the final scene of Cronenberg's *A History of Violence*, wherein the two spouses interchange a sight full of a sentiment that is impossible to describe and that rather must be seen: that sentiment uncovers the richness of the immediacy of existence and aims at a kind of consciousness of our finitude and of the true originality of life that no other time has come by. This is what, in accordance with our exposition, cinema has to show, to make visible and reachable for individuals that are in any other respect utterly subjected to the objective and material meaninglessness of the present way of life. *Vale*.

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NOTES

¹ I would like to stress this feature because it will help us to understand hereinafter the difference between cinema and television.

² Without further remark, it is worth reminding that a systematic regulation of the individuals is the main goal of the famous "panoptic" that Foucault has so brilliantly taken up in the final section of the second chapter of *Surveiller et Punir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975).

³ Concerning this issue, vide my paper "Enlightenment, Humanization and Beauty in the light of Schiller's *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man*", which will soon be published by Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka.

⁴ Vide the First Chapter to the Introduction of the *Lessons on the Philosophy of the Universal History*, wherein Hegel states: "It is necessary to endow History with the faith and the conviction

that the world of the will is not ruled by haphazard. As a matter of fact, we take for granted that a final end holds sways over the events of the peoples, that there is a reason in the universal history—not the reason of a particular individual but a divine and absolute reason” [Spanish trans. José Gaos, *En 141* (Madrid: Alianza, 1999), p. 44]. This vision is utterly contested in the work wherewith we deal now (to the extent, of course, that a philosophic theory can be contested by a dramatic conflict).

⁵ “The Philosophy of Fine Art,” in *Philosophies of Art and Beauty. Selected Readings in Aesthetics from Plato to Heidegger*, ed. Albert Hofstadter and Richard Kuhns, tr. F. P. B. Osmaston. (Chicago: UCP, 1976), p. 388.

⁶ As we know, the analysis of these mechanisms took up most of Foucault’s work, whose main upshot is the idea of a “microphysics of power” that is for figuring out the development of Modernity on a plane a lot more specific and precise than what the orthodox Marxism had aimed at, which has been a doubtless rise for the present approach. On this subject, vide *Microphysique du Pouvoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1978), p. 87 and ff.

⁷ Concerning the philosophical relevance of the common sense long before its vindication in the present relativism and also with a function quite different, vide the remarks on the concept that Kant formulates both in the curious “Apology of Sensibility” that the philosopher interpolates in his *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, paragraph eight and ff., and in the *Critique of Judgment*, paragraph 21.

⁸ This would strengthen the outright rejection both of Nietzsche and Heidegger of the cultural decadence of the modern societies and of the weakness of the individual that upholds a subjectivist conception of them. Regarding this, the most obvious reference in the case of Nietzsche would be the final sections of *The Birth of Tragedy* and, in the case of Heidegger, the first chapter of the *Introduction to Metaphysics*.

⁹ The want of a wide range or, which would be a lot better, a universal standard for the preponderantly aesthetic socio-cultural experience that Modernity vindicates has been evident from the very onset of the modern thought and above all during the eighteenth-century, when the discussions on the sensibility and its cultural transcendence were the very ground of the subsequent development of the philosophical aesthetics. Concerning this, vide the excellent introduction to *Eighteenth-Century British Aesthetics*, ed. Dabney Townsend. (Amityville: Baywood, 1999); Fiz, Simón Marchán, *La Estética en la Cultura Moderna*. (Madrid: Alianza, 1987), above all the chapters I–III; and my paper “Beauty, Taste and Enlightenment in Hume’s Aesthetic Thought” (which will be published by Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka).

¹⁰ Concerning this, it is profitable to see the interviews to the cast and assistants of Hitchcock that some editions of the picture include, which explain the transcendence of the shower scene. On the other hand, it is surprising the preference of Almodóvar and other contemporary directors for taking the moment when the actresses urinate, which I account an indirect homage to the masterfulness of Hitchcock.

¹¹ One of the best approaches to this subject among the copious bibliography devoted to it, is the book by Detienne, Marcel. *Les Maîtres de Vérité dans la Grèce Archaique*. (Paris: Francois Maspero, 1967), above all the chapter II.

¹² This matches the already mentioned denunciation on the part of Nietzsche of the weakness that the modern individual exhibits, which the philosopher takes up in works such as *The Genealogy of Morals*.

¹³ As a matter of fact, this double aim tallies with the respective goal of eighteenth-century Enlightenment and with nineteenth-century Romanticism, whereby we could consider that the vision of reality whereon cinema is based lies in a vulgarization of the former cultural movements.

ART AS INFORMATIONAL READYMADE

ABSTRACT

The aim of the article first of all is to analyze a new phenomenon of relational art as well as correlated with it relational aesthetics. The new artistic proposition seems to be extremely interesting since artists seem to become kind of sociological and thus political arrangers of public sphere. Gonzalez-Tores, Tiravanija, Hirschhorn or Broodthaers and others left their private sanctuary and moved their ateliers to a social context. Their work thus seems to be a platform, a kiosk, a station. Nicolas Bourriaud's relational aesthetics tries to examine the relationship between the newest artistic (post)production and informational culture and to answer the question about the essence of the new, informational, form of ready-made.

In my article I would like to focus on Nicolas Bourriaud's proposal and his relational aesthetics which examines the relationship between artistic (post)production and informational culture.¹ Recent artistic activities of such authors like Felix Gonzalez-Tores, Rikrit Tiravanija, Thomas Hirschhorn or Marcel Broodthaers may be complimented by emphasizing their 'zero artistic value'.² But in our informational society information seems to be a ready-made while art appears to be a kind of free collaboration and interaction. But the ready-made is not exactly Duchampian one as well as the art is no more modern one. We face the new paradigm of art as well as quite new artistic and aesthetic values: discoursivity, sociability, socialization, sharing or appropriation became the central issues of contemporary artistic creation. Art seems to be a platform, a kiosk, a station, whereas artist had become 'postpolitical producer of cultural services'.³ And exactly here is the point where (post)politics can appear: (post)politics of art and of aesthetics. This political aspect of a new, relational or postutopian form of art is a topic of Jacques Rancière's considerations.⁴

French theoretician of art and curator of the Palais de Tokyo, a Paris museum devoted to contemporary art, Nicolas Bourriaud making central issues of his thought ideas of 'relational aesthetics' and 'postproduction' has become an

inherent part of a transformation of art which was initiated by Dadaists, especially by Marcel Duchamp and his readymades.

Simplifying, the relational aesthetics deals with relational art. The latest one is a kind of artistic activity and its basic aim is to create diverse relations with the world. The relational aesthetics will be therefore a normative and descriptive theory of valuation of works of art on the basis of interhuman relations created by the new form of art. So we do not face here a traditional private space or an intimate sanctuary of an artist but rather all interhuman relations and thus their social context. We have “(. . .) a changed status of the ‘work’ of art in the age of information which has succeeded the age of production. (. . .) In a world of shareware, information can appear as the ultimate readymade, as data to be reprocessed and sent on, and some of (. . .) artists work to inventory and select, to use and download, to revise not only found images and texts but also given forms of exhibition and distribution.”⁵

The postproduction, on the other hand, Bourriaud sees as any other mutations of the already existing elements—data which seem to be artistically half-finished products which are subjected to treatment or postproduction in the result of which some spheres of activity are created. “This art of postproduction seems to respond to the proliferating chaos of global culture in the information age, which is characterized by increase in the supply of works and the art world’s annexation of forms ignored or disdained until now. These artists who insert their own work into that of others contribute to the eradication of the traditional distinction between production and consumption, creation and copy, readymade and original work. The material they manipulate is no longer primary. It is no longer a matter of elaborating a form on the basis of a raw material but working with objects that are already in circulation on cultural market, which is to say objects already informed by other objects.”⁶

It seems that the origin of the new paradigm of art can be found in the first half of the 20th century, among Dadaists. Since then, precisely Dadaists, with Duchamp as the leader, there began transformation of the modern, ‘optical’ model of perception into the ‘sensorial’ one or, as Benjamin Buchloh says, Dadaists triggered the passage from the bourgeois schema of individual contemplation of aesthetic forms to revolutionary model of active participation.⁷ In other words, Duchamp’s discovery of the role of context for art was the very first step to discovery of the essence of the context as the art. “That we can conclude from the work of Duchamp (. . .), which means a referring to a social institution closing artistic praxis in a discourse, becomes now a central issue. (. . .) An atelier of artist, a place of creation (. . .) changes into a place of reception.”⁸ So for Duchamp and Dadaists the fundamental artistic idea was the idea of ‘context’ or better to say, the idea of ‘space’, since the space is the context which became the content of the work of art.⁹ But the gesture of Marcel

Duchamp, the gesture legislating a readymade in the process of contextualization or indexation of already made object, was not a complete or definitive one. Duchamp however, as Brian O'Doherty says, suffered from a lethal sickness typical for modernity: he did not take into consideration a question of 'participation' in the space.¹⁰ But a complement of the Duchamp's step and at the same time a final elimination of the ruling eye was a gesture of conceptualists and their art for understanding of but not for looking at.¹¹ The dominance of the eye meant the dominance of the object, not the subject or the context, which in the best, was just a perfect white cube. In this perfect context objects appear in a typical imperial way and subject seems to be reduced to his eye. The eye means here a pure visuality and thus a pure surface: the eye has a kind of a problem with a content which seems to be the latest thing it would like to see.¹² In a similar way, the eye was dethroned by Jean-François Lyotard at his 'Les Immatériaux', an exhibition organized in Paris Centre Georges Pompidou in 1985 which was supposed to be anti-modern and thus postmodern manifesto and where "(...) the eye will be deprived of the exclusive privilege it enjoys in the modern gallery [where] the experience of the subject is formed by one sense alone, his sight."¹³

Both, the proposal of conceptualists and the idea of Lyotard have become indirect steps as well as a kind of the antidote to the aforementioned modernity's sickness. Finally, the art to look at transforms into the art to act and the space of white cube turns into an elbow room, a kiosk, a platform, an alternative space where an artist becomes a subtle director or arranger of inter-human relations. "Suddenly, as if he had been resurrected, the artist is entitled to doubts and his desire of elbow room puts out a challenge to politics of white cube, to parochialism of main course of art as well as to the holiness of the gallery space."¹⁴ Because of that, when Rijkrit Tiravanija is cooking curry in a gallery, being endeared to 'his active participation and social involvement' the New York critic criticizing after all quite recent megalomaniac and transcending attitude of modern but also postmodern artists can ask, what does it mean that the art still focuses our attention on exotic objects showing in quite empty space while the majority of the world is starving and to what extent an artistic and aesthetic discourse seems to be merely a shield protecting us for an anxiety of arrogant staying out of problems of the common folk?¹⁵

Those transformations are of course symptoms of the whole anthroposphere but they appear especially significant in the context of debates focusing on globalization or cultural identity.

The interesting answer for that new dramaturgy of art seems to be relational aesthetics of Nicolas Bourriaud which could be supplemented by 'politicizing' of art and aesthetics proposed by Pierre Rancière.

The relational aesthetics was finally an effect of a kind of misunderstanding of some works exhibited by Bourriaud in 1996. For him artistic proposals of authors such as the aforementioned Gonzalez-Tores, Tiravanija, Hirschhorn or Broodthaers demanded quite a new attitude since each of them operated, by contrast with recent tradition, rather in the context of new interhuman sphere than own artistic equipment. Seemingly their activities were nothing new. After all we have here as if typical postmodern eclecticism, quotations, recycling, remixing already existing forms, mutations of found works, operating with data, whereas an artist becomes DJ or programmer placing those alt data in a new context. But this artistic gesture is not merely a modern pose or postmodern interplay since the new art as the consequence of the gesture becomes 'a place of socialization' (Tiravanija) which means that it is no longer the modern *le art pour art* nor the postmodern art of appropriation but becomes the art of sharing.¹⁶ "(...) I try to show that artists' intuitive relationship with art history is now going beyond what we call 'the art of appropriation', which naturally infers an ideology of ownership, and moving toward a culture of the use of forms, a culture of constant activity of signs based on a collective ideal: sharing. (...) There is (fertile) static on the borders between consumption and production that can be perceived well beyond the borders of art. When artists find material in objects that are already in circulation on the cultural market, the work of art takes on a script-like value: 'when screenplays become form', in a sense."¹⁷

Actually, such scenario, placed by relational artists always in a sociological or just interhuman context, is an element of a sector of cultural services while an artist seems to be 'a producer of cultural services'. The product of the latest one becomes 'a zero artistic value work of art' and its only, and at least the most essential, value seems to be informational one. So we meet with informational readymades the main aim of which is to reprogramming the world.¹⁸ An artist-programmer is no longer in defiant opposition to the society but it does not mean that he becomes an inspired visionary and a builder of a new, better world. Contemporary relational artist proposes instead a restrained art joining in the subtle dialogue with different rhizomes of the informational society. The artistic dialogue takes place in a net structure not only through a redistribution of ready-made cultural objects but rather through a postproduction of the already existing data which, as a consequence brings a kind of pole of activity. The relational art (Nicolas Bourriaud) or the restrained, postutopian art (Pierre Rancière) breaks the utopian vision of absolute, radical and politically barren art (as sees it for example Lyotard) as well as its opposite version—the art being at politics' service (like in Walter Benjamin's conception of aesthetization of politics).

For Pierre Rancière the traditional prohibition of politicizing art, anyway alike any kind of prohibition, is a form of totalitarianism. “Always we deal with the same process: a process of using epochs or historic cracks to form a prohibition. An example of that could be a prohibition addressing to art that is supposed to be politically barren (. . .) Actually this is a prohibition of possessing an actual and verifiable, but not only phantasmic, influence on our shared reality.”¹⁹ Moreover, it appears that the relational or postutopian art operating in a cultural service’s space simply demands a kind of politicizing. His own version of peculiar politicizing of art Rancière bases on the idea of ‘distribution of the sensible’. Generally, it is a process in which every sensory data are divided into what is visible (or generally—perceivable) and what is invisible (or unperceivable).

What is politics and what is politics of art? In fact politics is neither a power nor a fight for power. It is rather a configuration of specific space and a distribution of the peculiar sphere of experience; it is rather a disclosing some objects fundamental for some subjects.²⁰ As we remember, for Aristotle man is *politikon zoon* because he poses a speech and not only a voice expressing pain or joy. Accordingly, politics appears when definite social groups demand possibility of speaking and thus expressing themselves—they want to be heard out. “This distribution and redistribution of places and identities, this dividing of space and time, visibility and invisibility, noise and speech is what I call distribution of the sensible.”²¹ Politics however consists in reconfiguration of the distribution and in making visible what so far was invisible as well as in making audible what was dumb.²²

As regards art, for Rancière it describes a space of presentation in which objects are identified as themselves. Art creates a kind of suspending usual forms of experience space-time for a social group. But by no means, it becomes politics on account of announcements or feelings it talks about the world order. Nor it becomes politics because of the way it presents a structure of society, social conflicts or cultural identities of social groups. “Art is politics by means of a distance it keeps from its own functions as well as of a specific time and space it creates and by means of the way in which it distributes the time and populates the space.”²³

It is especially visible in the case of the relational art, for which the creation of vague and ephemeral micro-situations demands a change of perception, a transformation of a spectator into an actor, a reconfiguration of places. The art acts through a new dividing of material and symbolic sphere. In the other words, passing from the culture of consumer to the culture of active participator the art is bordering on politics.

Concluding, for Rancière “(. . .) politics is not a fighting for power but first of all it arbitrarily appoints visibility (including) and invisibility (excluding). And if politics is supposed to be understood as a fighting for being subject (. . .) then art with its ability to revealing of mechanisms of social indifference, to unmasking any forms of enslavement, to denunciation of languages of hate and fighting for the subjectivity, seems to be a natural ally of politics.”²⁴ The relational, restrained or postutopian art however is “(. . .) a distribution of objects and pictures forming already existing world or a creation of situations being able to modifying our views and attitudes to surroundings. These micro-situations, not so much different from normal everyday situations, are to construct or reconstruct interhuman relations and to create new models of confrontation or participation.”²⁵ Finally, the relational aesthetics demands no claims of art to self-sufficiency and doing so it gives a new meaning to art mostly by reducing it to constructing space and relations the aim of which is a material and symbolic reconfiguration of territory of what is shared.²⁶

Thereby we can observe occurring, as in a bit leftist terminology says Pierre Rancière, an aesthetic revolution, namely, a community of feeling is forming.²⁷ So maybe we should agree with Dan Cameron for whom we are a part of a social-aesthetic transformation and because of it we should—as Rikrit Tiravanija proposes—stop, cook and eat and at least for a while forget any differentiation between art and world, since anyway the art—in form of informational ready-made—must finally return to the world.²⁸

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¹ See Bourriaud, Nicolas. *Relational Aesthetics*, translated by Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods with the participation of Mathieu Copeland (Les presses du reel, 2002), Idem, *Postproduction. Culture as Screenplay: How Art Reprograms the World*, translated by Jeanine Herman (New York: Lukas & Sternberg, 2005).

² Nicolas Bourriaud gives us a typology of postproduction. So we have (1) REPROGRAMMING EXISTING WORKS: “In the video *Fresh Acconci*, 1995, Mike Kelley and Paul McCarthy recorded professional actors and models interpreting performances by Vito Acconci. In *Untitled (One Revolution per Minute)*, 1996, Rikrit Tiravanija made an installation that incorporated pieces by Olivier Mosset, Allan McCollum, and Ken Lum; at New York’s Museum of Modern Art, he annexed a construction by Philip Jahnson and invited children to draw there: *Untitled (Playtime)*, 1997. Pierre Huyghe projected a film by Gordon Matta-Clark, *Conical Intersect*, at the very site of its filming (*Light Conical Intersect*, 1997) (. . .)” (2) INHIBITING HISTORICIZED STYLES AND FORMS: “Felix Gonzales-Torres used the formal vocabularies of Minimalist art and Anti-form, recording them almost thirty years later to suit his own political preoccupations. The same glossary of Minimalist art is diverted by Liam Gillick toward an archeology of capitalism, by

Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster toward the sphere of the intimate, by Pardo toward a problematics of use, and by Daniel Pflumm toward a questioning of the notion of production. Sara Morris employs the modernist grid in her painting in order to describe the abstraction of economic flux. (. . .) Angela Bulloch, Tobias Rehberger, Carsten Nicolai, Sylvie Fleury, John Miller, and Sydney Stucki, to name only a few, have adapted minimalist, Pop, or conceptual structures to their personal problematics (. . .)" (3) MAKING USE OF IMAGES: "At the Aperto at the 1993 *Venice Biennale*, Bulloch exhibited a video of *Solaris*, the science fiction film by Andrei Tarkovsky, replacing its sound track with her own dialogue. *24 Hour Psycho*, 1997, a work by Douglas Gordon, consisted of a projection of Alfred Hitchcock's film *Psycho* slowed down to run for 24 h. Kendell Geers has isolated sequences of well-known films (Harvey Keitel grimacing in *Bad Lieutenant*, a scene from *The Exorcist*) and looped them in his video installations; for *TV Shoot*, 1998–1999, he took scenes and projected them onto two screens that faced each other." (4) USING SOCIETY AS A CATALOG OF FORMS: "When Matthieu Laurette is reimbursed for products he has consumed by systematically using promotional coupons ("Satisfaction guaranteed or your money back"), he operates within the cracks of the promotional system. (. . .) Jens Haaning transforms art centers into import-export stores and clandestine workshops; Daniel Pflum appropriates the logos of multinationals and endows them with their own aesthetic life. (. . .) Michel Majerus, who integrates the technique of sampling into his pictorial practice, exploits the rich visual stratum of promotional packaging." (5) INVESTING IN FASHION AND MEDIA: "The works of Vanessa Beecroft come from an intersection between performance and protocol of fashion photography; they reference the form of performance without being reduced to it. Sylvie Fleury indexes her production to the glamorous world of trends offered by women's magazines, stating that when she isn't sure what colors to use in her work, she uses the new colors by Chanel. (. . .) Wang Du selects images published in the press and duplicates them in three dimensions as painted wood sculptures." Bourriaud, N., *Postproduction*, op.cit., pp. 14–16.

³ See Ibidem.

⁴ Rancière, J., *Estetyka jako polityka (Aesthetics as Politics)*, translated into Polish by Julian Kutyla and Paweł Mościcki. (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej, 2007).

⁵ Foster, Hal. "Arty Party," *London Review of Books* (4 December 2003), p. 21.

⁶ Bourriaud, P., *Postproduction*, op.cit., p. 13.

⁷ See Buchloh, Benjamin. *Fikcyjne muzeum Marcela Broodthaersa (A Fictional Museum of Marcel Broodthaers)*, translated into Polish Joanna Kisiel, in: Maria Popczyk (ed.), *Muzeum sztuki. Antologia (Museum of Art. An Anthology)*. (Krakow: Universitas, 2005), pp. 491–506.

⁸ Ibidem, p. 505.

⁹ See O'Doherty, Brian. *Uwagi o przestrzeni galerii (Notes on Gallery's Space)*, translated into Polish by Aneta Szyłak, in: M. Popczyk (ed.), *Muzeum sztuki. . .*, op.cit., p. 473.

¹⁰ See Ibidem, p. 453.

¹¹ See Ibidem, p. 473.

¹² See Ibidem, p. 478.

¹³ Lyotard, Jean-François. "Les Immatériaux," *Art&Text*, 17 (1985), pp. 54–53.

¹⁴ Deliss, Clémentine. *Swobodne spadanie—stopklatka (Free Falling—Freeze-Frame)*, translated into Polish by Olga Topol, in: M. Popczyk (ed.), *Muzeum sztuki. . .*, op.cit., p. 390.

¹⁵ See Ibidem.

¹⁶ See, Bourriaud, N., *Postproduction*, op.cit.

¹⁷ Ibidem, p. 9.

¹⁸ Cf. Bourriaud's subheading: *How Art Reprograms World*.

¹⁹ Rancière, P., *Estetyka jako polityka*, op.cit., p. 6.

²⁰ See Ibidem, p. 24.

²¹ Ibidem, p. 25.

²² See Ibidem.

²³ Ibidem, p. 24.

²⁴ Żmijewski, Artur. *Polityczne gramatyki obrazów (Politic Gramaticses of Picture)*, in: P. Rancière, *Estetyka jako polityka*, op.cit., p. 7.

²⁵ Ibidem, pp. 22–23.

²⁶ See Ibidem.

²⁷ See Ibidem, p. 34.

²⁸ See Deliss, C., *Swobodne spадanie—stopklatka*, op.cit., p. 400.

OH, BEHAVE! NOTHING IN EXCESS OR
EVERYTHING IN GOOD ORDER: THE “PORTRAITS”
OF SOLON AND KHILON ON A LATE ARCHAIC
ATTIC RED-FIGURE CUP BY OLTOS

ABSTRACT

The following study builds upon a recent examination of the komasts labeled Solon and Khilon on a late sixth century B.C. Attic red-figure kylix (London E19) by Oltos. What ensues is a reassessment of the identification of the figures as two of the traditional members of the Seven Sages. In question are the youthful appearance of the figures and their pairing on the cup in light of chronological disparities. Also under scrutiny is the sympotic setting for the gathering of these constitutional reformers. Ultimately, however, the inquiry focuses upon the meaning or purpose behind the selection of these historic figures for the cup. Reanalysis of the cup intends to strengthen the identification of Solon and Khilon as exemplars of proper sympotic behavior by drawing upon the figures' real-life concerns and declarations for the establishment and maintenance of social order, while further reappraisal intends to establish this message by highlighting similarities in the interests of Solon and Khilon in eunomia and the current political aims of Kleisthenes for isonomia in Athens at the time of the cup's manufacture.

At first glance, the komastic scenes which decorate the exterior of the late archaic Attic red-figure kylix, London E19,¹ by Oltos, appear to resemble the similar displays of merriment prevalent in Athenian vase painting of the late sixth century B.C. (Figures 1 and 2).² The male figures on the cup, engaged in song, dance, and music playing, seem to follow the traditional representations of males in Athenian vase painting when involved in the random forms of dance, drinking, and other miscellaneous activities of the komos, the culminating event of the symposium, or more often, the transitional journey to the next symposium, in which the participants enter the streets of the city-state in a drunken revel. Meanwhile, the archer within the interior scene of the cup, dressed in military garb consisting of a round shield, bow, quiver, helmet, cuirass, chiton, and greaves, looks out of place for such a festive occasion



Figure 1. Side A of London E19 showing Molpis, Thalinos, and Xanthos. ca. 510-500 B.C. Photo © Copyright The British Museum



Figure 2. Side B of London E19 showing Nikon, Solon, and Khilon. ca. 510-500 B.C. Photo © Copyright The British Museum

(Figure 3). The inscriptions running throughout both the interior and exterior scenes of the cup, however, help to negate the oddity of the archer's presence, and add to the cup's sympotic flavor.

Kalos inscriptions, along with labels for the figures befitting the symposium or komos, such as Molpis, Thalinos, and Xanthos, furnish support for the identifications of not only the context for the scenes of the cup, but also the context of the cup and its intended use for within a real-life symposium or komos. Meanwhile, the remaining inscriptions on the cup, Nikon, Solon, and Khilon,



Figure 3. Interior of London E19 showing archer. ca. 510-500 B.C. Photo © Copyright The British Museum

although not entirely disconnected from the world of the symposium, are somewhat unique in their possible references to historical characters with the same names. The labels of Solon and Khilon, especially, draw attention to what may be representations of two renowned constitutional reformers, one Athenian, the other Spartan, of the early and middle sixth century B.C.

Such identifications for the figures, however, are questionable, in terms of the youthful representations of the figures, the figures' pairing on the cup, and the cup's date to the late sixth century B.C. Later, more traditional representations of Solon and Khilon depict the historical figures bearded and more befitting their political and philosophical status, whether shown alone, or together as members of the Seven Sages.³ A recent examination of the cup, however, accepts the historical attributions of Solon and Khilon for the figures and hints at possible political motivations behind their appearance on the cup.⁴

The following study continues in support of the identifications of Solon and Khilon for the figures on the cup, and intends to further the idea of the cup's political agenda. What ensues is a reassessment of the identifications of the

figures as two of the traditional members of the Seven Sages. In question are the youthful representations of the figures and their pairing on the cup in light of chronological disparities. Also under scrutiny is the sympotic setting for the gathering of these constitutional reformers.

Ultimately, however, the inquiry focuses upon the meaning or purpose behind the selection of these historic figures for the cup. Reanalysis of the cup intends to strengthen the identifications of Solon and Khilon as exemplars of proper sympotic behavior by drawing upon the figures' real-life concerns and declarations for the establishment and maintenance of social order; whereas, further reappraisal intends to establish this message by highlighting similarities in the interests of Solon and Khilon in *eunomia*, i.e., lawfulness or good order, and the current political aims of the constitutional reformer, Kleisthenes, for *isonomia*, or equality before the law, in Athens at the time of the cup's manufacture in the late sixth century B.C.

The Type B Attic red-figure kylix, London E19, was acquired originally, following its discovery in the Cucumella area of Vulci, by the Canino Collection in the early nineteenth century, from where it was subsequently purchased of the Principessa di Canino by the British Museum in London, most likely in 1843.⁵ Since 1843, the British Museum has permanently housed the cup, where it has remained an integral piece of the Museum's collection of ancient Greek vases.

The cup, however, despite its inclusion in one of the world's most prestigious collections of ancient Greek vases, has received little notice. Apart from its entry in a British Museum Catalogue and a few monographs on *Oltos*, literature on the cup has remained scant, so much so, that it has, surprisingly, not even appeared within the ten volumes of the *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum* devoted to the British Museum.⁶ Further treatments of the cup have turned up in the studies of Karl Schefold on ancient portraiture, but again, the discussions of the cup, here, have been limited to only a couple of pages.⁷ In fact, it has only been within the past few years, thanks to the scholarship of Richard Neer, that the cup has finally gained recognition.⁸

The exterior scenes of London E19 comprise a total of six komasts, three adult males and three youths, distributed equally between the handles of the cup (Figures 1 and 2). Each komast advances to either his left or right in an active fashion, with bent knees and a single foot pushing off at the toes. Further unity in motion among the six komasts, however, ends at the waist down, and any subsequent analysis of the komasts, as a whole, ends here as well, for although they are members of the same parade, the six komasts on the cup are treated, in reality, as two separate and distinct groups of three.

The first triad consists of bearded aristocrats, adorned with wreaths and fully clothed in himations (Figure 1). Starting from the left, we are introduced to the komast labeled as Molpis, literally "the singing or dancing one", who strides forward to the right with one arm wrapped up inside the himation, while the other arm is held erect in its possession of a staff.⁹ Unfortunately, the fragmentary nature of the cup has left the komast headless; however, one should surmise the bearded mug of Molpis to be of a similar quality to the remaining komasts in the scene.

The central komast, Thalinos, or "the sprightly one", provides the entertainment for the komos, as he marches along to the right and enlivens the group with his playing of the khelys lyre.¹⁰ And finally, the last komast, Xanthos, or "the fair one", finishes off the scene, as he glides to the left with one arm tucked away inside the himation, while the other arm is hung loosely at his side in delicate ownership of a flower.

In contrast, the youthful komasts of the second triad are primarily nude, clad in nothing but their wreaths and khlamydes, or short cloaks (Figure 2). Beginning with the youth on the left, however, we also notice a difference in the choice of names for these komasts. Nikon, for example, which could mean "the victorious one", instead, here, is a common Athenian name for the komast and not the evocation of a komastic attribute or spirit.¹¹ In fact, the kalos inscription appearing to the left of the figure of Nikon is only loosely connected to the name of Nikon because of a separation created by the figure's intervening head; a circumstance, which, according to John Beazley, keeps the two inscriptions from forming a true kalos name.¹²

Meanwhile, the realistic labeling of the youthful komasts on the cup continues with the central komast, Solon, whose body is twisting and turning in dance.¹³ Solon, however, is not as common a name as Nikon, as it only appears on one other vase, Munich 2243, a middle sixth century B.C. black-figure band cup by Archikles and Glaukytes.¹⁴ Khilon, another uncommon name, is selected for the final komast of the scene. The choice of name, here, too, is rare, as it only occurs on one other vase, Florence 81601, a late sixth century B.C. red-figure cup, also by Oltos.¹⁵ Again, however, the kalos inscription appearing to the right of the figure of Khilon is only loosely attached to the name of Khilon, thereby denying the two inscriptions of their true kalos status. In fact, only one true kalos name, Memnon kalos, exists on the cup, within the interior scene of the archer. This inscription, however, a hallmark of Oltos, is more likely a devotional to a friend than a label for identifying the archer.¹⁶

The unique selection of Solon and Khilon as names for the final pair of youthful komasts on the cup has led scholars to identify these figures, and their accompanying inscriptions, as references to the historical personages of

Solon, archon and Athenian constitutional reformer of the early sixth century B.C., and Khilon, ephor and Spartan constitutional reformer of the middle sixth century B.C.¹⁷ Already, however, problems in terms of the chronology with the historical Solon and Khilon and their representational counterparts on the cup should be seen: The historical figures of Solon and Khilon were not contemporaries; and they were, most certainly, not contemporaries of the late archaic cup.

The youthful representations of Solon and Khilon on the cup are additionally problematic. Traditionally, the historical figures of Solon and Khilon are shown bearded and fully clothed, in a manner more befitting their roles as statesmen and political theorists, and in keeping with their reputations as philosophers among the Seven Sages.¹⁸ Consequently, some scholars, such as Joachim Harnecker, question the historical attribution of Solon and Khilon to the figures on the cup; whereas, other scholars, such as Karl Schefold, claim the figures of Solon and Khilon on the cup as visual evidence for an earlier literary tradition for the Seven Sages, a precursor, if you will, to Plutarch's *Dinner of the Seven Wise Men* (146C1–164D).¹⁹

Unfortunately, there is more literary evidence than visual evidence to support an earlier tradition for the Seven Sages, and so it seems the youthful representations of Solon and Khilon on the cup should not be associated with this group.²⁰ Instead, the choice to represent Solon and Khilon as youths on the cup appears intentional, so as to draw attention to these figures by placing them in direct contrast to the scene of the adult males on the opposite side. After all, actual symposiasts or komasts would have been much more inclined to look at the scene of the nude youths on the cup than the scene of the fully clothed, bearded men. But why bring attention to a scene with political figures from the recent and more distant past; and why a Spartan politician at that? For answers, the figure of Solon and the performance of his dance with khlamys and staff must be explored (Figure 2).

Recently, this type of dance, with khlamys and staff, has been identified as a representation of the pyrrhic dance, thereby providing, for the first time, good visual evidence for male representations of the pyrrhic dance within a symposium setting.²¹ On London E19, the pose of Solon and the manipulation of the khlamys and staff in the figure's dance recall representations in Athenian vase painting of performances of the pyrrhic dance, with its various offensive and defensive steps as it was carried out with shield and spear by males in other contexts, such as funerals, sanctuaries, and most notably the Panathenaia, Athens' annual festival in honor of Athena (Figure 4).²²

On London E19 and elsewhere, however, the substitution of shield and spear for khlamys and staff in male performances of the pyrrhic dance within the



Figure 4. Shoulder of New York 21.88.2 showing pyrrhic dance. ca. 500 B.C. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1921 (21.88.2) Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art

symposium and the komos is a testament to both the enactment of a law abandoning public weapon use in Athens in the late sixth century B.C., as related by Thucydides (I.6.3) and Aristotle (*Pol.*2.1268 b 33–69 a 3), and according to Hans van Wees, the general shift from displays of physical prowess to the showcasing of leisure among scenes of gathering men in Athenian vase painting.²³

Consequently, the images of the khlamys and staff version of the pyrrhic dance were produced by some painters, if not all, as a response to growing concerns over the increasing violence attributed to overindulgence in drinking within the symposium and the komos; concerns that were at their greatest during the onset of the Athenian democracy in the late sixth century B.C., when leisure activities, such as symposia and komoi, became more accessible to the masses.²⁴ On the interior of London E19 (Fig. 3), Oltos has readdressed such concerns by selecting the image of a warrior, an archer, to serve as an allusion to war, the culminating event or inevitable consequence of civil strife or stasis, for the purpose of reminding the symposiasts or komasts, who were using or, more likely, abusing the contents of the cup, to keep their debauchery under control.²⁵

Accordingly, the images of the khlamys and staff version of the pyrrhic dance serve as models or examples for the prospective users of the vessels

on how to act responsibly as good Athenian citizens within the symposium and the komos. And since all of the extant vases which portray the khlamys and staff version of the pyrrhic dance are sympotic in nature, the intended users of the vessels have been identified as symposiasts and komasts. And so, the message promoted by the images of the dance within these settings is one of self-control and discipline. For this assertion, the psychological views of Paola Ceccarelli on the pyrrhic dance, as fully expressed in her seminal study on the dance from 1998, have been accommodated.²⁶ The discernment by Ceccarelli of the inherent ability of the pyrrhic dance to affect control over the transitions of the mind into various states of behavior has worked well with the reasoning for why the images of the khlamys and staff version of the pyrrhic dance exist on vases within sympotic and komastic settings in the first place; and so, too, her views work well with the reading of London E19.²⁷

The promotion of self-control, as embodied in the image of the pyrrhic dance on London E19, however, is further accommodated by the appearance of Solon and Khilon on the cup; whereby, the historical figures of Solon and Khilon are said to have coined, among others, the Delphic maxims, “know yourself” and “nothing in excess”.²⁸ Together with these moralistic sayings, the poetry of Solon and Khilon now also should be associated with this message of self-restraint.²⁹ Here, the lines from Solon’s *Eunomia* (Fragment 4), translated as “lawfulness”, are especially relevant:

Our state will never perish through the dispensation of Zeus or the intentions of the blessed immortal gods; for such a stout-hearted guardian, Pallas Athena, born of a mighty father, holds her hand over it. But it is the citizens themselves who by their act of foolishness and subservience to money are willing to destroy a great city, and the mind of the people’s leaders is unjust; they are certain to suffer much pain as a result of their great arrogance. **For they do not know how to restrain excess or to conduct in an orderly and peaceful manner the festivities of the banquet that are at hand.** . . . they grow wealthy, yielding to unjust deeds. . . sparing neither sacred nor private property, they steal with rapaciousness, one from one source, one from another, and they have no regard for the august foundations of Justice, who bears silent witness to the present and the past and who in time assuredly comes to exact retribution. This is now coming upon the whole city as an inescapable wound and the city has quickly approached wretched slavery, which arouses civil strife and slumbering war, the loss for many of their lovely youth. For at the hand of its enemies the much-loved city is being swiftly worn down amid conspiracies dear to the unjust. These are the evils that are rife among the people, and many of the poor are going to a foreign land, sold and bound in shameful fetters. . . . And so the public evil comes home to each man and the courtyard gates no longer have the will to hold it back, but it leaps over the high barrier and assuredly finds him out, even if he takes refuge in an innermost corners of his room. **This is what my heart bids me to teach the Athenians, that Lawlessness brings to the city countless ills, but Lawfulness reveals all that is orderly and fitting, and often places fetters round the unjust. She makes the rough smooth, puts a stop to excess, dries up the blooming flowers of ruin, straightens out crooked judgements, tames deeds of pride, and puts an end to acts of sedition and to the anger of grievous strife. Under her all things among men are fitting and rational.**³⁰

Meanwhile, the poetry of Khilon, while not directly related to eunomia from a thematic stand-point, could be regarded as such from a performative aspect. After all, Khilon was a man of few words; so much so, that a form of reserved speech, known as Khilonian, was named after him.³¹ One should surmise, however, that as a Spartan, Khilon was very much interested in eunomia, which was, undoubtedly, the principle which Spartan political and constitutional law identified with in the late seventh or early sixth century B.C., and the ideal which was eulogized by the seventh century B.C. Spartan poets, Alcman and Tyrtaeus.³² Perhaps final testimony to Khilon's long-standing devotion to and practice of eunomia, however, was the heroization of the great ephor upon death, as commemorated by the erection of a combined hero and grave relief inscribed with his name.³³

Eunomia, however, was no longer the driving principle, at least in Athens, for which politicians strived in the late sixth century B.C., during the time of London E19's creation.³⁴ In fact, the concept of eunomia, it seems, did not even officially return to Athens until the late fifth century B.C. when the goddess Eunomia herself, one of the Horai, the daughters of Themis, began to appear as the personification of Good Order on a series of Athenian vases by the Meidias Painter.³⁵ Instead, a new order, isonomia, or "equality before the law", was ushered into Athens in the late sixth century B.C., as a result of the assassination of Hipparkhos, son of Peisistratos and brother of Hippias, the then tyrant of Athens, by Harmodios and Aristogeiton, the Tyrannicides, in 514 B.C., an event best recounted in a stanza from the Harmodios skolia, or drinking songs:

You two will always have glory on the earth, most-loved Harmodios and Aristogeiton, because you killed the tyrant and made Athens a city of *isonomia*.³⁶

Greg Anderson, however, has recently promoted an alternative sequence of events for isonomia's emergence into Athens, in which both the term and the concept of isonomia were actually introduced into Athens by the Alcmaeonid Kleisthenes, as part of a political campaign conducted by the Athenian statesman to subvert the tyranny of the Peisistratids and to overcome the influential grip that the Peisistratid family had held over the Athenian populace for some thirty-five years, so as to win over the demos in hopes of instituting his own political and constitutional reforms.³⁷

In support of his claim, Anderson has highlighted the successful military strike crafted by Kleisthenes and waged by the Spartans upon the Peisistratids in 511/510 B.C. as the first act of Kleisthenes' campaign, which, as a result, ultimately influenced the rival Peisistratid family to flee Athens, thereby vacating the seat for political control of the city-state.³⁸ Over the next few years,

however, Kleisthenes had faced a number of obstacles in his vie for power in Athens, including a struggle with the rival nobleman Isagoras, and a reign of Peisistratid tyranny, which, in all actuality, was viewed upon favorably throughout its duration by a majority of the Athenian people as a form of legitimate and just rule.³⁹

Nevertheless, while the former contest with Isagoras had posed a formidable challenge to Kleisthenes, it was the latter circumstance which had primarily threatened the hopes of Kleisthenes for political leadership, and which, according to Anderson, had prompted Kleisthenes to portray the Peisistratids in an overtly negative way as “illegitimate usurpers worthy of their demise” who had “suspended or dismantled an older, ancestral order in Athens, which, in turn, isonomia would revive.”⁴⁰

In conclusion, history tells us that Kleisthenes was successful in the demoting of the Peisistratids, as well as in the promotion of his new order; so much so, that London E19 may serve as rare testimony to the influence of the political propaganda of Kleisthenes in the late sixth century B.C. On London E19, it appears as if Oltos deliberately chose to portray Solon as the champion of Good Order, so as to promote to the viewers of the cup the benefits of isonomia with its revival in Athens of the old, ancestral order of eunomia.⁴¹ Meanwhile, as for Khilon’s appearance on the cup, it seems as if Oltos has both thanked and complemented the Spartans for their aid in the expulsion of the Peisistratid tyranny by pairing on the cup one of the Spartans’ most venerated politicians and supporters of eunomia with one of Athens’ own similarly revered statesmen.⁴²

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NOTES

¹ For the most recent examination of London E19, see Neer, R. T., *Style and Politics in Athenian Vase-Painting: The Craft of Democracy, ca. 530-460 B.C.E.* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 149–154.

² For earlier examination of London E19, see Beazley, J. D., *Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters*, 3 vols. (2nd Edition, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), Vol. 1, p. 63.95; Bruhn, A., *Oltos and Early Red-Figure Vase Painting*. (Copenhagen: Nyt Nordisk Forlag, 1943), p. 64.63; Harnecker, J., *Oltos: Untersuchungen zu Themenwahl und Stil eines frührotfigurigen Schalenmalers*. (Frankfurt

am Main: P. Lang, 1991), pp. 99–100, 231.85; Schefold, K., "Das Bild des Weisen in der griechischen Kunst," in *Festschrift Hans R. Hahnloser zum 60. Geburtstag 1959*, ed. E. J. Beer, P. Hofer, and L. Mojon. (Basel: Birkhäuser, 1961), pp. 1–2; Schefold, K., *Die Bildnisse der antiken Dichter, Redner, und Denker*. (Basel: Schwabe, 1997), pp. 80–81; Smith, C., *Catalogue of the Greek and Etruscan Vases in the British Museum*, 4 vols. (London: Printed by order of the Trustees, 1896), Vol. 3, pp. 54–55.

