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Volume 19, 2017

RETRACING THE PAST

Historical continuity in aesthetics from a global perspective

Edited by Zoltán Somhegyi

International Association for Aesthetics
Association Internationale d'Esthétique

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The selection of essays in the 19th Yearbook of the International Association for Aesthetics aims to analyse the phenomenon of retracing the past, i.e. of identifying the signs, details and processes of the creative re-interpretation of long-lasting traditions both in actual works of art and in aesthetic thought, hence where the historical interconnectedness and the influence of earlier sources can appear.

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International Association for Aesthetics

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RETRACING THE PAST

Historical continuity in aesthetics from a global perspective

Introduction to the 19th Yearbook of the International Association for Aesthetics

Zoltán Somhegyi
Editor of the Yearbook

Looking at modern and contemporary art production and its various forms of interpretation, including aesthetic analyses, art criticism, museum presentations, commercial exhibitions, curating and collecting, one can easily get the impression that overwhelming importance is often overtly placed on novelty. Both in art creation and in aesthetic discourse a particular emphasis is given predominantly to this aspect; in fact, we can talk about a certain fetishism of the new: new ideas, new approaches, new ways of (self)-expression. The desperate striving for "the next new thing" is hyped and – as it usually happens with exaggeratedly praised qualities – is often over-estimated, especially in the case of such works that try to eradicate themselves from their historical context and antecedents, in a fake interpretation and ephemeral appearance of contemporaneity. Curiously however, the more these pieces try to deny their forerunners, the more easily they get caught up in relations to them.

Nevertheless, we shall not forget that works of art, artists' oeuvres and even aesthetic theories are never completely stand-alone and never entirely "new", but are strongly – even if sometimes implicitly though – connected to their historical antecedents. This also explains that however much we are still in the midst of glittery celebration of the "brand new at any cost", recently we can see growing awareness as well of interest in the "historical-contemporary", as Karen Rosenberg formulates it in a review on

Artspace.com.[1] Both art professionals and avid art consumers, and what's more, even the average interested wider public, are becoming more and more curious about the juxtaposing of the most recent works of art with older ones. Many get inspired by the fact that through the parallel investigation of the temporal layers more understanding and more sophisticated experience can be gained. This also describes the expanding tendency to show these direct connections or to make indirect connections more explicit: exhibitions that confront old and new artworks, re-elaborations of classic pieces of art and design, re-utilisations of derelict sites in contemporary architecture, re-readings of theoretical texts and re-contextualisations of different forms of the tradition. These crossover analyses can be enjoyed for example in the carefully curated booths of leading art fairs, in some of the progressive pavilions of the last edition of the Venice Biennial, during visits to the private collections of those art lovers who do not accumulate objects only as a status symbol but through them aim at gaining a deeper understanding of human culture, and in the aesthetic analyses of experimental forms of theoretical texts.

The selection of essays in this Yearbook of the International Association for Aesthetics aims to analyse this phenomenon of retracing the past, i.e. of identifying the signs, details and processes of the creative re-interpretation of long-lasting traditions both in actual works of art and in aesthetic thought, hence where the historical interconnectedness and the influence of earlier sources can appear. The chapters investigate these questions in a wide-ranging perspective and on a global scale, quoting subject-matter from classical aesthetic theories, painting, sculpture architecture, music, video, photography and literature, and in some cases referring to the growing dispute around the aesthetic status of popular culture. Apart from the range of their topics, moreover, the contributors themselves also cover a broad geographical range, thus illustrating how the converging interest in these analyses has been spotlighted by many colleagues around the world. The collection of essays thus invites the reader the join this global and cross-historical dialogue.

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[1] Karen Rosenberg, "In Search of Lost Time: How the Art World Dispensed With Chronology in 2015 (and Why 2016 Will Be the Year of the 'Historical-Contemporary')," Artspace.com, accessed November 20, 2017. https://www. artspace.com/magazine/interviews_features/the_big_idea/how-the-art-world-dispensed-with-chronology-in-2015-53378

THE PARADOX OF *MIMESIS*

In connection with Aristotle[1]

Béla Bacsó

"It is by no means an accident that the law of mimesis
can only be presented in the form of paradox."
Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe: *Paradox und Mimesis*[2]

Presumably we can state without further ado that perhaps there exists no single and final interpretation of *mimesis* that everyone fully agrees on, but perhaps everyone agrees on this much, that *mimesis* is not a procedure of presenting, imaging, imitating, conveying or representing, and so on, of reality that has been used since the beginnings when creating works of art. The interpretation of *mimesis* has been the subject of debate again and again in every age, but hardly because the debaters wished to understand better the notions of the Greek beginnings, Plato or Aristotle in that regard, but much rather because they sought justifications for the artistic practice and interpretations of their own age, or, as did many theoreticians of modernity, they asserted their own *non-mimetic* theories against the Greek conception.

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[1] Originally published in Hungarian in: *Magyar Filozófiai Szemle* (*Hungarian Philosophical Review*) 58 (2014/2).

[2] Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, Paradox und Mimesis in *Die Nachahmung der Modernen.* Typographien II. trans. Thomas Schestag (Basel – Weil am Rhein – Wien: Urs Engeler Editor, 2003) 26. (French original: *L'imitation des modernes.* Typographies II. Paris: Éditions Galilée, 1986.)

[3] Cf. Arbogast Schmitt, trans., *Aristoteles Poetik.* in *Aristoteles Werke in deutscher Übersetzung.* Vol. 5. (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2008), Otfried Höffe (ed.) *Aristoteles Poetik.* Klassiker Auslegen Vol. 38, (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2009), Tobias Dangel, "Aristoteles' Theorie der Kunst und die Herausforderung der ästhetischen Moderne," *Philosophische Rundschau* 57 (2010): 84–90.

At the same time, as has been made clear by a number of new publications of *texts and interpretations,* [3] in the case of all *mimesis* used in art, it is even unclear what the procedure's very aim could have been, if the need to *convey* reality was raised at all, since few people knew better than the Greeks that *that which appears is not reality itself.*

As people seek to identify[4] with that which is already understood as self-evident for them, they seek points in the realisation of *mimesis* that are acceptable and conceivable to them, while the work of art is even capable of achieving the upsetting and the elimination of that advance *identification* and *familiarity*, since, as all perception, the aesthetic variety is also able to change and to be transformed in itself. That is to say, it modifies that which is perceived from its own direction. If they only perceive that which they have always perceived, if they get lost in the sensually viewable, or if, through mere imagination, they venture beyond the existing, they diverge from what we may call the *object* of their perception, on which and in which something is able to appear in a variable manner. *In the best case,* in people that *perception,* or *sensual imagination,* is augmented by *the capacity to make decisions:* "Sensitive imagination, as we have said, is found in all animals, deliberative imagination only in those that are calculative: for whether this or that shall be enacted is already a task requiring calculation; and there must be a single standard to measure by, for that is pursued which is greater. It follows that what acts in this way must be able to make a unity out of several images."[5] That which is made available by the sensual component can be organised into a *unity* by the decision-making/rational part, and the *measuring gaze* ("der massgebende Hinblick")[6] operating here and directing the endeavour is able to assert it.

In the text of *On the Soul* (from 425b27), Aristotle claimed that although man has the ability of perception, but it doesn't necessarily have an object, while when he is perceiving, it is *this something* that it hears, sees, but all perception is only able to perceive its object in a certain *ratio*. In a rather unnoticed work, Wolfgang Welsch elaborated the issue of aisthēsis with

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[4] Joachim Küpper, "Dichtung als Mimesis," in Otfried Höffe (ed.) *Aristoteles Poetik.* Klassiker Auslegen Vol. 38, (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2009), 38.