³ For traditional representations of Solon and Khilon, see Andreae, B., "Das Mosaik der Sieben Weisen aus Sarsina in der Villa Albani in Rom und sein Verhältnis zum Philosophenmosaik aus Pompeji im Nationalmuseum von Neapel," in *Otium: Festschrift für Volker Michael Strocka*, ed. T. Ganschow and M. Steinhart. (Remshalden: Greiner, 2005), pp. 9–14; Dillon, S., *Ancient Greek Portrait Sculpture: Contexts, Subjects, and Styles*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 51, 61–62, 104; von Heintze, H., "Zu den Bildnissen der sieben Weisen," in *Festschrift für Frank Brommer*, ed. U. Hockmann and A. Krug. (Mainz am Rhein: von Zabern, 1977), pp. 163–173; von Heintze, H., "Die erhaltenen Darstellungen der sieben Weisen," *Gymnasium* 84 (1977), pp. 437–443; Richter, G. M. A., *The Portraits of the Greeks*. (London: Phaidon Press, 1965), pp. 83–86, 91; Schefold, 1961, op. cit., pp. 1–9; Schefold, 1997, op. cit.

⁴ Neer, op. cit., pp. 149–154.

⁵ For details surrounding the cup's discovery and acquisition, see Smith, op. cit., pp. 54–55; for other vases from this area, see Williams, D., *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum. Great Britain 17, The British Museum 9*. (London: British Museum Press, 1993), pp. 36, 39, 43.

⁶ Bruhn, op. cit., p. 64.63; Harnecker, op. cit., pp. 99–100, 231.85; Smith, op. cit., pp. 54–55.

⁷ Schefold, 1961, op. cit., pp. 1–2; Schefold, 1997, op. cit., pp. 80–81.

⁸ Neer, op. cit., pp. 149–154.

⁹ Neer, op. cit., pp. 149–154, reads this as Molmis, as it appears in the drawing in Schefold, 1997, op. cit., p. 81. Schefold, 1997, op. cit., p. 80, however, reads it as Molpis (as does Beazley, op. cit., p. 63.95), a derivative from the Greek molpe, meaning song or dance.

¹⁰ Schefold, 1997, op. cit., p. 80, says that this is a derivative from the Greek thalos, meaning sprout.

¹¹ Schefold, 1997, op. cit., p. 80, actually names this figure Xanthos and puts Nikon on the other side of the vase because he believes that Xanthos, here, is actually a representation of the sixth century B.C. lyric poet of the same name, and so he belongs on the side of the vase with the other historical persons. For other occurrences of the name Nikon, see Beazley, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 1602.

¹² Beazley, op. cit., p. 63.95.

¹³ Neer, op. cit., pp. 149–154, along with others, identifies this figure as Khilon. Schefold, 1997, op. cit., p. 80, identifies this figure as Solon. I agree with Schefold's identification, here, because of the inscription's proximity to the figure and the starting sigma in Solon emanating from the figure's body, as opposed to the final nu in Khilon.

¹⁴ Beazley, J. D., *Attic Black-Figure Vase-Painters*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), p. 163.2.

¹⁵ Beazley, 1963, op. cit., p. 64.96, reads Khilon on this vase, although the inscription is incomplete and appears elsewhere on the cup as Khilos; Steiner, A., *Reading Greek Vases*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 160, subscribes to the same reading.

¹⁶ Beazley, 1963, op. cit., Vol. 2, pp. 1599–1600.

¹⁷ Neer, op. cit., pp. 149–154; Schefold, 1961, op. cit., pp. 1–2; Schefold, 1997, op. cit., p. 80. For further information on Solon, see Blok, J. and Lardinois, A., *Solon of Athens: New Historical and Philological Approaches*. (Leiden: Brill, 2006); Irwin, E., *Solon and Early Greek Poetry: The Politics of Exhortation*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Lewis, J., "Slavery and Lawlessness in Solonian Athens," *Dike* 7 (2004), pp. 19–40; Lewis, J., *Solon the Thinker*:

Political Thought in Archaic Athens. (London: Duckworth, 2006); L'Homme-Wéry, L.-M., "La notion d'harmonie dans la pensée politique de Solon," *Kernos* 9 (1996), pp. 145–154; L'Homme-Wéry, L.-M., "De l'Eunomie solonienne à l'isonomie clisthénienne. D'une conception religieuse de la cite à sa rationalization partielle," *Kernos* 15 (2002), pp. 211–223; L'Homme-Wéry, L.-M., "Le role de la loi dans la pensée politique de Solon," in *Le législateur et la loi dans l'Antiquité. Hommage à Françoise Ruzé. Actes du colloque de Caen, 15–17 mai 2003*, ed. P. Sineux. (Caen: Presses universitaires de Caen, 2005), pp. 169–185; L'Homme-Wéry, L.-M., "L'Athènes de Solon sur le <<Vase François>>," *Kernos* 19 (2006), pp. 267–290; Wallace, R. W., "Revolutions and a New Order in Solonian Athens and Archaic Greece," in *Origins of Democracy in Ancient Greece*, ed. K. A. Raafaub, J. Ober, and R. W. Wallace. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), pp. 49–82. For further information on Khilon, see Cartledge, P., *Sparta and Lakonia. A Regional History, 1300-362 B.C.* (London: Routledge, 1979), pp. 102–159; Frel, J., "Chilon," *Listy Filologické* 89 (1966), pp. 278–281; Huxley, G. L., *Early Sparta*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), pp. 51, 69–71, 138; Jones, A.H.M., *Sparta*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 45; Luther, A., "Chilon von Sparta," in *Gelehrte in der Antike: Alexander Demandt zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. A. Goltz, A. Luther, and H. Schlange-Schöningen. (Cologne: Böhlau, 2002), pp. 1–16; Richer, N., *Les Éphores: Études sur l'histoire et sur l'image de Sparte (VIIIe-IIIe siècle savant Jésus-Christ)*. (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1998), pp. 117–134; Stibbe, C. M., "Chilon of Sparta," *Mededelingen van het Nederlands Instituut te Rome* 46, n.s. 11 (1985), pp. 7–24.

¹⁸ See above, n. 2.

¹⁹ Harnecker, op. cit., pp. 99–100; Scheffold, 1997, op. cit., p. 80. For *The Dinner of the Seven Wise Men*, see Plutarch, *Moralia*, 16 vols., trans. F. C. Babbitt, et al. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927–2004), Vol. 2, 146C1-164D.

²⁰ For an earlier literary tradition of the Seven Sages, see Bollansée, J., "Fact and Fiction, Falsehood and Truth: D. Fehling and Ancient Legendry about the Seven Sages," *Museum Helveticum* 56 (1999), pp. 65–75; Martin, R. P., "The Seven Sages as Performers of Wisdom," in *Cultural Poetics in Archaic Greece: Cult, Performance, Politics*, ed. C. Dougherty and L. Kurke. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 108–128. For arguments against an earlier literary tradition, see Fehling, D., *Die sieben Weisen und die frühgriechische Chronologie: Eine Traditionsgeschichtliche Studie*. (Bern: P. Lang, 1985). For further references on the Seven Sages, see Busine, A., *Les Sept Sages de la Grèce antique: Transmission et utilisation d'un patrimoine légendaire d'Hérodote à Plutarque*. (Paris: De Boccard, 2002); Snell, B., *Leben und Meinungen der Sieben Weisen*. (4th Edition, Munich: Heimeran, 1971).

²¹ Johnson, J., "Chlamys and Staff: Malibu 86.AE.280 and Other Representations of Male Pyrrhic Dancers at Symposia and Komoi in Athenian Vase Painting," *Archaeological Institute of America 107th Annual Meeting Abstracts* 29 (2006), p. 68. For disagreement with this view, see Ceccarelli, P., *La pirrica nell'antichità greco romana: stude sulla danza armata*. (Pisa: Istituti editoriale e poligrafici internazionali, 1998), pp. 58–67, who concludes that there is no substantial evidence to support an explicit association between male performances of the pyrrhic dance and symposia.

²² For representations of, and studies on the pyrrhic, see Borthwick, E. K., "P. Oxy. 2738: Athena and the Pyrrhic Dance," *Hermes* 98 (1970), pp. 318–331; Ceccarelli, P., "Naming the Weapon-Dance: Contexts and Aetiologies of the Pyrrhiche," in *Praktika IA'diethnous Sinedriou klassikon spoudon, Kavala 24–30 Augoustou 1999, eis mnemen Nikolaou A. Livadara*, 3 vols. (Athens: Fédération Internationale des Associations d'Études Classiques, 2002), Vol. 2, pp. 197–215; Ceccarelli, P., "Dancing the Pyrrhichē in Athens," in *Music and the Muses: The Culture of Mousike in the Classical Athenian City*, ed. P. Murray and P. Wilson. (Oxford: Oxford University

Press, 2004), pp. 91–117; Delavaud-Roux, M.-H., "La pyrrhique en Grece antique," *Études Indo-européennes* 9 (1990), pp. 29–47; Delavaud-Roux, M.-H., *Les danses armées en Grece antique*. (Aix-en-Provence: Publications de l'université de Provence, 1993); Downes, W. E. D., "The Offensive Weapon in the Pyrrhic," *Classical Review* 18 (1904), pp. 101–106; Goulaki-Voutira, A., "Pyrrhic Dance and Female Pyrrhic Dancers," *Revue Internationale d'Iconographie Musicale* 21 (1996), pp. 3–12; Lonsdale, S., *Dance and Ritual Play in Greek Religion* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), pp. 137–168; Pinney, G., "Pallas and Panathenaea," in *Proceedings of the 3rd Symposium on Ancient Greek and Related Pottery, Copenhagen, August 31-September 4, 1987*, ed. J. Christiansen and T. Melander. (Copenhagen: Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, 1988), pp. 465–477; Poursat, J.-C., "Les représentations de danse armée dans la céramique Attique," *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique* 92 (1968), pp. 550–615.

²³ For the abandonment of public weapon use, see Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, 4 vols., tr. C. F. Smith. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1919–1923), Vol. 1, I.VI.3, and Aristotle, *Politics*, tr. H. Rackham. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932), 2.1268 b 33–69 a 3. Also see van Wees, H., "Greeks Bearing Arms: The State, the Leisure Class, and the Display of Weapons in Archaic Greece," in *Archaic Greece: New Approaches and New Evidence*, ed. N. Fisher and H. van Wees. (London: Duckworth, 1998), pp. 333–378.

²⁴ For an increase in violence at this time and social mobility, see Fisher, N., "Gymnasia and the democratic values of leisure," in *Kosmos: Essays in order, conflict and community in classical Athens*, ed. P. Cartledge, P. Millett, and S. von Reden. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 84–104; Fisher, N., "Violence, masculinity and the law in classical Athens," *When Men Were Men: Masculinity, Power and Identity in Classical Antiquity*, ed. L. Foxhall and J. Salmon. (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 68–97; Fisher, N., "Symposiasts, Fish-Eaters and Flatterers: Social Mobility and Moral Concerns in Old Comedy," in *The Rivals of Aristophanes: Studies in Athenian Old Comedy*, ed. D. Harvey and J. Wilkins. (London: Duckworth and The Classical Press of Wales, 2000), pp. 355–396.

²⁵ There is a desire to identify the archer as Scythian and as a member of the Scythian archer police, but the evidence shows that this police force was not active in Athens until the fifth century B.C. For the identification of the archer as Scythian, see Vos, M. F., *Scythian Archers in Archaic Attic Vase-Painting*. (Groningen: J.B. Wolters, 1963), p. 61. For the identification of the archer as non-Scythian, see Lissarrague, F., *L'autre guerrier: archers, peltastes, cavaliers dans l'imagerie attique*. (Paris: La Découverte, 1990), pp. 127–130; Raeck, W., *Zum Barbarenbild in der Kunst Athens im 6. und 5. Jahrhundert v. Chr.* (Bonn: R. Habelt, 1981), p. 22. For Scythian archers as police, see Bäbler, B., "Bobbies or Boobies? The Scythian Police Force in Classical Athens," in *Scythians and Greeks: Cultural Interactions in Scythia, Athens and the Early Roman Empire (sixth century BC—first century AD)*, ed. D. Braund. (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2005), pp. 114–122; Barringer, J., "Scythian Hunters on Attic Vases," in *Greek Vases: Images, Contexts and Controversies*, ed. C. Marconi. (Leiden: Brill, 2004), pp. 13–25; Braund, D., "In Search of the Creator of Athens' Scythian Archer-Police: Speusis and the 'Eurymedon Vase,'" *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 156 (2006), pp. 109–113; Ivantchik, A., "'Scythian' Archers on Archaic Attic Vases: Problems of Interpretation," *Ancient Civilizations from Scythia to Siberia* 12 (2006), pp. 197–271; Plassart, A., "Les archers d'Athènes," *Revue des études grecques* 26 (1913), pp. 151–213.

²⁶ Ceccarelli, 1998, op. cit., pp. 187–218; Ceccarelli, 2004, op. cit., pp. 91–117.

²⁷ For a similar view on dance's ability to motivate change in behavior, see Wilson, P., "The Politics of Dance: Dithyrambic Contest and Social Order in Ancient Greece," in *Sport and Festival*

in *the Ancient Greek World*, ed. D. J. Phillips and D. Pritchard. (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2003), pp. 163–196.

²⁸ Laetius, Diogenes. *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, 2 vols., tr. R. D. Hicks. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1925), Vol. 1, I.41, I.45–73.

²⁹ Irwin, op. cit.; Raafaub, K. A., “Athenian and Spartan *Eunomia*, Or: What to do with Solon’s Timocracy?,” in *Solon of Athens: New Historical and Philological Approaches*, ed. J. Blok and A. Lardinois. (Leiden: Brill, 2006), pp. 390–428.

³⁰ For this translation of the poem, see Blok and Lardinois, op. cit., pp. 457–458. Emphasis is my own. For more on the poem itself, see Blaise, F., “Poetics and Politics: Tradition Re-worked in Solon’s ‘Eunomia’,” in *Solon of Athens: New Historical and Philological Approaches*, ed. J. Blok and A. Lardinois. (Leiden: Brill, 2006), pp. 114–133; Irwin, op. cit., pp. 85–198; Jaeger, W., “Solon’s *Eunomia*,” in *Five Essays*, tr. A. M. Fiske. (Montreal: M. Cassalini, 1966), pp. 75–99; Mülke, C., *Solons Politische Elegien und Iamben (Fr. 1-13; 32–37 West). Einleitung, Übersetzung, Kommentar*. (Munich: K.G. Saur, 2002), pp. 88–102.

³¹ Laetius, op. cit., I.72.

³² van Wees, H., “Tyrtaeus’ *Eunomia*: Nothing to do with the Great Rhetra,” in *Sparta: New Perspectives*, ed. S. Hodkinson and A. Powell. (London: Duckworth, 1999), pp. 1–41; van Wees, H., “Gute Ordnung ohne Große Rhetra—Noch einmal zu Tyrtaios’ *Eunomia*,” *Göttinger Forum für Altertumswissenschaft* 5 (2002), pp. 89–103.

³³ Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 5 vols., ed. R. E. Wycherly and tr. W. H. S. Jones and H. A. Ormerod. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1918–1935), Vol. 2, III.16.4; Jeffery, L. H., *The Local Scripts of Archaic Greece: A Study of the Origin of the Greek Alphabet and Its Development from the Eighth to the Fifth Centuries B.C.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), p. 200.26; Stibbe, C. M., “Dionysos in Sparta,” *Bulletin Antieke Beschaving* 66 (1991), pp. 1–44; Wace, A. J. B., “A Spartan Hero Relief,” *Archaiologike Ephemeris* (1937), pp. 217–220; Woodward, A. M., “Laconia. Excavations at Sparta, 1909. Inscriptions,” *The Annual of the British School at Athens* 15 (1908–1909), pp. 80–81.

³⁴ For more on *eunomia*, see Andrewes, A., “*Eunomia*,” *The Classical Quarterly* 32 (1938), pp. 89–102; Mele, A., “Costituzioni arcaiche ed *Eunomia*,” in *Poleis e politeiai : esperienze politiche, tradizioni letterarie, progetti costituzionali*, ed. S. Cataldi. (Alexandria: Edizioni dell’Orso, 2004), pp. 55–69; Ostwald, M., *Nomos and the Beginnings of the Athenian Democracy*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), pp. 62–95; Raafaub, op. cit., pp. 390–428.

³⁵ For the cult of *Eunomia*, see Smith, A., *Political Personifications in Classical Athenian Art*. (Diss. New Haven, 1997), pp. 109–115. For representations of *Eunomia* on vases by the Meidias Painter, see Borg, B., *Der Logos des Mythos: Allegorien und Personifikationen in der frühen griechischen Kunst*. (Munich: Fink, 2002), pp. 190–208; Borg, B., “*Eunomia* or ‘make love not war’? Meidian personifications reconsidered,” in *Personification in the Greek World: From Antiquity to Byzantium*, ed. E. Stafford and J. Herrin. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 193–210; Burn, L., *The Meidias Painter*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), pp. 37–39; Smith, 1997, op. cit., pp. 138–141.

³⁶ For the translation of this stanza, see Neer, op. cit., p. 171. For more on the *skolia* and *isonomia*, see Ostwald, op. cit., pp. 96–160.

³⁷ Anderson, G., *The Athenian Experiment: Building an Imagined Political Community in Ancient Attica, 508-490 B.C.* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), p. 205; Anderson, G., “Why the Athenians Forgot Cleisthenes: Literacy and the Politics of Remembrance in Ancient Athens,” in *The Politics of Orality*, ed. C. Cooper. (Leiden: Brill, 2007), p. 120.

³⁸ Anderson, 2007, op. cit., p. 103.

³⁹ For a view of Peisistratid rule as not unfavorable, see Anderson, G., “Before *Tirannoï* Were Tyrants: Rethinking a Chapter of Early Greek History,” *Classical Antiquity* 24 (2005), pp. 173–222; Anderson, 2007, op. cit., p. 122.

⁴⁰ Anderson, 2007, op. cit., p. 123.

⁴¹ For success in the demonization of the Peisistratid tyranny, see Anderson, 2007, op. cit., pp. 122–124. For Kleisthenes’ *isonomia* as a deliberate reference to Solon’s *eunomia*, see L’Homme-Wéry, L.-M., 2002, op. cit., pp. 211–223.

⁴² For the attitude towards Sparta’s role in the expulsion of the Peisistratids and afterwards, see Anderson, 2003, op. cit., pp. 199, 205, 207–208; Anderson, 2007, op. cit., pp. 122–123.

SECTION IV
ARTISTIC AND PHILOSOPHICAL ITINERARIES

VISUALIZING TYMIENIECKA'S APPROACH TO
ORIGINALITY

*For Kathleen Haney*¹

Creation is a resumption, not an abandonment, of reality.

Anna Teresa Tymieniecka²

ABSTRACT

Tymieniecka believes that human meaning-bestowing in the creative act happens *before* cognition. This makes her prose difficult, overwhelming in volume and intensity. In the presence of artistic works, however, her words become clear and penetrating, because, in the presence of art we are in a contemplative rather than a rational mode. This essay demonstrates how the action of her words matches the action of, e.g. Jackson Pollock. Her Phenomenology of Life deals with objective ontological structures and subjective constitutive formations, like the Analytic Cubism of Braque and Picasso. Her philosophy changes our orientation fundamentally, the way Robert Rauschenberg's *Monogram* radically changed the field and expectations of support of a painting. While the reactions of the Post-Modern artists like John Baldassari and the Pictures Generation, e.g. Sherrie Levine, Cindy Sherman or David Salle, would seem antithetical to Tymieniecka's taste, their actions/works are just what Tymieniecka orders: that the original, creative work is a cipher into the life-world. That it renews the life world when the beholder receives the artist's "original gift." Such renewal does not occur in the popular works of Jeff Koons, who insists that his art begins and ends with the image. The Pictures Generations artists produce ciphers that reach down into life, make from its elemental stuff a work that is uniquely their own in time and place. In this lies the originality of the work.

The breadth, depth and difficulty of Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka's phenomenological writings are known to all who have studied her work. Because she reaches out to encompass a whole cosmology in the act of writing, she pours out her intuitions in a loose "build" whose sense is carried from one

construction to another, similar to the way Jackson Pollock moves threads of paint to bring the developed regions of a canvas into unity.³

At times her prose seems verbose and therefore confusing, but it has been my experience as an art critic that passages in Tymieniecka bring works of art to mind, and that some passages in her writings actually open the life, not just the narrative, of an artwork.⁴ But the reverse is also true, the density of certain of Tymieniecka's arguments can be unpacked by referring to an artwork. This paper seeks to do this for her arguments about creativity and especially originality. Caveat emptor: While this essay directly quotes and "illustrates" passages from Tymienicka's treatise and therefore helps illuminate their meaning, such a filmstrip approach cannot evoke the cinematic controlled wonder that her prose engenders: like that of a detective unveiling his discoveries to a room of cloistered suspects. Her texts can best be approached sensually. Listen, for example, to this: "Creative perception . . . represents . . . a phase comprising the entire self-interpretive operational system of the living individual-on-the-brink of turning into the specifically human self construction" (*L&LI*, p. 123)—an exclamation that surges on a torrent of italization.⁵

CREATIVITY AS THE PRIMARY DISTINCTION OF THE HUMAN BEING: JACKSON POLLOCK

In the first volume of her magnum opus *Logos and Life* entitled *Creative Experience and the Critique of Reason*, Tymieniecka argues that the creative act, not reason or cognition, is the primary distinction of the human condition. Tymieniecka moves beyond Husserl to argue that human beings are meaning-bestowing agents *before* cognition, that the individual interprets himself in existence as he enacts and creates his life. He will consider what he has done, true, but action comes first. This is reminiscent of Jackson Pollock's paintings, embodiments of action and creation, and then cogitation along with and after enactment (Figure 1). The strings of Pollocks's paint flow as concrete markers of choice, and so can be read as a visualization of Tymieniecka's description of the essence of human being whose "passional soul . . . plays the role of the galvanizing and dynamic complex from within which all the other functional segments of the creation of meaningfulness draw prompting, propulsions, passional strivings, etc. [It] may from its abysmal depth surge into its own aspirations and engage in a passional pursuit of its own" (*L&LI*, p. 13). What could be a better evocation of the meaning of his action painting⁶ than Hans Namuth's photographs of Pollock dancing his paintings into being?⁷



Figure 1. Hans Namuth, Jackson Pollock in action. 1950. Courtesy Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona, ©1991, Hans Namuth Estate

Pollock's horizontal pours of paint across an indeterminate extent of canvas⁸ can be read as a metaphor for the openness that allows human self-creation expanding into "*the possible worlds of life.*" While Husserl and other phenomenologists defined the human by its rationality and perception, for Tymieniecka—and the Abstract Expressionists' and probably most artists—the major controls of human life are not in the intellect but in the creative imagination (personified for Tymieniecka as the *Imaginatio Creatrix*), not merely in sensory perception but in the human will (*L&LI*, p. 11). The personification of this creative will is Michelangelo's flying God throwing forth the life-worlds of the Sistine Ceiling.

By finding life-building rather than thought-building at the center of her "system" Tymieniecka radically overturned the phenomenological perspective. Her *Phenomenology of Life* unifies the earlier perspectives that divided objective ontological structures from subjective constitutive formations. Life requires both. This unification does not make for greater simplicity of argument and her prose style reflects this. It does not develop along a traditional philosophic path because she intends to demonstrate the close, albeit temporal, unity of the numerous aspects of any issue. In her discussion of creativity

in life, she begins *in medias res* “at the center of all differentiation” (*L&LI*, p. 10). Like an artist, her literary form expresses her concept. She handles prose as though it were a painting, indeed, she calls her organization a triptych—a physical object. Indeed her prose is filled with object analogies, artistic vocabulary rather than literary terms: “intricate performance,” “carried at crucial joints by elemental strivings,” “life symphony constructs itself from fragments of their juxtaposed designs,” “anticipatory emptiness of one phase versus plenitude,” “develops the constructively progressing design in view of [the] presumed coherence which projects itself.”

Such terminology recalls the early twentieth century Analytical Cubist works of Georges Braque (Figure 2) and Pablo Picasso.⁹ In fact, it makes immediate sense when juxtaposed with Cubist works. The novelty of the Cubist style was their opening of traditional formulas to multiple dimensions of space and time. The openness of their constructions, the quasi-arbitrariness of the reconstructions of figures, evokes Tymieniecka’s description of the origins of creativity “*at the transition between vital and creative functioning within which the new system bestowing meaning on life unfolds. Its play of forces appears within the field of actual consciousness [as in the textures of the open planes of the Cubist painting] in the networks of their schematic articulations [the figures are drawn with angular lines, sometimes with shaded], partly directly, partly in profile [as in the Cubist painting where the faces are most clearly distinguished by eyelids seen directly and noses or pipes in profile]*” (*L&LI*, p. 123).

Although Analytical Cubist works radically transform the surface, the Cubist portrait composition is traditional: predominant figure, three-quarter-length pose, head centered in the upper quarter. Compare Tymieniecka’s description of the quality of life-enhancing change that occurs not through consciousness but on it:

Husserl’s constitutive perception lies in the full light of the field of consciousness—immediately open to consciousness [the traditional format]. . . . It is upon this ground that “radical mutation” takes place. . . . in opposition to it, and by means of mechanisms which dismember its constructive schema and set operational forces free to take on new roles within a different constructive system (*L&LI*, p. 123).

While the general structure of the portrait does not change, the positions of the features and other aspects move, open the figure in various spaces and various time—a radical change for the traditional figure meant to be seen from one point of view at one iconic time. *These operations lie “in-between” the*



Figure 2. George Braque, *The Portuguese (L'émigrant)*, 1911–1912 (inv. No. 2296), oil on canvas, 117 × 81.5 cm, Kunstmuseum Basel, Gift Raoul La Roche, 1952, photo: Kunstmuseum Basel, Martin P. Bühler

constitutive and creative systems uncoordinated, lurking on the horizon in a twilight zone (L&L1, p. 123).

We do not see how the forms are held together, why they have moved, whether they will stay in position, etc. At this point of encounter “*between two different regions of sense we enter into the bowels of life itself*” (L&L1, p. 124). While we recognize the “objects” in the Analytic Cubist painting, our delight lies in the “space” that allows us to recognize them and, more importantly, to open the door of further possibilities through change.

THE CREATIVE ACT AS RUPTURE: ROBERT
RAUSCHENBERG

For the next stage of development we might consider Robert Rauschenberg's combine *Monogram* (1955–1959, New York, Metropolitan Museum) as an analogy (Figure 3).

In this revolutionary work, Rauschenberg attaches objects to a support, but rather than hang it on a wall, he places it on a floor. Although much of the surface is painted (the “highest form of art” for the period), it could no longer be considered a traditional painting when he added the standing ram-in-tire motif to the center. Rather he chooses things and expressions to be seen from a new angle, a flat bed. He forces the beholder to reconsider position and location as well as composition, style, format.

For Tymieniecka the creative act opposes the totality of human experience in its present state and as we have known it. The originality of the creative act lies in its complete disintegration of the constitutive field of consciousness [the rejection of the vertical orientation in *Monogram*] so that the artist can pierce through the meaningful web of objectivity that absorbs him. He disentangles himself from function and from natural perception so that the creative imagination can take over and all elements vary as freely as possible. The searching



Figure 3. Robert Rauschenberg, *Monogram*, 1955–1959, combine. Metropolitan Museum, New York, Art © Estate of Robert Rauschenberg/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY

eye of artist introduces what seems to be a radical chaos [this could be a subtitle for *Monogram*], but which upon reflection becomes a new comprehensible ordering.¹⁰

Revolutionary works, like that of Rauschenberg, were not born like Minerva directly from the head of Zeus, but rather were actualized only after much trial and error. Art historians have studied such evolutions carefully; indeed descriptions of them abound in my work. The curious thing is that the evolution does not proceed at a steady rate, but rather leaps suddenly from a series of early experiments with traditional forms to the new “creative” solutions (see for example the history of the evolution of Cubism). One of my colleagues, ceramist William Weaver, once explained that he had to write out all of the bad, get them out of his system, before he could find the “right” words. This is also demonstrated in the training of graphic designers who must make over a hundred designs for a logo; the requirement of the large number forces them to work beyond their conscious habits. So the new may be radical, but it only comes out after flushing out the old, after emptying out conscious memory banks.

Tymieniecka argues that the condition of authentic artistic activity requires a radical transformation of the field of consciousness, that each new style “enriches and diversifies our perspectives on the nature of reality.” All creative (new) works become real as they take us into the “embracing whirl of existence-in-the-making, a primary modality of life. [We become aware of that whirl] by refreshing our sensibility of it, and by sharpening our reflection about it” through creative work (*L&LI*, p. 129). Tymieniecka sets the same goals for phenomenology, summarized below reformatted for emphasis.

It is precisely the vocation of phenomenology

1. to make philosophical inquiry attentive to all the “voices of sense” other than intellect;
2. to be open to all avenues of life’s constructive meandering;¹¹
3. to be courageous enough to oppose all traditional prejudices, codes, established patterns of argumentation, rhetorics, etc.—and all the paraphernalia of the rational limitations of our mind—
4. and to use all the means at our disposal in order to elucidate this gigantic game of human creation (*L&LI*, p. 15).

THE PICTURES GENERATION

To understand the radical confidence of her goals, here they are set against the pessimism at the “fin de millennium” as expressed by the young American artists of the Pictures Generation (1970s and 1980s). Their ideals can be most concretely exemplified in the work of one of the most well-regarded artists of



Figure 4. Michel Mandiberg, *Untitled* (AfterSherrieLevine.com/4.jpg) These images reproduce Michel Mandiberg's scanning of Sherrie Levine's exhibition *First and Last* catalogue; she exhibited her rephotographs of Walker Evans' 1936 photographs of the Burroughs family, Alabama sharecroppers. Mandiberg gives all site users permission to use these images, issues certificates of authenticity for each image. "This is an explicit strategy to create a physical object with cultural value, but little or no economic value"

the Pictures Generation, Sherrie Levine, who exhibited as "original" work her own 1979 re-photographs of Walker Evans (Figure 4).

Such works would seem antithetical to Tymieniecka's taste as well as her prescriptions for what is necessary for the work of art: *that in which "reality is in a nearly undefined, uncrystallized form, . . . vaguely outlined," full of potential so the imagination can be stimulated and on which the artist or viewer can bring to bear a new architecture* (*L&LI*, pp. 127–128). Yet we can see how Tymieniecka's arguments about the nature of the creative drive / goals of phenomenology might be linked with the dicta of the Pictures Generation. These artists were "open to all avenues of life's constructive meandering," if we consider popular imagery as a result of life's constructive meandering. They were "courageous enough to oppose all traditional prejudices, codes, established patterns of argumentation, rhetorics:" they refused the traditional medium of high art, painting, as a medium. They used "all the means at our disposal in order to elucidate this gigantic game of human creation," turning to photography and video as media, referring to commercial art and film in their images. Such tensions between generations are expected in the history of the changes in styles, and are analogous to, e.g. the development of Mannerist reaction to the High Renaissance masters in the sixteenth century.

Douglas Eckland, curator of a recent exhibition of the Pictures Generation at the Metropolitan Museum in New York¹² explains the circumstances in which these artists developed. Most were middle class, college-trained by

avant-garde professors. They expected to be the new avant-garde, but graduated into an artworld in which the elder generation had already invented every possible new artform from earthworks to conceptual art. "The utopian promise [of a] counterculture had devolved into a commercialized pastiche of rebellious stances prepackaged for consumption."¹³ Their given was too rich at all levels. They saw themselves as swimming "in a sea of images into which they were born—the media culture of movies and television, popular music, and magazine that to them constituted a sort of fifth element or a prevailing kind of weather."¹⁴ Images of assassinations, race riots and sexual revolutions immediately available in the commercial media shocked them through childhood.

Although they found their own ubiquitous visual culture highly seductive, they adopted the cool and critical attitudes of contemporary French philosophers and cultural critics, just made available in translation. For Holland Cotter¹⁵ their pictures, photos, films, media were a mixture of cynicism, anxiety and nostalgia, or for Ecklund, "productively schizophrenic."¹⁶ And so it is not surprising that, sometime between 1981 and 1984, Sherrie Levine appropriated texts to compose wrote this well-known manifesto.

The world is filled to suffocating. Man has placed his token on every stone. Every word, every image, is leased and mortgaged. And we note that the picture is but a space in which a variety of images, none of them original, blend and clash. A picture is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centers of culture. . . . We can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never original. Succeeding the painter, the plagiarist no longer bears within him passions, humors, feelings, impressions, but rather this immense encyclopedia from which he draws. The viewer is the tablet on which all quotations that make a painting are inscribed without any of them being lost. A painting's meaning lies not in its origin, but in its destination. The birth of the viewer must be at the cost of the painter.¹⁷

Such an action, so calculated, so non-original, so intentional are antithetical to the Tymieniecka/the modernist sense of originality in art, the Pollock mode with its "intricate performance . . . carried at crucial joints by elemental strivings, . . . life symphony construct[ing] itself from fragments of . . . juxtaposed designs, [the] anticipatory emptiness of one phase versus plenitude." Gone is the sense of the immediate and spontaneous welling up from unity of life itself. No constructively progressing design develops "in view of [the] presumed coherence which projects itself" (*L&LI*, p. 15 as cited above). Rather Levine rejects such naive simplicity:

When I began this work I was thinking about my relationship to the Utopian ideas expressed by the Modernists. . . . As Post-Modernists we find that simple faith very moving, but our relationship to that simplicity is necessarily complex.¹⁸

The given of the Post-Moderns is totally artificial, their individuality overwhelmed by commerciality. Cindy Shearman tells us in an interview:

It's challenging to reach a jaded public seeing God-knows-what in movies and television. We've become more callous to things than ever before . . .

Question: In this era, are any new images possible?

“Not really,” she said. “Anyone who thinks they've come up with new images—they're fooling themselves. That's why I'm not a painter. There's nothing that can be done that hasn't been done before, in paint.”¹⁹

Gone is sense of “the living individual-on-the-brink of turning into the specifically human self construction” (*L&L1*, p. 123). Passionate construction with primary materials (paint) is replaced by skeptical rearrangements from the surfeit of imagery deposited in and on their realities. Rather, construction is replaced by appropriation, as Levine's manifesto proclaims, and reaches even to the appropriation of “character” as in Cindy Sherman's self-portraits, “almost performances,” centerfolds, and film-stills as pop stars and characters.

John Baldessari, the Ur-teacher of the Pictures Generation artists from California Institute of the Arts, concerned himself with “invisible artists,” that is, artists who did not work in the traditional media, particularly painting. According to Ecklund, “What the students got was an education in Conceptual art shaped by Baldessari's offbeat, humorous critique of its orthodoxies as they were being codified.”²⁰ Although Baldessari's premise was that art could not be taught, it is clear that his students learned a new approach to art from his presence, from his approbation or approval. He convinced them to question the basis of art: e.g. where it came from, where it existed, what was necessary for it. Clearly for him, art was not in the visual arrangement, even if those forms traced the generation of the work (as in Pollock). For Baldessari art lies in its originality, its lack of dependence on the forms of earlier masters. It was the idea, not the material, design, or form, that had to be original; one their Ur-activities involved “pointing and selecting, sifting out from other possible things to point at,”²¹ actions that lead the viewer away from the artist's making as subject and to the artist's choice. Photography can emphatically state that whatever the given is, art arises from the artist's choice.²² And the point of the picture was to raise questions in the viewer. The locus of the artwork then was the viewer.

The artists of the Pictures Generation limited their choice to their own world. They re-record it ironically, as if to say “Have you really seen this? Did you really take it in? Should you?” Such intersubjective probings surely led David Salle and James Welling to the intriguing exhibition title “Images that Understand Us.”²³

TYMIENIECKA AND THE CREATIVE EXPERIENCE

To be understood a writer has to explain almost everything. Painter Eugene Delacroix

It was into this world that Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka founded her societies and the World Phenomenological Institute, and it was against such an "attitude of radical pessimism toward the human condition" (*L&LI*, p. xxiii) that she wrote the first volume of her series, *Logos and Life*, entitled: *Creative Experience and the Critique of Reason*. We will see, with Kathleen Haney (p.c.), that the pessimism of the Pictures Generation "has to do with their thinking that they and their art are at an end rather than in a stage, whereas Tymieniecka's optimism finds its source in her ideas of temporality and telos." Abigail Solomon-Godeau has criticized the work of this generation for being too tied to its contemporary time and place, for being too conceptual, for its destructiveness, for lacking the integrity of modernist photography:

If one of the major claims of modernist art theory was the insistence on the self-sufficiency and purity of the work of art, postmodern practice hinges on the assertion of contingency and the primacy of cultural codes. It follows that a significant proportion of postmodern art based on photographic usages is animated by a critical, or, if one prefers, deconstructive impulse. The intention of such work is less about provoking feeling than about provoking thought.²⁴

An examination of Tymieniecka's method of integrating the contingencies through which the artist must work with the role the artist plays in furthering the progress of the life-world will dissolve this apparent dichotomy.

Even though the work of the Pictures Generation might not fit into Tymieniecka's category of taste, or definition of art, her aesthetic can be used to justify and understand their art. For example, their sense of drowning in high art, popular, and commercial imagery could be addressed with the passage: "Creation is a resumption, not an abandonment of reality. It is . . . a conscious and desired reconquest of that which, passively accepted, threatened to submerge us" (*L&LI*, p. 61).

Logos and Life formalizes the "utopian promises" the Pictures Generation despaired of achieving in painting. To paraphrase (with quotations) Tymieniecka, it approaches the human being "in his evolving genesis within the constructive meaning-projecting progress of life . . . the vehicle of beingness." The human creative imagination allows new functional modalities to emerge in life, new proficiencies to be actualized from vital forces, and new powers to be released for new life functions (*L&LI*, pp. 319–320).

If we examine what the artists did rather than their early proclamations, we can easily see how Tymieniecka's arguments about the nature of the creative drive (see p. xx above) might be linked with the dicta of the Pictures

Generation. These artists, like Rauschenberg, thought that the picture, not theory, came first.²⁵ They were “open to all avenues of life’s constructive meandering” but found their imagery in popular rather than high culture. They were “courageous enough to oppose all traditional prejudices, codes, established patterns of argumentation, rhetorics”: they refused the traditional medium (but not the goals) of high art,²⁶ painting, as a medium. They used “all the means at our disposal in order to elucidate this gigantic game of human creation,” turning to photography and video as media, referring to commercial art and film in their images. To examine the theory of these artists, as well as the “performance” of their works, then, is to test the universality of Tymieniecka’s aesthetics.

Since the whole text of *Logos and Life 1* can be read as a response to the pessimism of the Pictures Generation, let us conclude this discussion by focusing on a few pages that address these issues directly: the Chapter “Existential Overplay,” Section 6, “The Created Object Overflows with its Fluctuating Virtually Potent Core of ‘Meaning’ into the Constituted World that it Enters.”

The heavily appropriated imagery of many of the Pictures Generation, in particular Cindy Sherman, acts at the least as a commentary on and an indicator of popular images assimilated uncritically (Figure 5). Like the phenomenological reduction it causes the beholder to reconsider his unthinking acceptance of



Figure 5. Cindy Sherman. *Untitled Film Still*, 1980. Black and white photograph, 8 x 10 inches. Courtesy of the Artist and Metro Pictures

the images that shaped his society, but it also involves suspending any blocks to the creative activity of the beholder, caused by the surfeit of and the inflation of images that brings about devaluation, or a sedimentation that hides any access to creative activity.²⁷ Sherman's references, e.g. to Marilyn Monroe,²⁸ have a sense of being too familiar, but are strangely disconcerting in their concentration and objecthood. We read behind the commerce to the vulnerability of the person being sold. "The objective intentional structure within the creative vision allows the work to break into the life-world in its thing-hood; radically renew that life-world; serve as a recurrent guidepost to culture; and act as a bridge across the breaking points in the continuing progress of man in his historicity" (*L&LI*, p. 294). Because they unsettle our complacency about the commercialized "reality" that submerges us, we react with a strange disbelief for by remaking commercial images in reality, Sherman shows them to be implausible. *The created work is an aim in itself; a meaningful microcosmos in itself* (*L&LI*, p. 295).

The sustained critical response to Sherman's imagery shows the internal strength of the vision of the photographs (*crystallized in its idea*). In this vision is found "a reservoir of spontaneous, intuitive, latent virtualities that, awakened by appropriate imaginative impulses, shines through, animates, and nourish its 'life' within the life-world" (*L&LI*, p. 294). And it is in Tymieniecka's continuing description of the process of the unfolding of the life of the artwork that she makes direct contact with the professed intentions of the Pictures Generation artists.

The viewer's initial response to their images is one of puzzlement, especially when the image seems so familiar, but at the same time, slightly askew, puzzling. Puzzlement about being puzzled follows, then a searching through memory, through past experiences, ideas, and ideals. "In contrast to the rationales of all types of the life-world, in either its empirical or ideal dimensions, [the creative work] introduces the surprise, the "unpredictable" "turn of events," the outcome—unpredictable, because it follows the lead of the inter-generative consequential connectedness other than those which function in the already established in the meaningful system of the life-world."

A contrast in point is the extremely popular Jeff Koons²⁹ (b. 1955, a generation after the Pictures group) whose work is among the most expensive in the world of contemporary art (Figure 6). His imagery begins and ends in popular imagery (giant candy hearts, Michael Jackson holding his chimp à la traditional Virgin of humility poses, giant balloon animals); they reaffirm the past and the status quo. His propounded theories of art are just as crass, e.g. "art to me is a humanitarian act and I believe that there is a responsibility that art should somehow be able to affect mankind, to make the world a better place."³⁰ The works



Figure 6. Jeff Koons, *Michael Jackson and Bubbles*, 1986, porcelain, 42 × 70 ½ inches (106.7 × 179.1 × 82.6 cm.), © Jeff Koons

of the Pictures Generation then are a creative means for thinking through into originality. Koons, on the other hand, affirms the comfort zone of the viewer, assuring him that his (and their) infantile pleasures can be inflated into high art (some were installed in the rooftop garden at the Metropolitan Museum).³¹ Koons is most emphatic that his art begins and ends with the image. The opposite is true for both the Pictures Generation and Tymieniecka who expect that the artwork would have an “overflow of fluctuating meaning” *that will continue through time* (*L&LI*, p. 297).

Each original work is a surprise (in Koons the surprise is in the scale—the Michael Jackson Madonna is a porcelain sculpture, 42 × 70 × 32 inches—and in the fact that banal imagery can be considered museum worthy)³² because genuine creativity *projects an unprecedented scheme of intuitive sequences in order to form an original cipher with a new significance of life*. Tymieniecka’s “cipher” is a technical term for what the creative work does: *it is* “the means by which the human being . . . reaches deep down into the fountain of life itself, and by his own means, endows the elemental stuff with a significance uniquely his own.”³³ It can communicate to others, displaying a universality that derives from the individual efforts of artist and audience.³⁴ The job of the viewer is to lay all his faculties open to the meaning of this cipher; this laying open may involve a great work that is similar to Husserl’s “*epoche*,” but here

the suspension involves more than the judgment of reason or intention. In 2008 Sherry Levine explained her work: "I want to put a picture on top of a picture. This makes for times when both disappear and other times when they're both visible. That vibration is basically what the work's about for me—that space in the middle where there's no picture, but emptiness."³⁵ And so she is interested in Andy Warhol's work because: "There are three spaces: the original image, his image, and then a space in between, a sort of Zen emptiness—an oblivion in his work that's always been very interesting for me."³⁶

THE CIPHER/NEW CREATION BUILDS THE FUTURE
LIFE-WORLD

While there is no key to this cipher, the new work itself will be a key to understanding the cipher of those that follow. Each new work develops according to its own "logic;" it is in this development inventing that new life-significance, and therefore new life, is constructed. This is where creativity lies: "each time it invents a new (its own) type of significance, it also invents its own appropriate logical system to match" (*L&L1*, p. 296). So many of the Pictures Generation works are in series and sometimes in series in juxtaposition, e.g. David Salle's books, *Untitled* [This Woman and This Chair], 1973. "This Woman" or "This Chair" printed on the first page echoes in our memory as we turn the pages; for Ecklund, the series just shows that "our ineffable experience of womanhood can never transcend the images of women that collect in our subconscious in our lifetime."³⁷ For the Pictures Generation the artwork is born in the viewer. It is not that the images of the woman or the chair are revered, but rather that they are limitations, shutters, on the reality of real women or real chairs. Of course the idea of this is born in the viewer after reading a series of images of women or chairs without descriptors, presented by a visual artist.

For Tymieniecka, *the original work projects to the beholder who establishes the cipher into the life-world which is renewed in the process. The world is reborn when the beholder receives the original gift of the artist.* Communication, therefore, is key. Note that this communication is not factual, not the transmission of knowledge, but rather is a seminal generation of new life. And this life-giving activity does not stop with one creative work, but is the action of all creative works. Hence her long convoluted title, restructured as a sentence: *because the core of the created object is too great for the containers built in the past, because that core is fluctuating with potentiality, it overflows the constituted world and like lava, builds the new ground for the progression of life.*³⁸

When the cipher is absorbed in the future that it has built, or, to continue the metaphor, when the new land has cooled and solidified, it becomes the base from which new ciphers can be generated. Thus once-novel becomes the shoulders on which the next innovation will occur; it provides a stable grounding for the fluctuations of the life world in time. It becomes an

invariable skeleton for the idea/intentional structure of the life-world [hence] the creative work carries a coherent form of universally objectified meaning, and yet, simultaneously, through its essential and intended incompleteness, it opens fields [for] a variety of receptive experiences and interpretations. This accounts for its specific “life” [for and in] the recipient and its perdurance in time. But it also allows it to “grow” and “outgrow” the world it enters (*L&LI*, pp. 296–297).

As the new cipher enters the life world, it will cause a reaction because it makes the “pre-established scheme of experiential functions which orchestrate them explode” (*L&LI*, p. 297).

CONCLUSION

This essay, hard in coming, is difficult to conclude because so many questions opened along the way, questions that will have to be resolved in another study, e.g. originality in the revival of styles. But I take heart in our purpose: to show that works art are valuable tools for the understanding of philosophy, particularly Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka’s phenomenology of life, just as her philosophy can deepen our understanding of art. That more questions are raised than can be answered in one essay is a gift providing avenues—yet to be cleared—for creative explorations of life and art.

This essay began in an attempt to demonstrate the Tymienieckan take on originality in light of works of art that came to mind as I read *Logos and Life 1*. The mutual unfolding of meaning began with an examination of her texts in light of the imagery of Jackson Pollock’s action paintings—the creative work coming from an individual whose passionate (pre-intentional) soul pursues its own end. Analytical Cubist works demonstrated the source of originality in the object, its “radical mutation” *in opposition to the tradition, ready to dismember its constructive schema and set operational forces free to take on new roles within a different constructive system* (*L&LI*, p. 123). Even orientation is subverted with Rauschenberg’s *Monogram*, which as a result refreshes our sensibility of the primary modality of life, existence in the making. This, in turn, leads us to reflect on *the gigantic game of human creation* (*L&LI*, p. 15), one of the goals of phenomenology.

The essay could have ended at this point, but I had the good fortune to study the Pictures Generation exhibition with our upcoming conference on

originality in mind. The coincidence of the radical challenges of their aesthetic and the rise of the Tymienieckan phenomenology of creativity led to the construction of a hypothetical polemic between this post-modern group and Tymieniecka's taste and philosophy. Theirs were, at first glance, antithetical positions, Tymieniecka's conservatism vs. their avant-garde stances, her optimism vs. with their pessimism. However, on closer examination of both positions, based on the artists' production of works as well as their words, we find in Tymieniecka's philosophy a justification and elucidation of their process and effect. The aim of the artists of the Pictures Generation is in keeping with Tymieniecka's notion of creative art, an *overflow of fluctuating meaning that will continue through time* (*L&LI*, p. 297).

Logos and Life I then can be read as a positive response to the Pictures Generation, pointing out the significance of their stance and work as a means of *conscious and desired reconquest of that which, passively accepted, threatened to submerge us* (*L&LI*, p. 61). What is more, the intent of the early appropriation phase in Levine can be seen as an attempt to induce the equivalent of an Husserlian "epoché"—one that is appropriately short-lived so that the artist can return to renewed life after leaving unexamined presuppositions aside. Unlike the popular contemporary Jeff Koons who insists that his art begins and ends with the image, the Pictures Generation artists produce ciphers that reach down into life, make from its elemental stuff—using whatever logic is necessary to them and it—a work that is uniquely their own in time and place. In this lies the originality of the work. The cipher is communicated to the audience who renews the life-world by establishing the new work in it. Thus the life of the future is built on the projections of the original gifts of the many artists and the audiences who establish them as a part of an ever expanding the life world. Many and multifarious, this creativity allows life to grow and outgrow its world, bringing with it the ample plenitude of generous creation.

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NOTES

¹ My colleague, critic and friend, Kathleen Haney, has added much in reviewing this essay. I have cited her generous personal communications to my discussion of the Pictures Generation artists. She understood how their outrageous copying had an important vision, and helped clarify it for the reader.

² Tymieniecka, Anna Teresa. *Logos and Life Book 1: Creative Experience and the Critique of Reason*, *Analecta Husserliana XXIV*. (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1988), p. 61. Hereafter *L&LI*.

³ See, for example, *Number 1*, 1948, New York, Metropolitan Museum, available at ARTstor [online]. New York: New York. Available from World Wide Web: (<http://www.artstor.org>).

⁴ See my “The Ontopoiesis of Leonardo da Vinci’s Brainstorm Drawings,” in *Logos of Phenomenology and Phenomenology of the Logos, Book 5: The Creative Logos. Aesthetic Ciphering the Fine Arts, Literature and Aesthetics*. Analecta Husserliana XCII, 2005, ed. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, pp. 3–12.

⁵ Since this essay using many quotations from various authors, and since the its purpose is to emphasize the relationship between Tymieniecka words and works of art, passages that are quotes or paraphrases appear in italics. The problem is that many of the quotations are already punctuated with italics in Tymieniecka’s text. However, losing her emphases is a lesser evil than losing her train of thought.

⁶ Harold Rosenberg coined the term action painting in 1952 in *Art News*, now reprinted at <http://www.poetrymagazines.org.uk/magazine/record.asp?id=9798> (consulted 21 June 2009).

⁷ The photographs and films were made in July 1950. O’Connor, Francis V. (Fall 1979). “Hans Namuth’s Photographs of Jackson Pollock as Art Historical Documentation,” *Art Journal* 39(1), pp. 48–49.

⁸ For Arthur Danto’s discussion of the floor as base, Pollock’s body and paint as a series of related tools examples as in Heidegger’s *Zeugganz*, see *The Nation*, January 7, 1999, <http://www.thenation.com/doc/19990125/danto>, consulted June 26, 2009.

⁹ Google Image “Analytic Cubism” for 12,400 such images.

¹⁰ Kathleen Haney, p.c. (14 July 2009).

¹¹ Kathleen Haney notes that “constructive” puts a limit on meandering (p.c).

¹² Douglas Ecklund, associate curator of the photography department at the Metropolitan Museum organized *The Pictures Generation: 1974–1984*, the first major exhibition to concentrate on this tightly-knot group, that Jesse Wilcox calls the last definitive movement of the twentieth century. (Wilcox, “*The Pictures Generation: A Conversation with Douglas Ecklund*,” *Art in America*, 4/21/09 (<http://www.artinamericamagazine.com/news-opinion/conversations/2009-04-21>), consulted May 19, 2009. Martha Schwendener writes that the show is extremely generous and sympathetic; that another curator would have build quite a different show that emphasizes the “mainstream” quality of the works (“Appropriate Me! ‘The Pictures Generation’ at the Met,” *The Village Voice*, 5/13/09). For negative criticisms see Schwabsky, Barry. “A Million Little Pictures: *The Pictures Generation* Revisited,” *The Nation*, May 13, 2009; and Jerry Saltz whose last paragraph gives a sense of his stand on the subject: “Pictures art was never the feel-good fun portrayed here; it was influential, but it was also self-policing and insular. (Salle was essentially cast out of the inner circle for the sin of painting and for using photos of naked women—that’s how conservative the liberal art world was.) But it was a crackling time, and appropriation is too nice a word for how potent this style still is: Stealing and ransacking convey the atmosphere much better” (http://www.saatchi-gallery.co.uk/blogon/art_news/jerry_saltz_on_the_pictures_generation_at_the_met_new_york/5624, accessed 19 May 2009). One can walk through the exhibition (including a talk by Ecklund) with James Kahn on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ftvSK-nx9WQ> (accessed 29 May 2009).

¹³ Interview with Jeanne Seagel, “After Sherrie Levine,” *Arts Magazine*, Summer 1985, <http://www.artnotart.com/sherrielevine/arts.Su.85.html> (consulted 10 May 2009).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ “At the Met, Baby Boomer Leap Onstage,” Art & Design Section, *New York Times*, 23 April 2009.

¹⁶ Ecklund, op. cit.

¹⁷ Interview with Jeanne Seagel, op. cit.

¹⁷ See Michael Mandiberg's AfterSherrieLevine.com/statement2.html (consulted 9 May 2009). One of the goals of appropriation as an art form was to make works of art more easily accessible, but in practice, Levine's works are not easily accessible, hence Mandiberg's project, a la Walter Benjamin, to reproduce them on the World Wide Web.

¹⁸ Siegel, Jeanne, "After Sherrie Levine," *Arts Magazine*, Summer, 1985, available www.artnotart.com/sherrielevine/arts.su.85.html. Accessed 10 June 2009.

¹⁹ Cindy Sherman in an interview with Glen Collins, *New York Times*, February 1, 1990, Arts Section, <http://www.nytimes.com/1990/02/01/arts/a-portraitist-s-romp-through-art-history.html?pagewanted=2> (consulted 11 May 2009). As noted above, David Salle would actually be cast out of the pictures group when he began to paint! See Salz, op. cit.

²⁰ Ecklund, op. cit., 23.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

²² See my essay on photography—but not that of the Pictures Generation: "When the Given Becomes the Chosen," *Phenomenology of Life—From the Animal Soul to the Human Mind. Book I. In Search of Experience*, Analecta Husserliana XCIII, ed. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka. (Dordrecht: Springer, 2007), pp. 387–400.

²³ See Douglas Crimp's essay, *Journal of the Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art*, 17 (June–July 1980) pp. 41–42, which had appeared in *October* in 1977. As cited by Ecklund, op. cit., pp. 41–42. See Salle's four untitled gelatin silver prints of 1973, each showing a Vermeer-mood woman with a coffee cup or mug peering out a window; a coffee ad is pegged to the bottom. Leonardo's *Mona Lisa* famously has the same effect. My essays "Visualizing Tymieniecka's *Poetica Nova*," *Phenomenology of Life and the Human Creative Condition I*, Analecta Husserliana LII, ed. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka. (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1998), pp. 303–315 and "Leonardo's Enchantress," *The Aesthetics of Enchantment in the Fine Arts*, Analecta Husserliana LXV. (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2000), pp. 85–100.

²⁴ "Living with Contradictions: Critical Practices in the Age of Supply-Side Aesthetics," in *Photography at the Dock: Essays on Photographic History, Institutions, and Practices*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), p. 113.

²⁵ Sherry Levine, www.crownpoint.com/artists/levine, accessed 19 July 2009.

²⁶ See note 32 below.

²⁷ Haney, p.c. This is typical of Haney's interpolations: she deepened my little reference on the *epoche*.

²⁸ The best way to get a sense of the forced artifice of Sherman's "portraits" in which she is the model is to Google Image her work. The panoply of poses, settings, costumes that seem so familiar yet so strange are set forth in an ocean of 539,000 thumbnails. It should be emphasized that Sherman does not regard the images for which she poses, self-portraits. She commented in *New York Times* (1 February 1990, "A Portraitist's Romp Through Art History," significant enough to be included in the Wikipedia citation: "I feel I'm anonymous in my work. When I look at the pictures, I never see myself; they aren't self-portraits. Sometimes I disappear." While they are not Sherman, the fact of Sherman acts as the model is tremendously significant. Her poses demand the viewer's response, largely because they are ultimately her most intimate commentary. So while on the obvious level they are not self-portraits, they are commentaries by her whole self.

²⁹ See his website, <http://www.jeffkoons.com/site/index.html>, for collections, honors, etc.

³⁰ Unsourced quote, http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Jeff_Koons, accessed 5 July 2009.

³¹ Through October 26, 2008. http://www.metmuseum.org/special/se_event.asp.

³² Sherrie Levine on Jeff Koons work (and her own): “actually, there are a lot of similarities and I have always thought Koons was an extremely interesting artist. He’s one of the first artists of my generation whose work I knew in New York. But the biggest different between our work is our subject matter. My subject matter is high art and his is popular culture.” Constance Lewellen interview, *Journal of Contemporary Art Online*, www.jca-online.com/slevine.html. Accessed 19 July 2009.

³³ Tymieniecka, *Poetica Nova*. (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing, 1982), p. 29. See Mardas, Nancy. “The Cipher as the Unity of the Signifier and the Signified,” *Imaginatio Creatrix*, *Analecta Husserliana* 83. (Dordrecht: Springer, 2004), pp. 13–23.

³⁴ Haney, p.c.

³⁵ Quoted by Todd Alden, Whitney Biennial 2008, www.whitney.org/www/2008biennial/, accessed 19 July 2009.

³⁶ Siegel, op. cit.

³⁷ See Ecklund, op. cit, pp. 42–43.

³⁸ Compare with post-modern criticism of photography. “As various theorists have argued, a position of resistance can never be established once and for all, but must be perpetually refashioned and renewed to address adequately those shifting conditions and circumstances that are its ground.” Abigail Solomon-Godeau, op. cit. note 34, p. 146.

ARTISTIC AND PHILOSOPHICAL ITINERARIES

ABSTRACT

The accounts given by artists concerning their artworks and the interpretation given by philosophers about those same artworks are clearly distinguishable and separate. Artists, in this view, explain their works because they have been the actors, the producers of art and therefore with their explanations they speak of causes and effects, or, in other words, they make clear and discuss the how and why a given painting or sculpture has come to life. Instead, a philosopher works with concepts and interprets works of art with tools that are common to both artists and philosopher, that is, imagination, intuition and understanding. However, these tools are not identical to those of the artist. Because of the specific, conceptual nature of philosophy there is no perfect identity between the verbal elaboration of an artwork given by the artist and the interpretation of the philosopher, and this fact makes their encounters something to be valued.

Art begins with the artist, but the artist is not a *tabula rasa*; artists have predecessors and in addition they devote time to the reading of literature and philosophy, not to mention other sciences that help them to define and refine their techniques. Of the first artist there is no history, no remembrance, only conjectures. And so artists begin by asking the question: “What is art? And what is its place in the existing world?” Paul Klee, one day while in Tunisia, after having surprised himself at his command of colors, said: “That is the meaning of this happy hour: Color and I are one. I am a painter.”¹ What prompted his excitement was the discovery of a new way of perceiving and of responding to a tradition that on the one hand demands to be recognized, and on the other hand recognizes as truly creative only what is new and that had remained unexplored by the tradition itself.² This is why technique is of great importance in art; without technique one could only speak of attempts, maybe pleasant, but far from those results that can only be called artistic.

Artists have a history behind themselves, and within their subjective domain they confront empirical, historical, perceptual, and philosophical questions. At the same time, they must not allow themselves to be crushed by history’s previous cultural achievements, something that can become so difficult with the

passing of history that few artists can be considered innovators.³ So to begin with an idea is to start anew, the first brush-stroke, phenomenologically speaking, is the beginning of a personal story and of a series of artistic and aesthetic pronouncements.

The poetics of a given artist is to be distinguished from the vast field of aesthetics. Both are parts of the artist's experience, but the relevance of this distinction becomes clear when one considers that the poetics corresponds to an artistic content and to the full import of a given artist. It is a general, but not generic view of what art is for an artist. Instead, through aesthetics, although it can still be a subjective domain, artists come close to philosophy, they define their artwork in philosophical terms and they broaden their vocabulary to include conceptual thinking.

Important as it is, the concept of content acquires its significance, philosophically and artistically, if it is not reduced to a psychological notion, and indeed it would be mistaken to reduce artists' ideas to their psychology in that they follow a logic, their own individual logic, but nevertheless a logic that is the result of a subjectivity in constant relation to the outside world, natural, social or strictly artistic.

Artists, even when theorizing, may not be fully conscious of the forces that work within themselves; they may not be transparent to themselves, although they know when a given artwork is completed. It is they who decide at that particular moment. By the same token, the artist's prerogative consists in having the first "naïve" task, the *fiat*, that is, the act of painting, which is preceded and followed by more or less elaborate thought processes. The two moments: "before" and "after" differ in their significance.

Even when an artist is philosophically inclined, the encounter between conceptual thinking and visual experience does not result in a complete coincidence. Because of this, one can speak of the specific "language," of the style, and of the thematic of a given painter; all these aspects identify the artist. Although some of them would deny that they have a style because a style can be imitated,⁴ it remains nevertheless true that even artists belong to their time and that schools form and take shape in a given historical period. Suffice it to say on this point that to belong to an art movement does not prevent artists to have a specificity all their own. In sum, the artist is art plus his or her time, but artists are not at the mercy of their time; the great innovator looks at the new and the future of art, gradually or perhaps suddenly. It is a subjective process that produces results worthy of contemplation and admiration; and, although artworks are the result of solitude, they are never the result of solipsism, the conviction that "only oneself and one's experience exists."⁵ Art is not the result of a rarefied mind, on the contrary, the mind of the artists is in constant search

of new itineraries, of new approaches that distinguish their activity from other activities, intellectual or manual.

There is a convergence between the mind and the body in the act of painting, and to speak a priori of this convergence is not the task of the artist, who is involved in an activity that is only partially theoretical. But one can speak in this context of an empirical approach to the canvas that goes back to the experiences of a lifetime. Bringing together the past, the present, and the future, time becomes the vehicle for impulses resulting, in part, from a knowledge of the solution to aesthetic problems given by other artists. Still, the innovative painters will not accept passively what they have learned, but instead they will detect and select those elements that in the end will make up the finished artwork. A holistic approach, therefore, gives only a limited explanation of the creative process, since while creating, artists proceed by contrasts and then crystallize their own mental processes.

This is what I call the empirical and preliminary stage of the creative process; as to the artwork itself, I would like to mention its chromatic value and its formal composition, but it would be futile to venture to establish precepts to be followed uncritically. There are none, but there are techniques and “rules” of composition; such rules are above all the prerogative of the artist who can prefer a symmetrical composition or an asymmetrical one.⁶ Given the fact that we see by contrasts, in order to obtain a dynamic composition, artists must know about the rules of perception, how a given arrangement of lines, shapes, and colors is perceived; the eyes and the mind, then, grasp the different degrees of complexity of a given artwork. Yet, an artist can decide for a still composition—and not for a dynamic or dramatic one—to bring about a meditative, pensive state of mind. Such is the work of the French painter Jean-Baptiste Chardin (1699–1779).

It remains true, however, that different states of mind can be experienced by different sensibilities, but a painting in the eminent sense of the word leaves in the viewer a lasting impression. On this point one can speak of feelings, but this word should be used with caution because feelings are indeed fleeting, whereas an aesthetic experience leaves in us a strong impression to such an extent that an artwork becomes an object of debate and not only an object to be admired. Indeed some works have been considered at first scandalous, and with the passing of time they have been accepted and understood. In order to meet such challenges, the new task of the artists—if they want to captivate the public in a lasting way—becomes one of explaining their aim and what means they use to reach that aim. In other words, they speak about their work as a critic can do, with the difference that they speak in the first person, so that their words introduce us into a world of inner ideas and of external, visible

accomplishments. Between these two worlds, internal and external, there is a correspondence, not an identity, since the translation from a visual experience to a verbal elaboration is a transition from one “language” to another.

Once this step has been taken, the artistic itinerary proceeds to address the important questions regarding the significance of an artwork; its coming to light is an invitation to discover a multiplicity of meanings. The implication is that there is not *one* meaning, there are several, depending on how complex a specific work is. Making and saying are two aspects of the artistic process and when they meet a semantic encounter between the visual and the word takes place.

But there will be a gap between the explanations given by the artists and the interpretations of the philosopher. A predictable lack of correspondence emerges as the two languages, artistic and philosophical, point toward different directions. Artists can verbally elaborate on what they do, explain what they wanted to convey; they do not attempt to justify their work. They explain what they have done, so that their verbal expressions are an extension of the artworks themselves. In this case “to explain” means that artists have the “right” of first account; their intentions and processes speak of what they have accomplished visually and formally, how they have reached certain results by pursuing specific ideas and criteria. The more articulate the artists are in this task, the less “abstract” their work will be considered. To explain, therefore, does not mean to categorize, it means to express verbally and make explicit the why and the how of the artistic process. It will not be an exhaustive account, if it were, no one else would or could expand on what has already been said; but the artists can and will say why a painting or a sculpture is such and not otherwise. It is an extension of the artwork that does not provide a positivist explanation; rather, it concerns the thorny passing from a nondiscursive medium to another one that is verbal in character.

As to the artwork itself, it is an object of a particular type that was in the making and that has emerged from a potential phase to become an actual cultural object that offers itself to anyone who is willing to take part to a novel visual experience.

At this juncture, the critic and the philosopher intervene to complement the words of the artist, be it a diary, an oral speech, or any other public declaration. So it is legitimate to ask: up to what point can a philosopher accept the declarations of the artists who discuss their artwork? Philosophy claims its independence from these statements, although it cannot ignore them, since its aim is to advance the understanding of art. As the artists have the right to explain with their own means and powers what and how they intended to express, so the philosophers have the right to give their own interpretation by

following criteria that may not be those of the artist. These two approaches can arrive at similar and compatible conclusions, but not infrequently a discrepancy remains due to the difference between conceptual philosophy and the subjective domain of the artist.

Philosophers, by employing the conceptual apparatus specific to their discipline, interpret artworks and do not explain them as if they were physical, natural phenomena. To interpret means, first of all, to grasp what the artists themselves have not yet said or maybe have not even understood to the fullest, since the respective approaches—philosophical and creative—have different starting points.

However, the task of the philosopher-interpreter will be easier the more articulate is the artist, although, as already mentioned, the philosopher may have a different understanding of a given artwork.⁷ To begin with, philosophical interpretations present two different and distinct levels: one is the perceptual level that considers the technique and aesthetic relevance of a given artwork, the second concerns the a priori conceptual categories that function as guidelines. The first step is analytical, since it takes into account the different steps that have produced the finished creation. It is, then, followed by a formal, overall view and significance of what has been accomplished by the artist.

To interpret is not to apply categories mechanically. Although the philosophy of art works with concepts, the specificity of the artworks must be taken into consideration in order to evaluate them, so that from the encounter between what is seen and the linguistic and conceptual means available to the philosopher, a theoretical and semantic understanding of art takes shape.⁸ Thanks to such an approach, and specifically, thanks to imagination, intuition, knowledge, and sensitivity, artworks are interpreted in depth. All these prerequisites, when brought together, fulfill the meaning of art in its more precise sense.

I will consider first the role of imagination and then proceed to speak of intuition. When philosophers confront the artworld, they enter into a world that has already been formed by the artists, and this means that on the one hand philosophers must pay heed to the artistic products, and on the other hand they must retain their autonomy in relation to the visual images in front of them. At this exact point the role of imagination becomes essential, and as Eva T. H. Brann reminds us in her important work, imagining is “The activity of forming . . . imaginal worlds.”⁹ Such an activity presents already its own concrete aspect that concretizes further when one brings together the mental imaging and the visual works that can be seen by others and that are, therefore, no longer confined to the inner world of the artist. Looking now at the classic study by Edward Casey on imagining, and considering the distinction he makes

between “act phase” and “object phase”—a terminology basically intuitive—we find this passage: “In and through an act—‘act’ in the strict sense of mental act or act of consciousness—the mind directs itself onto and absorbs itself in a specific content. What is most remarkable in this self-transcending movement of mind is that what is aimed at in the content, the intentional object, need not be existent.”¹⁰ What is discussed here is the stage in which a potentiality begins to emerge into consciousness when the first act phase becomes accessible to the artist who paints. As to the philosophers, they have access to the object phase, that is, extending this concept, to them is available what has become visible, whereas the act phase is for them only an imaginal construct.

In a further step, the artistic act is conceptually interpreted and translated by means of a perceptual intuition. It is a transition not without risks, since interpretation aims not at an “approximate” replica of the mental and material work of the artist, rather at a meaningful, intelligible reconstruction and refashioning of a given content. What is involved here is a leap, and as in every leap, a void or a difference must be dealt with and overcome, which requires all the originality of which a thinker is capable. There will not be a perfect coincidence between the work of the artist and the verbal elaboration of the philosopher, but this is what makes their encounter a fruitful one. Together they provide art with an additional dimension, something that the artist might have already thought about but only implicitly; by the same token, the philosopher learns from the artist to verbalize the visual through concepts that are not necessarily those of the tradition. It may be necessary, then, to invent or reinvent categories and concepts that have not yet been part of the tradition. As a consequence, new ways of relating to artworks emerge, and the unexpected becomes a power to reckon with.

To interpret is, therefore, to explore in a given artwork or cultural objects in general a web of meaningful relationships, which is tantamount to a process of individuation.¹¹ If there is a logic in the evaluation of an artwork, it will be a logic that recognizes the relevance of experience: As Husserl knew, what is required in philosophy is an “objectifying interpretation derived from experience.”¹² A percept is therefore necessary, and in the case under discussion the expressive value of the artwork coincides with it. Expression and intuition go hand in hand, but the coincidence of the two is not perfect, if it were, we would have a collapse of the two worlds, and percepts and concepts would not interact at all.

How can one explain this lack of coincidence? The first consideration concerns the fact that in Husserl’s words “Interpretation itself can never be reduced to an influx of new sensations; it is an act-character, a mode of consciousness” that differentiates between the “experienced content [and] the perceived

object.”¹³ It is, then, important to recognize that we are in the presence of different acts, and that the act of interpretation is the result of the intuition, the knowledge, and the sensibility of the philosopher. In fact, we expect that those who know about art are able to perceive similarities and differences among different artists and among different works.

It is not so important to define, once and for all, a specific style, to label it in one way or another; it is not even sufficient to detect, if any, the similarities between one given style and another. It is more important (and this is an indication of a higher understanding) to see the differences that make an artist what he or she is, because the significance of an artwork rests on its novelty, on being new and surprising; all characteristics that show the courage of the artist in breaking previous aesthetic conventions.

The aesthetic experience belongs both to the artist and the philosopher, but with the difference that the artist first makes, and subsequently theorizes. Moreover, the aesthetic experience is shared also by the casual viewer during a visit to a museum or gallery; as such it is an experience that comprises many aspects, including the subjective personality of the viewer. From the philosophers one expects something more, one expects that they examine artworks, an entire artistic movement, and also the different artforms to make the public aware of the importance of art. Indeed, a philosophical, insightful interpretation makes art open to communication; the communicative process, though, must not be understood as the simple overlapping of messages devoid of artistic content. In our case, communication is part of an ongoing process of understanding what makes the artworks intelligible.

Husserl, while discussing communication in *Logical Investigations*, speaks of the importance of expressing contents and also of the correlation of mental and physical experiences.¹⁴ In the specific case under discussion now it is not so much the case that the philosopher should speculate on the intentions of the artist and decide whether the artist has failed or succeeded; it is more important to realize that the possible connections between nondiscursive images—the artworks—and philosophical discursive language do not concern only the identification of a given object. It is a much more complex process that calls for the proliferation of multiple, potential meanings.

However, there are limits to what interpretations can do to make artworks intelligible, and these limits are to be found in the aura of the artwork itself that cannot be explained to the fullest. There is, therefore, a residue, perhaps even something beyond reason in works of art that remains unknown, and this is precisely what makes them worth seeing over and over again. This residue may be called the sublime aspect of art, which is that “unresolved” knot that keeps captivating us.

If art begins with an idea, the aesthetic act that accompanies it has all the characteristics of a crystallization of so many insights that it cannot be compared to anything else. The specificity I am referring to is related to the role of imagination that takes form either suddenly or little by little, brush stroke after brush stroke. A vivid imagination can be the result of a subjectivity in commotion, so that to imagine is to think otherwise; but to interpret is not just to imagine, it is also to find reasons why it is preferable to emphasize some aspects of an artwork rather than others. It follows that the preferable interpretations are those that give a thorough theoretical view of the meaningful qualities to be attributed to an artwork.

Meaningful qualities are those that emerge from the artworks and that the process itself of interpretation captures without hesitation. In Heidegger's words from *Being and Time*: "We call the development of understanding *interpretation*. . . . In interpretation understanding does not become something different, but rather itself. . . . Interpretation is . . . the development of possibilities projected in understanding."¹⁵ The implications of such a definition are many, and in the specific case of art, to understand is to relate epistemologically to the given without the pretension of covering exhaustively all possible interpretations.

Since we are confronting here distinct processes, namely, imagination, intuition, and last but not least perception (which is the first protagonist when we organize subjective and objective experiences), we face the difficult task of bringing closer together these experiences. The "bridging" of these experiences is art itself; art's independent existence gives us the possibility to understand ourselves better and to stimulate our imagination. And not everything is commonsensical in imagination. Casey, for instance, encourages us to go beyond an imaginative experience when he writes that "there is nothing in imaginative experience that is meaningfully comparable to a perduring temporal field in which entities or events can reside, last, and be focused upon in an intersubjectively confirmable way." Furthermore: "what we imagine need not be sensory in character."¹⁶

Such statements are an invitation to take seriously the phenomenological and hermeneutic paths; they convince us that when we enter the world of art there are no sharply separate spheres, that we are not in the presence of dualism, because it is always possible to make continuity and discontinuity converge with one another, if only by approximation, without undue overlapping. Philosophy, but not only philosophy—and here I conclude—tells us, indirectly, that our response to an artwork is the result of perception, imagination, and intuition, all of which exclude indifference. An indifferent attitude would indicate that either the artwork has failed to convey meaning or that

its aesthetic relevance has not been understood. This indicates that there is something intangible in an artwork.

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NOTES

¹ Klee, Paul. *The Diaries of Paul Klee—1898–1918*, ed. Felix Klee. (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1968), p. 297.

² For an exploration of the topic, see Goldsmith, Marcella Tarozzi. *The Future of Art—An Aesthetics of the New and the Sublime*. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999). See also *The Complexity of Creativity*, ed. Åke E. Andersson and Nils-Eric Sahlin. (Dordrecht, Boston, London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1997).

³ Berio, Luciano. *Remembering the Future*. (Cambridge, MA, London, England: Harvard University Press, 2006), pp. 2–3.

⁴ Arthur Danto, personal communication.

⁵ Blackburn, Simon. *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*. (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 356.

⁶ Arnheim, Rudolf. *The Power of the Center—A Study of Composition in the Visual Arts*. (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1988).

⁷ Heidegger, Martin. “The Origin of the Work of Art,” in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, tr. Albert Hofstadter. (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), p. 35. In this text, Heidegger speaks of the impact of Van Gogh’s painting of a pair of peasant shoes: “The art work let us know what shoes are in truth.”

⁸ For a discussion of these points, see Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Truth and Method*, translation revised by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall. (2nd Edition, New York: Crossroads, 1990).

⁹ Brann, Eva T. H., *The World of the Imagination—Sum and Substance*. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1991), p. 18.

¹⁰ Casey, Edward S., *Imagining—A Phenomenological Study*. (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1976), p. 38.

¹¹ For the concept of cultural object, see Husserl, Edmund. *Phenomenological Psychology—Lectures, Summer Semester 1925*, tr. John Scanlon. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1977).

¹² Husserl, Edmund. *Logical Investigations*, 2 vols., tr. J. N. Findlay. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, New York: The Humanities Press, 1970), Vol. 1, p. 309.

¹³ *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 565.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, pp. 276–277.

¹⁵ Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time*, tr. Joan Stambaugh. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), p. 139, paragraph 32.

¹⁶ Casey, “Imagination, Fantasy, Hallucination, and Memory,” in *Imagination and Its Pathologies*, ed. James Phyllips & James Morley. (Cambridge, MA, London, England: The MIT Press, 2003), pp. 68, 75.

THE ONLY STAR IN A NIHILIST HEAVEN: A
REFLECTION ON THE PROBLEMATIC IDENTITY
OF HISTORY, ART AND CINEMA

To my duckbill.

ABSTRACT

The main goal of this paper is to furnish a more comprehensive appraisal of nihilism as the bedrock of the identity mentioned in the title. In the first section, we dwell on the question of how the culture of the last century tried to recover the unity with a mythic or mystic origin (both epithets are valid), which was perceptible alike in phenomena as different as the totalitarianism, the individual liberation of the middle of the century and the development of a philosophical criticism that tried to remind us of the oblivion of being. What we intend to show through the analysis of these phenomena is that all of them stem from the belief in a transcendent origin and the effort to revert to it, which begets a *sui generis* nostalgia that has had very questionable upshots on the treble plane of society, individual life and thought. In the second part of the paper, we show that this nostalgia is not, however, the sole way to bring to light the want of a common ground of culture and history, and that art furnishes other model for coming by that beyond the metaphysical assertion of the origin. In accordance with our approach, cinema stands for the historical and technical fulfilment of this optional model insofar as it makes literally visible the human presence beyond or rather before whatever symbolic value, which coincides with the nihilist devaluation of existence and with all the critic possibilities that that caters despite the negative part that it plays face the final development of the philosophical conception of man and art.

THE PROBLEM OF THE COMMON GENESIS

One of the cultural phenomena of the twentieth-century that is more difficult to fathom is doubtlessly the nostalgia for the would-be fullness of the genesis, the want to recuperate an original experience that is supposed to have

been absolute and whose intensity would have been dissipated by carelessness, oblivion and, oddly enough, by the misguiding potency of history and tradition that, instead of preserving the purity of the onset, would have besmirched it. Now, this nostalgia is doubly intriguing taking into account the nihilism that has by and large ridden roughshod over the most sacred props of culture throughout the century, which has reduced even the religious transcendence to an ilk of daydream wherein God, the supreme ideal of reason, appears as a philanthropist and His terrible justice leads simply to a new opportunity for everyone. *Stricto sensu*, the nostalgia whereof we speak has not merely lied in the idealization of the past that is for affirming a present projected to future (as it took place in the Renaissance vindication of Antiquity or in the romantic idealization of the Middle Ages), but has on the contrary gone hand-in-hand with the downright rejection of the contemporary society and culture, stating that they represent the final stage of the withdrawal regarding the origin, which fosters the vision of history, above all regarding the last four centuries, as a fall or a loss that endangers the very essence of man (whatever this means). Now, what is more intriguing in this *sui generis* nostalgia is that it has not been a secondary influence in the development of the last century but the motive force in some of the main socio-historical and cultural happenings thereof, from the horrors of the World War II to the would-be individual liberation during the 60s, passing through the domains of thought and art, wherein it has played havoc with the whole order of representation and objectivity. Concerning all these phenomena, let us recall, for instance, the preposterous myth of an Arian race and of an all-mighty German Empire that led the Nazis to the worst atrocities; or the outlandish return to a natural, almost Edenic way of living and, above all, of making love that spread the sexual revolution of the 60s all the world over; or (to pass to the realm of representation), think also in the intention of Heidegger and his satellites to revert to a wisdom that, after having for the first time been revealed in the Athenian tragedy and in the Presocratic philosophy, was concealed by the Platonic metaphysics and the array of its derivations until Nietzsche; or, last but not least, in the astonishing reconfiguration and final dissolution of the *imago mundi* that has been accomplished both in the field of the plastic art and of literature under the aegis of a return to the boundless metamorphoses of sensibility, which has been attained at the cost of the figurativeness and of the anecdotic thread of the narrative itself.

Now, what is most intriguing of the nostalgia wherewith we intend to grapple is not, of course, its recurrence in so many planes of culture; it could after all be argued that every epoch has tried to anchor its identity on the irremovable bedrock of past that extends to the mythic confines of time and memory. If, for instance, we delve into the development of West Civilization from Antiquity

until the end of the nineteenth-century, it will be evident that there was an undeniable preponderance of past over present, which furnished society and culture with a metaphysical framework that was for shaping and overcoming the very discontinuity of time, so that when, for instance, the Renaissance proclaimed the return to Antiquity as an ideal epoch wherein art and social liberty had coexisted with the greatness of the State and the fulfilment of the individual,¹ it was simply trying to show that there had had a line of continuity between the ideal genesis and the Renaissance itself beneath the disruption that the Middle Ages implicated in the eyes of the thinkers of the time, line that allowed to recover the institutions and conceptions of life of the Ancients, not, by the by, in order to reject those of the Renaissance but to enrich them with the contribution of Antiquity.² And something similar took place in the famous quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns (which was for reasserting the seventeenth-century French cultural unity)³ or in the appellation of Rousseau to a human nature that had not been defiled by history (which propped the revolutionary creed of the equality of every man)⁴ and even in the romantic invention of a protean drive (which supported the claim of a poetic transcendence of the individual)⁵ and so forth until the end of the nineteenth-century, when Nietzsche, in the very end of the metaphysical conception of culture, reverted for the last time to the Presocratic Greece as the insurmountable ground of culture and individual formation.⁶

Thus, what we have called “nostalgia” would not seem to be a feature exclusive of the twentieth-century for, on the contrary, it has apparently been the sole ground for structuring every culture and epoch in accordance with a conception of nature and of man that has resorted to past so as to settle down on its exemplarity. If it were just for that, the issue would not be worth attention and we would simply dwell upon how it has worked in the specific case of the last century. But the reason whereby it seems to be so important for us within the historic horizon of the twentieth-century is that the omnipresent nihilism of the second half of the century and the concomitant meaninglessness of the ideality that tradition had kept despite the array of criticisms and socio-cultural revolutions, do not match nostalgia whatever. There is no room for nostalgia in a century that has throughout fought against the transcendence of time and the exemplarity of past and that has on the other hand tried to level whatever foregoing ideal so as to impose with no problem the shallowest topicality, whereof the last proof would very likely be the universalization of the mass media. What part could nostalgia play face to the lack of a clear order of life and to the relativity of thought and the devaluation of everything? Is it only for making up such a lack, or has it perhaps a sense of its own that is worth delving into?

In the light of these questions, it could to a certain extent seem bizarre that we put on the same plane phenomena as different as the Nazism and the dodecaphonic music or as the 60s creed of a universal liberation and the hardly understandable paragraphs of *Being and Time*, and, withal, that we consider all of them instances of a nostalgia that would also seem to be stark alien to the main trend in the culture of the two last centuries, i.e., the universal progress of mankind and the corresponding improvement of the individual; it is true that the Nazism and the Heideggerian philosophy have more than once been linked⁷ and that the socio-individual liberation and the imaginative reconfiguration have gone hand-in-hand from Nietzsche onwards,⁸ but that is all the same very far from stating that an irrational tenet such as the mythic superiority of the Arian race and one of the most influential philosophies of the time (independently of our opinion concerning it) stem from a common source or that the liberation on the plane of socio-individual existence has anything to do with the abandonment of figurativeness for the part of the painters, taking furthermore into account that all this could more easily be explained according to the progress that we have just mentioned, which should have attained its fullest expression in the time of globalization and limitless individualism: since the present time has to globalize everything, it is logic that it wants to recapitulate past, to pass over the otherness and exemplarity thereof, and that it uses nostalgia for that aim. Still more, the momentous impact of those phenomena (including Heidegger's denunciation of the oblivion of being) is doubtlessly due to their bond to the nihilism that has triumphed everywhere and whose first feature is to brand tradition an anachronism. Thereat, it could rather seem that those phenomena do not stand for a nostalgic trend but, on the contrary, for the boundless assertion of the present that gets rid of whatever nexus with the past and just attends to its own determination. And from a certain slant, it is undeniable that they do so: the lurid brutishness of Nazism exhibits the systematization, the method and the productiveness that define as a whole the modern progress, not the excessiveness of the holy sacrifice of the scapegoats, while the hippies were for their part surely a lot more related to the modern individualism than to a mythic brotherhood. For their part, philosophy and art would be merged in the modern relativity of truth and in the meaninglessness of figurativeness.