[5] Aristotle, *On the Soul*, trans. John Alexander Smith, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931) 434a6-9.

[6] Karl Ulmer, *Wahrheit, Kunst und Natur bei Aristoteles*, (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1953), 29.

great precision, stating that that which man perceives, i.e. the object of perception is *increasing in perception itself* (*epidosis*), and that *all such states of man move between the relationships of different and more than previously and different* and *less than previously*. Man does not theorise (*theorein*) about anything in general, unless in some way he already *knows* it. That which has already been perceived as something, which is changing precisely relative to the "it has been this way so far", and which is *measured* against his knowledge of it, forces the man to face exactly towards the way he does not yet know *this*, that is to say the already existing thing, worthy of contemplation, completes the possibility of that which he has not perceived and understood this way before. Welsch[7] was correct to say that *the meaning and the perceivable are not abstractly opposed to each other, but instead form an original and inseparable structure*. In other words, man is capable of perceiving this here, and at the same time this in a different way, that is to say the way he has been contemplating it so far is able to move the perception, and at the same time, its object, towards completeness[8]. "In its essence, perception is *krinein*, a separation and a glance at the difference, a grasping of differences (...)." In Aristotle's own words: "It is found in a sense-organ as such and discriminates the differences which exist within that group." (426b10) So Welsch[9] believed that perception *(aisthesis)* provides to the *logos* the possibility of grasping, thereby making it clear that there exists no perception that does not carry the meaning of that which man has become able to perceive/suffer.

Heidegger,[10] interpreting Aristotle in his early lecture discussing the concepts of classical philosophy, already noted that although man is distinguished by the capacity of sight, yet he still only sees that which he understands.[11] Vision opens up the experiential field, in which the perceived *exists according to its movement, quantity and shape*, that is to say man holds that which is experienced in perception in memory in some form, and to that extent he is freed from the bondage of direct noticing/perception,

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[7] Wolfgang Welsch, *Aisthesis. Grundzüge und Perspektiven der aristotelischen Sinneslehre*, (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta: 1987), 81.

[8] Aristotle, *On the Soul,* 417b–418a.

[9] Welsch, *Aisthesis,* 255.

[10] Martin Heidegger, *Die Grundbegriffe der antiken Philosophie* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann Verlag 1993), 208–209.

[11] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 980a21.

and at the same time he has the option of transgressing the memory field shaken by the perception, and to move away from himself, and from his previous perceptions as a fixed meaning. Accordingly, man stands before us as a being who is, of course, primarily determined by the capacity of perception, but due to the ability of retaining perceptions in memory, he is able *to behave circumspectly* (*mnémé, fronimotera*), and to recognise that this, this and this or this in now somehow different. The distinguishing ability of man is that he learns (*matetikotera*) from that which he is not familiar with, i.e. in his relationships with the things worthy of perception he becomes able to understand more of that which he has already understood in some way. At the intersection of perception and memory there appears the object as it touches him, affects him, moves him, i.e. awaiting understanding again. Perception, in the same way as imagination, is attached to that which appears, and it enables man of a knowledge that is created in relation to that which appears right now.[12]

So the anthropological basis for the *mimetic procedure* – as Plessner[13] has noted – is the fact that man is the only being who is able *to maintain a distance from his own behaviour and conduct*, so whether it is the coercion of the situation, or an openness to a better understanding, or any other pattern of behaviour or conduct, it is only *temporarily* attached to the place (or situation) in which it has been used. When the situation changes, not noticing that the pattern is no longer applicable is a mistake, and it is also missing the object. On the other hand, when any kind of conduct or attitude is presented, it remains a question: why this way? The question about man can be answered completely generally, man described in his general aspect is in many ways like this and like that, but never only like he is in general, but also in particular at one time like this and at another time like that. Aristotle said in the first pages of *Metaphysics* that man becomes the doer of *something* exactly because the experience created by the differences

[12] Martha C. Nussbaum and Amélie Oksenberg Rorty, *Essays on Aristotle's De Anima* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 191 and 197. (In the same volume with a similar attitude: Richard Sorabji, Intentionality and Physiological Processes. Aristotle's Theory of Sense-Perception, Dorothea Frede, The Cognitive Role of Phantasia in Aristotle).

[13] Helmuth Plessner, "Zur Anthropologie der Nachahmung" in *Ausdruck und menschliche Natur. Gesammelte Schriften* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2003), 396.

in perceptions is composed into a unity, and that which he experiences (*empeiria*) he is able to remember, which allows him to move away from direct perception, and this allows him *to avoid chance in his actions, in the things he does.* To determine the paramount *characteristic* (*idion*) that distinguishes man would force us to enumerate all the things that can be claimed about man, but that would still only be the individual *characteristic* through which the particular man primarily appears before us, presented to us in his *individual generality*. We say *it is this way because it cannot be otherwise*, we have recognised *him himself* in his action. At a particular point in *Metaphysics*[14] he asked the following question: it is possible to ask the question what kind of a being man is, which is not asking what man is in general, but rather we ask what is it that makes man this, this and this.

Mimetic art directs attention to that individual-general, unceasingly presenting us with relations in which man is presented in his specific and questionable being. That is to say it is an indispensable feature of *mimesis* that its conception of that which exists, man and his reality precedes that which it *still needs to understand* in that currently appearing being. Another way to put this is that Greek *mimesis* is precisely making this obvious, that is to say Aristotle knew full well that that which man thinks when he perceives a work of art doesn't unfold purely from what occurs in front of his eyes, the nature of the thing that stands before him, etc., but also from the *extent* to which he is able, the manner and the means the work uses to distance him from his *self until now*. That is, *mimesis* places the emphasis on the work of art not presenting what is *reality*; the work of art can speak about that which *is*, *may be* or as it happens *could be*, or that which is merely *possible* to think but which is not *probable* in countless ways, presenting various *arguments* – the aesthetically existing work is not exhausted by simply standing there. The main question about the aesthetic "object" is what the specific mode of its existence is, even if it very obviously resembles that which we experience usually in the world. At the same time, art also has the prerogative of *presenting that which we know does not exist and could never have existed*.

In many respects, the mimetic conception of art was also removed from the agenda because the late aesthetic *conception*, which is inseparable from the appearance of *autonomous art*, has placed a ban on that type of

[14] Aristotle, *Metaphysics,* 1041a22, and John L. Ackrill, *Aristoteles*, trans. Eric R. Miller, (Berlin-New York: Walter de Gruyter Verlag 1985), 181.

explanation, or considered it obsolete. It also cannot be forgotten that the actual specimens of Greek art were seen for a long time as *examples*, as *exemplary realisations*, whose imitation would guarantee authentic/true *mimesis*, that is to say the Greek mode of procedure was to be presented as exemplary in other eras, for a different public. As we know, the adoption of the system of forms and creative procedures of the works of previous ages was never copying, because even if it were, it could not have had the same meaning and function as the originals. That created yet another obstacle to understanding the Greek notion of *mimesis*. Today's understanding of art, of course, does not claim to have found the way back to the beginnings, it has simply recognised that speech about *mimesis* itself is burdened with the sediment of history. On the other hand, separated from his other works, Aristotle's *Poetics* is vulnerable and impossible to understand. Of course, we can always only understand the beginning approximately.