Now, notwithstanding these demurs, on saying that phenomena like these are a proof of an odd nostalgia more than of the uncheckable progress of modernity, we mean that they bring to light the internal dialectic of history that Hegel was the first to set out: no progress is conceivable without the return of the spirit to the perfect identity with itself which is only feasible through the elucidation of its own becoming: "The concept of the spirit is the return to itself, to become

itself its only object; thereby, the progress is not an indefinite progress into the infinite, for there is an aim, i.e., the return to itself. There is, consequently, a certain cycle. The spirit searches itself".⁹ And this search is precisely the pith of the historical development that is expressed as the permanent reflection upon past, upon the ground of the present that is indeed an absolute in itself that does not need justification whatever beyond its own fullness but also is a simple moment of the entire process that, like any other particularity, will adamantly be hurled down into the abysses of time. Thereat, the nostalgia that we underline might simultaneously be a badge of progress and of retrospect, although its meaning would vary in either case: in the former, it would stand for the in principle boundless possibilities that every time adumbrates and carries out and to the explicit wish to change them into a myth for the future; in the latter, the nostalgia or rather the retrospect would carry every epoch back to the experience of its own finitude face to the infinity of time, which the potency of present blurs or conceals behind the impression of an everlasting duration. In other words, the retrospect or properly nostalgic trend would put the objective plane of history before the subjective or purely progressive one, since it does not aim at what is still future and hinges entirely upon the possibilities of time but at what has once and for all been, whose strength is always perceptible (although not always at first sight) through the stints of a present whose contradictoriness compels to resort to a genesis that, like the one that Hesiod's *Theogony* unfolds, has to be sublime or unsettling enough so as to allow everyone to revert to it, not perhaps to yield to its determination but to overcome it: the nostalgia does not lead so to an erudite reconstruction but to an actualization that would be feasible only by the opening that the present itself caters. Therefore, the nostalgia or (which would be better in this case) the retrospect would rather be for vindicating present than to yield to past and it would allow integrating even what is beyond oblivion into the complex possibilities of memory and reflection, as it does, for instance, Rousseau's vindication of a prehistoric identification of man and nature.

In consequence, the particular structuring of the turn to past depends on how the recollection that it implies is carried out, that is to say, of how past is articulated with present. Concerning this, I believe that there are two and only two ways of binding our own time with its historic ground: firstly, through the *nostalgia* that in accordance with our approach has been the inner thread of the culture of the twentieth-century; secondly, by means of a *retrospect* that recapitulates past so as to strengthen present. Briefly said, the former states the paradigmatic value of the origin that is conceived as *a happening that must be endlessly recalled*, whereas the latter considers it just as *a ground to come by a full self-consciousness*. According to this, the origin that the nostalgia upholds

is an absolute ideal that has to be actualized through the recollection, which compels every further time to reproduce the past ideality, whereas the ground that the retrospect reveals stands simply for the reflection indispensable for attaining a deeper sway over the own possibilities; the ground in this case is the limit that has to be objectified so as to be overcome, whereby every further accomplishment has by principle to belie its ground instead of reproducing it, which was instead the aim of the nostalgia, as one sees in the odd affinity that shows through three of the four contemporary phenomena whereupon we have commented. The Nazism, for instance, on extoling the greatness of a people of invincible warriors and conquerors, was at bottom just projecting backwards the most irrational drives of the time, the wrath and the violence of myriads of workless German labourers together with the want of having a scapegoat to blame for the situation. In this case, the two dimensions of the recollection, image and actualization, remained isolated and the process did not render a new meaning for the myth itself, i.e., the labourers did not become unbeaten conquerors, which is what happened, from a very different slant, with the hippies of the 60s, who ended up on the fringe of society without having really brought about the great change whereat they aimed, i.e., the universalization of love and the abolition of the consumer society; needless to say, this failure of the hippy utopia was the logic upshot of having upheld two irreconcilable archetypes, the Edenic creature that has nothing to worry about short of his immense love for everything and the modern citizen that claims for his rights according to a socio-political dynamics utterly alien to myth and good will.

Now, if from the plane of historiography we come to the recollection of an original philosophical experience of truth that Heidegger and his epigones have so earnestly vindicated, it must be stressed, firstly, that Heidegger devoted his whole work to the question of the ground of thought and rebuffed whatever interpretation thereof in terms of mythical origin,¹⁰ whereby, he could in principle be considered one of the most out-and-out critics of the nostalgia for a past greatness; together with that, he contributed more than any other thinker to the comprehension of the problem of the genesis for the development of cultural tradition and for the sense of a time like ours, when the nihilism has triumphed throughout. However, Heidegger was not on the other hand able to lay the foundations of a new conceptual framework for the relations of philosophy and society (as Descartes, Locke and Kant for their part did);¹¹ far from that, Heidegger rather fostered the revival of the ancient vision of the thinker as someone preposterously alien to the socio-cultural reality and lost into the densest lucubration, which, by the by, is the very ideal of the metaphysics that Heidegger himself so downright rejected. Even more, he would have considered such an anachronistic apologia of the thinker a point in his

favour, insofar as he also rejected whatever form of philosophical topicality¹² and considered that the most important aim of philosophy was nowadays to bring to light once again the ontological framework of existence that cannot be reduced to the logic structures of modern rationality, let alone to the modern relativism, and only is understandable by means of a archaic, poetic or almost mystic wisdom that the West has forgotten because of Platonic metaphysics, of Christianity and, to top it all, of subjectivist modernity. Heidegger, then, contributed to the overcoming of the nostalgia only insofar as he reasserted it, and the cause of this oddity lies in the fact that although he broke with the metaphysical tradition of the omnipresence of the principle (contrariwise to the nineteenth-century first formulations of the question, Hegel's and Nietzsche's included) and strove to carry back the experience of thinking to its original ground or rather groundlessness, he ended up nevertheless showing all that as something that only could be experienced by means of an hierophany that should in any case be anachronistic for the present culture. In other words, the philosophy that Heidegger upholds considers that the problem does not lie in how to revert to the origin but in how to stop thinking of it in terms of presence and of rational causality, wherewith the sense of the nostalgia varies utterly: it is no more the way to the revelation of the origin but to the understanding of the final impossibility thereof, taking into account all the consequences that that carries for the existence of man.¹³ But precisely because of that unwithering transcendence, the origin recovers all the characteristics of the genesis of the tradition but in a negative sense: it is the absolute impossibility such as it was the absolute presence. Thus, the nostalgia for the genesis that philosophy was supposed to overcome returns at once as the foundational myth that we have accounted for,¹⁴ which is perceptible, on the other hand, in most of the present philosophical production that retakes Heidegger's work and tries uselessly to vindicate a pre-modern vision of existence without specifying the concrete sense that it would have for the own thought or the way society could avail itself thereof.

Let us recapitulate what we have said before proceeding any further: we have seen that there had been a *sui generis* nostalgia throughout the twentieth-century, above all in the second half thereof and even after the fall of the sham ideality of the political, hedonistic and intellectual myths of modernity which have been brought to light by the criticism of tradition and of its metaphysical origin. Now, despite the undeniable depth of this criticism, it has been for mystifying the origin that it was supposed to clear, whereby it has finally been useless. The question of the past has not been solved because there has not been a conception thereof that overcomes the would-be precedence of the origin, whether this is made out as an event, an experience or as a principle that

has to be endlessly actualized. It seems that it only remains for us to dwell upon how the twentieth-century art has tackled the problem of the origin. Let us see it.

THE ARTISTIC ORIGINALITY AND CINEMA

A. In accordance with our slant and to say it briefly, all the artistic production of the twentieth-century is bound to the problem of the genesis because this problem reveals the very essence of art as the activity of shaping something face to the would-be preexistence of an original object or, also, of a free and uninterested feeling (as Kant had set forth the question).¹⁵ Now, the fact is that representation and creation are indistinguishable for modern art insofar as it has no other sense than the exposition of the free play of imagination and/or the generation of a spiritual identity with reality,¹⁶ which raises a problem that is not easy to solve and shows why art always must deal with the question of the origin beyond the narrow question of the adequate mimesis that took up the whole of the philosophical approach to the question at least until the very foundation of the aesthetics within the Enlightenment, when the metaphysical transcendence that provided the framework of whatever philosophical investigation of nature was substituted by the subjective and systematic framework of experience. From then onwards, the understanding of the specificity of the artistic shape of reality took over the mimetic reproduction thereof that had until that time been the kernel of the philosophical reflection upon the issue: let us remind that although Kant still considered that art had to display a *sui generis* affinity with nature, he also thought that that affinity is just a structuring of the imaginative faculty of the subject and is thereby utterly indifferent to whatever objective configuration of nature.¹⁷ The real change of the perspective is perceptible, however, in Hegel, who so genially kenning that art, the same as religion and philosophy, possesses an absolute spiritual dignity that goes by far beyond the question of an adequate reproduction of an original: against the famous Platonic proscription of painting that stated that the reproduction of the original object implicated somehow its degradation,¹⁸ Hegel stressed that art, instead of merely reproducing something precedent, recreates or metamorphoses it on other plane of reality: “[. . .] The Idea, viewed as the beautiful in art, is not the Idea in the strict sense, that is as a metaphysical Logic apprehends it as the Absolute. It is rather the Idea as carried into concrete form in the direction of express realization, and as having entered into immediate and adequate unity with such reality”.¹⁹ Thus, whereas Plato can be considered the first upholder of the nostalgia for the past since he underlines through thick and thin the preeminence of the original, Hegel sides with the critic retrospective

that brings to light the superiority of the artistic work regarding its original, which, independently from any other question, is due to the fact that the artwork exhibits the consciousness of the creator through a shaped materiality whereas the natural or technical object just lies in a utensil that is more often than not meaningless or shapeless: if, following Hegel, one compares a statue such as the Apollo of the Belvedere with its original, it is very probable that one will be cruelly disappointed, which shows the capacity of the artwork to overcome and enhance the frail human selfhood, which is also illustrated by the legend of Pygmalion, whose love for his creation is passionate enough so as to change the statue into a beautiful girl: art literally outshines life. Thereby, although the artwork compels to ask for its genesis, it does not set it forth as an preexistent original but as the activity of shaping the reality, that is to say, as the ground both of the consciousness that the creator comes by on shaping the work and of the new shape that the work itself embodies: "The work, therefore, is not the reproduction of some particular entity that happens to be present at any given time; it is, on the contrary, the reproduction of the thing's general essence".²⁰ And this essence is no other thing than the spiritual identity of man and reality that the work instantiates or rather fulfils.

As we see, the retrospective that art brings about does not imply either the yearning for a mythic origin or the ideality of the original that leads to the rejection of present as a fall and of the artwork as an appearance, which, as far as I know, have been the two props of the metaphysical reduction of art to mimesis until the eighteenth-century, when both conditions were reevaluated in accordance with the new subjective framework of experience whose foundation was the main task of philosophy from Locke to Kant. From the latter onwards and until Nietzsche, the vindication of the present and of the spirituality of art were hand-in-hand beyond the differences in the way of setting it out and also beyond the opposition of the traditional framework of the socio-individual existence, which could work together with the subjectivist approach because all of them were tied by the dialectic transcendence of the historic progress. Now, by reasons that we cannot fathom in this place but that are doubtlessly bound to the devastation of the subjective framework that we have just mentioned, the unity of progress and artistic fulfilment came to an end (contradicting the overpowering development of the Hegelian Ghost), and in the void that it left both in culture and in the structure of life it appeared the nostalgia that has pervaded most of the twentieth-century culture and history, which, as we have showed, is stark alien to the critic consciousness of time and reality that art stands for, which precludes the lucid individual from simply surrendering to the logic of the present and demands rather to grapple with the multiple contradictions and possibilities that go to meet everyone in a time as ours. To

put it another way, if it is true that art compels to return time and time again to the past and to the original objective framework of reality like the double rise of creativity, as Hegel so lucidly saw, it is to the same extent true that that, far from implying the idealization of past or of the model of the work, postulates the overcoming of both of them, which does not match at all the nostalgic recollection that we have figured out.

B. This demand of an endless overcoming that is achieved through the retrospect is all the more perceptible in the case of an art that because of its historic genesis seems to be doomed to deal with the problem that we have so far set forth: we mean cinema. As a matter of fact, cinema should by principle be utterly alien to the question of origin insofar as it, contrariwise to poetry but also to the whole of the plastic art, whose respective beginning seems to be lost into the darkness of time whereon only myth is able to throw some light, has appeared within a technical and profane conception of reality that in the eyes of the utilitarian thought changes whatever allusion to the transcendence of the genesis into a piece of nonsense. Cinema, so the truism says, does not want a metaphysical or mythical justification simply because its origin is not beyond history and memory as it happens with the rest of the arts; however, we have hereinabove seen that the necessity of metaphysical or rather critical justification stems directly from the want of universalizing experience and recapitulating time according to the framework of present, so that although cinema is stark explainable as a technical improvement, it has begotten new ways of perceiving and appraising existence that go by far beyond the purely technical or historiographical aspects thereof. Still more, precisely because cinema has had such an outstanding part in the development of a culture that has yielded to nihilism and meaninglessness, it is crucial the question of its genesis or, which is the same, of how it recreates reality so as to put it within reach of audiences that have utterly antagonistic beliefs and idiosyncrasies, which however has not precluded cinema from coming by a level of popularity and a transcendence that no other art has been able to equal through history, which coincides withal with the onset of the so-called culture of the (visual) image and even of a “visual thinking” that are the props of whatever current vision of the socio-historical process.²¹ And this is doubtlessly due to a very elemental condition: that *the sole material wherewith cinema works is the human selfhood* that, notwithstanding the outlandishness or the preposterousness of the script or of the narrative thread of the picture, imposes a principle of comprehensibility that allows everyone to identify himself with the action of the screen. In other words, what one sees firstly and mainly in the picture is the selfhood that, amplified to a size that endows it with the transcendence that was in other times the very quality of the religious image, operates on all the planes

of reality with the dramatism and the efficaciousness that each circumstance demands so as to show the boundless capacity of man to break with whatever natural or socio-cultural stint. And insofar as this principle implies the ontological and psychological complexity of selfhood, cinema must always turn to the question of the genesis however much the technical or historiographical background thereof can dispense with it.

It is needless to stress that the globalization of the individualism has during the twentieth-century worked together with the criticism against the rational framework of existence that philosophy vindicated, which lied in the supposition of an ideality of selfhood that implicated that the sole material determination of the personhood was not enough to assure the fulfilment of the individual life.²² Contrary to this imposition of an ideality, cinema liberates everyone from the want of finding a would-be transcendent meaning of life and postulates instead the mere image of physical presence as the ground of an accomplished life, which brings so to the foreground the question concerning the real bedrock of the selfhood and, through it, of how setting out the genesis of the identity of man and reality that, as we have shown, is the hidden thread of the culture of the last century. For if it is almost always reduced to its negative aspects (the worst whereof is doubtlessly the vindication of a brutish violence in the field of politics, of a uncouth naturalism in the field of socio-individual relationships and of a retrograde irrationalism in the field of thought), the phenomenon has a positive side that also must be brought to light: that *it has literally compelled to see the sheer selfhood of everyone liberated, I insist, from the burden of the metaphysical ideality wherewith tradition had framed it*. Of course, this does not mean that the individual appears on the screen beyond the natural wants or the socio-historical bounds of existence; on the contrary, he always appears immersed in the most prosaic conflicts or situations such as a prefabricated romance or an abstract fight against crime, which must be as unlikely as possible so as to emphasise the way the individual reasserts himself through them: despite what the most common or garden realism would claim, the protagonist of a picture has to defeat almost effortlessly thousands of hindrances and antagonists by the pure strength of his will, of his conviction, of his feelings, which cater alternatively or simultaneously the bedrock to define his whole being: for instance, if he is a police officer that has to defeat a complot against the world peace, he will very likely fall in love with a woman that has been compelled to cooperate with the evildoers and that thanks to the gallantry of the protagonist will at the same time be released and will land a husband in the middle of the utmost danger. Thereat, it must be clear that the average cinema protagonist, more than embodying a transcendent ideal such as, for instance, gentlemanly or bounty, stands for the average individual

that always intends to stand out from anyone else in the most heteroclitic circumstances: he is the perfect badge of himself and just resorts to the peripeteias of the action in order to show more downright who he is.

This preeminence of the individual over the circumstances explains from another slant why the question of the genesis is not secondary for cinema: it points at the uniqueness and singularity of everyone, even of the humblest or most despicable individual. Concerning this, think of all those pictures that deal with the hidden powers that someone has inadvertently had all his life and that when he all of a sudden discovers allow him to transmogrify his anodyne existence into a great success. Of course, it could be argued that this is not exclusive of cinema and that the idealization of the common individual is also a feature of the theatre and, by and large, of literature, which has for centuries dealt with the common people. However, there is an axial difference here: that the cinema protagonist (I refuse to call him "hero" because of the reasons that follow) never goes beyond the average existence, not even when he, like Superman, is able to save the whole world, and that is because he has to linger not only within the plane of the average individual but on the very immediacy of his existence, which coincide with the reduction of reality to the screen. In other words, the protagonist of a picture limits himself to operate more than to act, for in his case the action is more a performance, a function that has to be carried out according to wants and determinations that must be subjective although their effects affect the outward world, which is why there is hardly a way to differentiate the cinema protagonist of the actor that embodies him, which is all the more blatant when one compares the cinema protagonist with the theatrical one. As a matter of fact, theatre was by its historical origin linked during Antiquity with the effort to show the mythical sway of the Gods over the human existence, and always has kept that characteristic even when the concrete conception of the divine or of the metaphysical ground of reality has drastically changed, which is amply corroborated by the easiness where-with Nietzsche resorts to tragedy so as to lay the foundations of a metaphysical conception of man. Furthermore, whatever dramatic work possesses two features intimately bound that preclude it from being equated with the technical approach of cinema and that help to grasp more concretely by contrast the identity of the latter: firstly, in the theatrical artwork the text has an undeniable precedence over the performance because of the complexity and the richness of meaning that the literary word possesses;²³ secondly, the theatrical actor appears in his human dimension however much the character that he embodies is terrible or superhuman (superhuman, I have said, not Superman!). Even more, these two features always work together, so that the actor appears on a stage whose final unity is provided by the text, which explains why every

dramatic masterpiece keeps its own identity independently of the staging: one can criticize the latter and even so enjoy the text; this transcendence, then, resists the technical approach and fosters instead a *sui generis* uniqueness that matches marvellously the nostalgia for the past that we have set out throughout this paper.

In the case of cinema, on the contrary, the text and the action itself hinge upon the physical presence of the actor, and the reason thereof is as plain as a pikestaff: because of the magnifying power of the screen, which endows the cinematographic actor with a mythic size and changes the action that the picture shows into the representation of something that happens to someone like oneself but on a greater scale, which is precisely for underlying the potency of the individual will whether over adversity, malevolence or even a natural limit like the physical strength of the body, which as if by magic is able to carry out exploits that would outstrip Hercules's. Now, this mechanism whereby every individual is endowed with a mythical identity without losing his average condition allows by means of the actor to reduce the transcendence of the past heroes to the dimension of the present existence: in accordance with that, a hero like Achilles or like Napoleon ends up being "as human" as any member of the audience, and the picture shows how, although the hero struggled unyieldingly against Gods and men in the middle of circumstances or within a cultural framework that have nothing to do with the average individual, in his heart of heart he just wanted to live and love like everyone else and would have willingly changed all his fame for being "normal", i.e., average and common, which is why the so-called cinema superhero always lingers on the most shameful anonymity or normality. Thus, the ancient idealization of personality that considered it an excellence unattainable for the average individual, becomes the mere cult to an individual that stands out from the others only insofar as he embodies all of them, which, oddly enough, is not entirely negative from a cultural point of view. Why? Because, leaving aside the doubtless vindication of the meaninglessness and of the stints of the average existence that lies at the bottom of the cult to the personality, the fact is that when the question is focussed through cinema, it allows to endow everyone with an identity and a potency that makes up for the anonymity of the average existence, so that it is possible to reduce the whole course of history to the moment when the spectator imaginatively overcomes all the hindrances and becomes what he always had wanted to be: himself.

If, as far as I see the issue, *this reconfiguration of past is the main function of cinema concerning history*, the genesis that it sets forth can perfectly dispense with whatever nostalgia both for the part of society and of the individual, provided that the latter will win at the end and that everyone else will take him

as the perfect symbol of his own identity: the actor, in this case, will be the instance of a universal identification.²⁴ Of course, that this is meaningless outside the cinematographic realm does not prevent everyone from feeling that he is the centre of the universe and that his petty business or his tortuous passions and obsessions are important enough to be filmed, for he has taken over the ancient hero and appears on every screen as the subject by *antonomasia*: no picture is conceivable without the bedrock that is provided by the sheer selfhood of the actor whose size, even when the pictured is projected on television, brings the human presence to a dimension that surpasses whatever precedent philosophical framework of existence. Thus, the retrospective superiority of the artwork concerning the natural or the technical object becomes the retrospective superiority of the individual regarding the historical or ontological determination of existence, which is why the nostalgia is stark preposterous even in the case where it could be more logic: I mean the so-called historic pictures, which should in principle contradict our general approach since their very essence implies that the past is brought up to day. But is it really so? Is it not rather the contrary, that is to say, that past is merely on the screen a dimension of present that is given for a deeper visualization of the individual possibilities of action? If we are right, the historical cinema is just the window to the genesis of present that prefigures simultaneously fullness and contradictoriness of the time when the individual seems to come by, at least in principle, the total control over reality, which is due, as we have showed, to the very presence of the actors that bring to light the inner or psychological complexity of average existence beyond or rather before whatever transcendent badge or ideal, which would allow to see what metaphysics and by and large literature have unsuccessfully tried to set forth from their onset: the identity of presence and action that constitutes the bedrock of the present conception of man beyond the nostalgia for past. Thereat, on speaking of an selfhood that is free from the burden of the cultural symbolization and just stands for itself, we also implicate the overcoming of the previous or metaphysical (in the deprecatory sense of the term) way of defining human existence. For although it is true that cinema reproduces and strengthens the social functions through certain archetypes such as the responsible citizen, the batty scientific, the tender girl or the vamp, all of them appear not as the actualization of a symbolic value (as it happens in literature, wherein the character is defined through words and demands the imaginative cooperation of the reader) but as the sundry possibilities that everyone has at hand according with his individual personhood, which is not the same.

Thus, the downright presence of the actor and the identification with it thanks to the carrying out of a determined function with a social meaning allows

dispensing with the nostalgia for a transcendent or symbolical ground of socio-historical existence and explaining the action by means of the sheer selfhood, which, of course, does not mean that the want of a philosophical reflection on history can simply be thrown aside as a reminder of a tawdry wisdom, but that it must be defined according to the critical character of the current vision of reality wherefrom both totalitarianism, individualism, irrationalism, art and cinema itself stem. In other words, insofar as the latter reveals the finitude of man literally embodied in the actor, it compels to see something that the precedent ways of plastic representation (so as not to mention literature and music, the two props of a metaphysical conception of existence on the plane of art) would have never been able to make visible: that the only ground of cultural reality is the very complexity of man, and that it belies the would-be precedence of the mythic, mystic or metaphysical genesis, as it shows the sole picture whereon we are going to remark, which in my eyes has fathomed more than any other work the intellectual sense of cinema: *Persona* by Bergman, where one sees how the mere presence of someone is enough to unsettle the whole existence of everyone else: when the theatre actress that has become dumb during a performance imposes her ironbound silence to the nimble nurse that looks after her in a house on the seashore where they are stark alone, the latter starts to feel unsettled almost immediately and experiences a want of speaking without stopping and reveal her innermost secrets to the other, who listens attentively; later on, in a scene that could be either a daydream, a dream or simple reality, the actress enters to the room where the nurse is supposedly sleeping and caresses her before the camera as if it were a mirror that allowed the nurse to see her own desire. However, when she realizes that the actress has been watching all her reactions with an ironical distance and that her friendliness has been feigned, she starts to attack and insult her, not because she, the nurse, is feeble and cannot stand the situation but because she feels that the other has destroyed the sentimental link that united them beyond the impenetrability of silence. Now, inasmuch as the actress remains wordless despite the violence of the reaction, the nurse lose utterly the self-control and acts like a madwoman, which goes hand-in-hand with the breakdown of the narrative thread of the picture, until coming down to a scene wherein the nurse successes in making that the actress repeats the only word that she utters in the picture: "Nothing". What is behind the face of a human being is not the harmony of the cosmos, let alone the traces of an all-mighty Creator or an original chaos that reverberated through history and culture; it is the absolute emptiness of everything short of the originality of each individual, which has been concealed by an abstract idealization but that unfolds its unwithering power as soon as one overcomes the

average perception. After all is said and done, what remains of metaphysics is the riddle that every existence entails before the order of reality.

That cinema shows this without the interposition of symbol whatever and that it brings to the foreground the multiple possibilities of self-fulfilment that a nihilist time puts within reach of everyone is the double reason of the historic importance thereof, independently of its reduction to a propagandistic medium or to a commercial entertainment. In other words, the philosophical value of cinema lies in the capacity that it has for making see the real framework of the nihilist existence, the numberless shades that the meaninglessness of everything possesses and the advantages that the shallowness of feelings and the relativity of thought offers for attaining, if not a happy life, at least an intense or interesting one. For we can take cinema as the art by antonomasia to visualize the pluralism of existence that nihilism has made possible through the "idealization" of the average selfhood, just like Nietzsche took Hellenic tragedy as the cornerstone of a whole conception of the heroic greatness that man could come by in spite of the adamant subjection to fate. As a matter of fact, although history, understood as the dialectic development of man consciousness that should have led to a boundless inwardness, has concluded in the levelling of all the metaphysical ideals according to the wants of the aimless individual that is the only star in a nihilist heaven, it does not imply that its upshot has to be boring, perfunctory or grotesque. On the contrary, the lack of sublime ideals can also be the best reason to change the stints of the metaphysical ideals concerning existence into the quest of a less demanding way of leading it. *Vale*.

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NOTES

¹ On this issue, vide the chapter II of the classical book by Panofsky, Erwin. *Renaissance and Resuscitations in Western Art*. (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1960).

² Both Luis Villoro in his book *El Pensamiento Moderno. Filosofía del Renacimiento* (México: FCE, 1992) and Rafael Argullol in his *El Quattrocento. Arte y Cultura del Renacimiento Italiano* (2nd. Editon, Barcelona: Montecinos, 1988) point out that this is the right way to appraise the "return" of the contemporaries to Antiquity.

³ On this topic, vide Marc Fummaroli (Ed.), *La Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*, FC 3414. (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), above all the introductory essay by the editor.

⁴ As a matter of fact, this creed was already present in the Cartesian ideal of a secular society of wise men devoted to develop a practical knowledge of nature that improved human existence. Concerning this point, vide the first and the sixth part of the *Discourse on Method*.

⁵ I analyzed this last point in my article "A Life Beyond Go(o)d: A Criticism of Wisdom and the Foundation of a Poetic Conception of Life Based on Goethe's *Faust*", which was published by Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka in the volume LXXXV of the *Analecta Husserliana*, pp. 749–785.

⁶ That is in fact the general approach of *The Birth of Tragedy*, which Nietzsche vindicates in the rest of his works of youth. Regarding the point, vide my article “El Concepto de lo Intempestivo en el Pensamiento del Joven Nietzsche y su Aplicación a la Comprensión de la Cultura” that appears in *Perspectivas Nietzscheanas. Reflexiones en Torno al Pensamiento de Nietzsche*, ed. Paulina Rivero Weber and Greta Rivara Kamaji. (Mexico: UNAM, 2003).

⁷ Concerning the reasons why, beyond this questionable link, Heidegger’s thought has come by such an amazing influence on the host of the works that have been produced in the last half century and are devoted to the analysis of the modern society and state, vide Ferry, Luc, and Renaut, Alain, *Heidegger et les Modernes*. (Paris: Grasset et Fasquelle, 1988). The general thesis of the work is that that influence is due to the lack of a general discourse on the subject after the fall of Marxism.

⁸ Independently of the undeniable transformation of these two fields of the socio-cultural experience, I think that the real aim of Nietzsche’s thought, i.e., the overcoming of the metaphysical framework of desire and of the whole order of representation, has largely been reduced to the sheer vindication of an individualistic appropriation of reality that has nevertheless conceived according to the own metaphysics that Nietzsche criticized. Regarding this, it could be very useful to compare the array of aphorisms that are about the modern subjectivism in the first two books of *Daybreak* and the sundry colloquies that make up the fourth book of *Thus Spake Zarathustra*.

⁹ *Lessons on the Philosophy of the Universal History*, p. 148.

¹⁰ This is blatant in *Being and Time* throughout, and the explanations of the ontological framework of existence does not allow doubting that the original experiences that Heidegger vindicates such as speech and the fall cannot be mistaken for the common or garden exegesis of them that the same philosophical tradition and Christian religiosity have canonized, let alone for whatever concrete historical event. However, this exigency is shaded in the further works of the philosopher, above all in the ones that deal with the problem of the technic and the general approach to thing that modernity upholds, where the criticism endorses the turn to a pre-modern or poetical praxis. Vide concerning this, the introduction to Heidegger’s “The Question about Technology” by Jorge Acevedo, in *Filosofía, Ciencia y Técnica*, ed. Jorge Acevedo (3rd. Edition, Santiago de Chile: Ed. Universitaria, 1997).

¹¹ It is very meaningful that these three philosophers, so as not to mention the rest of the tradition, had endeavoured to lay the foundations of a new philosophical paradigm of knowledge insofar as it allowed a new social practice thereof, which is evident in Descartes’s *Discourse on Method*, in Locke’s works on education and civil government and in Kant’s minor works on the same subject.

¹² As far as I know, the work wherein Heidegger rejects more eagerly such topicality is the *Introduction to Metaphysics*, in whose first part he denounces the transformation of the thinker into an ilk of propagandist that is at the service of the opinions and standpoints of the present.

¹³ Concerning this, the obvious reference is the famous interview with the *Spiegel*, wherein Heidegger warns against the danger implicit in the exigency of a total functioning and efficiency that presides the current time. A Spanish translation of the interview appears in: Heidegger, Martin. “La Autoafirmación de la Universidad Alemana”. “El Rectorado, 1933–1934”. “Entrevista del ‘Spiegel’”, ed. and trans. Ramón Rodríguez, CP 61 (Madrid: Tecnos, 1989), pp. 49–83.

¹⁴ An analysis of this that is surprising for its erudition and depth makes up the chapter fourth of the following book: Hansen, Mark. *Embodying “Technesis”: Technology Beyond Writing* (Michigan: UMP, 2000).

¹⁵ Let us remember that in the paragraph 48 of the *Critique of Judgement* Kant points out that the properly aesthetic quality of an artwork lies in the feeling of beauty wherewith the subject contemplates it, which is for the universal communication of a way of representation that is not determined by a concept.

¹⁶ Which is why Hegel considers that art possesses a specific quality independently of the merely theoretical aspects of the work, that is to say, it provides man with an experience superior concerning the objectivity of the practical knowledge.

¹⁷ This appears above all in the paragraph 45 of the *Critique of Judgement*, where Kant upholds that art always has to bring about a free imaginative trend akin to the creative strength of nature that is perceptible in the irreducible multiplicity of vital forms.

¹⁸ The classical reference is *Republic*, 595b and ff., where Plato sets out his famous differentiation among three kinds of bed: the ideal one, which is made by God, the material one that is made by the carpenter and the apparent or imitative one, which is made by the painter. For a very analysis of the Platonic rejection of plastic art, vide Murdoch, Iris. *The Fire and the Sun. Why Plato Banished the Artists*. (Oxford, OUP, 1977). For an analysis of the link of the Platonic theory with the post-modern art, vide Danto, Arthur C., *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace. A Philosophy of Art*. (Cambridge: HUP, 1981).

¹⁹ "The Philosophy of Fine Art" in *Philosophies of Art & Beauty. Selected Readings in Aesthetics from Plato to Heidegger*, ed. Albert Hofstadter and Richard Kuhns, trans. of Hegel's excerpts: F. P. B. Osmaston. (Chicago: CUP, 1976), p. 428.

²⁰ Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work Of Art", *ibidem*, trans. by Albert Hofstadter, p. 666.

²¹ Concerning this issue, the classical references are Rudolph Arnheim's *Visual Thinking*. (Berkeley: UCP, 1969) and Marshall McLuhan's *Understanding Media*. In the latter book the author says that "our literate acceptance of the mere movement of the camera eye as it follows or drops a figure from view is not acceptable to an African film audience. If somebody disappears off the side of the film, the African wants to know what happened to him. A literate audience, however, accustomed to following printed imagery line by line without questioning the logic of lineality, will accept film sequence without protest" (Cambridge: MIT, 1994), pp. 285–286. These remarks strengthen the want of a more accurately reflection on how, despite the opposition that some cultural structures can offer to a picture's logic, the fact is that cinema is all the world over produced and consumed, which coincides point by point with the loss of the would-be total meaningfulness of existence.

²² Concerning this, vide my article "Enlightenment, Humanization and Beauty in the Light of Schiller's Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man," in *Virtues and Passions in Literature. Excellence, Courage, Engagements, Wisdom, Fulfilment*, ed. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, *Analecta Husserliana* XCVI. (Dordrecht: Springer, 2008), pp. 171–198.

²³ Among the myriads of works that delve into this issue, I just mention the several articles by Gadamer that were gathered in the volume VIII of the *Complete Works* of his under the general title of *Ästhetik und Poetik*. (Tubingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1993).

²⁴ In my paper entitled "On the Poetics of Cinema in the Light of the Present Culture", which will (I hope) be published by Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, I have focussed this process of symbolization not from the point of view of the individual but from the social want of differentiating functions and planes of action.

“BODHER PRATYUSHE BUDDHIR PRADIP”: THE
LAMP OF INTELLIGENCE AT THE DAWN OF
ARTISTIC FEELING

A B S T R A C T

[The phrase “bodher pratyushe buddhir pradip nahi jwale” (i.e., the intellectual faculty has little role at the advent of reflective feeling) occurs, you know, in the poem “Dhwani” (The Soundscape) in Tagore’s poetical work “Akash Pradip” (The Sky Lamp). Tagore is very much sensitive to the visual and aural aspects of the whole world around us. (cf., “Dekha” (Seeing) and “Shona” (Hearing), two consecutive congregational addresses in Santiniketan)

The paper aims at a cozy conciliation between the voice of senses generating intense feeling and the radiation of intelligence illuminating our logical traits.

On the whole, it can be understood that intelligence and artistic feeling are always complementary to each other. The very misconception that they are contradictory has led to many an imaginary problem unnecessarily raised]

The wonderful subordinate clause “*Bodher pratyushe yetha buddhir pradip nahe jwale*”¹ (where the lamp of intellect need not be, or rather cannot be, lit at the dawn of sensuous arousal or at the advent of aesthetic feeling) occurs, you know, as the last line of the poem “*Dhwani*”² (Sound) in Rabindranath’s poetical work “*Akash Pradip*”³ (The Sky Lamp). The full sentence, quite lengthy and a compound one, the antecedent of ‘yetha’ (where), indicates, in short, the spell of soundscape around us leading the poet’s sensitive consciousness to the centre of the wonder-world of existence. The poem was written at Santiniketan on the 21st October, 1938. The poem is very much important from phenomenological point of view and exactly relevant to the central them of this conference on “The Artist’s Account And Philosopher’s Interpretation.”

I must also explain the phenomenological significance of “*Akash Pradip*” especially for clearer understanding of the western audience. “*Akash*” means the sky, the firmament. ‘*Pradip*’ means the lamp. The compound word “*Akash-Pradip*” or “*Akashpradip*” denotes our age-old rite of lighting a lamp on the top of a very high pole fixed and erected on the roof or thatch of every house every night throughout the month of *Kartik* (mid-October to mid-November).

The rite connotes the radiant connection between us and our bygone ancestors, between the earthly bio-sphere and the Heaven, between the human soul and the cosmic soul, between the human consciousness and the whole creation throughout space and time. The illumination ceremony at the new moon night of the same season connotes a soulful bondage between the starry heaven and the illumined earth-surface. Rabindranath has composed a beautiful song on the occasion of the illumination ceremony (*dipavali*). The song is “*Himer rate oi gaganer dipgulire. . . .*”,⁴ very much popular in our country. It is sung in unison along with picturesque group dance. A unified aura of the culmination of artistic rows of lamps, sonorous music and lively dance enlivens the nocturnal atmosphere.

Now, let me come back to “*Dhwani*” again. The poem starts as

Janmechhinu sukshma tare bandha man niya
Charidik hote shavda uthito dhwaniya
Nana kampe nana sure
*Nadir jatil jale ghure ghure.*⁵

[I was born with the strings of my mind acutely tuned. Variety of sounds produced all around had had their vibrations and tonal resonances prolonging in the network of my nervous system.]

The poet recollects his childhood memory while writing the poem. The sounds were from various sources: the shrill cry of a flying hawk, the quarrelsome barking of distant dogs, the prolonged voices of street hawkers, the loud cry of the horse-rider, the quacking of ducks in the nearby reservoir, the ringing of school-bell, the whistle of the floating steamers on the Ganges etc. The poet was very much sensitive to all these natural sounds. The visual aspects of nature along with their tonal dimensions created a unique feeling in the poet’s imagination. This kind of feeling is unaccountable in philosopher’s interpretation “*Yukti nay, buddhi nay*”,⁶ i.e., neither logic, nor intellect can help us in explaining this kind of feeling and sensation. Yet, this very aesthetic feeling has given birth to the excellent poem “*Dhwani*”, very much significant both from the artistic as well as from the philosophical points of views.

For a clearer understanding of the visual and tonal dimensions of the natural world around us we may now take into consideration two pieces of Rabindranath’s prose—writings viz. “*Dekha*”⁷ (Seeing) and “*Shona*”⁸ (Hearing). These are two consecutive congregational addresses delivered by the poet on the Fourth and Fifth *Paus* respectively in 1315 Bengali era. Actually seeing and hearing are two reciprocal and complementary roles of two of our five senses. These two addresses bear Rabindranath’s deep insight and magnanimous introspection of human perception on the one hand and the perceived world or this wonderful creation on the other. The discourses inherent in these

addresses clarify to some extent the subtle and inner relationship between “the artist’s account” and “the philosopher’s interpretation”.

The first address, i.e., “*Dekha*” starts with the phenomenon of light, the principal contingent of our visual perception. Light, coming from a very far distant source (our nearest one, the sun), provides us with the necessary condition for visual perception of the wonderful world of beautiful forms. Light along with its radiance is also one of the necessary components for the vegetative growth of trees, flowers and crops of various kinds around our surroundings. Light shows us much more than we need. Seeing surpasses our needful items and leads our vision to the amazing vastness of the sky and the distant horizon. Furthermore, the nocturnal vision of our starry heaven is much more than just knowing the constellations and their astronomical details. It is to become one with the creation. The world of appearance finds its fulfilment in our analogic perception. Day and night, we are free to see the beautiful forms of creation.

As the sunbeam causes the lotus-bud to bloom, to open its petals, so also it reveals and illumines our consciousness too. We have to see with full consciousness the perennial fountain of beauty, i.e., “*Ruper jharna*”⁹ arising from and ultimately submerging into the infinite ocean of beauty, i.e. “*Ananta rupasagar*”.¹⁰

Quoting from the *Mundaka Upanishad* “*Anandarupamamritam*”,¹¹ Rabindranath pronounced in full faith that the exquisite beauty of human face is but the lively model of the beauty of that infinite one joyfully manifesting in all beautiful forms. In human face we have to see his pleased countenance, i.e., “*Dakshinam mukham*”.¹²

Rabindranath concluded his address by chanting from the *Swetaswatara Upanishad*.¹³ We bow down to that God who is inherent in fire, in water, what to say, throughout the whole creation, even in crop-plants as well as in big trees. The poet added, if our sense of vision leads us to that kind of realization, then and then only, it will attain its fulfilment.

The poet was highly contemplative that night, was gazing at the starry sky from the top roof, and thought that the vision of the nocturnal firmament is but the silent music of the celestial world.

The next day, he delivered his next congregational address under the title “*Shond*.” At the outset he narrated his wonderful experience of the previous night and quoted his own song “*Baje baje ramya vina*”.¹⁴ In this three-stanza song, the first stanza gives the vibrant picture of the delightful *vina*-music as heard throughout the beauty of our natural surroundings, such as in the beautiful lotus, in the moonlit night, in the dark cloudy sky and in the fragrance of flowers. Just notice that seeing takes the role of listening, visual forms perform tonal imagery, our senses exchange their roles. The second stanza narrates the

enchanting dance-rhythm of the luminous heavenly bodies including the sun, the stars and planets; the rhythm of the dance-movements of the rivers, seas and oceans; the evolutionary dance-rhythm of births and deaths, the dance of the emergence and lapse of aeons after aeons. The third stanza depicts the beautiful embellishments of the blue sky, the transitional glow of dawn and dusk, the colourfulness of earthly dust and also depicts the beauty of the heart of the devotee. The poet as if makes us feel the grand cosmic orchestration, colourful cosmic ornamentations and joyful cosmic dance. Not mechanics but love is the common factor of all the events of music, embellishment and dance (“*preme preme baje*,” “*preme preme saje*,” “*preme preme nache*,” the last lines of three stanzas highlighting celestial love).

The deluge of magnanimous orchestration of the universe (*bipul visva-ganer banya*¹⁵) is so vital a metaphor that the poet can affirm in full belief:

This is neither a poetic utterance, nor a rhetorical phrase that across space and time a grand music is being played all along day and night.¹⁶

In soulful ecstasy the poet added:

As this devastating deluge of magnanimous music of the universe rushes towards our soul, we are unable to receive it in single sense organ, we have to open up all our sense organs. We have to receive this musical flow through our eyes, ears, sense of touch, and by all means of our body and spirit. We, as it were, see this grand harmonious concert, listen to it, touch it, smell it, and even taste it too.¹⁷

By virtue of his insight, intuition and introspection Rabindranath had felt the interrelationship of our five senses much before the experimental psychologists poked into the concept of synaesthesia.

The ancient Greek thinkers had attributed the idea of celestial music to the serene and exactly mathematical movements of the heavenly bodies. Pythagoras was a great thinker of such a kind as who had identified the classical mechanics with the sonic properties of the sympathetic vibrations of musical tune and rhythm. This is more than the function of our eardrums alone.

While looking at the nocturnal sky, Rabindranath felt the common rhythm inherent in both the macro-cosmic universe and the micro-cosmic cells of our body. He pronounced that the cosmic music is never separated from the Cosmic Artiste, the Vina-Player, the Flute-Player, the Singer, the *Nataraja* (Cosmic Dancer). It should be our aim to synchronize our life-music with the cosmic music. Rabindranath concluded his address “*Shona*” with the soulful prayer:

O my Guru, lead me from discord to tunefulness¹⁸

It may be that the artist has his self-sufficient account of feeling and creativity; but at a closer look we can see that the artist’s account and the philosopher’s

interpretation are never contradictory. They are always complementary to each other.

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NOTES

¹ Rabindranath Tagore, “Dhwani,” *Akash-Pradip. Rabindra rachanabali* (henceforth abbreviated as *R.R.*, followed by the volume number), Birth Centenary Edition, Government of West Bengal, Saraswati Press, Calcutta, 1961, Vol.3, p. 640.

² *Ibid.*, pp.638–640.

³ *Ibid.*, pp.631–673.

⁴ “*Prakriti*” (Nature): song number 171, *Gītābitan* (collection of songs), *R.R.4*, p. 381.

⁵ *R.R.3*, p. 638.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 640.

⁷ *Santiniketan* (collection of congregational addresses), *R.R.12*, pp. 124–126.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 126–128.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

¹¹ *Mundak Upanishad* 2.2.7, quoted by Rabindranath, *Ibid.*, p. 126.

¹² *Brihadaranyak Upanishad*, quoted by Rabindranath, *Ibid.*, p. 126.

¹³ *Swetaswatara Upanishad*, 2.17, quoted by Rabindranath, *Ibid.*, p. 126.

¹⁴ “*Shona*”, *R.R.12*, 126.

For all full text of the song consult “*Puja*” (worship): song number 321, *Gītābitan*, op.cit., *R.R.4*, p. 103.

¹⁵ *R.R.12*, p. 127.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 127; translated from Bengali into English by me.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 127, translated by me.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 128, translated by me.

THE PHILOSOPHER'S PUPIL, IRIS MURDOCH'S
POST-MODERN ALLEGORY OF THE CREATIVE
PROCESS

ABSTRACT

In Iris Murdoch's novel *The Philosopher's Pupil*, the author writes a post-modern allegory of the creative process. In this work, Iris Murdoch teaches her reader how to read allegorically in an age dominated by realism. She teases us—as critic Robert Scholes wrote of an earlier Murdoch novel—into re-learning a “lost way of reading by almost imperceptibly moving from conventional mysteries of motivation and responsibility to the ideational mysteries of philosophy” (Scholes, p. 60). Murdoch carries out the allegory by way of “The Institute,” a hot-spring spa in the town. The behind-the-scenes “machinery” of The Institute relates allegorically to the operation of the publishing apparatus controlling narrative for the public as the product of innate creativity surges through it. The allegory is clearly tied to a view of sexuality as a powerful natural force which some feel must be suppressed or at least channelled. The allegory is carried out as follows: A philosopher attempts to arrange the marriage of his granddaughter to a young writer who descends into the works of The Institute and then realizes he should marry the granddaughter. This allegorically represents the merger of narrative art and philosophy.

In Iris Murdoch's novel *The Philosopher's Pupil*, she writes a postmodern allegory of the creative process. Robert Scholes's analysis of *The Unicorn*, also a novel by Murdoch, has influenced my interpretation of *The Philosopher's Pupil*. Echoing Robert Langbaum's insight on the tales of Isak Dinesen, Scholes refers to Murdoch's novels as “carefully worked-out romances of ideas—what I would call allegories” (p. 56). But “fabulators” such as Murdoch, Scholes believes, “are post-realistic and post-romantic as well” (p. 56): “For the post-World War II fabulators” says Scholes, “any order they impose on the world amounts not to a symbol of the divine order that God imposed on the cosmos, but to an allegory of the mind of man with its rage for an order superior to that of nature” (p. 56).¹

As she does in *The Unicorn*, Murdoch launches *The Philosopher's Pupil* with a misleading opening. *The Philosopher's Pupil* begins with an episode of a man, George McCaffrey, and wife Stella driving through the dark in a rain-storm, arguing. The wife tells the husband that he is driving recklessly because he is "crazy with fear because that man is coming" (p. 5). "That man" is identified as "John Robert Rozanov," whom we later discover is George's former philosophy professor at university; years before, Rozanov had told George to give up philosophy because George would never amount to anything as a philosopher (p. 77). George had followed Rozanov's advice but had always fiercely resented Rozanov. In his anger, George intentionally wrecks the car, and the crash knocks Stella unconscious. George then gets out, and, seeing that the car had come to rest inches from a canal, gets behind the car and pushes it into the canal with Stella still alive inside. As he does so, George sees the outline of a man on a nearby bridge observing his action: "It's the devil, thought George, the devil come at last to—" (p. 6). And he breaks off. Then he passes out.

From this scene, Murdoch's reader inevitably forms an impression of what this novel's future structure will be like—a Dostoevsky-inspired novel of crime and repentance, perhaps superimposed on an action-suspense-mystery fiction. However, *The Philosopher's Pupil* turns out to be a novel in which Murdoch shows her independence of conventions by gradually transferring the reader's attention—not only from the level of "what-will-happen-next" but even from interest in the characters—to the level of structure and image which makes up an allegory of the creative process. Murdoch's transfer necessarily directs an ironic, parodic scrutiny toward all conventions of fiction. As we notice that Murdoch is manipulating the conventions with disdain, we place the novel not only as allegory, but as a subtle post-modern allegory.

In this work, Iris Murdoch teaches her reader how to read allegorically in an age dominated by realism. She teases us—and here I again echo Scholes—into re-learning a "lost way of reading by almost imperceptibly moving from conventional mysteries of motivation and responsibility to the ideational mysteries of philosophy" (p. 60). After a break in the text, Murdoch continues to play with her reader when she depicts George waking the next morning in his bed and deciding "it was only a dream! I dreamt I'd killed Stella" (p. 6). Just as the reader is beginning to adjust to the convention of a dream that seemed so real, George notices his clothes, "what was odd was that they were all soaking wet and black with mud" (p. 8). "It was not a dream." And in Murdoch's italics: "It had all really happened" (p. 8). And just as we begin to re-realize with horror that George did kill Stella, George remembers that he had gone into the

canal and pulled her out in time to save her life. Yet, just as we are beginning to see a redeeming side to George, he remembers that he had then kicked her limp but living body. An ambulance had come; "Stella was taken to the hospital" (p. 9). The mysterious figure on the bridge—whom George confused with the devil—turns out to be "a priest," "Father Bernard Jacoby." George now concludes the priest must have called for help.

The above is not the only instance of a mischievously misleading clue, given by Murdoch. In another instance, the narrator tells us that, "There was some anxiety in the family about whether [George's brother] Tom mightn't be homosexual" (p. 39). Thus the third brother, Brian, is relieved to hear that Tom is bringing a university friend named Emma for a visit. "Anyway, a girl, that's good," says Brian (p. 39). When we finally meet them, Emma turns out to be a male friend named Emmanuel (p. 106), who seems very probably a homosexual and very probably in love with Tom. Eventually, we are told directly that Emma loves Tom (p. 340). Thus, the reader may then say to himself or herself, something along the lines of *Oh, so Tom is a homosexual after all*; however, Tom spends most of his part of the narrative trying to decide which of two women he loves, and showing no sexual interest in Emma or any male character. To top it off, the only person Emma has sex with in the novel is a woman—Pearl (p. 474).

The sequence I have described so far illustrates a process whereby Murdoch arouses inferences in the reader as to what kind of book this will be and then repeatedly shows each inference to be wrong. A paradigm of this movement comes a little later when we find these words said of George: "Then he fell in love with [Diane]. Well, surely he *did* fall in love? George was rewriting history so fast, it was hard to remember what had really happened" (p. 66, Murdoch's italics). Any person reading any novel's opening creates at least a vague, tentative structure in his or her mind as to what type of book this will be by inferring forward from the first few pages. Although a reader may have to revise or at least hone the inference as he or she reads on a few more pages, the typical reader usually soon settles comfortably into one of a limited number of conventions. Actually the reader may be influenced by factors outside the first few pages of text, for example, something as simple as the section of the library or bookstore in which one discovered the book. Was it in the fiction section, the mystery section, the science fiction section, or the fantasy section? The dust-cover, title, and front matter may condition the expectations the reader brings to the reading of the first few pages, expectations that may have to be revised a bit as the person reads. The above should be true of any book. Murdoch, however, does something rare in forcing multiple, radical dislocations of the reader's conventional anticipations, to the point where the reader may even give up

making inferences and simply become open for the next thing the author will throw at the reader, and be alert for anything.

The allegorical setting is the next thing that Murdoch throws at the reader. The narrator says he will call himself N. Almost the first thing N says is, "I shall call [the town in which the novel's action occurs] after my own, 'N's Town,'" (so Narrator's Town) "or, let us say, 'Ennistone'" (p. 16). The *narrative world* is thus the allegorical setting of the novel. Second, the Narrator says, that the center of interest in N's Town is "The Institute" (p. 19). In the allegory, what would "The Institute" stand for? Probably, The Institute is the external apparatus of narrative: the publishers, sales force, book stores, libraries, and anything else that attempts to influence literary production. Underneath The Institute is a hot spring that surges constantly—sometimes more, sometimes less. This parallels to innate creativity. The Institute has a garden with a hot-spring fountain that is described this way:

The idea that the waters had an aphrodisiac effect was periodically popular. Shakespeare's Sonnet 153 is said to refer to Ennistone, wherein the Bard's lively fancy pictures the spring deriving from a prank of one of Diana's nymphs who cooled the fiery penis of sleeping Cupid in a cool spring which thence became hot, and whose waters were said to cure the "sad distempers" and "strange maladies" which attend imprudent love. (p. 18)

Since Cupid is a god who encourages love (including sexual love) and Diana is the virgin goddess, patron of chaste women, Shakespeare evokes a symbolism of the conflict between these two deities and what they embody. However, N makes things more explicit. The sonnet actually says that Diana's nymph stole Cupid's "brand," a burning stick or torch, and "did quickly steep" Cupid's "love-kindling fire" in a fountain. So N (and thus Murdoch, of course), in changing "brand" and "fire" to "penis," makes overt the sexual element that is merely symbolic in Shakespeare's words.

Representing perhaps the historical heritage of narrative, The Institute is built on the ruins of a Roman bath and consists of wings built in the eighteenth century, Victorian era, and the 1920s. It also contains the following:

... our small but well-arranged Museum with its treasured collection of Roman antiquities. In the same building there is a modest art gallery containing nineteenth-century romantic paintings and some prettyish work by Ned Larkin, an Ennistonian follower of Paul Nash. (p. 19)

Paul Nash is an artist who produced highly stylized, but still recognizably realistic paintings of the front-line trenches during World War I, working as an official War Artist for the British military. During the interwar years he also was a leader in introducing abstraction and surrealism to the British art scene. During World War II, Nash again worked for the Government, this time for the Ministry of Information, producing, notably, paintings depicting the RAF's

Battle of Britain. Thus, The Institute covers the range of historical influences from classical times to modernism, touching on the effects of both world wars.

The Institute has a public, above-ground area and a private area below ground:

On the left of the Promenade a door leads to a large and curious octagonal room known as "the Baptistry". This room enshrines the entrance, complete with pseudo-classical pillars and pediment, to the great "machinery" or "engine room" to use the traditional terms, of the instillation. These machines, now modernized of course, were the pride of a well-known nineteenth-century engineer, and the huge subterranean area which they occupy used to be on show to the public. Now, however, for a variety of reasons (thought by some who canvass the matter regularly in the *Gazette* to be sinister) this area is closed off and the way into the Baptistry is marked PRIVATE. (p. 21)

The behind-the-scenes "machinery" probably relates allegorically to the operation of the publishing apparatus controlling narrative for the public as the product of innate creativity surges through it. The allegory is clearly tied to a view of sexuality as a powerful natural force which some feel must be suppressed or at least controlled. I do not see the sexual interpretation as an alternative interpretation to the reading of the novel as an allegory of creativity in the fiction-making process (in N's town on the River Enn). Rather it seems that Murdoch is signaling that the creative process that produces narrative art is intimately tied up with the sexual impulse.

This gives readers who see the allegory a chance to guess at Murdoch's philosophy of creativity in narrative. N says: "Lud's Rill, the 'Little Teaser', the modest hot jet in Diana's Garden, suddenly became more animated and began sending up great spurts of boiling water to a height of some twenty (when I saw it) or even thirty feet" (p. 28).² Evidently, uncontrolled narrative creativity can be dangerous since, "Some people who were nearby when the jet suddenly first erupted were quite seriously scalded" (p. 28). The history of censorship suggests that more than a few people have often thought the product of creativity can be socially dangerous. In N's tale, "The garden was then closed. The spring continued to perform for about three weeks and then stopped of its own accord. The garden remained closed for some time and was then re-opened after the introduction below ground of some grand new 'valve' which, we are assured, would preclude any repetition of such exuberance. There was disappointment and general annoyance at what was felt to be an unjustified interference with a marvel of nature. Most of us would gladly have surrendered the garden to the whims of the scalding jet" (p. 28).

Once in a while, as I read the allegory, a raw artistic creativity surges beyond the control of the publishing apparatus. Three things here are interesting: first, that a narrative spurt can scald anyone standing too close; second, that the unidentified managers of The Institute now believe that they have the potential

excesses of the natural creative instinct under their control; and third, that the patrons would rather the managers not try to control these unscheduled outbursts. This fits well with a final comment: "Some people," N says, have urged "that the Bath Institute should be thoroughly shaken up and hustled into the contemporary world" (p. 27).

The water in the fountain is too hot for a budding historian Emmanuel Scarlett-Taylor who is temporarily trapped in the fountain. People have gathered and are laughing at him as he was "dancing about in helpless frustration inside the railing which surrounded the spring" (p. 184). The historian had been "filled with a sudden desire to approach the little fount and feel how hot the water really was. It was easy enough, stepping upon a nearby stone, to vault in. Getting out was another matter" (p. 184). The sacred fount of Narrator's Town is apparently only for literary narrators, no matter how much historians may want to jump in. Murdoch's historian can only spend energy in desperate attempts to get out. The water is too hot for the historian.

What about a philosopher? John Robert Rozanov is a philosopher who long ago left N's Town, deeming it to be a nice quiet provincial place—a good place to be from. Rozanov's first book was a "demolition of the views of Husserl" (p. 77), but John Robert left philosophy for years, claiming "that philosophy was 'impossible', 'too hard for human beings'"; and so "he had decided to become a historian" (p. 78). Although people heard rumors that Rozanov had returned to try philosophy again, John Robert has published no new philosophy and now thinks, "he saw through every notion that he had ever had, the 'insights' won by a sustained asceticism appeared to him now as so much vacuous rather nasty stuff which he had made up out of nothing" (p. 131). So now, after many years teaching in universities in the United States, he has returned to Ennystone because he "did indeed retain an old childish faith in the efficacy of the waters" (p. 131). This is true, despite his having, "quarreled with N" (p. 72). However, when George takes a peek at what John Robert is writing, he reads, "But in what sense can value be asserted in the absence of the person? I must refer back at this point to my discussion of Husserl's reduction" (p. 303). Apparently, after "demolishing" Husserl in his first book, then losing faith in philosophy, and ultimately returning to it, Rozanov has decided he must build on Husserl's foundation, after all. Iris Murdoch received her initial Philosophic Education at Oxford as World War II began. The then younger professors who were creating the foundation of Analytic Philosophy under the influence of A. J. Ayer, who had published *Language, Truth and Logic* in 1936, left for war work, leaving behind the older British professors who worked in the tradition of Immanuel Kant, along with Jewish refugees in the continental tradition that included Phenomenologists. "While the cats were away, the mice could play,"

is the way A. N. Wilson puts it in his book *Iris Murdoch as I Knew Her* (p. 75). Murdoch later taught at Oxford but left there for a position teaching philosophy at the Royal College of Art in London. A. N. Wilson interprets the move as follows:

It was a liberating moment for her in many ways. She no longer needed to pretend to “do philosophy” in the way that the Oxford syllabus required, or as the largely male, largely analytical philosophical school at Oxford practiced the subject. She could, for the benefit of her non-philosophical pupils, talk about subjects such as Love, Art, God and The Good, which were of small interest to such figures as A. J. Ayer. (p. 92)

The philosopher that Murdoch found most congenial was Plato. Wilson emphasizes that she and Plato both believed in the reality of The Good—that goodness was not just something that we make up. However, we should not forget that Plato was a supremely excellent narrative writer, not only in the form of the dialogue but in making his points by the use of stories.

Murdoch's depiction of Rozanov despairing in the possibility of philosophy, leaving the discipline, then returning to it with the help of a return to Husserl and a visit to Narrative Town is the heart of the allegory. The allegory contains Murdoch's understanding that Anglo-American Philosophy, having cut itself off from narrative and from its continental cousin of Phenomenology, has run into a dead end and must return to both to seek its renewal. This is supported by John Robert's having “cursed the luck which had so authoritatively made of him a philosopher and not an artist” (p. 134). “Artists have beauty and nature at their side,” John Robert thought, “but a philosopher must contain his world inside his head until . . . it be unified, clarified . . . until he can become a god . . . or else perceive that his all is nothing” (p. 131). “Oh for another fifty [years]!” thought John Robert. “If human life were longer, art and science might be much the same, but philosophy *would be an entirely different matter*” (p. 131 Murdoch's italics). Underlying the problem, as John Robert depicts it, is a paradoxical quality of the enterprise: “Philosophy,” John Robert thought, “may be called a sublime ability to say the obvious, to exhibit what is closest. But what is closest is what is farthest” (p. 133). This verbal discussion of the difficulties of philosophy serve as a hint toward the allegorical meaning derived from the imagistic and structural features of the novel. However, with this analysis we are presented with a problem.

Once we are aware that we are in an allegorical space, as well as a realistic one, there are two routes to the allegorical meaning. The first begins when John Robert discusses his 17-year-old granddaughter Hattie with a 20-year-old writer, Tom. “I want you to marry her,” says the philosopher (p. 275). Why, we must ask, does Murdoch have her frustrated philosopher try to arrange the marriage of his granddaughter to a writer? John Robert “felt world-weary, as if the

journey was done, his era was over, John Robert Rozanov was finished. There only and so terribly remained alive the future, which was Hattie” (p. 317). Murdoch specifically connects Rozanov’s effort in matchmaking to the two fields of philosophy and narrative writing. In terms of Hattie marrying a writer, one reason John Robert chose Tom is that he prefers “A middling talent” for Hattie because marrying such a person “makes a more serene life” (p. 276). When Tom protests that he “might become a great writer,” John Robert says, “some risks must be taken” (p. 276). When Tom asks John Robert why he does not ask one of his students to marry his granddaughter, John Robert replies, “I do not think a philosopher would be suitable” (p. 276). “Why,” asks Tom: “are philosophers under a curse?” John Robert replies, “Yes” (p. 276).

Attempting to arrange a marriage is so unusual in the late twentieth century that one looks hard for a realistic motive. It is possible to see John Robert’s motive in Freudian terms as the closest he can come to having sexual intercourse with Hattie himself. By picking her husband, he controls who does have relations with her. The fact that John Robert eventually does have a sexual affair with Hattie supports this interpretation of his initial motive. However, this unusual grandfather-granddaughter incest is, itself, so strange as far as typically considered ideas of character motivation that I feel driven to the allegorical dimension for an interpretation. In addition to narrative creativity helping re-energize philosophy, Murdoch may be indicating how the injection of philosophy alters the tone of narrative and so modifies the product of the creative process.

Iris Murdoch’s academic career, both undergraduate and graduate, was in philosophy. Her first book was on Sartre, and one of her last books, *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*, is haunted by the ghost of Martin Heidegger, says her friend and biographer, A. N. Wilson (p. 237): “With Heidegger she became increasingly obsessed, though inwardly,” says Wilson. “In her latter days, she wrote and obsessively rewrote a book about Heidegger which in the event she decided not to publish” (p. 136). Murdoch apparently liked being a philosophy teacher since she kept her position as Instructor of Philosophy at an art institute long after she was wealthy enough to give it up, had she desired to do so.

Supporting the allegorical interpretation is that normal motivation gets suspended in the case of Tom. Tom does react as we would expect a modern young man when some young woman’s grandfather proposes to arrange a marriage to his granddaughter. Tom is flabbergasted and initially sees the proposal as evidence that John Robert is crazy. Tom later says to Hattie, “things don’t happen like that, do they—” (p. 343). Yet he finds himself, against his inclination, agreeing to John Robert’s suggestion. Tom felt he was “acting out a dream-like

destiny" (p. 294). Later, Tom "considered going to London, but he *could not* leave Ennistone" (p. 430). Murdoch puts the words "could not" in italics. Tom's non-realistic and thus allegorical motivation is further supported by the fact that Tom follows John Robert's instructions despite the fact that Tom is interested in Anthea Eastcote, the most beautiful young woman in town who is also the heir to the town's largest fortune: "Match-makers had long ago decided that Tom and Anthea Eastcote were made for each other" (p. 115). Tom even tells Anthea that he loves her (p. 432). However, he ends up marrying Hattie, as John Robert had prompted him to do. Seeing Tom as he walks away from having promised to get to know Hattie with the object of getting her to marry him, Mrs. Osmore reflects the town's assumption that Tom and Anthea are near to being engaged. Mrs. Osmore thinks of her son Greg, "Oh why had Greg not married Anthea Eastcote, as Mrs. Osmore had a thousand times urged him to do" (p. 282). Thus we have information of a second instance of an attempted arranged marriage, but a more typical one of a mother urging her son toward the woman the mother thinks would be right for him—but doing so unsuccessfully. The contrast between this sequence and John Robert's old-fashioned proposal dramatizes, it may be, the allegorical nature of the philosopher's move.

The second path leading to the allegorical meaning is Tom's descent into the subterranean level of The Institute. Tom felt, "What he needed was some sort of symbolic or magical act which concerned or touched his situation without running any danger of changing it. . . he needed to busy himself about his state of mind" (p. 519). Seeing the doors of the subterranean works of The Institute ajar, a "flood of excited physical fear took possession of the lower part of his body, a painful vertiginous thrilling urgent pressuring feeling, like sexual desire. Then Tom thought, it's not like sexual desire, it *is* sexual desire" (p. 519). Again it is Murdoch's decision to put the word "is" in italics. "The big bronze nail-studded doors under their stone pediment stood wide open. There was a low throbbing humming sound. Tom moved toward the opening" (p. 519). Then Tom entered.

The sexual overtones continue as Tom notices that the "presence of so much compressed steam, so much sheer awful force, seemed to animate the sweating pipes as if they were all quivering with life." He thinks, "Might not the whole thing be about to *explode*, and was not this imminent danger the reason why the place was empty?" (p. 521). Murdoch uses italics to give added emphasis to the word "explode." Yet in the face of this imagined threat, Tom thinks "I have an aim, a task, I must go on down. I've come so far I can't give up now" (p. 522). Again we have a hint that the author is controlling Tom's actions for her purpose, one that I believe is the need to reveal the allegorical meaning.

“To climb back,” the way he came, Tom saw, “was impossible” (p. 523). “A second later all lights went out” (p. 525).

In a flashback, Murdoch tells us how Tom got out of the depths of The Institute, climbing on projections that he found in the dark by memory, until he lost “all sense of which way was up and which down” (p. 546). Tom is finally released by a worker who responds to his cries for help. Tom “saw, through the open door of one of the empty rooms, a divine sight, a bed with plump pillows and white sheets. He entered, drew back the sheets and climbed in. The most refreshing slumber he had ever had came to him instantly, and wisdom and clear vision dripped quietly upon him as he slept” (p. 547)—just as males stereotypically do after satisfying sex. And here, the two routes to the allegorical meaning meet, for when Tom “awoke knowing exactly what to do, and set off” for the house where he knew Hattie now resided (p. 547). When he arrived, Tom asked Hattie, “Will you marry me?” (p. 548). After an actual physical struggle with the philosopher, Tom wrestles Hattie out of John Robert’s arms and pulls her by the hair down the street. “At first she resisted, then ran with him, holding his hand” (p. 545). That fall they married (p. 561).

Meanwhile, the hot fountain in the courtyard of The Institute erupted again despite the efforts of the directors to control it. “The ‘Little Teaser’, or Lud’s Rill, had suddenly decided to change itself into a powerful geyser, sending a spout of scalding hot water up more than thirty feet into the air, ‘higher than last time’” (p. 488).

The essence of the allegory is thus that the creative process of narrative is driven by the sexual instinct; the creative process runs through and is often modified by the external apparatus of publishing and inherent censorship, but on occasion the creative force breaks through in a completely uncontrolled burst. The arrival of the philosopher in N’s Town provokes both the idea that philosophy needs to re-immense itself in narrative to renew itself, and that in the marriage of the writer and the philosopher’s granddaughter the blending of philosophy and narrative invigorates narrative creativity as well.

Murdoch ends her novel by giving us a peek into her process; N, the narrator, gives the game away to the alert reader:

The end of any tale is arbitrarily determined. As I now end this one, somebody may say: but how on earth do you know all these things about all these people? Well, where does one person end and another person begin? It is my role in life to listen to stories. I also had the assistance of a certain lady. (p. 576)

That “certain lady” must, of course, be Dame Iris Murdoch herself.

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NOTES

¹ I discuss the terms “fabulation” and “fabulator” in “Gail Godwin: Negotiating with Destiny in *The Odd Woman* and ‘Dream Children’,” *Existence, Historical Fabulation, Destiny*, Ed. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer, 2009: 419–429.

² The name “teaser” may be significant because that very word could well describe Murdoch’s method in this novel of repeatedly hinting what the reader is to expect and repeatedly forcing the reader to readjust his or her expectations.

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- Murdoch, I. *The Philosopher's Pupil* (1983). (New York, Penguin, 1984).
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RA'ANAN LEVY'S METAPHYSICAL SPACE

ABSTRACT

Between November 2006 and January 2007 the Musée Maillol in Paris held the first French retrospective of the painter Ra'anán Levy that featured a new series of studies of empty rooms. These studies along with other series on street drains and sinks evidenced an impressive emotional resonance. Perhaps influenced by his Syrian heritage, Israeli upbringing, Italian and British art training, and Paris residency, several critics have assumed the paintings reflect Levy's rootless state. One has even suggested a precise Freudian-based interpretation of the empty rooms and paintings of pigment bottles and other art supplies. However, the undeniable existential depth of these atmospheric representational paintings rather seems to reflect a metaphysical space with a perhaps symbolic interest in empty human spaces and light.

I attended the first French retrospective of the paintings of the contemporary Israeli and Paris resident Ra'anán Levy.¹ Previously unfamiliar with Levy's work, I was stunned by the exhibition. There is an undefined moodiness in all his important paintings, often supported by atmospheric affects in the landscapes. The retrospective was dominated by paintings of empty, seemingly abandoned rooms. Paintings of street drains and sinks also convey the moodiness of seemingly empty, ordinary space without people. A typical Levy work evokes an atmosphere of mystery and loneliness. Levy has a peculiar, often off-balance treatment and perspective of rooms, street drains, tables with art supplies, and even nudes. Levy also maintains a lavish use of empty space. Levy, moreover, uses soft rather than hard-edged brush strokes in the treatment of objects and graded or smudged color to fill space or objects to reinforce the moodiness of ordinary yet empty space. In effect his treatment produces the equivalent of natural elemental atmospheric affects. I intend to examine the unique nature of Ra'anán Levy's moodiness which is supported by representation and an almost expressionist interest in light.

Although critics, such as Bertrand Lorquin, have identified Levy's space as an expression of his rootless status and even particularized it in a Freudian-influenced reading of the empty rooms and displays of painting supplies as symbols of a nurturing dwelling and the mother, as does Jeremy Lewison,² it

would seem that rather a more metaphysical space is expressed in his work. Levy's comments on his use of color, especially in his paintings featuring pots or blotches of pigments, is instructive:

I introduced the power of color into my painting without being a colourist. My painting is not a chromatic invention like Pierre Bonnard's, nor is it characterized by a pure search for light like the one you discern in Edward Hopper's pictures. I'm a draughtsman; my painting is above all a question, though it doesn't question: it provides a framework for the question that haunts me.³

The "question that haunts" Levy is what provides the wonderfully dense atmosphere in his work. A close look at Levy's paintings and drawings should then perhaps provide a hint at what that question is.

When looking at a Levy painting it is instructive to examine the overall perspective, the geometric structure and design vis-à-vis the given representational forms, the use of light and shading, the emotional coloring, and the relationship to genre. Levy is obviously working in recognizable genres and has organized the book accompanying his Paris exhibit accordingly. Levy had given up his studio in Israel after he had settled in Paris.

He also, perhaps necessarily, gave up his landscape paintings, often featuring a sunlit garden and walls. "Landscape with Steps" (1994) already introduces features that show up in the other genres: a cropped perspective onto a structure, here a building bordered by a stairway; the pastel's fading of color and soft-edged strokes producing a sense of the undefined, here the stairway's form fading away like Jacob's ladder at the left; structure highlighted by pattern, here a tree bent diagonally across the building; and, a treatment of light as an emotional intensifier, here the scattered bright patches on the building. As a landscape it echoes Cézanne but is imbued by a mystery all its own. "Jerusalem through a Window" (1992) emphasizes the issue of perspective framed as it is by a window and parts of two adjacent windows, a truncated triptych as it were. What is seen is an empty hazy landscape with gradually rising hills set against an empty sky. In the foreground are two forms, cypresses, which hold the only color. A perspective onto indistinct forms hovering, so-to-speak, in space establishes likewise a metaphysical space. That "metaphysical" space is further established in a Levy work by an impressionist atmospheric affect symbolizing the indistinct. The pre-Paris "Still life" (1998) makes this schema clear. It is representational: a lock and key hanging on the wall and a dark bottle in front of it. The quality of mystery is evoked by setting simple three-dimensional forms against an almost infinite expanse of empty space, here the section of back wall that the lock and key seem to float in.

Levy seems to be exploring more than the beauty of human form in his recent nudes. None of them reveal the subject's face or her complete torso.

"Nude" (1998)⁴ is a good example with the low perspective cropped above the breasts and just above the knees. The pattern in which the shadow in the crease over the right hip parallels the shadow of the metal fixture on the closed door suggests some sort of question as does the almost vibrating bland color of the door and wall infused with light. The bright highlights of light on the body suggest that this is not a study of a drab room offset by the nude's beauty, but rather the emphasis of some presence. The pastel and charcoal drawing "Crossed Feet" (2000), except for the perspective and cropping of the subject, seems an elementary exercise. Yet the light through the window on the left that illuminates the wall, the pillow, parts of the bedspread, and the left side and legs of the subject, as in an Edward Hopper painting, emphasizes the emotional state of the subject. There is also a kind of isolation here and, perhaps, longing, but Levy's light additionally offers the suggestion of revelation or expected revelation. Levy's question might seem to impinge upon such a reading that would imply some enigmatic inroad to understanding being as such.

Levy is probably singular in his studies of street drains and sinks, subjects seemingly the farthest possible from studies of nudes. Yet Levy's treatment of such subjects allow the subjects to convey the moodiness of seemingly empty, ordinary space without people as well as the mystery inherent in such moodiness. I was struck by the moodiness of one of his street drain paintings at the Paris exhibit. I was reminded of the Japanese aesthetic concepts *sabi*, a positive, almost philosophic, loneliness found in scenes of nature and life, and *wabi*, an appreciation of worn or commonplace things. In "Street Drain II" (1998), for example, we are situated below a building similar to the one in "Landscape with Steps." The cropped perspective centers on the red street drain cover but the patterning of the composition makes the fading steps a continuation of the drain, linked structurally by a pole, a basic elemental structure seemingly leading to some mystery. The faded color, the weeds around the pole and building, and the refuse stuck in the drain imbue the scene with emotions associated with something old and weathered yet very familiar. The deeper sense here of loneliness is mediated as in "Landscape with Steps" by a sense of mystery suggested in the fading steps. The post-Israel "Street Drain and Packing Cloth" (2004) seems the essence of loneliness. There are no stairs, only the cement sidewalk behind the drain. The curbstones, like the street and sidewalk, are old and weathered as they are in Paris. This is atmospherically a study in gray and black. A structural pattern is however established between the faded yellow caution strip next to the drain's cover and the dirty packing cloth angling out from it in the street. Without the cloth the work would establish the factual presence of ordinary objects. With the cloth there is perhaps an expressionist

symbolism of the waiting for mystery in the zinc white highlights of the cloth and the calking cement around the drain.

That an intended symbolism might be intended in Levy is humorously suggested in the Klee-like title of "Green Boat" (1983). However, the series of sink paintings repeats, from one perspective, the disturbing aspects of emptiness and gloom of the street drain series. The sinks are uniformly worn and filthy. In "Green Boat" grime spots are everywhere, even visible under the water. Yet color in many paintings of the series as scrub brushes, dishes, dish clothes, and the wash basin itself, here the torn, floating brush, the tinted basin water, and the touches of green stains, offer some evident painterly interest to soften the well-worn presence of these objects. Suggestiveness is moreover apparent here where objects supply painterly impressionist atmospheric details, here in the white glow of the sink and the faucet handle, and in other of the sinks, such as "Bare" (1985) and "Black Sink" (1987). The sink in "Bare" seems suspended like a figure in a dense mist. The black and gray surrounding the sink's phosphorescence only the sink's aspect as an object suggestive of mystery. Levy seems not simply interested in the residues of human use of objects and spaces, as some critics would have it.⁵ He seems rather to be formulating a question about the possible presence of mystery in being itself emerging in empty spaces in unnatural, typically evening light.

In the pigment series, the color of pigment replaces the phosphorescent sink as the nexus of his unstated question. These sites of possibility often occur in apparently empty apartments, as in "Blue Pigment, Open Door" (2004). Here as in many in the series the perspective is from the pile or bottle of pigment. This perspective from the foreground pigment usually points to an open door. Thus the schema is repeated as in other genre: a foreground subject leads to some metaphysical opening, here the door leading to an empty room. "Virgin Cloth, Blue Stain" (2004) is a variation on the schema. The stained bottle in the foreground leads to a blank canvas leaning against the back wall, while a triangular pattern is established with the open window to the right. Another variation occurs in "Black and White Photos, Red Pigment" (2003). In an empty apartment the red pigment bottle shares the foreground with left-behind photos from someone's life. The bottle directs the perspective through an open doorway. Levy had emptied his own apartment and sought out empty rental property in preparation for this series and the related empty places series. He seems here again to be pursuing not the residue of past habitation but the presence of a mysterious suggestive otherness evoked through the use of artificial light and shading on floors, walls, and doors in the barest setting.

Although most of the series of tables cluttered with painting supplies and clippings are tour-de-force recapitulations of the trompe l'oeil genre, "Two

Squares" (2004–2006) repeats the general schema, with the foreground supplies leading to both an open doorway and two perfectly untouched white squares, all portals to the inscrutable unknown. The series on pillows, despite some questionable posing of a hatchet on some of them, contrariwise to the usual schema of perspective, places the pillows anywhere on the given canvas, sometimes taking up almost all of it. Yet these pillows, as in "Unmade Bed II" (1998), with their upturned corners and glowing white color appear as some otherworldly inexplicable presence. Thus the emotional focus of works like these is not the absence of the person who slept in the unmade beds, but the suggestiveness of the pillows.

The self-portraits give a mixed impression of the artist. "Self-Portrait" (1994) captures Levy's kindhearted presence. There is a pale blue space surrounding his profile on the left, a halo of sorts. The bright highlights of pink and white of his skin, the clear, soft treatment of the eyes, and the slightest smile support the overall figuration of someone who has entered the mystery he has sought. "A Face" (1998) is a portrait of the artist contending with the darker existential matters of being and facing them straight on. He is presented face forward with a hardened look in his eyes. There is no halo. The age lines in his face and forehead are exaggerated and highlighted. Here is a portrait of a man struggling for a breakthrough. "The Painter and His Model" (2002) situates the artist in a constructed symbolic space. The familiar white wall is the portal to mystery as is the mirror that reflects part of his naked body. At the canvas's bottom are drawing journals and notebooks that contain his ideas. The portrait of his model at the top of this painting is one such idea. In all "The Painter and His Model" is the cauldron of Levy's artistic vision. "Night" (2002) rehearses the approaches to that vision. The perspective leads through the brightly lit white balcony doorway to the similarly bright white balcony. Beyond is a darkened night cityscape punctuated by yellow incandescent lights like stars and bordered at the top by a zinc white phosphorescence. "Night" also places the artist in his own symbolic scene of enchantment. Part of his half-naked body is reflected in a balcony window, but the depth of perspective creates the illusion that he is hovering in the cityscape, an expression of transport, even Rimbaud's synesthesia.

Levy has said he often reads Kafka. The impressive series of empty rooms with open doors leading to empty corridors suggests Kafka's endless search for resolution within a Chinese-puzzle-box or Russian nested figures structure, as in "The Trial" and "The Castle." The metaphysical question, "Where does this lead?" is responded to in the rendering of these empty night rooms in moody shades of soft white and grey, the perspective that leads to openings or patches of bright white, and the general emotional atmosphere of loneliness

and mystery. "Electric Light" (2005) leads down a hallway to a bare florescent bulb and a bright sun-filled window. The light collects as if a molded tangible thing in the back empty room, the concretization of the mystery sought. "Yellow Halo" (2005) has a similar schema with a patch of yellow light hovering at the top of the back room to suggest mystery. In "Veronese Green" (2005), likewise, a molded, ghost-like light from a back room moves past an ajar green door toward the vacant foreground room. "Light and Shade" (2005) depicts a truly bare apartment with one doorway opening to a dark room and another doorway leading to a brightly illuminated room, as if a choice were being conveyed. "Empty Place" (2004) leads one through uninhabited rooms with bright walls and doorways to a similarly bright empty room, the enigma of amorphous presence. "Door-Window" (2005) similarly portrays a single empty room with bright light seemingly entering from an evening window on the right.

The light collects on the floor and window frames as highlighted white. Also, more dramatically, the light gathers as a dense substance-like presence on a door's window pane. Finally, in "Apartment, Empty" (2004), once again the perspective leads the viewer down a corridor of bright empty rooms that culminates in an even brighter empty room at the back, perhaps the final revelation sought.

One of the main branches of Jewish mysticism, the *Heikhalot* (palaces) tradition, presumes mystical journeys to heavenly palaces with bright shining pillars. Could Levy's empty night spaces and even his weathered ordinary things resonate with something of the fervor of such mystical journeys? One of Levy's portraits, "Open Spirit I" (2005), appears to support the possibility. The delicately featured person has almost closed lids and a simple smile. The face is aglow with highlights of white. More significantly, the face is set against darkness, almost hovering in its own projected inner brightness. One critic, Jeremy Lewison, suspects Levy may have "an unconscious need to be in touch with a hidden feeling that he may be dimly aware of."⁶ Lewison specifically comes to view the empty places series as a site of death and transfiguration, and, in his words, "transcendence."⁷ Levy's work, or more accurately, my reading of his work, encourages one to agree with Lewison. The moodiness that Levy expresses in his paintings is none other than the outwash of the inner journey we each must take, with the distinct possibility accordingly for each of us of some illumination in its many senses.

Levy's work has been compared to Courbet, and it does reflect a continuous direct perspective, however lowered, in a figurative treatment, however atmospheric. In each artist the dramatic interest is focused on some object. Courbet's bold representational depictions of people, animals, or a part of a model's torso are transformed by Levy into atmospheric representations

of sinks, artificially lit rooms, and street drains. Both revolutionary artists, Levy's work incorporates a sense of mystery. Levy describes his work as presenting the "figurative through abstraction."⁸ In his case the abstraction is the atmospheric emotional coloring that is precipitated into the simplest things conveyed in their barest existential presence and suggestiveness and the mystery adhering to this process.⁹

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NOTES

¹ Held between November 16, 2006 and January 29, 2007 at Musée Maillol in Paris.

² See Lorquin, Bertrand. "A Question of Paintings: Painting Questions and Jeremy Lewison, 'La Chambre Double' Inside the Studio of Ra'anan Levy," in *Ra'anan Levy, La chambre double, Peintures Dessins Gravures*. (Paris: Editions de la Fondation Dina Viering—Musée Maillol, 2006).

³ Ra'anan Levy, p. 221.

⁴ This and the following Levy paintings and drawings are found in *Ra'anan Levy, La chambre double, Peintures Dessins Gravures*. The few other paintings are taken from online sites.

⁵ See Lorquin, Bernard. "A Question of Paintings: Painting Questions," p. 225: "Levy perceives interiors as living organisms. 'Apartments are like bodies with entrances and exits.'" Levy has said in conversation that he takes an anatomy book with him when he paints empty apartments and even begins his painting with a (later covered) drawing of a human organ. See also Bernard Lorquin's preface to "Ra'Anan Levy, Sinks and Spaces" (New York: Janos Gat Gallery, 2008), which accompanied the catalogue to Levy's March 6–April 20, 2008 show at the Janos Gat Gallery. As if to support such interpretation of the paintings' aims, 2007 paintings of sinks now have bins of trash below them and water flowing from their facets and 2007 paintings of empty apartments now have steps leading to a basement.

⁶ Ra'anan Levy, p. 231.

⁷ Ra'anan Levy, p. 234.

⁸ Expressed in a personal conversation I had with Levy.

⁹ Levy in a personal conversation has described the experience of this process as being "suffocating," attesting to the existential weight imbued here.

SECTION V
MEDIATING INSPIRATION

ART, INTENTION, AND COMMUNICATION

With what words, O writer, can you describe the whole arrangement with the perfection of this drawing? For lack of due knowledge, you describe it so confusedly as to convey but little perception of the true shapes of things, and deceiving yourself as to these, you persuade yourself that you can completely satisfy the hearer when you speak of the representation of anything that possesses substance and surrounded by surface. I counsel you not to cumber yourself with words unless you are speaking to the blind . . . How in words can you describe this heart without filling a whole book? Yet the more detail you write concerning it, the more you will confuse the mind of the hearer.
Leonardo da Vinci, On a drawing of the heart¹

ABSTRACT

Prepared for a discussion of Communication in Tymieniecka's philosophy, the paper first analyzes Tymieniecka's own writing style, using different fonts to show that the difficulty of her exposition lies in the visual structure of prose. She attempts to braid all ramifications of a thought into the whole without losing sight of the individual aspects; her prose is operatic, with voices singing varied parts, each distinct yet all harmonious, combining the memories of previous sounds to propel the latest discovery. She attempts to communicate not just thought, but rather the dynamic life of the logos. The second aspect of this paper deals with what Frank Wilczek has called "opportunities for creation." Rather than following the too narrow view of creationists, we might consider the way human beings, especially artists, create. Distinction is made between inventiveness (intentional) and creativity (intuitive, spontaneous). Leonardo da Vinci's grotesques provide a case study. His famed *Five Grotesque Heads* at Windsor is newly examined as a composition that evolved organically, figures added in response to the "opportunities for creation" in the drawing. It becomes an example of how creative energy tends to destabilize simple systems. The creative work is finished when the possibility of introducing new instabilities disappears, when there are no more problems to solve.