The existence of the artwork created in the course of *mimesis* doesn't receive its essence and its justified presentability by means of something beyond it that exists in the world, but because standing alone, it is able to present its object *as something that is this way and could not be otherwise*. The work presents itself as variable along perceptions and completions of meaning, which, of course, is partly the result of its linguistic articulation. The language and the speech situation used opens up new relationships in the existence of the work. The work, as an existing thing, and the existence of the "world" existing in the work and existing only that way, can be exhibited and we can state something about them, just as any actually existing thing, as Aristotle hinted in *Metaphysics*:[15] this being, as something, or as like something, as having this or that number, or existing in a specific relation, or as that which does or suffers this and this, but we can also talk about where and when it is/was like that, and in all those cases we speak of the same being, yet within the limits of different categories. The work of art, however, is precisely at home in the ambiguous medium of that system of categories, up to the point, even, that that which *is* in it and by means of it does not directly correspond to any existing thing. When one meets the work, one does not step over into another world, but retains one's experiences about this world, and asserts a position concerning the world in the work *in comparison* to that.

[15] Cf. Aristotle – *Metaphysics,* 1017a23–30.

It was in his analysis of Aristotle's significant recognition that Heidegger[16] made it clear that it is the work existing in that way that moves and displaces man, putting him in relationships that only exist through him, and so the existence of the work of art as a work of art *becomes complete* in the man, and not in the work's simple standing-there. In his analysis of the texts *Metaphysics* and *On the Soul* he showed that the soul, as existing-in-the-world, is not separate and immobile, but moved by that which inspires movement in it. That which moves it, the impulse that it submits to, even as it perceives things, refers back to how man is, and how he still can be. The soul, as a particular being, is able to separate/distinguish something from something (*krinein*), to have a preference for something against something, etc., and to move (*kinein*) itself in that situation and in those relationships, to deal with something through which the thing dealt with *is present*. Aristotle quoted Empedocles: "For 'tis in respect of what is present that man's wit is increased."[17] He emphasised two distinguishing features of the soul: that it is moved by something, and that through something that it perceives it is able to make distinctions, in the end, as Aristotle himself formulated, if being mistaken *belongs to man's nature,* then being mistaken can only be avoided if he recognises how this and that differ from each other, that is to say if he endeavours to recognise the similar in the similar, and hence to connect similar with similar, in other words if he continuously aims to perceive that which is *other and different in them*, thereby creating the possibility of grasping that which is *this and this*. Being mistaken is the failure to understand a difference, but man's being has the possibility of avoiding that.

In the Greek realisation of art – although a number of precursors could also be brought up here – the real novelty was that *mimetic* formation gained the ability to allow something else to appear as well in the place of that which was presented, to make that which it presents itself and at the same time something different. The true novelty of *mimesis*, the mimetic procedure was that it used its means in various ways the elicit the sensation of difference between that already seen and that not seen previously in that way. Above, I claimed that man is not necessarily able to see and recognise that which could otherwise be perceived or thought alongside the work of

[16] Martin Heidegger, *Grundbegriffe der Aristotelischen Philosophie* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann Verlag, 2002), 31.
[17] Aristotle, *On the Soul*, 427a17.

art presented. We may recall Jean-Pierre Vernant's observation,[18] who made it clear that it represented a decisive turn in the social history of the polis, the town *when the temple, the image, and, we may add, the stage play opened the way out of the private sphere in this common-social field, and in the same transition, the non-idolic meaning of the gods presented was transformed into an appearance on or in which the visible constantly referred beyond itself, that is to say the invisible divine manifested itself through the visible, while its direct presence and ritual self-evidence vanished.* To put it briefly: *the symbol of the divine was transformed into an image of the god*, and here the forceful presence of that notion in Hegel's conception of *art as religion* is of no consequence.

So it does not hurt to acknowledge that the relationship of *mimesis* to those who perceive it is always determined by the way they relate to such a created object in the historical context. Or in another way, and Voegelin was the first to point this out, a mimetic work doesn't necessarily exert and effect through that which is voiced in it or that which appears on it, as for a significant part of people, the obvious ethical requirement in a situation demanding a decision is not self-evident, as they prefer to insist on that which has been fruitful and profitable before. According to Voegelin's[19] reading of Aristotle, the Greek thinker was very much aware that *it would be easy to maintain the order of society if it were possible to guide people towards virtuous action with words.* "Now if discourses on ethics were sufficient in themselves to make men virtuous, "large fees and many" (as Theognis says) "would they win" quite rightly (...) yet they are powerless to stimulate the mass of mankind to moral nobility (i.e. the arguments that stimulate enthusiasm for the beautiful and noble thing - B.B.). For it is the nature of the many to be amenable to feat but not to a sense of honour, and to abstain from evil not because of its baseness but because of the penalties it entails; (...) but have not even a notion of what is noble and truly pleasant (...) What theory then can reform the natures of men like these? To dislodge by argument habits long firmly rooted in their characters is difficult if not

[18] Jean-Pierre Vernant, "From the "Presentification" of the Invisible to the Imitation of Apparence," in *Myth and Thought among the Greeks,* trans. Janet Lloyd and Jeff Fort (New York: Zone Books 2006), 342–344.

[19] Eric Voegelin, "Aristoteles," in *Ordnung und Geschichte* Vol. 7. ed. Peter J. Opitz (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2001), 50–51.

impossible."[20] From that perspective, it is precisely the *argumentation* that the *mimetic* work shapes so as to involve the viewer in the decision situation that he usually avoids, i.e. it is able, in this manner, to convince man, submitted to his passions, and his uncertainties of morals and thinking, to the correct *measure*, thereby enabling him to *learn*, even against his *habits* or his *nature*. In the pages of the his *Poetics*[21] and *Rhetoric,* he discussed the elements through which man may come to take into account things that he is not moved to consider in ordinary life. Aristotle understood that that which is unbearable in reality is still bearable in art, that things whose sight we refuse to suffer are not offensive in art, and also that in art, a certain *degree* should not be transgressed, as that rather turns men away from yielding to the work's linguistic argumentation (*dianoia*). "The terrible is different from the pitiable, for it drives out pity, and often serves to produce the opposite feeling."[22] The conception used makes it clear in the ordering of the events, the "argumentation" of choice, that is to say the linguistic and cognitive integration of events – which *Poetics* deals with so extensively – that every word uttered, every linguistic act performed makes us face the question of *what is it that is to be understood here, and what is right about this ordering*.[23]

Lest anyone should think that Aristotle's model is an art that aimed to *create order* in chaos using the instruments of art, that is incorrect; the only possibility for the maintenance of morals is that, during the events that one experiences in the work and by means of the work, one is transported outside what has been so far, and assumes a stance towards one's previous judgments. Only the man who is capable of recognising the situation in which he exists, that is to say who is able *to move outside how he has been* so far can *learn morals*. This is what Plessner called an *eccentric* outsider's stance, which does not mean the boundlessness of a life ruled by the passions, but the recognition of the fact that in most cases we maintain our

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[20] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Harris Rackham, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1934), 1179b

[21] Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1456a30

[22] Aristotle, *Rhetoric,* trans. J. H. Freese, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1926), 1386a22.