When Professor Tymieniecka announces a topic for discussion, I often have difficulty because I cannot see how *I* can approach the topic through the visual arts. This time, however, quite the opposite is true. The topic is art and communication, a subject I have discussed in almost all the work I have done in this

society, from studies in works of art as visualizations of philosophical ideas to the effect of the cleaning of the Sistine Chapel (that the ceiling now shows us what Michelangelo managed to reveal in his day, despite critics' charges). I have studied great works whose communication or rhetoric was *expected* to engage and move the viewer; my part in the general discussions was to demonstrate their phenomenological communication, not merely their iconographical or formal messages. Leonardo da Vinci explained this sort of communication when he advised his students: "when you make a figure, think well about what it is and what you want it to say, and see that the work is in keeping with the figure's aim and character"²—even to choosing the style of a work modally, that is, in accordance with its rhetorical aims.

Being preternaturally disinclined to approach a question that can be easily addressed, I will not use this space to illustrate examples of Renaissance rhetoric in art, nor will I loudly complain that often in the modern and contemporary art work we are asked to be mere observers rather than deeply involved listeners. Rather, I prefer to take another tack, one that looks to the cause and the impetus for making and doing. At first my response would seem to be antagonistic to our topic, but then, surely the *urspringen* of the artwork is one of its fundamental, albeit underlying, communications.

And so I find myself not in the popular definition of communication, but in Tymieniecka territory because, for her, the term "communication" mines deeply into reality, right to the level of the logos that reaches to "the very foundation of life."³ Before turning to my own discussion (which I find parallels her own ideas in a concrete example of a Leonardo da Vinci drawing), let us examine her written communication more closely. She herself has repeatedly insisted that her style follows not the "discursive patterns of traditional conceptual frameworks [but rather] our spontaneous intuitions as they appear to our mind/sight in a 'zig-zag' fashion."⁴ Leonardo knew well the problems of such writing, as is apparent in his inscription on one of his drawings of the heart now at Windsor Castle (see above).

Tymieniecka's problems are those of the poor writer Leonardo describes (although she has overcome the lack of due knowledge). She must *describe a whole substance*, that is from its depths in the logos, *surrounded by surface* to its physical "reality." She is indeed *speaking to the blind* for she is trying to show us what she sees but we do not. *How in words can you describe this . . . without filling a whole book?* She can't, she hasn't. But we must understand how she works to show us in words what she has found.

The difficulty of Tymieniecka's exposition lies in the visual structure of linear prose. She attempts to be inclusive, to braid all ramifications of a thought into the whole without losing sight (and it is visual) of the individual

aspects that are woven together. Therefore, a single sentence becomes burdened with lists whose purpose is cinematographic in three-dimensions *and* with sound, in an attempt to make us aware of the whole living surround of any singularity. However, because English prose is visual (we read rather than hear) but linear, it is easy to lose track of a multidimensional argument. For that reason, I present her description of “communication” with intermittent commentary as in a PowerPoint presentation, that is a visualized textual presentation.

So to repeat: we are in Tymieniecka territory again, for when she considers communication she is working at the level of the logos. To demonstrate the multidimensionality of the text I have interwoven my own “stage directions” into the sentences in bracketed italics and have emphasized the major flow of the argument in bold. To return to the text, for Tymieniecka communication reaches to

the very **foundation of life** [*here follows a list of the foundations that drill down into a the discovery of the depths*]: its roots, the world, nature, and the geo-cosmic positioning of the human condition within the unity-of-everything-there-is-alive [*at this depth what is found?*] **reaching to reflective human selfhood** which, with [*the self is not alone but is linked to*] its creative societal network as well as with its personal life. . . . **ties the threads of the logos** [*how great is that thread?*] **which extend throughout life and reach to the divine**. . . . [*and then to show where such awareness leads*] **The progress of the human mind**—with [*another list to open to us all that “mind” involves*] its sentient and emotional dimensions as well as with the spiritual, intimately personal longings to see that one’s very own meaning of life and self-fulfillment elucidates our ties with the Divine—[*finally to let us see the function*] **calls for a meaningful, cogent coordination of our sensibilities** [*but that’s not enough for it affects more*], valuations, convictions, and our faith [*and why?*] all of which are **indispensible to our maneuvering upon the chaotic flux of life**.⁵

Looking back, the sentence looks more like a music score than a philosophical text. Musicologist-phenomenologist Ellen Burns has confirmed my intuition, remarking that the Tymieniecka’s unadulterated text, that is the conventional philosophical text, is a “clean score” with no tempo or expression markings to indicate the multiplicity of dimensions it attempts to engender. The meaning has been flattened into a two-dimensional linear space that is insufficient for ease of transmission. Artist-musician Amanda Ransom reminds us that poetry is especially formatted, so that its condensation can be more easily grasped. Opera, that high fusion of music and poetry, might be the best comparison, with the voices singing varied parts, each distinct yet all harmonious, combining the memories of previous sounds to propel the latest discoveries.

Perhaps Tymieniecka’s prose is the farthest that is possible to go in philosophical language until we reach the *mathesis universalis* of the logos, an argument not unlike that of contemporary physicists who maintain that philosophy has used only used the pictorial, descriptive accounts of sciences—its

conjectures, not its certainties. While such accounts are often good enough for the man-sized world, they are insufficient for the ultimate processes of nature, processes that can only be revealed in mathematics. When we operate at the level of the *mathesis universalis* we will see, with Nobel Laureate physicist Frank L. Wilczek, that “our equations know things that we don’t. They contain splendid surprises and opportunities for creation.”⁶

CREATION AND SPONTANEOUS COMPLEXITY

Which resurrects an old question again: why there is something rather than nothing. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka’s early book addresses the question directly, pointing out that such a “nothingness” is purely a construction of the mind.⁷ Useful for our discussion here is the theory that nothingness is the simplest of all states. After a long discussion of the cosmic symmetry between matter and anti-matter, Wilczek concluded “that the answer to the ancient questions “‘Why is there something rather than nothing’ is that nothing is too unstable.”⁸ Physicist Victor Stenger uses this to propound his atheistic arguments:

Then why is there something rather than nothing? Because something is the more natural state of affairs and is thus more likely than nothing—more than twice as likely according to one calculation. We can infer this from the processes of nature where simple systems tend to be unstable and often spontaneously transform into more complex ones. Theoretical models such as the inflationary model of the early universe bear this out. . . . [M]any simple systems are unstable, that is, have limited lifetimes as they undergo spontaneous phase transitions to more complex structures of lower energy. Since “nothing” is as simple as it gets, we would not expect it to be completely stable. In some models of the origin of the universe, the vacuum undergoes a spontaneous phase transition to something more complicated, like a universe containing matter.⁹

The idea of simplicity opening to complexity spontaneously is a powerful tool for understanding the creative urge and process of some artists, e.g. how, although Julius II asked Michelangelo to paint twelve apostles on the Sistine Ceiling, the artist covered it with a canopy of fictive architecture supporting more than 300 figures. Julius II suggestion was too simple, it had insufficient complexity for the plenitude of talent and drive of Michelangelo. Creationists—and those of the Intelligent Design persuasion—argue from a very fixed idea of how a creative force would or should operate. God’s act of creation is absolutely intentional, e.g. He wanted a striped horse, so He made one—the “zebra explanation” of creation. I prefer to picture the creating God not as William Blake’s giant with a compass, but as God singing in his shower, pouring creation out of His innermost self with joy and ease. To think that

absolute intentionality is a requisite of primal creativity is to deny a major element of the creative process, one that we witness in the only creative entities we know directly: human beings!

This is a good reason to study Leonardo da Vinci, one of the acknowledged creative geniuses of human history, and one who left us with many drawings and notes that give evidence of the *urspringen* of his creativity. And so, we will look at the generation of a group of his very popular images, his drawing and sketches of grotesque heads. Why? Because they were, for the most part, a matter of creative play, direct products of the creative impulse—that urge that is the overflow of surplus energy that is creation.

I could do a detailed analysis of the various modes of Leonardo's drawings, I could demonstrate the difference between the finished and projected areas, but such analyses are not necessary here for the argument is more general, based as it is on Professor Tymieniecka's explanation of the difference between creativity and invention. Inventiveness calls for the intentional working with that which already exists, like those of Leonardo's followers who invented new compositions for his grotesques. The creative act "is given intuitively in a pre-reflexive experience in which we identify our present site of mind by experiencing an 'opening' upon a 'new dimension' of 'reality.'"¹⁰ It arises spontaneously, it strikes out new ways, and generates new forms. If we are to look at the example of Leonardo, who left off paintings when he got bored and expected his students to finish them, it is clear that subject matter was not his interest. For him communication of constitutive content was a secondary to creative possibilities.

CREATIVITY: PRODUCT AND PROCESS

We used to think that we might be able to find a pattern of use for the large corpus of Leonardo's over 200 drawings called the grotesques. These come in all variety of forms, from sketches, to fair copies, to elaborate presentation drawings. A few times, Leonardo pairs grotesques, as in those of the Royal Collections at Windsor Castle (e.g. RL 12453, RL 12449, and RL 12495) but the individual heads were elaborated into fictions by others, e.g. in c. 1520, by Quinten Massys in a *Grotesque Betrothal* (c. São Paulo, Museu de arte) after Windsor drawing RL 12495 or in the prints by Wenceslaus Hollar by the seventeenth century.¹¹ In both cases, these were far away from the original impetus in Leonardo, Flanders of the sixteenth or Holland of the seventeenth centuries. Their narratives were applied *after* Leonardo generated them. It was Leonardo's *follower's inventiveness* to exploit the communicative quality of the grotesques in narratives, to use his material, to rationalize and



Figure 1. Leonardo da Vinci, *A Man Tricked by Gypsies*, c. 1493, RL 12495, The Royal Collection © 2005 Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

dramatize it. They turned spontaneous play into something useful, something communicative.

Leonardo did make composition of grotesques, indeed, my first presentation to our society, over ten years ago, was on Leonardo's famous *Five Grotesque Heads* from the Royal Collection at Windsor (Figure 1). Probably drawn ca. 1493, when Leonardo was in the Milanese court of Ludovico Sforza, the drawing has posed many problems, largely dealing with its iconography: Why the serious old man? Who are the laughing/mocking characters? What's the story? Arguments that it might be read as a study in physiognomy have fallen out of favor.¹² Martin Kemp and Marina Wallace, in the *Universal Leonardo* website, link the drawing with the tradition of the burlesque poetry favored by the Milanese court.¹³

I argued¹⁴ that the question of meaning should remain open since the right side of the composition has been cropped, cutting off what seems to have been a indicating gesture of the rightward woman toward characters and actions outside the main group. Martin Clayton¹⁵ acknowledges the cropping, but has

related the subject matter and action to later compositions that have derived from it. He renames the drawing *A Man Tricked by Gypsies*, and relates the iconography to gypsy customs in Europe of the fifteenth century, identifying the “lost” action at the right as palmistry.¹⁶ While the iconography of the drawing has been solved—almost—for there is still the question of the “mysterious” oak leaf wreath worn by our central character. In keeping with the story as he reads it, Clayton argues that “perhaps Leonardo’s intention was simply to render the old man more dignified, effecting a still greater bathetic contrast with the perfidious Gypsies.”¹⁷

My question about the drawing is whether Leonardo *intended* to make a Gypsy composition from the start, as he did later in the developmental variations for the *Burlington House Cartoon* of Madonna, the Child and St. Anne (London, National Gallery) or the Louvre *St. Anne*.¹⁸ Let us take another tack, to consider the drawing not as product but rather as a process. Let us consider it onto poetically by examining Leonardo’s standard practices and the quality of the drawing itself.

Leonardo regularly tested his pen by drawing formulaic heads, and some heads can even be read as distracted musing, like humming a tune while working, or doing warm-up exercises before one starts to play or sing. A good example of this can be seen in Leonardo’s *Profile Sheet* at Windsor (RL 12276 recto and verso) wherein he plays with profiles of three of his standard types: the young woman, the young man, and the old man. Clayton’s description of Leonardo process as “investigating, unsystematically” (although later in the entry he called them “Leonardo’s game of profiles”)¹⁹ may be a loose way of describing Leonardo’s process, and for the purpose of this essay, it provides a point of departure for my own arguments.

Leonardo did systematic drawing, e.g. in the anatomical studies where he studied closely from 1,510, e.g. the shoulder from four points of view in Windsor RL 19008 verso.²⁰ These drawings are accompanied by texts that explain what to draw “if you wish to understand all the parts of an anatomized man” (Windsor RL 19062 recto). But the profile heads of RL 12276 do not indicate a “wish to understand” but rather to almost absentmindedly doodle with his standard form. Sometimes he models the heads with hatching. Sometimes he attaches shoulders to the heads, as he does to the old man on the verso of Windsor RL 12276, an elaboration of the tiny tightly-drawn profile on the recto. The central character of the Gypsy drawing is an elaborate reformulation of this type.

His head is in profile, his back sketched in three-quarter view with his arm extended in profile. His body is an afterthought, drawn loosely, perhaps added to accommodate the story as it was constructed.²¹ A parallel can be seen in *Le*

*Mystere du Picasso*²² a film that demonstrates well how Picasso could change our readings of his brush drawings by adding a few jots to turn our reading on its heels. This is the mystery: we are dumbfounded by the artist's process of creation because it is not congruent with the rational process of our analysis. We could not imagine that in Picasso's drawing of the artist and model in the studio, he would start—not with the space—but with the bottom of the artist's legs! Then he adds his palette, his canvas, the model, the chair the artist sits on, finally the whole interior! The "logic"/order of the artist's picture-building (Tymieniecka's *Imaginatio Creatrix*) is not congruent with that of the critic-theorist's picture analysis which starts with the product. The transcendent mystery of the process escapes the critic for there the image is not reasoned out but imagined out.

So let us imagine the evolution of the *Gypsies* drawing from point of creation by Leonardo, following whatever clues in the image that are available. Let us assume that he first put his most habitual image first, the warm-up, formulaic drawing the head of an old man, toying with it, adding the delicate oak leaves, modeling the head with fine hatching as he did on the *Profile Sheet* at Windsor. The head of the old man in the Gypsy drawing, seen by itself, is dignified, nearly emblematic, and well-finished enough for a coin.

At some point, whether alone and playing to an audience like Picasso did, he adds another head. If he followed his earlier plays on antithetical typing,²³ he may be drawn to the gypsy at the right. At some point or another, he decides to play through that image, to elaborate on it, as he did in e.g. the antinomy of the old man and youth facing in profile (Uffizi Inv. 423-E, Clayton Figure 10). There the facing heads are well finished while the bodies may have been added later, Leonardo adding the turning body of the old man to face the profile young man. The young man eyes look into the distance, rather than at the old man; we might imagine that the old man looks at the young one's nose. The gesture of the old man touching the young is barely described, as if the "conversation" between the two is an afterthought.

Let us return to the *Gypsy* drawing at Windsor. We can imagine that Leonardo found his habitual rendering of the distinguished old man too simple. In an insatiable urge to *de-simplify*, he adds one line and therefore *un-balances* the space, calling for further additions (perhaps of the man above and between the first two, perhaps the cackling lady at the right). The order does not matter much to this discussion of process. What is significant is that the process drives forward into further complications as the artist tries to make a unity of the disorder that *de-simplification* entails. The sketchy lines that indicate gestures and the overall hatching just might be a part of that unification process.

It has been my contention over the years that Leonardo's grotesques were a game for him, a surplus of energy, a spontaneous generation. By examining Leonardo's famous drawing as process rather than product we have entered into its life and see how "simple systems tend to be unstable" in a place of creative energy. The game is over when the possibility of introducing new instabilities disappears, when there were no problems to solve.

It is no wonder that in his later years Leonardo spend more time with mathematics and science than with art. Man's finite complexities would have been less challenging than were infinite simplicities of God.

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NOTES

¹ Windsor Anatomical II 1r; MacCurdy, Edward., *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*. (New York: Brazillier, 1939), p. 167.

² Codex Atlanticus 349 r-b. See Mac Curdy, op. cit., p. 906.

³ Tymieniecka, Anna-Teresa. *The Fullness of the Logos in the Key of Life, Book I: The Case of God in the New Enlightenment*. (Dordrecht: Springer, 2009), p. xix.

⁴ Ibid., p. xvii.

⁵ Ibid., p. xix.

⁶ www.frankwilcek.com/quantum.html, accessed 24 March 2009.

⁷ *Why is There Something rather than Nothing? Prologomena to the Phenomenology of Cosmic Creation*. (Assen: Royal Van Gorcum, 1966), p. 9.

⁸ *Scientific American*, December 1980; reprinted in *Particle Physics in the Cosmos, Readings from Scientific American*, ed. Richard A. Carrigan Jr. and W. Peter Trower. WH Freeman & Co, 1989, pp. 164–77; available online at www.frankwilczek.com/cosmos.html, accessed 12 October 2008.

⁹ Stenger, Victor. "Reality Check: Why is there Something Rather than Nothing?" *Skeptical Briefs*, June 2006, www.csicop.org/sb/2006-06/reality-check.html, accessed 10 September 2008. Stenger uses the argument that simple systems spontaneously change to complex one to conclude that the existence of matter (complex) is so natural that it does not require and external agent, such as a god.

¹⁰ Tymieniecka, *Logos and Life: Creative Experience and the Critique of Reason*, Book 1, *Analecta Husserliana* XXIV. (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1988), p. 204.

¹¹ See Martin Clayton, *Leonardo da Vinci: The Divine and the Grotesque*. (London: Royal Collection Enterprises, 2002), RL 12449 and RL 12495 (Clayton, Pl. 40, 41) and the fragments RL 12463 and RL 12353 (Clayton, Pl. 45, 36). Clayton's figures will be cited in text for reference. Heads were gathered on sheets attributed to his devoted follower Francesco Melzi, e.g. RL 12491, RL 12493, and Accademia, Venice inv. 227 and 229 (Clayton Pl. 37, 38, fig. 29 and 2). The famed *Ugly Duchess*, long considered to have originated from Leonardo, has very recently been shown to copy Metsys, as seen in the London's National Gallery exhibition, *Renaissance Faces: Van Eyck to Titian* (15 October 2008).

¹² See my "Making the Dead Laugh," *Achademia Leonardo Vinci*, X 1997, pp. 190–196. The argument is reiterated with a phenomenological turn in "Bracketing Theory in Leonardo's *Five Grotesque Heads* at Windsor," in *Enjoyment: From Laughter to Delight in Philosophy*,

Literature, Fine Arts and Aesthetics, Analecta Husserliana, Vol. LVI, 1998, ed. A.-T. Tymieniecka, pp. 87–102.

¹³ <http://www.universalleonardo.org/work.php?id=534>, accessed April 10, 2008.

¹⁴ PT-C, op. cit.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 96–99.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 98, e.g. to a painting, *A Grotesque Betrothal*, attributed to Quinten Massys (ca. 1520, São Paulo, Museu de Arte, Clayton fig. 26).

¹⁷ Clayton, op.cit., p. 98.

¹⁸ See my discussion, “The Ontopoiesis of Leonardo da Vinci’s Brainstorm Drawings,” in *Logos of Phenomenology and Phenomenology of the Logos, Book 5: The Creative Logos. Aesthetic Ciphering the Fine Arts, Literature and Aesthetics. Analecta Husserliana XCII*, 2005, ed. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, pp. 3–12.

¹⁹ Clayton, op.cit, p. 16.

²⁰ He preferred to show eight, in cinematographic sequence. See Martin Kemp’s discussion in *Leonardo da Vinci, The Marvellous Works of Nature and Man*. (Cambridge MA: Harvard, 1981), p. 286.

²¹ My argument is with reading the whole drawing as a reflection of Leonardo’s *intention* to make this Gypsy composition from the start, for not only do we have an unusual headpiece for the old man, but the technique of drawing the old man’s head is much finer and his features are more fully articulated than those of the gypsies. Is it possible that what we read as an intended narrative is really an elaborate play against his ever-ready formula type?

²² Directed by Henri-Georges Clouzot, Filmsonar, France, 1956. Christian Zervos paraphrased Picasso’s prophesy in an article in a 1935 *Cahiers d’Art*. Picasso’s point is very close to Tymieniecka’s argument about the creative vision and the creative idea:

It would be very interesting to record photographically, not the stages of a painting, but its metamorphoses. One would see perhaps by what course a mind finds its way towards the crystallization of its dream. But what is really very curious is to see that the picture does not change basically, that the initial vision remains almost intact in spite of appearances. (www.milestonefilms.com/pdf/mysteryofpicassoPK.pdf accessed March 24, 2009)

²³ Numerous examples exist, see, e.g. Uffizi Inv. 423 E of the 1490s, RL 12490 of ca. 1485–1490, RL 12555c of ca. 1492–1493. These examples and many more can be found in Clayton.

HAROLD PINTER'S MINDSCAPE: HIS
FOOD-CLOTHING PARADOXES

ABSTRACT

From 1952, when Pinter began writing his only novel, *The Dwarfs*, until the mid-1970s, Pinter invoked a food–love–clothing–honesty cluster to ground his characters' feelings and anxieties in sensuous metaphors. Whereas food and costume had practical functions in his plays, they usually had wider significance regarding his characters' likes and dislikes, memories of the past and aspirations for the future. Imagery in Harold Pinter's early drama links the scarcity of food and drink to lovelessness, a loss of psychological underpinnings, and social instability. Disorder, uneasiness, and distaste often emerge in food imagery, as food providers give or withhold food in lieu of love. Manipulating food involves the exercise of power, ways of taking advantage, or showing approval or disdain. Pinter also uses clothing symbolically, not only to shield nakedness but as a stand-in for society's weakening repressions. Clothing is a proxy for lying, gratuitous display, subjugation, spurious self respect, and social hypocrisy. Pinter's food–clothing clusters vanish in the mid-1970s when his character orientation shifts from lower- to middle-class.

Imagery in Harold Pinter's early drama links the scarcity of food and drink to lovelessness, a loss of psychological underpinnings, and social instability. Disorder, uneasiness, and distaste often emerge in food imagery, as food providers give or withhold food in lieu of love. Manipulating food involves the exercise of power, ways of taking advantage, or showing approval or disdain. Seemingly-trivial struggles over food and drink mask barely-concealed battles for dominance, even vengeance. Pinter's biographer Michael Billington's comments about a film (*The Quiller Memorandum*) apply more widely to the plays: "Pinter uses the consumption of food as a constant metaphor for a kind of moral blankness" (p. 183).¹ A plenitude of food and drink—though much rarer than its absence—suggests love, security, acceptance and order, though often with underlying ironies.

Pinter also uses clothing symbolically, not only to shield nakedness but as a stand-in for society's weakening repressions. Clothing is a proxy for lying, gratuitous display, subjugation, spurious self respect, and social hypocrisy. It

also serves as both camouflage and enticement, meant to blind observers and accentuate female sexuality. Pinter has tellingly acknowledged that “speech is a constant stratagem to cover nakedness” (p. 15).² In one example, *The Homecoming*, references to clothing heighten the imagined sex appeal of naked bodies while pointing up Pinter’s preoccupations with love’s scarcity and loss. They also suggest societal inhibitions the characters all yearn to both sustain and evade.

It is hardly surprising that Pinter uses food and clothing, both as metaphor and as signs manipulated by his characters, in his plays. Along with other basic needs, such as shelter, air, and sexual gratification, humans must satisfy them as a condition for realizing more abstract goals. As Abraham Maslow’s pyramid has famously postulated, one must first fulfill the needs of the lower stages before the next, higher stages can possibly attain meaning. One moves from the attainment of physical, basic needs to security, social relations, social acknowledgement and, finally, self-implementation.

Without entering the debate about the particulars of Maslow’s scheme, I note that Pinter invokes food and clothing both as (a) physical aspects of staging and (b) metaphors in his characters’ dialogue. When Pinter’s characters eat or drink, put on or take off clothing, the audience endows these items with limited, provisional reality: a pair of shoes, say, may “literally” be leather and laces, but signify a sense of fragmented identity, the difficulty of “fitting in,” as Davies reveals in *The Caretaker*. In *The Dumb Waiter* Gus finally appears stripped of outer clothing and weapon, symbolizing both his change of identity from “hit man” to victim as well as his helpless inability to make sense of his predicament. As Varun Begley notes, “Pinter’s work attaches unusual intensity to particular objects and utterances; these material phenomena are invested with psychic energy, cathected. . . . A single element can lead to multiple associations” (p. 25).³ That is, characters onstage handle food, drink, jewelry, clothing and other such objects as “signs of signs.” Petr Bogatyrev put it best: “Any item of nature, technology, or everyday use can become a sign whenever it acquires meaning beyond the bounds of its individual existence as a thing in and of itself” (p. 33).⁴

A more complex process of association links aspects of dialogue such as food and sexuality, clothing and honesty, along with their variants to one another—with a crucial difference. The playwright consciously and deliberately portrays the consumption of food and drink, the donning and doffing of clothing, onstage. Pinter, however, largely unconsciously creates image clusters linking food and drink to sexuality, clothing to honesty, to each other and their many variants, prompted by fraught conflicts at tense moments in his drama.

Image clusters have been studied in depth, particularly in Shakespeare, since the mid-eighteenth century. These studies have their genesis in a book by Walter Whiter (1758–1832), *A Specimen of a Commentary on Shakespeare* (1794). Whiter applied Locke's associationist psychology to relate some of Shakespeare's odder choices of imagery to Shakespeare's psyche and to associations customary in ordinary life or theatrical practice in Elizabethan times. In more recent times, successors such as Carolyn Spurgeon, Edward Armstrong, and Norman Holland (among many others) have extended Whiter's original insights to Shakespeare. For instance, Armstrong was an ornithologist; the clusters he found ran to birds and other animals: kite-linen-death; beetles-cliff-crow-death; goose-disease-music. As Armstrong's clusters suggest, one element in a group invokes other elements with no common affinities except those buried deep in the writer's unconscious.

Pinter wrote his only novel, *The Dwarfs*,⁵ over a 4-year period, 1952–1956, early in his career. He then revised it in 1989 and re-published it in 1990, suggesting its continuing value to him. The novel presages Pinter's use of food–clothing links in his later plays, seemingly emerging randomly. For example, when Len says, "I'm supper for the crows," Pete responds, "You're like a rotten old shirt" (pp. 48, 49). Pete later opines mysogynistically that "most women have minds like moldy larders," adding that the last time he saw an acquaintance, Marie Saxon, "was in a swimming costume" (p. 86). In the novel's final pages, Pinter's food–love–clothing–honesty cluster emerges full-blown, when Mark fulminates against Pete's supposed parasitism and disloyalty. Mark's metaphors for betrayal include a failure to cook in another's oven, being victimized by a bloodsucker, eating sour flesh, going hungry, an enemy's eating into one's stomach or cutting up his bowels for mincemeat. Affection is not enough, compared to true love, he implies. Being excluded from love invokes a tailoring reference, a refusal to "cut my suit" (or adjust his behavior and feelings) to fit another's wishes. Lovelessness resembles a deep hunger, or worse, being deprived of spoiled food, "even a stale frankfurter, a slice of bacon rind, a leaf of cabbage, not even a mouldy piece of salami" (p. 183). By contrast, Mark envisions a rare moment of social comity, when story-telling in warm sunlight resembles anticipation of a banquet, as friends sat "anticipating a rarer dish, a choicer spread" (p. 183). Tellingly, Pinter's use of the entire image cluster in the novel's final, tense exchange sharpens one character's explosive criticism of another character's shortcomings, breaching their long friendship.

Patterns emerging in Pinter's subsequent plays are apparent in *The Dwarfs*. For one, his food–clothing clusters are characterized by Samuel Johnson's striking phrase: "heterogeneous elements linked by violence together." In addition, although food–clothing clusters appear randomly through the novel as

in the plays, they appear strikingly prominent in the novel's final recognition scene. As Aristotle suggested in *The Poetics*, recognition scenes bring into sharp relief characters' identities, relationships and links to the work's themes, though not without ironies. Finally, distasteful food images predominate in *The Dwarfs*, as in the plays; even appealing food images carry an underlying tone of doubt and transience.

In *The Birthday Party*⁶ (first prod., 1958; pub. 1959), Stan initially links the seductive Meg to spoiled food: horrible cornflakes, sour milk, gravy-like tea. After both embarrassing and flattering her with the eroticizing term "succulent," (p. 27) he demeans her as an "old piece of rock cake" (p. 33). With Lulu, however, Stan reduces food and sex to appetites: telling her, "I'm a big eater," Stan propositions Lulu: "How would you like to go away with me?" (p. 36) Unlike Stan, Goldberg associates love—casual and maternal—with appealing, appetizing food. A memory of walking out with a beautiful girl segues to a childhood vision of a nurturing mother, linked idyllically with tasty nourishment: gefilte fish, hot milk, pancakes.

The second Act party begins with a food–love–clothing cluster: Goldberg absurdly associates Stan's imagined sexual misdeeds ("lechery") with tasteless gluttony and night clothing ("pyjamas"). Later, embracing Lulu reminds Goldberg of his dead wife's appetizing cooking, "the nicest piece of rollmop and pickled cucumber you could wish to find on a plate," and, McCann adds, "a plate of fry in the morning" (p. 70). As Stan's forced departure nears, Lulu accuses Goldberg of sexual harassment—taking "liberties only to satisfy your appetite" (p. 89), triggering an obscure, unrelated revelation about McCann's apparently disgraceful "unfrocking." Stan then appears, mutely carrying broken glasses, but immaculate in a well-cut suit, contrasting with his slovenly, unshaven visage. Non-sexual maternal and marital love invokes images of tasty, appealing food in the play, while lechery or sexual harassment are associated with unappetizing things to eat hungrily and inappropriate clothing.

In *The Dumb Waiter*⁷ (first produced 1960), a pair of hit men, Ben and Gus, inhabit a cramped, impoverished dystopian microcosm. Like a malign, petty god an unseen order-giver demands a series of increasingly exotic meals like offerings from supplicants. Given the order-giver's omniscience, the orders are meant (presumably) to taunt, demoralize and mock Ben and Gus. Driven by desperation and frustration, the two send their meager snacks up the dumb waiter, only for them to be rejected as inadequate and/or spoiled.

The last scene completes the inverted food–love–clothing cluster (privation–rejection–nakedness) at the basis of the play: after leaving for a glass of water, Gus—the more judgmental of the pair—"stumbles in . . . *stripped* of his jacket, waistcoat, tie, holster and revolver" (p. 165), presumably to be shot by his

partner Ben. The play's logic suggests either that Gus was the designated victim all along, or that both men are punished for their inability to comply with their order-giver's impossible demands by requiring that one kill the other.

In *A Slight Ache*⁸ (1st prod. 1959), like Stanley, in *The Birthday Party*, Edward is reduced to a helpless pawn and expelled, to be replaced by a matchseller, a mute receptacle for the couples' fantasies. The play's first food-clothing link emerges in Edward's preposterous offer of a choice of exotic drinks to the matchseller—a Wachenheimer Fuchsmantel Riesling Beeren Auslese, among others—followed by a suggestion, “You look a trifle warm. Why don't you take off your balaclava” (p. 185). Edward's list is reminiscent of the strikingly unusual foods demanded by the unseen manipulator in *The Dumb Waiter*.

Flora later conflates love (a food stand-in) with clothing, observing,

Tell me all about love. Speak to me of love. . . Do you know when I was a girl I loved . . . I loved . . . I simply adored. . . what have you got on? . . . A jersey? And what have you got under your jersey? . . . Lord, is this a vest? . . . (p. 192).

Love must be paid for in Edward's case, but is absolutely free for the mute, loathsomely smelly matchseller. As in Pinter's previous plays, whether one receives love, or at least acceptance, or is rejected seems entirely random; one's deserts are completely irrelevant. One happens to be in the right (or wrong) place at the right (or wrong) time.

In *The Caretaker*⁹ (1960), shortly after entering Davies links clothing, food and sex in a misogynist attack on his ex-wife:

Fortnight after I married her, no, not so much as that, no more than a week, I took the lid off a saucepan, you know what was in it? A pile of her *underclothing*, unwashed. The pan for *vegetables*, it was. The *vegetable* pan. That's when I left her and I haven't seen her since . . . I've eaten my *dinner* off the best of plates (p. 18).

Davies' need for properly-fitting shoes is a dominant, recurring metaphor in the play, twice associated with food. In Davies' rambling narrative of a search for suitable footwear, he is directed to a Luton monastery. After he arrives “three days without a bite,” a monk refers him to a nearby kitchen for what Davies considers an inadequate meal, “a little bird, a little tiny bird, I could have ate it in under two minutes” (pp. 23–24), then sends him away shoeless. Near the end of the second scene in Act II, Nick's offer of a cheese sandwich sets off Davies' obsessive complaint about inadequate shoes:

Listen, you can't pick me up a pair of good *shoes*, can you? I got a bad need for a good pair of *shoes*. I can't get anywhere without a pair of good *shoes*, see? Do you think there's any chance of you being able to pick me up a *pair*? (p. 60)

In both instances, the linkage between food and shoes heightens Davies' rootlessness, desperation and helplessness, his inability to secure a fixed habitation or establish an amicable relationship with others.

Early in *The Collection*¹⁰ (1961) James intrudes on Bill's home, demanding olives, pouring himself a whiskey, and mentioning that Bill had spent time in Leeds for a "dress collection" (p. 130). Food likes and dislikes form the basis of quarrels over trivialities triggered by fears of betrayal: whether biscuits are fattening, whether to eat olives. As in "A Slight Ache," a woman's replacement of one man by another dominates much of the plot.

In *The Lover*¹¹ (1963), Pinter closely entangles sex, food and clothing, whether as references in the dialogue or hand props. Sexual availability manifests itself in offerings or consumption of food and changes of clothing, most often shoes, from low to high heels, particularly, or back again. Near the play's beginning and end, feigned indifference and real anger alternate in his characters' minds and speech, marking Pinter's couple's treatments of one another's sexual choices. Their links between sexual gratification and bountiful food offerings, on the one hand, and changes of clothing, particularly Sarah's shoes, clump together in tense, dramatic fashion, insistently, even obsessively.

In *The Homecoming*¹² (1965) Ruth associates a nostalgic memory of her pre-marital work as a "photographer's model" with a rare abundance of drink and food: "When we changed in the house we had a drink. There was a cold buffet" (p. 73). Ruth's wistful recollection passes nearly unnoticed. Seemingly-trivial struggles over food and drink mask disdain, barely-concealed battles for dominance, even vengeance. By suggesting Max is "cooking for a lot of dogs," (p. 27) Lenny slyly reveals the family members' animality. Ruth later contests Lenny over an otherwise inconsequential glass of water, a struggle Ruth sexualizes and turns to her advantage:

LENNY: Just give me the glass.

RUTH: No

Pause

LENNY: I'll take it then,

RUTH: If you take the glass . . . I'll take you. (p. 50)

Lenny recognizes their byplay as a sexual contretemps: "What are you doing, making me some kind of proposal?" (p. 50) Later, Teddy steals Lenny's cheese roll, another seemingly-trivial contest masking a complex power struggle. When confronted, Teddy admits, "I took it deliberately" (p. 80). His petty, evidently unmotivated theft deflects his resentful loss of Ruth's love upon his brother; it also pays Lenny back for asking embarrassing philosophical questions; furthermore, it anticipates Lenny's deal returning Ruth to prostitution.

Pinter uses clothing symbolically here, not only to shield nakedness but as a stand-in for society's weakening repressions. Clothing is a proxy for lying, gratuitous display, subjugation, spurious self respect, and social hypocrisy. Pinter, too, views clothing as both camouflage and enticement, meant to blind observers and accentuate female sexuality. Lenny's uncanny echo of Bernard Shaw's *Heartbreak House*, "Isn't it funny? I've got my pyjamas on and you're fully dressed" (p. 45) calls attention to Ruth's charisma. Ruth's complaint about her inability to find satisfactory shoes in America glances obliquely at both her once-forsaken role as streetwalker and her ill-fitting role as a professor's wife.

Oddly, the play's only two lyrical passages invoke gifts of clothing to symbolize rare moments of affection tinged with irony. In one of them, Max congratulates himself on his "generosity" to Jessie, invoking clothing to idealize his otherwise ambivalent relationship to his dead wife. He recalls promising Jessie "a dress in pale corded blue silk, heavily encrusted in pearls, and for casual wear, a pair of pantaloons in lilac flowered taffeta" (p. 62), a fantasy masking a profession usually conducted in the nude. In an unusually tender reminiscence, Lenny recalls poetically, "I bought a girl a hat once . . . It had a bunch of daffodils on it, tied with a black satin bow, and then it was covered with a cloche of black veiling" (p. 73). Like Max's over-refined dress imagery, Lenny's hat gift invokes a male fantasy of female submission and obedience.

Ruth later exploits the clothing-nakedness paradox with her verbal striptease, a simultaneous act of revealing through concealing. Ruth tantalizes the family while remaining fully clothed. She suggests they visualize her body clad only in underclothes, that they consider her body language, the movements of her lips, quite apart from any words she may speak: "Look at me. I . . . move my leg. That's all it is. But I wear . . . underwear . . . which moves with me . . . it . . . captures your attention" (pp. 68–69). In effect, Ruth verbally and gesturally pre-enacts Sam's report of the sex act Jessie had performed blatantly in the back of his taxi as he watched, helplessly enthralled. In this regard, Prudence Glynn's¹³ insight is instructive: [I]t is possible to assume that all dress is erotic in that it conceals something which by tradition is not acceptable to the public gaze. . . . [M]an has always been excited by what is concealed. It is always what is underneath which must be discovered. . . . (p. 22)

After Teddy confesses his theft of Lenny's cheese roll, Lenny pointedly ties up food, dishonesty and social hypocrisy with a clothing metaphor: "this is something approaching the *naked* truth, isn't it?" (italics mine) (p. 80). References to clothing heighten the imagined sex appeal of naked bodies while pointing up Pinter's preoccupations with love's scarcity and loss. They also suggest societal inhibitions the characters all yearn to both sustain and evade, illustrating the psychological maxim, "What we desire we also fear."

The Homecoming thus probes the deeper implications of an essential item of stagecraft—clothing, with its power to manifest, hide, and titillate, all at the same time.

In “Family Voices”¹⁴ (1981), midway through the play, the landlady’s daughter, Jane, flirts with the son, linking clothing with food and (disguised), female-initiated sexual foreplay:

Her *stockinged* toes came to rest on my thigh. Lady Withers’ *dress*, I decided, wasn’t red but pink. Jane was in *green*, apart from her toes, which were *clad in black*. . . . Jane gave me a *bun*. I think it was a *bun*. Lady Withers bit into her *bun*. Jane bit into her *bun*, *her toes now resting on my lap*. . . . I had never seen so many *buns*. . . . Lady Withers went through her second *bun* with no trouble at all and was at once on to another. Jane, on the other hand, chewed almost dreamily at her *bun*. (p. 137).

Pinter’s mingling of appetites (food and sex), triggered seemingly randomly with close observation of the women’s dress, coincides with the young people’s dalliance under the benign gaze of Jane’s mother. The foregoing occurrence of the clothing–food–sex cluster in this play involves a triangle—a mother-figure and a young couple—engaged in mundane eating activities.

Pinter’s inclusion of a food–clothing cluster in *Family Voices* is somewhat anomalous. Beginning with *No Man’s Land* in 1975, his clusters virtually disappear from his plays. This absence coincides with Pinter’s sharp veer into political melodrama. Many of his characters become stock, easily divided into oppressors and victims, living in totalitarian dystopias or sterile, impersonal institutions. One could speculate that Pinter invokes his food–clothing metaphors to accentuate nuances of inner feelings, fraught personal relationships and expressions of longing and foreboding. With his shift towards highly politicized milieus, delicate shadings of emotion fall by the wayside. Unlike his earlier plays, which located a vaguely-defined menace outside a room, Pinter—especially after *Precisely* (1983)—has posited willing tools of a totalitarian state motivated entirely by the untrammelled exercise of power. Drinking, particularly whiskey, symbolizes the release of childish wishes for sexual and physical domination, leaving not the identity of tormentors but the rationale for their actions shrouded in mystery. For example, the co-conspirators in *Precisely* meet and drink in a bar; the chief tormentor in *One for the Road* drinks conspicuously and obsessively while tormenting his victims. Even more important may be a shift in focus noted by Christopher Innes: “After *The Homecoming* there is a switch from characters at the very bottom of the economic scale, to figures from a ‘respectable’ stratum with whom the average audience could more easily identify” (p. 332). Perhaps it is down-and-out characters living close to the edge who feel most keenly visceral threats to their very survival that Pinter, earlier in his playwriting career, identified most closely with.

From 1952, when Pinter began writing his only novel, *The Dwarfs*, until the mid-1970s, Pinter invoked his food–love–clothing–honesty cluster to ground his characters' feelings and anxieties in sensuous metaphors. Whereas food and costume had practical as well as aesthetic functions in his plays, they usually had wider significance regarding his characters' likes and dislikes, memories of the past and aspirations for the future.

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NOTES

- ¹ Billington, Michael. *The Life and Work of Harold Pinter* (London: Faber & Faber, 1996).
- ² "Introduction," *Complete Works: One* (New York: Grove Press, 1976).
- ³ Begley, Varun. *Harold Pinter and the Twilight of Modernism* (Toronto: U Toronto Press, 2005).
- ⁴ Bogatyrev, Petr. "Costume as Sign," in *Semiotics of Art*, ed. Ladislav Matejka and Irwin R. Titunik (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1976). (Original Work Published 1936).
- ⁵ (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1990). All further references to this novel to this edition.
- ⁶ In *Complete Works: One* (New York: Grove Press, 1976), pp. 18–97.
- ⁷ In *Complete Works: One* (New York: Grove Press, 1976), pp. 128–165.
- ⁸ In *Complete Works: One* (New York: Grove Press, 1976), pp. 168–200.
- ⁹ In *Complete Works: Two* (New York: Grove Press, 1977), pp. 14–87.
- ¹⁰ In *Complete Works: Two* (New York: Grove Press, 1977), pp. 119–157.
- ¹¹ In *Complete Works: Two* (New York: Grove Press, 1977), pp. 159–196.
- ¹² In *Complete Works: Three* (New York: Grove Press, 1978), pp. 19–98.
- ¹³ *Skin to Skin: Eroticism in Dress* (London: Book Club Associates), 1982.