[23] Stephen Halliwell, "The Rewards of Mimesis" in *The Aesthetics of Mimesis. Ancient Texts and Modern Problems* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 197.

boundaries ourselves, and that is why we do not feel any *shame* when we come face to face with the misfortunes of others. A turn in life may occur for a number of reasons, but a changed life will only retain its dignity if man responds with an answer that befits the situation. There is never a single and final answer to the situation that the work puts before us, and at the same time the work destroys all answers that corrupt the solidity and most complete unfolding of the things ordered into each other.

Aristotle's poetic interpretation of *mimesis* begins here, as it makes clear that the ordering/matching (*systasis*) of the events presented is the definitive factor, as it is on the basis of that that the viewer is forced to understand, what's more, to learn how and why something happened, and at the same time what (advance) signs indicated that the thing that happened would have this result.[24] In order to demonstrate the extent to which Aristotle was not unsuspecting as to whether certain events *necessarily* lead to a result that is a *good* solution, or as to whether the event that has occurred would not be judged in the customary way, it is sufficient to refer to the text in which, referring to Homer's work, he warns us: the work of art follows the mode of speech that transgresses the usual *procedure of inference*, i.e. it "speaks" so that it doesn't say what *is*, that is to say it says something else, or depicts so that we *believe* that if this has happened, then that must have happened also, which led to this. The appearance of suspended *logic*, or *paralogismos*, urges one to investigate, and if one chooses a traditional procedure of inference, one will come to a conclusion that *has no basis at all in reality*.

"(...) that is, by using a fallacy. When B is true if A is true, or B happens if A happens, people think that if B is true A must be true or happen. But that is false. Consequently if A be untrue but there be something else, B, which is necessarily true or happens if A is true, the proper thing to do is to posit B, for, knowing B to be true, our mind falsely infers that A is true also. This is an example from the Washing."[25]

Aristotle makes us recognise precisely that through and by means of the logos we can diverge from that which is true in a number of ways, and we can claim something to be true concluding from hidden elements of the

[24] Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1457a15.
[25] Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1460a20–26.

preceding story, or mere allusions, when we see what has just happened. The scene of the *Washing* allows someone (Ulysses) to be recognised on the basis of an outward feature from which it does not necessarily follow that *it is he*, and what is perhaps even more important, *even if it is he*, what really follows from that concerns the actions to be expected. Auerbach[26] touched on that scene in the opening piece of his book, and showed the element that sheds life on the essence of art, namely that *before and after that which is taking place before us, there are events and happenings that are occluded by the present moment and the visible scene.* The recognition that is expressed in the scene will be an identifying element for those that know that only *that* person had and has a wound on his foot, but as others could also have a wound there, there is no final certainty that the identity of that external mark allows us to draw any certain inferences concerning the future actions of that person, it only makes that which will occur later more probable.

If we accept Aristotle's claim that all that distinguishes man from other living beings is the joy of imitation, then we must also agree that our greatest joy must derive from the event, the action taking place before our eyes serving to create the recognition of something that *we already know in some way*, only not in this way. That is to say the main element of all *works of mimetic art* that moves us is our ability that is shows something *that is in a particular, originally undecidable relation with that which we have already experienced about man, but never in the way in which it now appears before us.* That is why tragic mimesis becomes the presentation of actions that show the decision made not through its end, but through its continuous unfolding, even by showing when and how the person made a mistake/diverged, while on the other hand his decision also elicits in us the consideration of the extent to which this and this is right or the best possible course in the given situation.

"The starting point of the plot (*arché*) is man (*EN* 1112b31), more precisely man's decision in favour of something, his choice (*prohairesis*), whose starting point is the endeavour or thought directed at wanting something..."[27] But acting man, surrounded by those before him all this happens,

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[26] Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis. The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013)

[27] Ritoók Zsigmond, "Mimesis Praxeós" in *Vágy, költészet, megismerés (Desire, Poetry, Gaining Knowledge).* Selected essays (Budapest: Osiris, 2009), 290.

and who also judge it, and face him with the power of the gods, doesn't appear in himself, but against himself and others, that is to say, the decision can go up to a limit from his own will, while the rest is the work of something that is greater than him – which is known to the audience, but not recognised by them. Schadewaldt[28] was justified in saying that *the logos of tragedy is antilogical, that is to say it transgresses the situations of speech and action that are shut out of ordinary life*, i.e. it stresses to the utmost *the possibility of the speech situation and field of action that almost opens towards the improbable in reality, in order to finally show forth the necessity of the conditions that result from the action.* In doing so, it provides an experience that reality occludes, yet bears as a possibility.

Mimetic art is noticing something that is different in itself, that is to say not some kind of correspondence according to some model or original, real object beyond it, but rather an unfolding of that which is original to the work, as *the joy of mimetic similarity is caused* by our recognition that it is this way, because it could not be otherwise. That hermeneutic wisdom has its source in man's desire to understand that which he has not understood before, as the similarity of the already understood hardly operates in a way that causes pleasure. "The reason why we enjoy seeing likenesses is that, as we look, we learn and infer what is, for instance "that is so and so". If we have never happened to see the original, our pleasure is not due to the representation as such but to the technique or the colour or some other such cause."[29] As the portrait stands in the absent person that it depicts, and if it is successful and beautiful it is able to refer to that absent figure in some way, that is to say against all anthropo-centric mimetism whose principle is identity, the portrait actually shows that it is only this way in this work, only this image shows the beauty of the figure. Its beauty consists precisely in its having individual features that we may attribute to the person depicted, but in its generally accepted aspect only the work refers back to the changeable person. Good portrait painters, "while rendering a distinctive form an making a likeness, yet paint people better than they are."[30] And this can only be understood if we understand *beauti-ful* mimetic presentation as showing all the things that are divergent in the scenes of

[28] Wolfgang Schadewaldt, *Die griechische Tragödie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1991), 57–58.
[29] Aristotle, *Poetics,* 1448b15–19.
[30] Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1454b10.

life in an essential fashion in the figure presented, and the similarity is only that the artist puts him before us as this and no other. In brief, it is beautiful because *it is him*. And as with the portrait, so with tragedy: it is only capable of that beauty if its able to present human relationships so that we understand in it life, operating in the hues of the possible and probable, constantly present around *the real*. It must present the actions that, around the figure, sharply separate the decision from that which is, *although possible, yet not credible*, that is to say simply reflecting reality is not the objective of the mimetic procedure, but rather it is eliciting a decision from us as to whether *it is like that, and whether it is right and good like that*. "What is convincing though impossible should always be preferred to what is possible and unconvincing..."[31], what's more, Aristotle even goes as far as to say that if the artist is able *to make a convincing impression*, then even the impossible (*atopon*) has a place. The mimetic procedure is a *paradox*, as it is continually able to bring within the scope of the ordinarily accepted elements that are rejected or completely ignored by everyday experience.

Therefore it is no accident at all that for Kommerell and Gadamer, Aristotle's *Poetics* was not simply *a theory of art, and it is through releasing it from that later limitation that we can also understand the conception of mimesis at work in it*. Max Kommerell viewed its explications as a dynamic conception of art that is fundamentally attentive to how the work exerts its effect, how it works (*ein Werk der Wirkung*)[32], tracking the procedure of the many unfoldings and differences, successes and failures that in tragedy direct a process of life to the shaking-up that also shakes up the relationships into which the beings acting on stage are organised, without the ability to know where the next step would lead. As Kommerell also hinted that *for him, the foundation of art is not built from art itself*, as Aristotle's question with the mimetic procedure is how tragic mimesis fits into religious, moral and political conditions – so his paramount principle is how human action takes place in the given structure, and finally how the sequence of events shown in the tragedy is linked to that which we call being, which is only able to present to us similarity *to a certain degree*, but never identity.

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[31] Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1460a27.

[32] Max Kommerell, *Lessing und Aristoteles. Untersuchung über die Theorie der Tragödie* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann Verlag, 1984), 54–56, 217.

Gadamer repeated Kommerell's discovery, namely that tragic mimesis goes beyond the theory of art, and summarises the *essence of mimesis* with his characteristic precision: mimetic presentation (*Darstellen*) consists in recognising the presented thing in the presentation. "The presentation wants to be so true and so convincing that we don't even reflect on the fact that the presented is 'not real'."[33]

The mimetic procedure suspends our experience of reality so as to restore it more fully, as only works of art are able to do – this is the *paradox of mimesis*.

Translated by Bruno Fuchs

[33] Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Kunst und Nachahmung," in *Ästhetik und Poetik. Kunst als Aussage.* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1993), 31.

Reflections on the subject of Antiquity and the future

Raffaele Milani

In the history of art we find many recurrences of Antiquity, since it is a source of instruction and a model for subsequent aesthetic developments. In his studies of Neoclassical and Romantic aesthetics and poetics, Rosario Assunto illustrated that Antiquity itself can be experienced as the future.[1] It can be said that memory underpins all innovation and gives authenticity to new and, at times, shocking forms. Antiquity is present in artworks in the play of fantastic forms we find in masterpieces. This presence entails the reinterpretation of images from the Classicism of the Romans to that of the age of Charlemagne, from Humanism to the Enlightenment, from the Renaissance of the modern era to the Renaissance of postmodern era. Even the Greeks reinvented their past in an "archaeology of nostalgia", to use John Boardman's expression.[2] Greek Antiquity features myth, history, imagination, and personifications in an amalgam of meanings and symbols. Classicism is synonymous with values considered to be universal: perfection, proportion, equilibrium, harmony, grace, and intensity and naturalness of figures. In this sense, we can speak of a future dimension of Classicism, according to Salvatore Settis, who studied the phases of the Western artistic tradition. He argues that the more we see the "classical" not as a dead culture we inherited and for which we can take no credit but as something surprising to be recreated each day and as a powerful stimulus to understand the "other", the more we will be able to mould future generations.[3]

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[1] Rosario Assunto, *L'antichità come futuro* (Milan: Mursia, 1973)

[2] John Boardman, *Archeology of nostalgia. How the Greeks reinvented their mythical past,* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2002).

[3] Salvatore Settis, *Futuro del classico* (Torino: Einaudi, 2016)

In order to appreciate this perspective, we need to reflect on the imagination and the relationship between art and nature, providing appropriate examples. "Antiquity as the future" is to be studied in the light of the process in which reality is expressed as form and form expresses reality. In this regard, it is useful to take into account the viewpoints of two different but important authors. The first is that of George Simmel who, in the early part of the 20th century, stated that the relative heights attained by technical progress had become an *absolute* value in the sense that the splendour of technology and money were smothering "spirituality" and "meditation", qualities that managed, nonetheless, to achieve a sort of vindication by generating a sense of tension and nostalgia.[4] The second is that of Roland Barthes who described the endless re-signification of the object observed and in so doing affirmed the overflow of the senses relative to first impressions.[5] The real is thus enriched by the artificial. We could also say, as does Hans Blumenberg with his concept of "metaphorology", that art produces an illusion but it is never simply fantasy. It is the elaboration of elementary or foundational models of thought: the creative process is essentially mythic.[6]

To be more specific, we need to reflect on the imagination and nature. If we think of the imagination as dreaming, we are sometimes able to gain access to the hidden order of a universal language that nature itself creates and projects all around us: a language, we might say, of both nature and art, that is, of being and doing (of the poietic display of things and events) because nature pertains to art, the expression of living forms, as art pertains to nature, the expression of existent things. It is a language whose properties are multiplicity and mutability; it is a language infused with myths and symbols, facts and metaphors, truth and appearance or fantasy. It is the ecstatic vision that humans experience as part of nature and the illusion of a dream world. Signs, symbols, and representations surround us and seem to interact with us. But in what way do they do so? Is observing nature

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[4] Georg Simmel, "Il dominio della tecnica," and "La metropoli e la vita spirituale," in *Tecnica e cultura. Il dibattito tedesco tra Bismarck e Weimar,* ed. Tomás Maldonado (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1987).

[5] Roland Barthes, "Diritto negli occhi," in *L'ovvio e l'ottuso* (Torino: Einaudi, 1985).

[6] Hans Blumenberg, *Paradigmi per una metaforologia* (Bologna: il Mulino, 1969), 107-112.

through an ecstatic gaze that is the manifestation of the oneiric world an illusion that our minds need, or is the act of observing nature connected to a real expression of things? Can the subjective element disappear when we lose ourselves in thought?

To answer these questions we need to consider the fact that dreams are an activity that eludes time and space; they are an escape from the world in which we live. In this state, we experience a richness of figures, forms, and metaphors: images that flow like a musical score. We can say that we are pleasantly enmeshed in an ecstatic perception. This occurs when something near to us captures our attention and compels us to think of ourselves as being observed by the thing we are observing. We discover that we are participating in a transformation; trees, hills, mountains, fields, everything that constitutes the landscape displayed before us comes closer to us in a sort of fusion or an act of love and enchantment. We see ourselves and we are everywhere. Distance disappears and is replaced by closeness. Perception is not translated into a description of what we see but into enlightenment. This occurs as a result of a kind of doubling of the object whereby the field of vision converges with the invisible, and dreams come to occupy the space between the two dimensions. As Giovanni Pascoli wrote in the poem "Alexandros": "Dream is the infinite shadow of Truth". We sometimes ask ourselves: "Am I dreaming or am I awake?" This thought comes to us both in the light of day and in the darkness of doubt, located between the dream world and the real world; but even the real world can be a dream because the mind can lose its sense of self-control even in daytime and drift into deeper realities. This is the journey of art.

As for nature, it has the capacity to appear before our eyes as both dormant and enlivened, according to Greek mythology, with all its personifications, or according to Buddhist philosophy. This happens precisely because nature is concealed within the language of existing things, since the natural world appears to be under the spell of a daemon that fixes or transforms both places and observers. In a flash of the imagination, we find ourselves caught up in the *rhetoric of the ineffable* when we engage in contemplation; we are dealing with an art of persuasion that emanates from nature itself in the time and space of its unfolding. Thus, a magical attraction propels human beings on a quest for the truth behind appearances, moving from the visible to the invisible, the point of departure being the enchantment of the earth, the sublimity of places, and the sacredness of mountains, caves, and springs. In this mystical perception, there is, as Jean

Richer suggested, a certain reciprocal mirroring of earth and sky.[7] As did the Egyptians, the Greeks transformed their land into a living image of the sky, by virtue of the correspondence they saw between their physical world and their astrological signs. They created a sacred geography within which Delphi, Sardis, and Delos were the centres of three great zodiacal wheels, and on this system of "planetary modulation" were based the structure and placement of their temples and the decorations on the tympanums and amphorae, etc. Alongside the ancient worldview that I have called mystical, there is also another, however, that is useful for representing the perception of landscape and nature, namely, the modern, enigmatic one. The latter undertakes a full and new reading of mythology and Rainer Maria Rilke gives us an interpretation of this perspective in his poetry. We see it as well in Giorgio De Chirico's *The disquieting Muses* or Alberto Savinio's *The mask of myth*, both paintings, as well as in the films of Jean Cocteau. The modern present retrieves the past and reaffirms it as a paradigm for the future.