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MEDIATED: THE IMAGE AS A PERFORMATIVE
INTERFACE IN THE PHOTOGRAPHIC
RELATIONSHIP

ABSTRACT

How can art, specifically photography, illustrate the limitations of vision? What do those limits reveal about perception and knowing? To explore these questions two distinct mechanisms need to be discussed in relation to creative practice, Paul Virilio's augmenting lens that forever changes the photographer's perception and the image acting as an object for both Maurice Merleau-Ponty's embodied experience and Jean Baudrillard's simulacrum. The photographic image becomes an index by exposing the relationship between photographer and image. The camera is a tool, to Virilio a prosthetic eye, which immediately affects the photographer's perception of her environment. The phenomenal world is the one that is photographed, a subjective experience. The tension between surface and reality, image and object, removes the photographic experience from an experience of the real. The making of the image closely parallels the act of viewing the image. A dual experience emerges from the photograph, the creation of the image and the viewer's act of reading, inferring. An image, as an index, is open to multiple interpretations, placing equal weight on each participant, viewer, and creator, so that there is no hierarchy of interpretation, experience, or meaning. These questions are explored in relation to a creative practice embedding theory with process and outcome.

There is a simple statement that follows the relationships embedded in the photographic process; *the photographer uses a camera to take a photograph that is observed by the viewer*. I call this the *photographic relationship* and use it as a point of investigation leading to a creative output. Rather than a singular research question to lead a studio practice, I use studio practice to test and explore the complexities of the various inter-relationships within the photographic process. That is, how does the camera affect the photographer's perception of and approach to their space? How does the viewer interact with the image? Starting with these questions of how the camera mediates the photographer's space, a research methodology developed into a

practice-led inquiry involving the manifold relationships, among photographer, camera, image, and viewer, which leads to the understanding of the camera as an integral part of visual perception.

A photograph is an object in its own right, a mirror, an interface, a surface that bridges the viewer to the photographer and her camera. In this photographic relationship the object photographed, a subject of the image, becomes secondary to all other participants; it is the photographer's methodology and choices which take precedence. If the image is the interface between viewer, photographer and all intermediary devices, then might not it be said that the camera acts as the mediator between photographer and her environment. The act of looking through a lens immediately changes the photographer's perception of, and her role in, that environment.

Through photographic inquiry the theories of Paul Virilio's prosthetic eye, Jean Baudrillard's simulacrum, G. Deleuze and F. Guattari's haecceity, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty's embodied perception are tested. The prosthetic eye of the camera reveals the mechanism of the photographer's approach to space. The simulacrum exposes another mechanism of viewing and provides an awareness of the fidelity of the image. Haecceity has a manifold definition, but for the photographer it can be the unique moment or object in a specific space and time that is captured on film. Whereas, for the viewer a haecceity may be part of the experience of looking, the moment viewing an image sparks appreciation or understanding. With the mechanism of prosthesis or simulacrum, it is through an embodied experience that both photographer then viewer perceives the object or the haecceity.

C.S. Peirce defines the index as one of three types of sign that "signifies its object solely by virtue of being really connected with it" (1931, p. 211). Peirce's index is not descriptive nor does it imply any specific meaning; the index is only a referee that points to a referent. In the case of a photograph, the image indexes the subject. The viewer applies their own meaning, makes their own references; this index has no prior meaning or connotation. The presumed subject of the photograph is the object in front of the camera that is photographed, but an image can refer to more than the visible content of the image.

A photograph's indexical possibilities includes: reference to the physical procedure of recording an image on film; the subject's existence as an object; or the steps, the decision, the method, taken by the photographer to reach the moment of image making. As an index, the photograph does much more than point to its past. The photograph acts as an interface to provide keys to the roles of subject and object by revealing the viewer's relationship to the image and the photographer's relationship with camera and space.

The very term ‘medium’ directly links to the image’s referent, indicating that the photograph is just a material through which concepts and ideas are transmitted. The camera is a tool, while the image is data, the result awaiting analysis. Once a photograph refers to itself it no longer acts as a medium, but is an object in its own right to be reflected upon; the subject is shifted from that of the image to that of the photograph’s and the photographer’s intent. The photograph no longer connotes the traditional subject, but instead is a sign, a denotation of the image’s own conception.

The photographer Gunther Selichar uses photographic apparatus conceptually and reflectively. In three photographic series *Sources*, *Screens*, and *Exposures*, Selichar documents the instruments of making: *Sources* explores recording medium; *Screens* looks at display medium; and *Exposures* is a study of photographic light sources (Selichar 2004). The result of his research is the object of his research is the subject of his images; the subject is both the instrument and the phenomenon. Reversing the role of image carrier to image, especially in *Screens*, Selichar makes the often overlooked, presumed invisible, medium become visible in careful detail, become the object of reflection and that which is indexed. The crisp clear quality of the images unveils the moment where the medium breaks down, information ceases to register; revealing the limitations of the medium, the object, which is also the subject, becomes media-ized and mediated. By turning the camera into subject, Selichar’s camera is the evident mediator between image and reality.

In their essay *From presence to the performative*, D. Green and J. Lowry call this diverse indexicality of the photograph “performative photography” (2003, pp. 47–48). Green and Lowry make careful note of the full indexical nature of the photograph; “Photographs, therefore, are not just indexical because light happened to be recorded in an instant on a piece of photosensitive film, but because, first and foremost, they were taken” (2003, p. 48).

This implies the photographer’s active role in the taking of the image and applying meaning. The image then, “first and foremost”, reflects the photographer’s view and intent while the photographer is the implied subject. As the image evidences the photographer, the photograph’s relationship to the real is confirmed at the same time that it is subverted. The performative image is the result of a causal gesture and continually reflects back to its inception. The gesture itself refers to the photographer’s intent, which as already discussed turns the photographer into subject. Secondly, reflection upon and analysis of the image is performed by the viewer. A photograph can point to a scene or object and at the same time point to the viewer’s ability to read it. When the image is internalized by the viewer, the image becomes performative and the

viewer becomes a subject by revealing their own judgements and perceptions in relation to the image.

As a dual index, able to refer to both the object photographed and the event of recording, the photograph temporally refers to the past as well as the present. There is an experiential flow from the taking of the photograph to the viewing of the photograph. A photograph is not just a static record of the past but a document of unfolding time as the viewer develops a relationship with and interpretation of the photograph; it is not necessarily documenting a pre-existing object but can act as a continual record of an unfolding experience. Both the photograph's relationship to the real and role in experiential perception will be discussed further on, in terms of Baudrillard's simulacrum and Merleau-Ponty's embodied perception.

In Jean Baudrillard's *Simulations* he discusses the four facets of an image (1983, p. 11). In its first order the image refers to a basic reality, a photograph that acts as an index to the object in front of the camera. The second phase masks a basic reality, obscuring some underlying truth. The third obscures an absence of a basic truth. The opacity of both the second and third orders has negative implications, obfuscating an aspect or absence that is more convenient if ignored. The final phase of the image is Baudrillard's simulacrum, an image that bears a separation from the original and is beyond reality extending into the hyperreal.

For Baudrillard true reality is the hyperreal (1983, pp. 142–147), that which can make an equivalent duplicate, a simulation that is indecipherable from the original. The mechanism of revealing the reality and the simulation becomes a perpetual motion, feeding into itself. Just as Surrealism subverts and augments reality with the imaginary and “privileged moments” of the banal, hyperrealism intensifies this contradiction of reality and simulation as made evident in Green and Lowry's performative photography. Different subjects imprint different realities; the photographer and the viewer have different but equal interpretations of the hyperreal. The image is the copy, the simulacrum, while the camera is the tool that records the hyperreal. Transparency of the act of making and the act of looking reveals this mechanism of the performative photograph.

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, G. Deleuze and F. Guattari utilize the concept of *haecceity*, a term derived from Latin *haecceitas* meaning ‘this-ness’, as tool for defining an individuation, putting form to the indeterminate, embodying a specific moment and place (2004, p. 288). To understand the haecceity is to be able to define the subject. A haecceity is a mode of individuation and an embodied moment. As they describe, “On the plane of consistency, *a body is defined only by a longitude and a latitude*” (their emphasis, Deleuze and Guattari 2004, p. 287). That is to say, the haecceity is the quality of a particular

body at a specific place and time, a transitive experience such as that of a high desert sunset on a stormy Spring evening.

In terms of photography, the haecceity is what the image indexes. Haecceity can be used to refer to the implied photographic subject, the photographic moment. The image becomes an index of the photographer's experience, a unique time and place caught on film. The photographer and camera act as a tool to find and record that moment among many, that haecceity.

As an example of both performative photography and haecceity, the photographic strategy of Barbara Probst blurs the line between subject and object and activates the performativity of the image. Using multiple cameras to capture multiple points of view in a single instant, a unique moment, she questions the veracity of the photograph, elucidates the photographer's hand, confronts the preconceptions that the viewer brings to the image, and reveals the subjectivity of the index. Each image in her series is linked in time and space, but in such a way that breaks from traditional narrative; it is a pinpoint of time and an unfolding of space within that singular moment which captures the haecceity of the moment, more so than any singular image could ever achieve.

The process of capturing the image is part of the performance, but the performativity of the photographs is much more than the act of taking and making, it is also the act of looking. Both the act of making and the act of looking become completely transparent in Probst's images, asking the viewer to approach with an awareness of their own preconceptions. In *Exposure #16*, she provides simultaneous multiple views of a woman in a red dress. The first image, a close-up view up the legs, elicits an intimate reading of the work. The distance from the subject of the second image, a view of the woman down a dark hallway, at once puts the viewer in position of voyeur (Probst 2007). By positioning the images side by side, the images distinguish viewer preferences or comfort levels. The viewer automatically makes comparisons and conclusions about their own response. Performativity is a transparency of intentions; the process is performance, intent enacted upon the emulsion. The event is not being documented by the photograph, the event is the photograph.

As described in relation to Probst's work, the performativity of the photograph is a means of recording and conveying a haecceity. This vein of inquiry led to my series of photographs I entitled *horizons*. However these were not horizons found at the point where land meets sky, a line that defines a larger than human scale. Instead I first discovered a horizon in my water bottle, specifically the edge where water meets air, an object on the human scale. I discovered this space purely by accident, while laying my head on my desk after a long afternoon of reading. My tired eyes in the dimming

light shifted focus between background and foreground, as one might focus a manual lens, so to speak.

The moment, the haecceity, of this discovery opened up a world of possible horizons and provided me with the tool to unveil them. The images explore alternative spaces within the everyday. A horizon line automatically orients space visually, whether it is real or not. In the process of finding and taking these images I felt as if I was fabricating my own private world. The sense of my own space and my no-space creates a discord between reality and representation. The images reveal my navigation through a space intimately with my camera, careful attention is paid to often disregarded details. Each resulting photograph acts as a residue of that discovery and as an object invites the viewer to enter that no-space; the act of finding and taking the photograph and then viewing become distinctly different performative acts.

At the same time the horizon shows the possibility of photography just as it reveals the limitations of vision. That decisive moment is hyperreal, referring to a moment that has gone and can never be experienced again, the haecceity. As a simulacrum of the moment, the performative photograph is an attempt to trace back to that haecceity by referencing the steps leading up to the click of the shutter. The interpretation of those steps and the image will be different for both the photographer and the viewer.

As a tool the camera augments perception. Visual expectations become dependent on lenses and technology. The view is cropped and removed from the body. Focus is directed to a narrow perspective creating the false sense of horizon. At this moment there is a disruption between subject and context. The periphery provides a means for drawing reference, without which the subject is dislocated from context.

This instability of the subject is what disorients space in *horizons*. The photographic subject only becomes visible to the augmented eye. In *The Vision Machine*, Paul Virilio discusses the concept of the camera as prosthetic eye, operating as a mediary device that eventually transforms vision. As he puts it “One can only see instantaneous sections seized by the Cyclops eye of the lens. Vision, once substantial, becomes accidental” (Virilio 1994, p. 13). For Virilio, the human eye becomes fixed and so loses its sensitivity; with vision reduced the eye becomes dependent on the lens. Over time this new way of seeing becomes normalized; an objective vision is replaced by the tunnel vision of recording. Absence of periphery destabilizes the subject’s context, ripping it from its original meaning, its intent.

Looking through my camera lens, my peripheral world is excluded. My visual space becomes manipulated by shifting focal length or adjusting aperture. Snapping the shutter captures my moment in that space, an haecceity

from the photographer's roving eye. From one moment to the next, each frame creates a unique space and my gaze becomes narrowed.

As photographer's tool, the camera is an extension (read prosthesis) of their embodied self. It is a way of putting themselves into the world, or as Maurice Merleau-Ponty states as he introduces his *Phenomenology of Perception*, "The real has to be described, not constructed or formed" (1962, p. xi). Describing the real is a performative act. When the photograph becomes description, and not just a record, it becomes performative; the descriptive moment is a haecceity unique to that time and place.

As prosthesis, the camera is directly controlled by the photographer just as it reconfigures vision. Obsessively carrying my camera with me to photograph a horizon whenever one was discovered, my vision became narrowed. I became less observant of my periphery, stumbling upon a rise in the sidewalk only to discover that it creates a horizon. My alternative world filled with sublime horizons became so consuming, one morning I awoke to find one in my bed and was momentarily disoriented. While as images these may not be the most successful horizons from the series, their significance lies in my experience, the way that I embodied the camera to search for these alternative spaces.

Merleau-Ponty states,

Perception is not a science of the world, it is not even an act, a deliberate taking up of a position; it is the background from which all acts stand out, and is presupposed by them. The world is not an object such that I have in my possession the law of its making; it is the natural setting of, and field for, all my thoughts and all my explicit perceptions. . . there is no inner man, man is in the world, and only in the world does he know himself (1962, pp. xi-xii).

Here Merleau-Ponty uses perceptions as something internalized, not a sensory input devoid of interpretation. Reflection upon reaction reveals perception and therefore reveals self, a performative act in the context of the photographic relationship. Restoring the object to sensory/bodily perception; it becomes subjective as in the example of perceiving a cube. Not all sides can be perceived at the same time even though their existence is known. The object is transitive depending on the subject, an extension of the body (1962, pp. 235-236). The world is not an object, but it is through perception of objects within the world that we can know it and define it. In the photographic relationship, the photographer defines her world through the camera.

In *horizons*, the world is no longer recognisable unless the viewer considers the relationship between photographer and camera; and so the viewer can see a landscape or a water bottle, the outside world or the world created by the photographer and camera, this consideration a performative act. These everyday objects become horizons as the photographer manipulates the camera and

the camera manipulates space. The periphery surrounding, and therefore contextualizing, the object is absent in the image, dislocating the object as the photographer fabricates space. The reflexivity of the image is evident as the grain becomes enlarged and streaks or scratches make the surface of the film and the surface of the object indiscernible. The transparency of the photographic moment causes the subject to subtly shift between the object and the photographer's intention to fabricate her own space.

Performative photography can be a tool of inquiry in itself; the photograph unfolds under the viewer's gaze demanding to be contextualized and asking the viewer to make inferences and draw conclusions. Like in Probst's images the viewer brings their own meaning to the work; however, the space created in *horizons* is much more subtle and requires a more active inquiry from the viewer. Where she adds context to her images, *horizons* subtracts contextualizing information, but both demand the viewer to reconsider their gaze. My inquiry peels away the real through transparency, taking the banal, the often overlooked, and provides a moment to reflect on photographic relationships. As the mechanism of viewing and making the image becomes transparent, the image become performative; its objecthood not only reflects its own inscription, but it questions its own truth and the fidelity of the copy.

As in Selichar's photographs and *horizons*, the camera is a tool for discovery and analysis. The images perform analysis instead of acting as a record, becoming more than a sign. If the camera is mediator, then the image becomes interface. Proceeding from *horizons*, my project *interface* explores the potential for the image as a point of reflection into the photographer-camera experience. The tension created by superimposing the photograph's space into the viewer's space is where I started my next investigation for *interface*. The white wall of the gallery serves as a point of reflection for the viewer and a subject for the photographer.

Preparing and measuring the wall to photograph, it becomes an interface just as the image becomes interface once I remove myself and the camera from the scene. The photograph becomes a juncture between past and present. I photographed from the base boards to 112 cm high, the height of the paper. The resulting image is an 8.48 m print at a 1:1 ratio with the white wall. When this print is shown in the room in which it was photographed, the image is laid out flat so that the viewer must move around the print just as the photographer moves through the space to photograph it.

As I measure and photograph this haecceity becomes an embodied perception. As previously discussed with respect to Deleuze and Guattari, bodies in a Cartesian coordinate system have unique qualities; an object at certain coordinates is altered as compared to the same object at different coordinates. An

object is dependent on the coordinates for definition. As I carefully measure the distances from camera to wall, from midpoint to midpoint of each frame (a total of seven frames is required), and the reflective and ambient light, the wall becomes defined in terms of the photograph.

Using a 4×5" camera, I became acutely aware of the elegant mechanism of the black box and its reliance on measurements. Before I manipulate the camera, it is only an object relying on theoretical relationships of light and space. The numbers I input define the relationship so that it can properly function. Under the black hood I refine the focus of the lens. My breathing seems amplified in my ears and I shorten my breath to keep the ground glass from fogging. The wall seems much farther away than its 1.9 m and I become a part of the camera apparatus.

In each frame I only see one seventh of the wall through the ground glass plate of the camera, but am always aware of the wall as a whole. As Merleau-Ponty describes the paradox in perceiving a three-dimensional object over time he posits, "it is. . .by conceiving my body itself as a mobile object that I am able to interpret perceptual appearance and construct the cube as it truly is" (1962, p. 236).

For Merleau-Ponty, self is subject; object is a temporary extension of the self; the photograph becomes a hybrid between object and index as the roles of subject and object become fluid and I become the first audience of my work. The making of my work closely parallels the phenomenon of viewing my work; just as I move through my environment with my camera, the viewer approaches the images. It is only through moving around the space and the image that it can be fully perceived and experienced. The need for this movement through space in order to perceive it becomes exaggerated in *interface* as the entire wall is photographed and an 8.48 m print is made.

The print took three days to render, test-print, stop, reload the printer, re-spool, and finally lay down the ink on paper. The printing process pushed the limits of the printer, the paper, the graphics programme, the rendering programme, and even the size limit of the room in which the image was printed. Reaching the pixel limits of Photoshop CS3, I had to make a decision to print at 90 dpi. My first reaction was frustration at being forced to print at screen quality rather than print quality resolution. As I watched a test print roll off the Epson printer, the limitations of the print process were subtle. The pixels are only visible when about four inches from the print surface. The grain of the film is visible before the pixels become noticeable, such that various stages of the technology and process are visible at different viewing distances.

When Merleau-Ponty's observer walks around a cube it is with direction and intent, a vector that at the end of the circuit describes the observer's experience.

It is only by completing the circuit that the object is fully perceived, requiring a bodily experience of the observer, just as it takes seven frames to fully capture the wall. The careful labour of measuring and moving the camera places me in the space as I observe it. I had to physically engage with the camera in order to find the haecceity within the image, my embodied perception. As I have to move within the space to photograph it, the viewer must move to perceive all the details and the full effect. Only by moving closer into the image and then pulling back out, as one might focus a manual lens, the viewer can see the texture of the wall, then the grain of the film, followed by the pixels of the digital printing process, and finally the texture of the paper which closely mimics the wall.

As a viewer approached the final image in *interface* there are different moments of focus. From farther away it appears to be a representation of the wall, but when reaching a few inches from the surface, the image breaks down into pixels. The surface of focus and information is the same, but perception is relative to position. The photograph is the wall at the same time it is an image, both an index and an object asking the viewer to engage in performative query. The viewer has the photograph from which to infer the entire photographic relationship. The point of failure in the technology reveals the mechanism at work in the image, such as edge of vision, focal length, white colour correction, and grain. Just as Georges-Pierre Seurat's Pointillism breaks down an image into differential dots of colour only to be visually blended by the eye, the grain and pixels of photographic media become more or less pronounced depending on the viewer.

The limitations of the printing provided the transparency of machine; as the observer moves the subject shifts from wall, to image to photograph. The image is truly an interface. Even the texture of the paper slightly mimics the texture of the wall so that the visible texture is ambiguously wall and photograph at the same time. There is a moment where the photograph is indiscernible from the photographed object.

The moment of transition occurs when the image is no longer a space, but instead is a medium and an object. It switches visibly from film to digital medium, print to wall, all depending on position, the viewer's vectoral body, the haecceity. This performative moment reveals that our perceptions are dependent on our position and the mechanisms in place.

Through the process of this inquiry it is evident that there is no clear distinction between subject and object. Within the photographic relationship, when one becomes subject the other becomes object, but the roles are never concretized and instead are always shifting. In *interface* there is not a distinct subject and object, but rather it is a circular, fluid, transitive relationship



Figure 1. M. Samsell, untitled (water, Nikon D70) from *horizons* series, 2008

dependent on a body in space-time, the haecceity. As the viewer moves in space, the wall, the image the paper, the ink, the photographic process, and ultimately the viewer his/herself all have the opportunity to become the subject. As the camera eliminates the periphery in *horizons*, the subject shifts from the object photographed, the photographer, the space created which is an artefact of the photographer and camera relationship, and finally the viewer.

The subversion of an image's indexicality is fundamental to performative photography. The performative function of the photograph reveals the embodied perception as the photographer navigates through space with the camera and the viewer interacts with the image. As the photographer's actions unfold and the intent is revealed through the images, the image ceases being an object and becomes an index, as in Barbara Probst's multiple exposures of the same scene at the same moment. The object stands before the viewer to be judged, awaiting the preconceptions of the viewer to give the object meaning. The transparency of the performative photographic processes reveals the image's limitations as an index of reality. So when acting as both object and index, the photograph behaves as a simulacrum, simultaneously revealing the subjective reality of the photographer and the viewer. (Figure 1)

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THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF COLOR [AS A
WORKING METHODOLOGY FOR DESIGN
PRACTICE]

ABSTRACT

My design studio work and research explores the phenomenology of color. This paper examines the creation of viewer color experience in my design process and finished design works in context of the legacy of phenomenological work in the disciplines of art and design. I investigate how hues can enhance the experience of objects and spaces, and I manipulate varied materials and textures to create color phenomena. Here, we explore three separate projects I created in series: *orange room* (a spatial study of color and material), *The Void Series* (a study examining temporality and light in the creation of “moment sketches”), and *The Color Sequences Project* (a sequential study of color and narrative).

My approach to design mixes philosophies of Eastern master Lao Tzu and etiquette expert Emily Post; it is as much influenced by the carefully orchestrated atmospheric color combinations of Mexican architect Luis Barragán as by the controlled aspect of chance present in the works of Helen Frankenthaler. I propose a method of designing furniture and spaces starting with color, rather than superficially adding it at the end of production as is typical in industry today.

PHENOMENOLOGY OF COLOR: AN OVERVIEW

Of course, the idea of phenomenology can encompass a wide range of perspectives—from Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s depictions of a hedgehog hand to the “intentionality” of Edmund Husserl to contemplation of levels of being in Buddhist meditation. In the late 1960s, a dynamite Swedish team comprised of psychologist Lars Sivik, economist Anders Hård, and physicist Gunnar Tonnquist launched ground-breaking studies on the phenomenology of color. Out of the trio’s studies came the Natural Colour System (NCS), the only published color system based completely on human perception. The system

became Sweden's national color system, or Swedish Standard, in 1979, and its notations are used today in the paint, furniture, food, and medical industries to ensure color consistency and accuracy. This system proves amazingly helpful for those who research color phenomena; it allows colorists to talk about perception of colors with precision and specificity.¹

In her book *Dimensional Color*, artist and educator Lois Swirnoff clearly defines the challenges of working with color in three-dimensions. She notes that color can, at once, have an element of constancy and also a tendency to change.² At sunset by a lake, we understand that the true color of the boat on the water is white even if its actual color at the perceived moment is a dull blue grey (due to the water reflections and the low light level).³ Color's tendency to change also poses problems (and provides opportunities) for those using color in design, and this effect has been explored in painting and other art media for centuries.⁴ In 1839, chemist Michel Eugène Chevreul published the *Cercle Chromatique* in his book, *De la loi du contraste simultané des couleurs et de l'assortiment des object colorés*. Here, he clearly defined the idea of simultaneous contrast, or the changing appearance of a color based on colors adjacent to it.⁵ This was not a novel concept as ancient mosaicists had long employed the strategy for visual effect, and color heavy-weights such as Leonardo da Vinci and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe spoke about the effects of color adjacencies in their respective eras.⁶ Georges Seurat banked on simultaneous contrast when he placed hot pink dots next to turquoise specks in his paintings in order to allow the colors to vibrate and resonate excitingly in the eye while Josef Albers spent 25 years making his *Homage to the Square* paintings, an exercise devoted solely to exploration of squares of color in relationship to one another.⁷ Op Artists such as Bridget Riley and Victor Vasarely use(d) color contrasts to create trippy effects and current work by Beverly Fishman, Susie Rosmarin, and Peter Schuyff continues these explorations in a contemporary manner. In three-dimensional work, architect Luis Barragán and artist Donald Judd used color adjacencies to shape experience of a space. Contemporary artists such as artist Daniel Buren, sculptor Anish Kapoor, architect Jean Nouvel, and interior designer Kelly Wearstler compose colors in three-dimensions to create atmosphere, make graphic spatial compositions, enhance depth, and control perceived effect. In other words, they consciously use the phenomenology of color in their works.

A strong concentration of research on color perception continues in the Scandinavian countries today. Major city universities in Scandinavia have full-fledged departments of light and pigment; the Swedish government funds color research; and preceding landmark color work lives on as part of residents' cultural heritage. Institutions such as the Swedish Color Foundation

lead color-crazed members on tours and “color walks” around Stockholm. In addition, countries such as Sweden receive little natural light in winter yet summer days have almost round-the-clock sunlight; the sun’s trajectory in the Stockholm summer sky reaches a maximum angle of 49 degrees above the horizon, causing sunlight to pour into windows and bounce directly off of building facades.⁸ Extreme seasonal lighting poses particular challenges to living life in Scandinavia and has forced generations of Nordic dwellers to become experts on manipulation of color and light in their daily lives.

THE DESIGN PROCESS

In investigating phenomenology of color, I found myself immediately drawn to the work of the minimalists. Artist Mel Bochner claimed that famous minimalist Dan Flavin had “‘an acute awareness of the phenomenology of rooms’”⁹ while others proclaim that the work of James Turrell “allows us to see ourselves ‘seeing.’”¹⁰ Furthermore, historians argue that minimalists “brought their audiences to an unprecedented level of perceptual awareness,”¹¹ and, as such, the majority of minimalist criticism and theoretical writing tends to come from a phenomenological read: “In Minimal art what is important is the phenomenological basis of the viewer’s experience, how he or she perceives the internal relationships among the parts of the work and of the parts to the whole. . . .”¹² With the pared down vocabulary of minimalist work, every design move (including color choice) must be spot on. As such, minimalist works can provide ripe territory for visual analysis of working methods. So, I compiled a list of techniques for using color that can be applied in my own design work by looking to the minimalists, to contemporaries who work in a minimal fashion, and to those for whom color became one of their main media - arguably creatives such as Piet Mondrian, Donald Judd, Wassily Kandinsky, Ellsworth Kelly, Paul Klee, Henri Matisse, James Turrell, and others.

THE STUDIO WORK

ORANGE ROOM

orange room was an installation at Cranbrook Art Museum composed of six works made of resin and oranges: *Ribbon Splat*, *Still Life With Oranges*, *Orange Window Seat*, *Column Orange*, *Orange Diffuser*, and *Orange-and-Dart Molding*. What happens when typically decorative objects such as crown molding and still life paintings are superseded with another somewhat preposterous and conventionally frivolous program? Objects found in a typical domestic

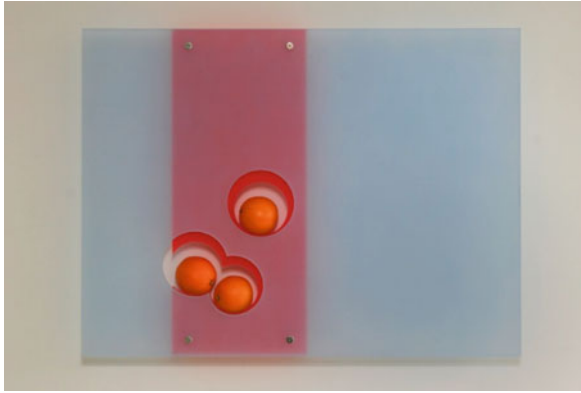


Figure 1. *Still Life With Oranges* by Jada Schumacher. resin, oranges. 29" x 39" x 4". 2006 (Photograph: eWolf)

interior serve their normal roles of decor or utility in *orange room*, but they also have an extra task: to celebrate the orange. *Still Life With Oranges* plays off of the classic painting tradition of depicting clusters of various static objects on a canvas (Figure 1). *Orange-and-Dart Molding* references egg-and-dart molding, a historic symbol of fertility found in classic architectural detailing. The title of *Ribbon Splat* alludes to the name of the vertical back of a Chippendale chair. The objects in *orange room* used experiential color to explore our conventional notions of everyday living spaces and challenge our often unconsidered use of furniture typologies.

As I spatially constructed the installation to fit the museum space, I created site-specific pieces based on the flow of space and the existing elements in *orange room* (Figure 2). The works were also carefully sequenced in relation to each other, to anticipated viewer movement, and to natural and artificial light in order to capitalize on the resin's material properties. Japanese architect Tadao Ando expresses the benefits of this design strategy with, "The surprise, the emotion, of how you perceive the space comes from what you see before and what you see after."¹³ The resin in *orange room* had a translucent glowing quality that changed as the viewer moved around the space, and, when several colored shapes were placed next to each other, light bounced through the resin to create color puddles with new hues. In *orange room*, I ensured that, where colors overlapped or collided, oranges were held or the overlapping pieces were integral to the structure of the piece.

The oranges themselves were offered as both a fruit and as a material. As a material, they were naturally the color orange. They had inherent texture (made more apparent when next to the smooth, fake, clean-lined resin), mass,

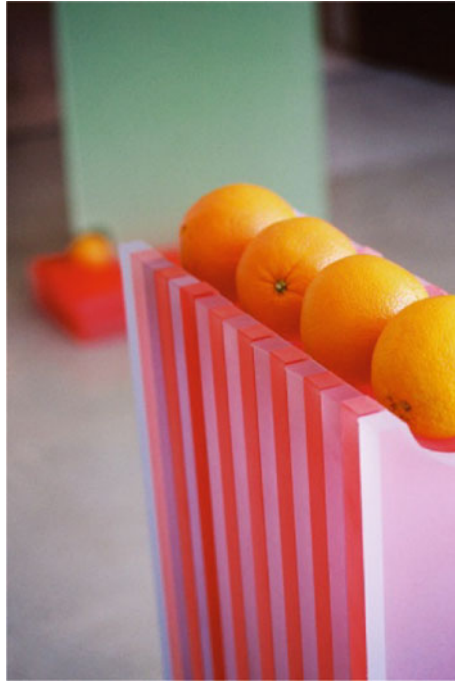


Figure 2. *Column Orange and Ribbon Splat* in orange room by Jada Schumacher. resin, oranges. 2006 (Photograph: Zona Janssen)

and volume. In color and opacity, they purposefully stuck out in the room. Even the carefully chosen, more pristine oranges seemed less perfect and more flawed when placed next to the decidedly synthetic resin works.

A few years ago, I began to fashion specific shapes that had color in their thicknesses as well as on the planar surfaces. The juxtaposition of these translucent colored shapes allowed unexpected reflections, refractions, and light pools to create new color combinations. Painter Henri Matisse commented on his found freedom with cut paper when he argued that he could now create directly in color. He claimed, “Paper cut-outs allow me to draw in colour. . . Instead of drawing the outline and establishing colour within it, I draw directly in the colour, which is more exact for not being transposed”.¹⁴ What seemed to be a liability in Matisse’s later life lack of physical strength created the conditions for a stunning development in his work. So too, sculptor Donald Judd advanced out of pure surface application of color during his lifetime infatuation with color and space: “. . . [Judd] worked as Matisse had with his cut-outs, for when he cut directly into the material he simultaneously cut into

his color. The quality of the materials - thick or thin, soft or hard, pliable or resistant, shiny or dull - became the qualities of his color as well.”¹⁵ Using the dimensionality of the water-jet cut resin in the spirit of Matisse and Judd, color could become the material itself in *orange room*.¹⁶

THE VOID SERIES

What color is a void? Is a void a luxury or a burden? An escape hatch or an unattainable tease? Loneliness or decadence? *The Void Series* works became abstracted studies examining temporality, color, and light. The works softly freeze individual moments or layered instants in time and, as such, I dub them “moment sketches”. They serve as design process tools for digging into and divulging tiny occurrences that happen in the myriad of events that flow to make up a day, a week, a year, a decade. The works in this series, such as *Halo*

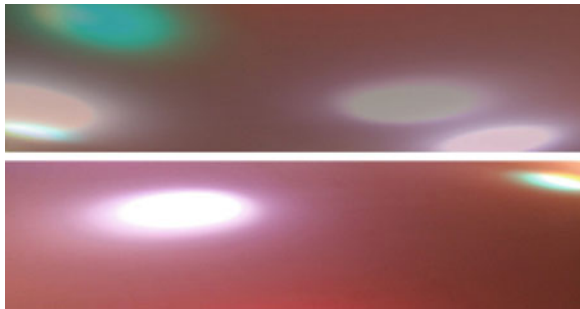


Figure 3. *Halo One* and *Halo Two* by Jada Schumacher. digital prints on polyester. each 54” x 14”. 2007

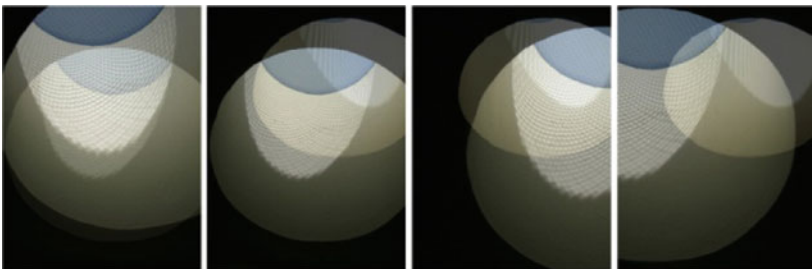


Figure 4. *Hole One*, *Hole Two*, *Hole Three*, *Hole Four* by Jada Schumacher. digital prints on polyester. each 20” x 27”. 2007

One and Halo Two and Hole One Hole Two Hole Three Hole Four, investigate the perceptual, psychological, and temporal significance of the spaces of emptiness in our lives (Figures 3 and 4).

THE COLOR SEQUENCES PROJECT

The Color Sequences Project is an on-going series of my design works inspired by the literature of British Booker Prize-winning author A. S. Byatt. I methodically note each color word used in her writing, choose colors that best represent each color word, and line up the colors into even vertical stripes in a pre-selected width. The works become digital images which can be printed out as digital prints. Each work depicts stripes of colors in the exact order they arose in one chapter of Byatt's text. The same color word repeated multiple times in a row in Byatt's prose appears as a wider stripe or a color block.

Color words in the order they appear in chapter one of A. S. Byatt's novel *Possession*:

gold. .golden. .gold. .silver. .black. .white. .green. .black. .black. .blue. .cream. .grey. . .
brown. .soot-black. .golden. .tomato-red. .grassy green. .gold. .gold. .metallic gold. . .
golden. .gold. .golden. .golden. .gold-skinned. .grain-golden. .golden. .leather
brown. .gold. .grey. .green. .tomato. .¹⁷

Color words in the order they appear in A. S. Byatt's "Medusa's Ankles" from *The Matisse Stories*:

rosy. .silver. .rosy. .white. .black. .pink. .rosy. .pinks. .creams. .creamy. .ivory. .sky
blue. .a dark sky blue. .rosy. .pink. .pink. .white. .blonde. .red. .blondes. .unnatural
whiteness. .chestnut-glossy. .rosy. .pink. .dove-grey. .bronze. .mixed-autumnal. .pink. . .
cream. .rosy. .battleship-grey. .maroon. .blue. .steely. .storm-grey. .dark grey. .maroon. . .
grey. .rosy. .rosy. .grey. .coal-black. .puce. .black. .pink. .black. .white. .grey. .chestnut
. .greying. .whitely. .red. .pink. .pink green. .rosy red. .grey. .red. .grey. .puce. .blush-
coloured. .venous-blue. .fuschia-red. .crimson-streaked. .orangehenna. .cobalt. .copper. .¹⁸

Byatt's polychrome prose provides fertile territory for the exploration of color as a narrative tool. When the works from *The Color Sequences Project* are arranged in order, viewers can see how the colors were sequenced in successive chapters and can examine the resultant effects on the novel's narrative. The works from *The Color Sequences Project* allow for a visual digestion of colors from a literary source as, with words being replaced by their corresponding hues, viewers are left with only the color strip residue of a story.

CONCLUSION

In further pursuing design works and processes such as those conveyed here, I aim to create experiential color spaces that develop abstracted, identifiable narratives and/or generate specifically characterized atmospheres. Artist Anish Kapoor sums up an aspiration of the exploration of the phenomenology of color with, “But is it my role to bring expression, let’s say, to define means that allow phenomenological and other perceptions which one might use, one might work with, and then move towards a poetic existence.”¹⁹ It may very well be that, in this charged experience of color (encountered in a creative work through a carefully contrived design filter)—in the specific combination of perceptual clues, puddles of hues, spatial constructs, and other such sensory stimuli, the world may find a means of revealing itself, if only for an instant, with a consequential and astoundingly honest clarity.

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NOTES

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³ Scandinavian Colour Institute, op. cit.

⁴ Swirnoff, op. cit., pp. 22–23.

⁵ Chevreul M. E., *De la loi du contraste simultané des couleurs et de l’assortiment des object colorés*. (Paris, 1839).

⁶ Chevreul, Michel Eugène. <http://www.colorsystm.com/projekte/engl/17chee.htm> (accessed May 2006).

⁷ Swirnoff, op. cit., pp. 22–23, and Josef Albers, *Interaction of Color* (Cologne, Germany: Dumont Schauberg, 1963).

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⁹ J. Fiona Ragheb, “Dan Flavin,” http://www.guggenheimcollection.org/site/artist_work_md_46_5.html (accessed December 2005).

¹⁰ Haines Gallery, “James Turrell,” http://www.hainesgallery.com/Main_Pages/Artist_Pages/JTUR.bio.html (accessed December 2005).

¹¹ Nancy Spector, “Robert Mangold,” http://www.guggenheimcollection.org/site/artist_work_md_97_2.html (accessed December 2005).

¹² Guggenheim Museum, “Minimalism,” http://www.guggenheimcollection.org/site/movement_works_Minimalism_0.html (accessed December 2005).

¹³ Tadao Ando, “How do you achieve such special qualities within a simple box?” <http://www.pulitzerarts.org/answers/ando/5.gif> (accessed December 2005).

- ¹⁴ Néret, Gilles. *Henri Matisse Cut-outs*. (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1995), p. 10.
- ¹⁵ Agee, William C., "Donald Judd and the Endless Possibilities of Color," in *Donald Judd: Colorist*, ed. Dietmar Elger. (Bonn, Germany: Hatje Cantz Publishers, 2000), p. 42.
- ¹⁶ Agee, op. cit., p. 47.
- ¹⁷ Byatt, A. S., *Possession*. (New York: Vintage International, 1990), pp. 3–11.
- ¹⁸ Byatt, A. S., "Medusa's Ankles," in *The Matisse Stories*. (New York: Random House, 1993), pp. 3–28.
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THE METAPERFORMATIVE AND GENDERED SPACE

ABSTRACT

The early Wittgenstein commits himself to the view that, if they are to be sensible, words can only point to the world and not to the pictorial form of the signifiers themselves. I criticize this thesis on two grounds. First, words are also Austinian instruments of performance. Second, words can depict both their pictorial and performative functions. I show this meta-relationship with respect to Julio Medem's *Lucía y el Sexo*, Nan Goldin's photographs, and Marnie Weber's image juxtapositions. In drawing attention to showing what words can do, I suggest these that artists exploit the fact that words can show what words do in order to complexify our understanding of womanhood and gender.

PERFORMATIVE AND META-PERFORMATIVE

Starting with the logical positivist view of the significance of language, as articulated by the early Wittgenstein, propositions or words are pictures that *describe* reality. Wittgenstein says, "...the picture is a model of reality" (Wittgenstein 1933, p. 2.12). When a sentence is true, the elements of a proposition—its sense—must have a referent. "That is how a picture is attached to reality; it reaches right out to it" (Wittgenstein 1933, 2.1511). This is a strong statement, as Wittgenstein commits himself to the view that words can *only*, if they are to be sensible, point to the world and not to the pictorial form of the signifiers themselves; according to the positivists, pictures can never be about pictures. Words which purport to talk about presentation itself—for example those found in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (see his discussion in 6.54)—are strictly speaking, meaningless. The early Wittgenstein roughly approximates the view of A.J. Ayer, and Bertrand Russell.¹

The positivists have not been without their critics. Judith Stacey, an ethnographer, writes "Feminist scholars evince widespread disenchantment with the dualisms, abstractions, and detachment of positivism, rejecting the separations between subject and object, thought and feeling, knower and known, and political and personal as well as their reflections in the arbitrary boundaries of traditional academic disciplines" (Stacey 1988, p. 21). At root, the problem lies with a certain portrait of language wherein words are reductively seen as simple

descriptors of the world. Any other relationship or use of words is dismissed as nonsense. In this essay I want to suggest that words don't simply signify, but create and fashion reality. A positivist regime literally attenuates the world by stripping words of these vital functions. In short, I want to explore the ways in which words serve not only to portray the world, but also to enchant it, thereby bringing language into being.