The daemon of the secret language of nature, which appears and disappears in the exchange between subject and object, animates the figures of the doubling effect mentioned earlier. It is a force that courses through both humans, with their representations, and nature, with its forms. It can be detected to a certain extent when we think of images that we perceive as paintings even before they are painted. In this case, nature itself creates countless images in its myriad of manifestations. For some thinkers, these images exist in our minds prior to becoming actual artworks. In this sense, we can say that nature is the object of contemplation as well as the reciprocal relationship between subject and object because the observer appears to be possessed by the images that he or she creates under certain conditions. On the other hand, as we learn from David Freedberg, images not only fix themselves in our memory, they also inspire empathy and an endless interaction with things.[8] They are linked to the landscape, both the visible and the invisible, in a prolonged "meditative" process, a long pause of the ecstatic-oneiric gaze. In ancient Greece, for example, as Károly Kerényi explained, vision and myth, epiphany and mythology, influenced

[7] Jean Richer, *Geografia sacra del mondo greco. Le forme della religione e dell'arte nella Grecia antica* (Milano: Rusconi, 1989).

[8] David Freedberg, *The power of images. Studies in the history and theory of response* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

each other and inspired the production of cultural images whereby humans transferred to other figures all their occasions of doubling and disappearing.[9] The theme around which our discussion revolves is represented by the appearance and metamorphosis of the god. For ancient humans, the natural world was inhabited by gods and became a temple, and the temple became nature symbolically. The act of seeing or observing was considered an obligatory step toward the supernatural and there was a strong connection among place, vision, and the god dwelling in the place. To use one of Kerényi's expressions, we find ourselves before "transcendence in nature".

To this point, we have discussed the imagination, nature, and the daemon that resides in the secret language of things, which embraces both the subject and the object. We can now deal with the issue of space. The historical relationship between a place and the divine is clear and serves to explain further the passage from the material to the immaterial in humankind's encounter with nature. The actions of the gods are translated into poietic representations or pictorial images. This is because it is through art that we rediscover the signs of that empathy mentioned above. Claude Lévi-Strauss liked to repeat the idea that the passage from nature to culture finds a privileged manifestation in art.[10] The artistic condition arises from the dreaminess of an aesthetic perception, that is to say, from fantasy. At the same time, nature itself, as we have noted, appears as art and it does so as the "eloquent" organization of forms. A pleasant and necessary illusion attracts humans. In addition, the contemplation of nature is based on an act of seeing related to the sacred, the symbols which present themselves through objects and living things that become something other than what they are without ceasing to participate in their natural setting. For Mircea Eliade, a sacred tree remains a tree although it signifies something other than a tree, a natural thing that is different from the tree, for example. The sacred is, for Eliade, the invisible reality of noumena and as such is ineffable.[11] We engage in an extended epiphany: nature, the abode of the gods, coexists alongside the environment created by human beings. For this reason, the language of nature is the art of existing things that come into

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[9] Károly Kerényi, *Miti e misteri* (Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 1979), 303–346.

[10] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Régarder écouter lire* (Paris: Plon, 1993)

[11] Mircea Eliade, *Trattato di storia delle religioni* (Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 1999).

being in representations and to which dreams correspond as both illusion and revelation. This is what is meant by the term "transcendence in nature".

We have interpreted transcendence in nature and naturalization in art, which occur in time, as the expression of a need to rediscover Antiquity's capacity to project the future. As stated, this happens in various historical moments in the recurrence of the so-called Renaissance of the classical, from medieval allegories to the mythology of Humanism; and in the 20th century we have examples of oneiric art inspired by these motifs. As Stefano Benassi demonstrated, the ancient world is the wellspring of the modern, as we can see in the aesthetic models offered by literature and the figurative arts.[12]

Finally, at the end of the 20th century, dominated as it is by a love of citation, and especially in new millennium, there are at least two important cases where a past image inspires a present one. Postmodernism returns to the past to reclaim it as a model for the future, as we find in many of Bill Viola's films, which draw inspiration from painters like Masolino da Panicale, Pontormo and Paolo Uccello, as well as in Lech Majewski's film *The mill and the cross*, inspired by Peter Bruegel the Elder's *Procession to Calvary*, which can be read as an allegory of redemption. This indeed demonstrates the presence of Antiquity and its various expressive forms in contemporary art.

[12] Stefano Benassi, *Gli antichi e le origini del moderno. Modelli estetici tra letteratura e arti figurative* (Bologna: Clueb, 1995).

Contemplation or manipulation?

Aesthetic perspectives on nature and animals from Shaftesbury to bio-art[1]

Karl Axelsson & Camilla Flodin

1. Introduction

Francis Bacon's 17th century vision of the island of Bensalem and Salomon's House provided modernity with a strong but mixed blessing of (natural) science.[2] The account, given by the "Father of Salomon's House," opens with a general promise to which it is easy to subscribe: "The End of our Foundation is the knowledge of Causes, and secret motions of things."[3] As Bacon continues, he is, however, likely to alarm today's reader with the megalomaniac announcement that the ultimate end is "the enlarging of the bounds of Human Empire, to the effecting of *all things* possible."[4] If realised, empires tend to decline and fall; if unrealised, the idea of imperial

[1] The authors wish to thank the participants of the Humanimal Studies Research Group at the Centre for Gender Research, Uppsala University, for comments and suggestions on an earlier draft of this paper.

[2] The categories of science and scientists are 19th century inventions and they are used in an anachronistic manner with reference to Bacon's *New Atlantis*. As Richard Serjeantson remarks in "Natural Knowledge in the *New Atlantis*," in *Francis Bacon's New Atlantis: New Interdisciplinary Essays*, ed. Bronwen Price (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002), 82–105 (83), it is more accurate to use the term "natural knowledge" (*scientia naturalis*) when addressing the focus of *New Atlantis*.

[3] Francis Bacon, *New Atlantis*, in *The Works of Francis Bacon*, vol. 5, eds. James Spedding, Robert Leslie Ellis, Douglas Denon Heath (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., n.d.), 398.

[4] Ibid. Our italics.

power still implies an unhealthy desire for domination. Indeed, the enlargement of the "human empire" and the authority over nature also come at a high price at Salomon's House, where captured "beasts and birds" are not used "only for view or rareness, but likewise for dissections and trials."[5] Still, the manipulation of nature, where man tries "chirurgery" and experiments with "all poisons and other medicines upon" animals, and where he "dwarf[s]" them and makes them "stay their growth," or "make[s] them differ in colour, shape, [and] activity," presents itself as a vital and rational human activity for all the members of this imaginary haven of natural knowledge.[6]

Bacon's scientific utopia is realised in the modern scientific laboratory, as well as in the collaboration between the biological sciences and art that is labelled bio-art.[7] There is a straight line from the manipulation of nature and animals in Salomon's House to the recognised Brazilian-American artist Eduardo Kac's use of the transgenic rabbit Alba in the artwork *GFP Bunny* (2000).

However, an undercurrent to this attitude is also present throughout history. The following chapter takes a closer look at how this undercurrent manifests itself in the history of aesthetics. Well-deserved accolades to the Anglo-scientific revolution in general, and Bacon in particular, were of course common currency amongst the early 18th century moralists that aesthetics still cling to as the starting point of the discipline.[8] But the praises were not completely without hesitation. The fact that nature appeared to be a source that needed to be harnessed in order to achieve human dominion and profit occasionally made philosophers uncomfortable. In this chapter, we focus on some of these philosophers – who undoubtedly advanced the

[5] Ibid., 401.

[6] Ibid., 402.

[7] On bio-art, see e.g. Frances Stracey, "Bio-art: the Ethics behind the Aesthetics," *Nature Reviews Molecular Cell Biology* vol. 10 (2009), 496–500. Stracey raises relevant concerns (498) on what the "rights [are] of a living creature that has been reduced to art."

[8] See e.g. Joseph Addison, *The Spectator*, ed. Donald F. Bond (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), vol. 2, no. 160, 126–130 (esp. 129). When separating a "first Class" of geniuses (e.g. Homer, Pindar, and Shakespeare) from a "second Class," formed by "Rules" and committed to the "Corrections and Restraints of Art," Addison positions the writings of Bacon in the latter category, together with Plato, Aristotle, Virgil, Tully, and Milton.

modern discipline of aesthetics[9] – in order to challenge the highly problematic tendency in bio-art to fuse with science and to manipulate non-human animals.

2. Shaftesbury, Nature, and Animals

One of the most original early 18th century voices belongs to the third Earl of Shaftesbury. Even if he did not address the particulars of Baconian ideals, Shaftesbury's position offers an altogether different approach to nature. In the opening of the *Treatise of Human Nature* (1739–40), David Hume highlights that the writings of Shaftesbury, John Locke and others relate to Bacon in their interaction of the "science of man" (which Hume regards as the "only solid foundation for the other sciences") with other sciences, including natural philosophy.[10] A move from the Baconian natural sphere to the moral sphere of humankind is suggested by Hume. While Shaftesbury had played a part by having "begun to put the science of man on a new footing,"[11] his peculiar take on nature would, however, resound throughout the history of aesthetics and continue to challenge the modern paradigm of science in a way that Hume would neither have expected nor perhaps have endorsed.

When Shaftesbury's hero, Theocles, is first introduced in the dialogue *The Moralists, A Philosophical Rhapsody* (the fifth treatise from *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, published in 1711) by the narrator Philocles, he rather tellingly assures the interlocutor, Palemon, that Theocles' brilliant personality was "fair, open, and genuine, as Nature her-self."[12] In Philocles' account, "Twas *Nature* he [Theocles] was in love

[9] Andrew Bowie also considers the development of aesthetics as a response to the increasing exploitation and domination of nature in *Aesthetics and Subjectivity: From Kant to Nietzsche*, 2nd. rev. ed. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), see esp. 3–8.

[10] David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, vol. 1, eds. David Fate Norton and Mary J. Norton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 4–5.

[11] Ibid., 5.

[12] Shaftesbury, *The Moralists, A Philosophical Rhapsody. Being a Recital of Certain Conversations on Natural and Moral Subjects*, Standard Edition, II, 1, Moral and Political Philosophy, eds. Wolfram Benda, Gerd Hemmerich and Ulrich Schödlbauer (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1987), 72.

with" and "Twas *Nature* he sung."[13] Theocles seems to worship the beauty of nature too much to easily get in line with the Baconian paradigm. Instead of being a contemplative "beholder, a pure knower" or "interpreter of nature" like Theocles, man is, from the Baconian perspective, expected to be "an active agent compelling nature by his intervention to do his bidding."[14] The experiments conducted by the fellows of Salomon's House aim to "do things to the natural world: to change it and to use it, not just to observe and understand it."[15]

The impelling cause behind Theocles' adoration of nature is, needless to say, that the concept of nature here refers to something more than the "great lakes both salt and fresh, whereof we have use for the fish and fowl" found amongst the useful scientific "instruments" at Salomon's House.[16] Shaftesbury makes every possible endeavour to prevent nature from becoming disenchanted; God is, for him, always immanent in the beauty of nature. And external nature is never distinctly detached from man's inner moral nature. As Theocles pinpoints: "ALL things in this World are *united*."[17] One of the reasons behind Theocles' early labelling of Philocles as "so ill *a Naturalist*" is precisely the fact that he has not, thus far in the dialogue, integrated the "*Particulars* of Natural Beings and Operations" into the large "Order and Frame of NATURE."[18] In order to become virtuous, Philocles and others have to make the self-reflective connection between their own inner moral nature and the beauty of external nature. While man, according to Shaftesbury, is "born of a good Nature," he is nonetheless "easily corrupted."[19] Hence, moral agency must involve a continuous effort to maintain, or mend, one's own nature, and to fine-tune the natural disposition to "*the Supreme* and *Sovereign* BEAUTY."[20] Here, an awareness of the complexities of external nature and animals does not rely on an artificially created distance between the agent and the surroundings or bodies that he examines. Instead, Shaftesbury stresses that

[13] Ibid.
[14] Perez Zagorin, *Francis Bacon* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 38.
[15] Serjeantson, "Natural Knowledge in the *New Atlantis*," 84.
[16] Bacon, *New Atlantis*, 398–99.
[17] Shaftesbury, *The Moralists, A Philosophical Rhapsody*, 166.
[18] Ibid., 162.
[19] Ibid., 176.
[20] Ibid.

such an awareness hinges on re-establishing a more intimate and self-reflective relation to nature. With reference to Maximus of Tyre (*fl*. late 2nd century AD), Theocles summarises his position: "*The River's Beauty, the Sea's, the Heaven's, and Heavenly Constellation's, all flow from hence as from a Source Eternal and Incorruptible. As Beings partake of this, they are fair, and flourishing, and happy: As they are lost to this, they are deform'd, perish'd, and lost*."[21]

While Shaftesbury does not explicitly challenge the well-known Cartesian view of animals as mindless *automata*,[22] he nevertheless proposes a perception of nature and animals that leads the reader in the opposite direction. In his five-chapter commentary on the previous two volumes of *Characteristicks*, entitled *Miscellaneous Reflections on the Preceding Treatises and Other Critical Subjects*, he states that "[w]ithout demurring on the profound modern Hypothesis of *animal Insensibility*, we are to believe firmly and resolutely '[t]hat other Creatures have their *Sense* and *Feeling*, their mere *Passions* and *Affections*, as well as our-selves'."[23] From Shaftesbury's perspective, animals cannot be addressed as mindless machines, but are instead intimately related to humans, and he stresses that someone studying "a *Horse*, a *Dog*, a *Game-Cock*, a *Hawk*, or any other Animal of that degree, know[s] very well, that to each Species there belongs a several Humour, Temper, and Turn of inward Disposition, as real and peculiar as the Figure and outward Shape which is with so much Curiosity beheld and admir'd."[24]

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[21] Ibid. 178.

[22] Descartes, *Discourse on the Method*, in *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, vol. 1, trans. Elizabeth S. Haldane and G.R.T. Ross (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911), 116. However, Shaftesbury is otherwise a forthright critic of Descartes's philosophy. For instance, he ridicules Descartes's Cogito argument in *Miscellaneous Reflections on the Preceding Treatises and Other Critical Subjects*, Standard Edition, I, 2, Aesthetics, eds. Wolfram Benda, Gerd Hemmerich, Wolfgang Lottes and Erwin Wolff (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1989), 232: "'TWILL not […] be sufficient for us to use the seeming *Logick* of a famous Modern, and say '*We think: therefore We are*.' Which is a notably invented Saying, after the Model of that like Philosophical Proposition; That '*What is*, *is*.' Miraculously argu'd! 'If *I am*; *I am*.'"