Language transcends the descriptive under the performative mode. As when a queen dubs a man a knight, the performative has an uncanny ability to create reality. As J. Hillis Miller argues, "A parable does not so much passively name something as make something happen. ... A true performative brings something into existence that has no basis except in the words, as when I sign a check and turn an almost worthless piece of paper into whatever value I have inscribed on the check!" (Miller as quoted in Gould 1995, p. 25). The performative, Derrida writes, "produces or transforms a situation" (Derrida as quoted in Gould 1995, p. 26). Here art and literature (a text) has the ability to prompt the audience, and the artist. The text is not just a description; it impels participation in its own creation. It requires the self-reflective authorship by the characters inside the text *and* the reader. Like Grahame Weinbren's interactive fiction *In the Ocean of Streams of Story* (1995), the audience participates to make and remake the world.² Sigmund Freud writes about this performative process of synthesis, "This task finds a natural limit when it is a question of forcing a structure which is itself in many different dimensions onto the two-dimensional descriptive plane. . . [bringing] forward fragmentary portions, which the reader can put into a living whole" (Freud, 1973, p. 173). Language serves both to portray and to create. Language can also depict itself performing both of these functions. Language that pictures itself picturing is in the meta-semantic mode. Language that pictures itself doing, creating, and enchanting, is in what I'll call the meta-performative mode. Either way, contra the positivists, language can be about language.

The entirely vertical meta-semantic functions as a text depicting a text that depicts. It is a picture that shows the camera taking a picture. Margaret Atwood's poem *This is a Photograph of Me* describes a photograph. Atwood says

then, as you scan
it, you can see in the left-hand corner
a thing that is like a branch: part of a tree
(balsam or spruce) emerging
and, to the right, halfway up
what ought to be a gentle
slope, a small frame house (Atwood 1998, 3).

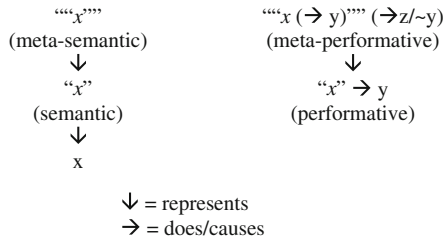


Figure 1. Visual representation of the meta-performative

The poem is not the picture, it is a description of the picture.

Texts can talk about texts in two different ways. The meta-performative shows what texts do rather than the fact that they represent. The meta-performative is a vertical depiction of a text’s horizontal causative relations. (See Figure 1.) For example, Eve Ensler’s play *The Vagina Monologues* (Ensler 1998) affected change as women established V-Day, a global nonprofit group committed to ending violence against women (this is the horizontal performative.) Ensler has been on tour talking about V-Day and *The Vagina Monologues*, articulating the results of the play on our understanding of women and violence (this is the vertical meta-performative). If *The Vagina Monologues* is a text, Ensler’s discussion of its impact is meta-performative in the sense that I am stipulating.

Different mediums use language as creation rather than just description. Julio Medem’s 2001 film, *Lucía y el Sexo*, Nan Goldin’s photographic diaries, and Marnie Weber’s collages show certain versions of women, but they go beyond mere creation of stereotypes. These artists are interested in showing the difference that texts make (whether their own or others) in the lives of their audience. The world they show also is also one that they talk about, by deploying the meta-performative to rearticulate and recreate a gendered space. These artists show socially invisible women that reside between the poles of our concepts or dichotomies, the lenses through which we understand the world. Womanhood is described but also is continually re-imagined by the text and the activated audience, resisting simplified categorization, moving beyond the realm of stereotypes and into a rearticulated purlieu.

“Purlieu,” a term found in old English Forest Law, was defined by John Manwood (1665) as “a certain territory of ground adjoining unto the forest, . . . which. . . was once forest-land and afterwards disafforested.” Laws applying to the forest still applied to the purlieu, so that the King’s wild beasts were to “have free recourse therein and safe return to the forest” (“Purlieu 1911,”

665, 45). A private owner—a “purlieu-man”—was nevertheless permitted to cultivate the land. The purlieu was thus a borderland, a social space of overlapping and conflicting jurisdiction. The purlieu, which came to derogatorily denote any of a place’s outlying parts, is, in a way, hidden—existing at the point of overlap, being neither one thing nor another—nor *not* one thing nor another. Until the purlieu became a center of designation, as it did under Manwood, it remains invisible. “Purlieu” designates that which is hidden in social space.

To be a woman is not a traversal from X (farmland) to Y (forestland); the designators exist prior to the categorization, it is both X and Y—it is the purlieu. The rendering of a new image of a woman in film or through photographs can highlight what is latent, what is invisible. A social invisibility is to occupy a space between conceptual umbrellas. . . . even with a label that broadly defines a group of people, it is the case that we can remain blinded by that label, and that women continue to occupy the purlieu.

People and artifacts that constitute the purlieu are inevitably more complex than the categories—forest, farmland, wife, tramp—under which they are brought. The purlieu is a special case of the kind of invisibility that results from stereotyping or conceptual shoehorning. W.J.T. Mitchell remarks that

The stereotype is an especially important case of the living image because it occupies precisely this middle ground between fantasy and technical reality, a more complexly intimate zone in which the image is, as it were, painted or laminated directly onto the body of a living being, and inscribed into the perceptual apparatus of the beholder. . . . stereotypes are not special or exceptional figures but invisible (or semivisible) and ordinary, insinuating themselves into everyday life and constituting the social screens that make encounters with other people possible—and in a very real sense, impossible. They circulate across sensory registers from the visible to the audible, and they typically conceal themselves as transparent, hyperlegible, inaudible, and invisible cognitive templates of prejudice. The stereotype is most effective, in other words, when it remains unseen, unconscious, disavowed, a lurking suspicion always waiting to be confirmed by fresh perception (Mitchell 2005, p. 296).

Medem, Goldin, and Weber disavow the preconceptions of womanhood through their work. Pictures of women do things—they tend to reinforce stereotypes and engender gendered spaces. The meta-performative talks about the effect of those images and descriptors upon their subjects, giving the opportunity for rearticulation.

LUCÍA Y EL SEXO

Julio Medem’s film *Lucía y el Sexo* (Medem) departs from the logical positivist reductionistic depiction of language; by transcending the descriptive mode, the text creates vivid social environments. These gendered spaces are then

rearticulated through the meta-performative, the film itself, to show how text itself affects the characters.

Medem's film seems simple. Filmed in Spanish with English subtitles, it is organized into two chapters: the first is "Lucía", running for a total of 12 min, the second is "Sex", for the balance of the film. But it is a complex and elliptical story of lives running parallel and intersecting in uncanny moments, the woman seemingly situated as a powerless agent, later to emerge as the master of her own narrative. There is active mediation between the author and audience, as the audience is engaged through sound and voluptuous visuals: throughout the film the light is overexposed, as if a poor photograph. The brightness suggests memory loss and *tabula rasa*. What cannot be seen we (as audience) recreate, the details of Lucia's life filled in by proxy. In the whiteout Lucia stumbles, and falls down into an underground cavern, the first of several references to a characteristic feature of the story: holes. Immediately following her fall is the next chapter. The story is an unraveling of a series of events that are not presented linearly, revolving around three principle characters: Lucía, Lorenzo, and sex. With its splintered narrative, its mysteries and the key characters' search for truth, the film becomes a study not only of sexuality but also of the power of storytelling and the volatile relationship between fact and fiction³ as text moves beyond the descriptive and into the performative use of language. As with Augusto Boal's 2003 "Theatre of the Oppressed," images of transition⁴ are presented to the audience to reformulate.

As if a hyperlink, we move from the end of the film back to the middle. Lorenzo, who is a novelist, types, "The first advantage is at the end of the story. It does not finish, it falls in a hole. And the story starts again halfway. And the other advantage, the biggest, is that you can change course along the way, if you let me, if you give me time" (Medem). This is the self-contained opportunity for character reframing. The typed words as they appear on his screen (partially obscured by his very reflection in the monitor) and then our screen (also acting as a mirror to our visage) *become* the landscape and the winding adventure—the island, the water, and the memories are all made—they fold inward upon themselves, fall through a hole, and once again live as text. Not limited to the typed page, the film presents sounds, images, and text with enough gaps for the audience to respond. *Lucía y el Sexo* is a film that does more than present reality; it makes and shows us characters in the process of engendering that reality. The film represents a possible gendered space, is performative as the characters themselves are called upon to help create their worlds. In a straightforward sense, the film functions as an image of Lorenzo fashioning reality, and is meta-performative rather than simply meta-semantic.

The use of performative language in *Lucía y el Sexo* creates a dubious gendered space that is only reformed through another layer of text, the meta-performative. Within the film, the narrator writes a story about Lucía, rendering her invisible by way of archetypes and tropes, but a woman's reality is always more complex than the descriptors brought to bear upon it. Women exist *between* the stereotyped signifiers of "housewife", "girlfriend", "waitress", and "whore". The film itself is the meta-performative, talking about the very words that affect the characters, showing how words matter. After the doubling back, each of Lorenzo's words recharacterize the women. To understand these women requires action, and rearticulation. Through the meta-performative the problematic space of female disempowerment becomes one of agency.

NAN GOLDIN

The photographer Nan Goldin uses a distinct visual language to engage the audience in a dialogue regarding gender and sexual politics. With her work, the separation between the meta-performative and the performative is discernable when considering a series of photographs, rather than singular images.

Goldin illuminates the turbulent lives of herself and her friends through a photographic series titled *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*, a visual diary that she lets people read (Weintraub 2003, p. 198). Through her camera, Goldin captured moments of the lives, loves, and losses of her friends, relationships that developed over decades. No content is out-of-bounds for her camera's lens; she photographed her friends regardless of the need for privacy. Her content includes sexual intercourse, substance abuse and detoxification, physical violation, cycles of love, and the process of death. Goldin's stills and slideshow *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency* hooked the viewer with the raw fever and painful verisimilitude of life's fragility. It was imperative for her to give her subjects agency while injecting them "with the pink juice of humankind."⁵ Goldin did not stage these images; instead she regularly carried her camera and captured discrete moments. Goldin describes her work as "... about keeping a record of the lives I lost, so they cannot be completely obliterated from memory. My work is mostly about memory" (Mazur and Skirgajllo-Krajewska 2008). The images help her not forget, activating one of their performative functions as tools of remembrance and the intentions that memory serve.

Goldin photographed herself as a way to invoke memory; after being battered and subsequently released from the hospital, she took a self-portrait to as a reminder about her partner's brutality. Marshall McLuhan notes that usually "the woman... appear[s] in a world of visual and typographic technology as victims of injustice" (McLuhan 2003, p. 207). Within the self-portrait, Goldin

is a victim of injustice, but uses the image as a tool to gain agency. She is centrally featured, her face brightly illuminated, the shadow of her body harsh against a greenish wall and curtain. Her bloodshot eyes and healing bruises are evidence of the brutal beating. Complete with jewelry, she has prepared to confront the viewer through her gaze and makes direct eye contact with the camera. What does this image show? It shows a woman with a bruised visage. What does it do? The arresting quality of this photograph renders the moment (including the previous rough encounter) unforgettable while at the same time instilling a sense of personal resolve for Goldin. The image is thus performative.

In *Lucía y el Sexo* the meta-performative and the performative are clearly delineated, so that Lorenzo's typewriter can be distinguished from the film in which the typewriter is portrayed. The distinction between the meta-performative and the performative does not always map so easily on to differences in medium. In the collection of photographs, *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency* did not end with that singular image of her battered face, but there were no more images of her abuser after that time. The subsequent images—there are no more images of her abusive partner—are meta-performative in the sense that they tell a story of the effect of the self-portrait.

THE SPIRIT HORSE

Goldin's style evolves, widening to encompass fashion photography. In a departure from the emotional realism of her snapshots, Goldin staged a photo shoot with cultural icon Kate Moss, the model credited with the advent of 'heroin chic.' Set outside against a background of greenery, in one of the images a naked Moss is posed astride a white horse, bent forward so only the side of her body is exposed to the viewer. She looks directly at the camera while stroking the horse's neck. Gone is the frenetic narrative quality of *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*, instead raw sexuality is communicated through the presentation of beautiful bodies, woman and animal. The image shows a woman on a horse. What does it do? For some it might induce passion; some of Goldin's critics accused her of creating a cheap advertising spread. Though the image is performative, it is not clear that the photographer understands what the image is doing.

The distinction between meta-performative and performative can span multiple artists' work. Marnie Weber offers a meta-performative solution to Goldin's Moss image by way of a sculpture that subverts the seductive beauty of the feminine and animal. With *The Spirit Horse* (2007), notions of the bestial and sexual power of the woman are rearticulated. The image of the sculpture shows

a clothed woman wearing a blue shift as she lies astride a brown horse, her body and the horse's similar in scale. The horse is not a stereotyped white stallion, and the identity of the woman is unknown. Atop the woman's back is a saddle signaling that it is not only the horse to be ridden, but the woman as well. The sculpture affects notions of gender: this is evident as human and animal blend to become one. Woman is equated with livestock, something to perform, ride, and breed. Weber furthers the parody by placing the horse atop a decorated and wheeled platform meant to be pulled around, a circus prop staged in front of a pastoral curtain. Attached to the platform is a rope that lies curled on the floor; the sculpture is activated through the possibility of audience participation implied by the unused rope. Here Weber's work illustrates the difference that texts can make upon their subject. For Weber, the conceptual backbone is transformation. "My characters undergo transformations born from searching; they lose their innocence, they become stronger or weaker. As long as they change, I'm happy" (Weber as quoted in Dambrot 2008). The sculpture is a parody of Goldin's Moss picture. In comparison with Goldin's photograph of Moss, Weber's sculpture disassociates with the iconic power of the model and becomes a pointed statement about images of beauty and womanhood.

Goldin's image of Moss may reinforce the simplified categorization of women as sexual object, decoration, or nurturer. Weber's articulation of this affect reminds us that women are to be found in the purlieu, somewhere between those designers.

MARNIE WEBER

In a series of photographic collages, Weber articulates and triggers a gendered space by way of re-appropriating girlie magazine images and juxtaposing the naked bodies within a western frontier landscape. *Blue Nude with Hamsters* (1997) exemplifies this. Central to the image is a naked woman cut from a magazine spread, bending forward, rear exposed. In its original unaltered context, this woman is meant to prompt passion. Carlin Meyer comments that pornography often depicts women in dehumanizing ways—violated, subjugated, dominated, and degraded. The displays of breasts and buttocks screaming for attention from magazine stalls and not-so-hidden in back corners of video rental stores, as well as the crass sexist photos and cartoons of *Hustler* and *Playboy*, are often among the most blatant, vulgar, and ugly expressions of patriarchal society's reduction of women to "tits and ass" available for the taking—to be used, abused, bought, sold, dissected, digested, violated, molested, mutilated, and killed (Meyer 1994, p. 1).

Weber removes the image from the pornographic context to situate her in a landscape. The woman now leans over an image of desert canyons, holding a hamster by the scruff of his neck with her right hand. Through the lower left portion of the composition are smaller hamsters, perched atop the rocky plateaus. Scale is disproportionate as the (now monstrous) giantess looms forward. To her immediate right are two cowboys, surveying the open landscape. Like Goldin's image of Moss, this image may incite physical desire. The collage also affects the gaze—the corporeal bodies of the hamsters and woman literally block a section of the vista, acting as a boundary and limitation. Similarly, the works *Salvation Mountain* (1998), *Reaching for the Stars* (1998), and *The Windy Day* (1998) toy with environment and gendered perspective. In these, naked women are posed atop rocks in lieu of sofas, their eyes are hidden behind animal masks rather than beckoning the viewer, and floating, impalpable breasts populate an expansive sky. The women remain as objects of desire, but the figure as sexual object has been removed from its original skin magazine context and it is cut up, thereby reduced to its disparate parts. By transposing the images into another environment, the original message of sexual consumption is altered and turned back upon itself. For Weber, “it’s the juxtaposition of . . . elements that transforms their individual meanings. Objects juxtaposed together can create metaphors and tension that otherwise wouldn’t have existed, very much like poetry. . . I like to combine props and costumes and stage sets to create some sort of psychological drama; otherwise the collage is just another pretty picture” (Dambrot 2008).

Weber’s collages are not just blandly interesting images of naked female forms scattered through stereotyped western landscapes, disrupting what would only be an image characteristic of the Wild West. They are meta-performative in that they show the difference images make. *Blue Nude With Hamsters* parodies the hierarchical and gendered relationships reinforced within the pages of skin magazines. Spread as centerfold within their pages, woman as object is unquestioned.

Weber’s collages present the female form as the centerpiece, but the situational reality is altered through recontextualization: the image shows how, by removing the naked woman from the blasé (socially accepted world of pornography) just how much she is the object of consumption. The brute content of the photograph is unable to capture her, underscoring the limit of the description of sex object. Again, the text brings females under painful, and often tragic, oversimplifications. In this they are relegated to the purlieu, the hidden. In collage, the medium of photography comes under scrutiny, as photography can idealize, aestheticize, and limit its subject. “It is praised for its incapacity for abstraction, or condemned for its fatal tendency to produce abstractions from human

reality. It is declared to be independent of language, or riddled with language. Photography is a record of what we see, or a revelation of what we cannot see, a glimpse of what was previously invisible. Photographs are things we look at, and yet, as Barthes also insists, “a photograph is always invisible, it is not what we see” (Mitchell 2005, p. 274). The subject is what we see. Here is the force of Weber’s meta-performative: her images talk about what is being shown in the skin magazines by lifting and mixing their visual content. Women do not remain solely as invisible sexual objects, because of their recontextualization. Atwood herself describes this particular way of perceiving:

Imagine a picture of a landscape in which everything is dark grey—sky, lake, shore—except for a few points of light—a red flower, or a small fire, or a human figure. . . You can look at the picture with two attitudes. You can decide that the grey landscape is so large and overpowering that the points of light are totally dominated by it, rendered insignificant. Or you can see the points of light in contrast to their surroundings; their dark background sets them off and gives them meaning in a way that a bright one would not. (Atwood 1972, p. 245)

Through wry irony, Weber places the woman as object, yet this new placement disavows the mindless consumption of flesh. Here breasts are succulent fruit to be plucked, but they are disembodied. Like their naked bodies, the notion that women are open terrain—something to be conquered, controlled, and owned—is exposed as myopic. The collages mock the notion of woman as the locus of Manifest Destiny.

These texts do more than just show models of the world. Medem, Goldin, and Weber use the meta-performative to talk about what they are showing, illuminating the difference that texts make upon the subject. In the feminist performative characterization, words create things *and* other words; the text vitalizes the world. These artists explore the purlieu of womanhood, recognizing her presence outside of the boundaries of stereotype.

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NOTES

¹ Bertrand Russell and A.J. Ayer think that words refer to the world directly without the mediating picture.

² “In both *Sonata* and *The Earl King* the participant’s (inter-)actions affect the temporal conglomerate of images and sounds.” Grahame Weinbren, “In the Ocean of Streams of Story,” *MFJ: Millennium Film Journal*. 28 (1995).

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ “the oppressed classes do not know what their world will be like; consequently, their theater will be the rehearsal, not the finished spectacle. . .the theater can present images of transition”.

Boal, Augusto. "Theatre of the Oppressed," in *The Newmediareader*, ed. Noah Wardrip-Fruin and Nick Montfort. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003).

⁵ Goldin is not subjecting her friends to a photographic appraisal; rather her camera's perspective was sympathetic. Weintraub, Linda. *In the Making: Creative Options for Contemporary Art History and Studio Classes*. (New York: D.A.P./Distributed Art Publishers, 2003), p. 202. This is in contrast to Robert Frank's photographic documentary series, *The Americans*. Frank photographed an era "generally characterized as a high point of American complacency, hypocrisy, and superficiality; the feeling, in Jack Kerouac's words, was that Frank had done even more than 'expose' American culture to a photographic critique—he had actually created a 'tragic poem' that sucked out the 'pink juice of human kind'." Thomas Mitchell, W. J., *What Do Pictures Want?: The Lives and Loves of Images*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), p. 276.

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A REVISED TAIJI DIAGRAM TO CONVEY THE
UNITY OF WORLD PHENOMENA

ABSTRACT

Surprisingly, the quantum computer, which utilizes the most advanced computing technology today, reveals its ultimate computing principle at the most fundamental level, the qubit, which is based on the primordial dual structure, the binary 0.1. that interacts in complementary contradiction. World phenomena can be clearly explained in a revised Confucian-Taoist metaphysical scheme to show its mathematical beauty and philosophical appeal.

Recent cosmological theories, which mainly rely on satellite observations and calculations, propose a cyclic model of an endless universe in addition to the inflationary model. Unlike string theorist, they suggest a braneworld, two branes in dynamic interaction within a medium of dark energy, initiated the Big Bang causing the violent transition that occurred between two stages of cosmic evolution taking place over a one trillion year period. These episodes of expansion and contraction in ever-cycling polarities will eventually lead to the next Big Bang. Existing without a true beginning or end, they seem to shed some light on neo-Confucian speculation about the evolution of the universe, crystallized in the Taiji diagram, most notably interpreted by Zhu, Dewin during the Yuan time period. Zhu posited that the finite, identifiable, concrete universe (taiji) evolved from infiniteness or nothingness (wuji.) The known world consists of a dual structure, ying-yang, interacting in harmonious balance. Existence depends on the world's constant repetition of cyclical changes, for instance, the cyclical duality of day and night, which in turn shapes all things and events and implies infinite nothingness (wuji o.) For instance, different branches of a stream emerge from one source and eventually return to their fundamental source, the ocean. Space and time are in unity even if our perception separates them into separate spheres of left versus right or present versus future. A balance exists between the macroscopic and microscopic world. One can discern the unity between East and West, the known and the unknown, through the simple but tremendously profound taiji diagram and its recent interpretations.

(1)

In the preface of *Mathematics of Quantum Computing*, Raneë Brylinski and Goong Chen state that “one of the most exciting developments in the science community these days is the design and construction of the quantum computer.” Yet, at the most fundamental level of computing, the ultimate principle of the quantum computer is the qubit, which operates in a primordial dual structure. Its binary design of zeroes and ones operate in a classical process of complementary contradiction. World phenomena are broken down into superpositions of 0:1 as the quantum computer operates in unprecedented parallelism (Clearwater 2000).

Obviously, the binary code upon which all computing is based and the development of the qubit, allow the largest magnitude of information or world phenomena to be explored. This process also resonates with the Confucian-Taoist metaphysical supposition of ying-yang interacting to maintain the existence of and change in all things and events. The unity of the world and its phenomena cannot be separated from the ying-yang of the qubit. These relational dualities are only separated by linguistic expression.

With the advancement of quantum mechanics in physics, science can no longer regard the taiji diagram as over simplistic. As Seth Lloyd (2006) pointed out in *Programming the Universe*, “all things arise out of one bit.” The laws of quantum mechanics govern all physical systems and make finite the number of bits required to specify the properties of everything on its most microscopic or atomic level. Each nuclear spin of an atom’s core registers as a single bit and its position and velocity register as other bits of information. A bit not only registers as a zero or a one, but it also acts as an instruction in the dynamic of information processing as well as the evolution of the universe. One wonders if this revelation is one reason why Niels Bohr adopted the taiji diagram as his coat of arms. No wonder R. Hughes said, “I take it to be an unassailable truth that Taoism, Confucianism and Zen Buddhism . . . have much in common with quantum mechanics” (Hughes 1989) Subsequently, David D. Awschalom, a great promoter of the quantum computer, crystallized the Confucian-Taoist metaphysical view of the universe in a new artistic design by modifying the taiji diagram as his way to reveal the power of spintronics in the design of the quantum computer. Rather than dots of opposing colors in the fields of white and black, Awschalom situated the zero and the one (D. Awschalom, p. 73) While quantum physics enhances our understanding of the universe on a microscopic level it does not exclude the value of classical physics. In some cases, quantum physics and classical physics are contradictory. For instance, classical physics has properties that only progress in a linear fashion while quantum mechanics

can be non-linear operating in two opposing directions. Ultimately, a simple dual structure captures these truths, whether bits of information or 0:1. The question is why this exists. Science, viewed as the most concrete and therefore most reliable of our cognitive activities, can only describe what and how, not why. To resolve this dilemma, philosophy or religion may need to come into play, and needs further exploration.

(2)

Perhaps one of the most challenging questions confronting us today is why this duality exists and why it operates in a complementary contradiction. Why is this dual balance fundamental to all events and things as well as critical to sustaining existence and change? Aside from Confucius who counseled us to accept the precept as it is, Laotze reminded us that the answer appears inexplicable. How could an omnipotent creator design a world in which we are mere play-toys. Why are a man and woman needed to create life but death is solitary? While murder is considered immoral and an act against humanity, is the counterbalancing act of punishing the murderer by ending his or her life an acceptable necessity? The Mongol conqueror, Ghengis Khan, (1162–1227) was one of the most ruthless rulers ever, yet he appears to have enjoyed the life of a supreme emperor without divine retribution. His children followed in his footsteps, slaughtering millions of Muslims, yet Allah did not intercede. In Buddhism, killing is forbidden yet the slaughter of animals and the consumption of plants is necessary for human survival. Quantum mechanics reveal that a plant is truly a living being. Historically, non-Buddhists have been known to harass Buddhist monks for eating eggs, which might be construed as violating their faith.

Eating itself consists of a dual structure: hunger and satiation, emptiness and fullness, absorption of nutrition and the disposition of waste. Human existence is dependent on more than food and water. Without the inhalation and exhalation of air, human life stops. Within the duality of breathing there are even conscious and unconscious interactions of mind and body. When one sleeps one continues to breathe unconsciously. Looking more closely at that life-sustaining matter, air, other dualities are observed. Quantum mechanics disclose the subatomic nature of air. Each particle has an anti-particle. Not only does each electron have a positive and negative charge but each has a bi-directional spin.

Delving even deeper, both matter and dark matter exist in the universe. Matter is that which is knowable and dark matter cannot be grasped but its existence can be seen almost as a void of matter. A parallel can be drawn with

energy and dark energy. The only dispute among scientists working in this realm is the extent to which dark matter and dark energy exist. The recent discoveries of dark matter and energy strengthen the view of the universality of the dual structure of the world and can be extrapolated to human knowledge itself. Knowledge evolves through a process of interactions between what is known and therefore knowable and what is unknown and apparently unknowable. Why is there dark matter? The answer appears to be unknown at present. According to quantum mechanics, the world is a universe of atoms. The universe is also teeming with life. What is life? How does life begin and how is life derived from lifeless atoms? This, too, is yet to be discovered—it is unknown. The vast majority of organisms are microbes; it is nearly impossible to tell what they are. What is known and observable is the dual nature of the universe, which operates on a macroscopic and microscopic level. Quantum mechanics reveals that there is ultimate unity in the universe and that a primordial dual structure operates. The quantum phenomena of superposition, interference, entanglement, non-locality and non-determinism demonstrate this universal process. Can we imagine what the world would be like if no dual structure existed? How, for instance, would life's instructions be carried out without the double-helix and its duality. The Confucian–Taoist metaphysical approach to this interpretation is a powerful one.

Since Confucius refrained from engaging in studying whether there was an omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent creator (*Ze buy u guili lan sheng*) and insisted on accepting the world as it is, he left open the idea of searching for the perfect way in which to live one's life in accordance to Taoist principles. Confucians and Taoists came together to explore these questions. Borne out of that melding of two perspectives came *The Book of Changes*, which is based on a binary principle guided by the abacus, and was used to calculate the consequences of actions. Subsequently, during the Soong time this metaphysical pursuit crystallized in an artistic design. Neo-Confucian, Zhou, Dongyi's (1017–1073) interpretation came to be known as the Taiji Diagram. The binary concept of “wuji” defined as nothingness, infiniteness or zero and “taiji” defined as finite, identifiable world phenomena, ultimate greatness or number one, were brought forward to reveal that taiji evolves from wuji or that the known universe evolves from nothingness. Taiji consists of the primordial dual, ying-yang, otherwise defined as 0:1, interacting in complementary contradiction to bring about the existence of and change in all things and events in the universe. At the same time, another neo-Confucian, Shao, Yun (1011–1077) developed a binary, mathematical, 64-hexagram replication sequence, which came to be known as the *Book of Changes*. Interestingly, Shao's 64-hexagram table is identical to the DNA replication sequence (Mullis 1990,

p. 58) The binary mathematical sequence has been attributed to Leibniz and its application to computer technology has been acknowledged as attributed to Turing. Leibniz's binary mathematical formula was inspired by his study of the ideas of Zhou and Shao and the *Book of Changes* (Davis 2000). It underscores the link between Eastern and West through the underlying unity of the world and the binary, primordial, dual structure of the universe. It seems only natural, then, that Awschalom, the creator of the quantum computer, would rely to some degree on a modified taiji diagram to convey the mathematical beauty and the philosophical appeal of spintronics and the qubit. Talk of teleportation was considered laughable and a Taoists fantasy. Now, through the exploration of the quantum phenomena of non-locality and entanglement, it turns out to be a reality (Darling 2005).

(3)

The very nature of the circular design of the taiji diagram is meant to denote and connote that there is no beginning nor end to the evolution and creation of all things and states in the universe. The “great ultimate” or the world evolves from nothingness and eventually recycles to nothingness. The intertwining dark section symbolizing ying and the light section symbolizing yang are intended to convey the primordial dual structure of nature and existence. As well, contained within each sphere is one dot of the opposite segment, therefore ying contains yang and yang contains ying. They reflect the complementary and contradictory relationship governing ying-yang. Neither side can exist or operate without the other.

Within this context during the Yuan time period, Zhu, Dewin, expounded on the *Book of Changes* in his work *Glory of I-Ching* written in 1349, in which the taiji diagram served as its frame of reference. Zhu's exposition almost appears to have anticipated recent cosmological discoveries regarding the cyclic nature of the universe. In his verses, he first pays heed to the tenets of Zhou but then elaborates on his view of ever-cycling polarities in ying-yang. In his third verse, he expresses a vision of an underlying unity to this polarity with a rhythmic movement among opposites, in a timeless ebb and flow of string-like vibrating wave patterns. In his final verse, Zhu explores the difficulties confronting the study of cosmology and the most fundamental question of all, what came before the “Big Bang” and would the universe go on expanding forever? While acknowledging a difference in nomenclature, Paul Steinhardt and Neil Turk recognized “that theoretical physics is in some respects similar to certain Asian philosophies” (Steinhardt & Turk 2007, p. 146).

A new concept has evolved with recent discoveries of dark matter and dark energy, which supplement the Big Bang theory and further the notion of ying-yang (Steinhardt & Turk 2007, p. 41). Newly advanced technologies have revealed another duality within the evolution of the universe showing that a Big Bang is counterbalanced by a Big Crunch. Scientists conceive of this phenomenon as two branes, almost like circles of dark matter, whose properties influence the formation and behavior of the known world of gravity and matter. One could liken them to two soap bubbles of infinitesimal nature, expanding and colliding together causing a Big Bang and then a Big Crunch, repeating in perpetuity. In all, the introduction of a brane world offers a transformative view of the cosmology and enhances the assertion of a primordial dual structure most eloquently represented by the taiji diagram.

(4)

This brief analysis seems sufficient to demonstrate and underlying unity among diverse phenomena in the world, as shown in ying-yang speculation and quantum mechanics. The difference between the two is linguistic rather than substantive. By merely replacing the contrasting dots in the taiji diagram with a one or a zero, as was done to communicate the power of spintronics, a new vision of the primordial duality of the world and its phenomena has come to light. Whether it be symbolizing the beginning of time through the brane world or the foundation of Confucian-Taoist duality of the human world, the simple power and artistry of the taiji diagram is irrefutable.

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**INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF PHENOMENOLOGY,
FINE ARTS AND AESTHETICS (AN AFFILIATE OF THE
WORLD PHENOMENOLOGY INSTITUTE)**

Marlies Kronegger, President
Patricia Trutty-Coohill, Secretary General
Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, Program Coordinator

12th ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Topic: **THE ARTIST'S ACCOUNT AND
PHILOSOPHER'S INTERPRETATION**

Place: Harvard Divinity School, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA

Dates: May 18 and 19, 2007

P R O G R A M

Friday, May 18, 2007

REGISTRATION, 9:00 – 9:30 AM; Sperry Room

9:30 AM

INAUGURAL ADDRESS:

Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, World Phenomenology Institute

PUBLIC INVITED

P L E A S E P O S T !

Friday, May 18

10:00 AM, Sperry Room

SESSION I:

Chaired by: Patricia Trutty-Coohill, Siena College

Topic to be announced

Susan Pepin, Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center, Ophthalmology

BETWEEN A ROCK AND A SOFT PLACE: FINDING CREATIVITY IN THE FACE OF
OPPRESSION

Mary Jeanne Larrabee, DePaul University

AESTHETIC & HISTORICAL CONTOURS OF RUSSIAN MANOR AS A GENRE

Ljudmila Molodkina, The State University of Land Use Planning, Moscow, Russia

THE ODD AFFINITY OF PHILOSOPHY AND ART

Victor Gerald Rivas, University of Puebla, Mexico

1:00 PM

Banquet at the Harvard Faculty Club

3:00 – 6:00 PM

SESSION II:

Chaired by: Raymond J. Wilson III, Loras College

THE TWO-STEP: THEORY AND PRACTICE

Patricia Trutty-Coohill, Siena College

THE HISTORICAL LOGIC OF NON-VERBAL EXPRESSION IN EVERYDAY LIFE AND
THE ARTS: THE PERCEPTUAL FOUNDATION OF THE PRECEPT

Mark E. Blum, University of Louisville

EKPHRASIS AND EXHEGISIS: FOUCAULT AND THE INTENTIONALITY OF MEANING
IN WORKS OF ART

Elena Stylianou, Columbia University

THE RELEVANCE OF BEAUTIFUL INFRASTRUCTURE

David M. Foxe, Boston Architectural College

VINCENT VAN GOGH'S LILIES: VENTURING UPON DIZZY HEIGHTS

Bruce Ross, Independent Scholar

P U B L I C I N V I T E D

P L E A S E P O S T !

Saturday, May 19, 2007
9:00 AM; Andover, Room 102

SESSION III:
Chaired by: Gretchen Gusich, Boston College

DOING PARADOX WHILE MAKING REASON: IS ART AN IMPOSSIBLE 'PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE'?

John Baldacchino, Columbia University, Teacher's College

MIRROR, MIRROR ON THE WALL: THE CULTURAL-HISTORICAL TORN DREAM OF A TIME TRAVELER*

Matti Itkonen, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

THEORETICAL PRINCIPLES OF AESTHETICS AND PHILOSOPHY OF ARTS AS VIEWED BY ISLAMIC MYSTICISM (ERFAN)

Hossian Kalbasi, Allameh Tabatabai University, Iran

THE PAIN OF THE SEER IN THE CIVILIZATION OF THE BLIND: FAULKNER AND SINGER

Raymond J. Wilson III, Loras College and Jerre Collins, University of Wisconsin, Whitewater

1:00 PM Lunch together

2:00 – 6:00 PM SESSION IV:

Chaired by: John Baldacchino, Columbia University, Teacher's College

JOHN STEINBECK'S LOG FROM THE 'SEA OF CORTEZ': ONE OF HUSSERL'S INFINITE TASKS?

Gretchen Gusich, Boston College

RECONFIGURING OLDENBURG'S FREE STAMP (1982–1991)

Diane G. Scillia, Kent State University

ARTISTIC AND PHILOSOPHICAL ITINERARIES

Marcella Tarozzi Goldsmith, Independent Scholar

"BOHDER PRATYUSHE BUDDHIR PRADIP": THE LAMP OF INTELLIGENCE AT THE DAWN OF ARTISTIC FEELING

Sitansu Ray, Visva-Bharati University, India

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Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, Program Coordinator

13th ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Topic: **THE ARTIST AND THE MESSAGE –
CREATIVITY AND COMMUNICATION**

Place: **Radcliffe Gymnasium, 10 Garden Street, Radcliffe Yard,
Cambridge, Massachusetts**

Dates: May 7 and 8, 2008

P R O G R A M

Wednesday, May 7, 2008
REGISTRATION

9:30 AM

WELCOMING ADDRESS:

Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, World Phenomenology Institute

PUBLIC INVITED

PLEASE POST!

Wednesday, May 7, 2008

10:00 AM

SESSION I:

Chaired by: Patricia Trutty-Coohill, Siena College

MUSIC AS *PRESCIENT MEANING*: INTERPRETATION AND THE DIALOGUE
BETWEEN COMPOSER, PERFORMER AND AUDIENCE

Laura Falzon Baldacchino, Columbia University

THE LIMITS OF CREATION; THE ARCHITECT AS THE MEDIATOR OF THE
BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

Gul Kale, McGill University

CLARITY AND MYSTERY: MUSIC, METAPHOR AND SILENCE

Guillermo J. Marini, State University of New York, New Paltz

1:00 PM

Banquet at the Harvard Faculty Club

3:00 – 6:00 PM

SESSION II:

Chaired by: Gul Kale, McGill University

OPUS CORDIS: REFLECTIONS OF A CONTEMPORARY ARTIST EMBRACING THE
DRAMA OF RELIGIOUS IMAGERY

Constance Pierce, St. Bonaventure University

A REVISED TAIJI DIAGRAM TO CONVEY THE UNITY OF WORLD PHENOMENA

Tsung-I Dow, Boca Raton, Florida

ART AS INFORMATIONAL READYMADE

Mariola Sulkowska, University of Silesia

PHENOMENOLOGY AND MUSIC IN THE CONTEXT OF NON-DUALITY AND
TRANSCENDENCE

Tom Zelle, North Park University

“SRISHTI”: THE TAGOREAN IDEAL OF ARTISTIC CREATIVITY AND
COMMUNICATION

Sitansu Ray, Visva-Bharati University

PUBLIC INVITED

PLEASE POST!

Thursday, May 8, 2008
9:00 AM

SESSION III:

Chaired by: Victor Gerald Rivas, University of Puebla

SINGING IN THE SHOWER: ART AS EXHALATION

Patricia Trutty-Coohill, Siena College

THE METAPERFORMATIVE AND GENDERED SPACE

Jenn Figg, Richmond, Virginia

THE CIVIC BRICK

David M. Foxe, Boston Architectural College

ADJOURNED *SINE DIE*: MEANING AS 'CREATION' AND ART'S AVOIDED MESSAGE

John Baldacchino, Columbia University

1:00 PM

Lunch together

2:00 – 6:00 PM

SESSION IV:

Chaired by: John Baldacchino, Columbia University,
Teacher's College

OH, BEHAVE! NOTHING IN EXCESS OR EVERYTHING IN GOOD ORDER: THE
"PORTRAITS" OF SOLON AND KHILON ON A LATE ARCHAIC ATTIC
RED-FIGURE CUP BY OLTOS

Jeremy J. Johnson, Florida State University

TOWARDS A PHILOSOPHY OF THE ELECTRONIC ART

Victor Gerald Rivas, University of Puebla

BEYOND THE INTENTIONAL FALLACY

Ellen J. Burns, State University of New York, Albany

RA'ANAN LEVY'S METAPHYSICAL SPACE

Bruce Ross, Hampden, Maine

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Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, Program Coordinator

14th ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Topic: *ORIGINALITY IN ARTISTIC CREATION: CREATIVE PROCESS,
AESTHETIC VALUE, CULTURAL ROLE OF ART, METAPHYSICAL
SIGNIFICANCE*

Place: Radcliffe Gymnasium, 10 Garden Street, Radcliffe Yard, Cambridge,
Massachusetts

Dates: May 14 and 15, 2009

P R O G R A M

Thursday, May 14, 2009

REGISTRATION, 8:30 – 9:30 AM

9:30 AM

WELCOMING ADDRESS:

Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, World Phenomenology Institute

PUBLIC INVITED

P L E A S E P O S T !

Thursday, May 14, 2009
10:00 AM

SESSION I:

Chaired by: Patricia Trutty-Coohill, Siena College

'ORIGINALITY IN ART' AND THE CONCEPTION OF THE COMMONPLACE
Jorella Andrews, Goldsmiths, University of London

KANT AND HEGEL ON JUDGMENT AND GENIUS
Stefan Bird-Pollan, Harvard University

CREATION VS. TECHNE: THE INNER CONFLICT OF ART
Davor Dzalto, University in Nis

THE MAROON AESTHETIC IN FRANCOPHONE CARIBBEAN VISUAL ARTS
Alix Pierre, Morris Brown College

1:00 PM

Lunch at the Harvard Faculty Club

3:00 – 7:00 PM

SESSION II:

Chaired by: Raymond Wilson, Loras College

VISUALIZING TYMIENIECKA'S APPROACH TO ORIGINALITY
Patricia Trutty-Coohill, Siena College

THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF COLOR (AS A WORKING METHODOLOGY FOR
DESIGN PRACTICE)
Jada Schumacher, The University of Wisconsin-Stout

HEIDEGGER'S CONCEPT OF EDUCATION
Alon Segev, University of Kohn

HAROLD PINTER'S MINDSCAPE: HIS FOOD-CLOTHING PARADOXES
Emil Roy, University of South Carolina

P U B L I C I N V I T E D

PLEASE POST!

Friday, May 15, 2009

9:00 AM

SESSION III:

Chaired by: Alix Pierre, Morris Brown College

THE ARTISTIC LIFE, THE ART ALIVE

Mariola Sulkowska, University of Silesia

ECOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ART THROUGH THE EYES OF
NEW MEDIA

James P. Werner, Southern Polytechnic State University

ON THE IMAGE OF YOUTH IN CINEMA AND OF ITS TRANSCENDENCE FOR THE
UNDERSTANDING OF SOCIABILITY

Victor Gerald Rivas, University of Puebla

PHENOMENOLOGY AND MUSIC: SIGNIFICANCE OF BODY AWARENESS AND
MIND AWARENESS AS DISTINCT AGENTS FOR THE TRANSCENDENTAL
PHENOMENOLOGICAL PROCESS IN MUSIC

Tom Zelle, North Park University

1:00 PM

Lunch together

2:00 – 7:00 PM

SESSION IV:

Chaired by: Victor Gerald Rivas, University of Puebla

THE PHILOSOPHER'S PUPIL, IRIS MURDOCH'S POST-MODERN ALLEGORY OF
THE CREATIVE PROCESS

Raymond Wilson, Loras College

THE TRIPTYCH BETWEEN HEAVEN AND HELL: THE CASE OF BOSCH,
BECKMAN, AND BACON

Bruce Ross, Hampden, Maine

MEDIATED: THE IMAGE AS A PERFORMATIVE INTERFACE IN THE
PHOTOGRAPHIC RELATIONSHIP

Molly Samsell, Massey University, New Zealand

TAIJI DIAGRAM: A MIRROR OF THE SUPER-SYMMETRIC WORLD

Tsung-I Dow, Florida Atlantic University

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