[23] Shaftesbury, *Miscellaneous Reflections*, 258.

[24] Ibid., 260.

In the great chain of being, animals are still "inferiour Creatures,"[25] but Shaftesbury sets himself apart from mechanistic conceptions by viewing animals as irreplaceable members of natural environments that, while being occasionally different from the environments enjoyed by humans, are fulfilling in their own unique and purposeful way. Hence, when animals are removed from their natural state and "tam'd by Man, and, for his Service or Pleasure merely," animals also leave their natural and distinctive dispositions behind.[26] By disconnecting the animal from its natural state, and by positioning it and using it in a human setting and for human needs, it will simply begin to act in an unnatural way; the fact that the animal is forced to exit its natural surroundings that are purposely designed for its needs thus transforms, and makes it forget, its true inner nature. Consequently, when the order is reversed, and the animals are "releas'd from human Servitude, and return'd again to their natural *Wilds*, and rural Liberty, there is nothing more certain than that they instantly resume their *natural* and regular Habits, such as are conducing to the Increase and Prosperity of their own Species."[27]

3. Kant, Schelling, and the Purposiveness of Nature

While Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781; second edition 1787) is closer to the dualistic Baconian and Cartesian conception of nature,[28] the effort in the third *Critique* to reconcile humanity and nature through the experience of beauty aligns Kant with Shaftesbury. It is indeed common to stress Shaftesbury's influence on several of the central ideas in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790),[29] and special attention is often given

[25] Ibid., 264.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), e.g. 236 (*Kants Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. by the Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaft, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1902– [henceforth: AA], vol. IV, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (1781): 114).
[29] For a recent example, see Paul W. Bruno, *Kant's Conception of Genius: Its Origin and Function in the Third Critique* (London and New York: Continuum, 2010), 12–19.

to the idea of disinterestedness. Shaftesbury's notion of (aesthetic) disinterestedness has frequently been regarded as the starting point for modern aesthetic autonomy, a view that has recently been challenged.[30] But what we want to draw attention to here is the way both Shaftesbury and Kant connect disinterestedness not only – and, in the case of Shaftesbury at least, not even primarily – to aesthetic autonomy, but to a higher interest, namely the moral interest in a reconciliation with nature. For Kant, there is a deep affinity between the morally good and the ability to take an immediate interest in beautiful nature, that is to say, a desire to let beautiful nature exist for itself (even if it would not be beneficial for the human individual). The contemplative attitude towards nature, which allows it to exist for itself, beyond human intentions and purposes, is a sign of moral refinement in human beings.[31]

This higher interest is undoubtedly dependent on a certain detachment from nature's immediate grip, and indeed this detachment has historically been achieved through mastery of nature. But the idea of a reconciliation with nature can, at the same time, be regarded as a reaction to the mechanistic conception of nature exhibited by thinkers like Bacon and Descartes. In the second *Critique*, Kant emphasises that "an observer of nature" begins to like natural objects that once "offended his senses" when he discovers their inner purposiveness: "his reason delights in contemplating them, and Leibniz spared an insect that he had carefully examined with a microscope and replaced it on its leaf because he had found himself instructed by

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[30] The established account of Shaftesbury's position, in the narrative of aesthetic disinterestedness and aesthetic autonomy, was introduced by Jerome Stolnitz in "On the Significance of Lord Shaftesbury in Modern Aesthetic Theory," *Philosophical Quarterly*, 1961, 11:43, 97–113; "On the Origins of 'Aesthetic Disinterestedness'," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 1961, 20:2, 131–43; "A Third Note on Eighteenth-Century 'Disinterestedness'," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 1963, 22:1, 69–70. See also R. L. Brett, *The Third Earl of Shaftesbury: A Study in Eighteenth-Century Literary Theory* (New York: Hutchinson's University Library, 1951), esp. 139–44. For a recent attempt to challenge the established account, see e.g. Karl Axelsson, "A Realised Disposition: Shaftesbury on the Natural Affections and Taste," in *New Ages, New Opinions: Shaftesbury in his World and Today*, ed. Patrick Müller (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2014), 27–44.

[31] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 178–79 [AA 5: 299–300].

his view of it, and had as it were, received a benefit from it."[32] The contemplative attitude, allowing organisms (such as animals and plants) to continue their life instead of dissecting them, can thus be achieved even in scientific examination.

The purposiveness of nature is, of course, the overarching theme in the third *Critique*, where Kant holds that it primarily appears as beautiful forms, but also as the more general purposiveness of organisms and of nature as a whole.[33] Artworks, or art products in Kant's terminology, are beautiful if they appear as purposive in themselves, and thus not subject to external rules. In other words, art products should appear as if they were purposive, that is to say organic, products of nature – however, not falsely masked as such.[34]

For a post-Kantian thinker like F. W. J. Schelling, the third *Critique* was immensely important.[35] Even though the emphasis has shifted from natural beauty to the beauty of artworks, the idea of a reconciliation between humanity and nature is still at the core of Schelling's aesthetics. In the *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800), Schelling argues that art reveals the common origin of mind and nature. Artworks reconcile the unconscious productivity of nature and the conscious productivity of mind, thus reflecting the union of these productivities in a sensuous, objective form.[36]

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[32] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, in Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, trans. Mary Gregor (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 268 [AA 5: 160].

[33] Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, 79–80 [AA 5: 193–94].

[34] Ibid., 179 [AA 5: 299].

[35] In his lectures on the history of modern philosophy, Schelling refers to the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* as "Kant's deepest work," see F. W. J. Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, trans. Andrew Bowie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 173 (*Zur Geschichte der neueren Philosophie. Münchner Vorlesungen* (1827), in F. W. J. Schelling, *Sämmtliche Werke*, ed. K. F. A. Schelling (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1856–1861) [henceforth: SW] vol. I/10, 177).

[36] F. W. J. Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism*, trans. Peter Heath (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1978), 231: "[…] art is at once the only true and eternal organ and document of philosophy, which ever and again continues to speak to us of what philosophy cannot depict in external form, namely the unconscious element in acting and producing, and its original identity with the conscious" (*System des transscendentalen Idealismus*, in *Werke: Historisch-kritische Ausgabe*, ed. H. M. Baumgartner, W. G. Jacobs, and H. Krings (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1976– [henceforth: HKA]), vol. I/9.1, 328).

Schelling develops the Kantian analogy between organism and artwork into a notion of art's imitation of nature as productivity and not as an object. By creating artworks in a similar manner as nature creates purposive objects (that is to say, organisms), aesthetic production is able to show the common ground of humanity and nature.[37] Schelling argues that "nature begins as unconscious and ends as conscious; the process of production is not purposeful, but the product certainly is so."[38] The opposite is the case in the artistic production of artworks: "the self is conscious in respect of production, unconscious in regard of the product."[39] Indeed, the artist makes conscious, that is intentional, decisions when creating the artwork, but the final product always surpasses the artist's aims as well as any attempt to reach an ultimate definition of the work. The artwork is more than the sum of the components of which it is constituted, in the same way that the organism is more than the aggregate of its parts. The distinctive unity and self-sufficiency of the artwork, its inner purposiveness, thus relate it to the organism. Another way of formulating this is through the concepts of freedom and necessity: the artwork unifies the conscious and free decision of the artist with the unconscious necessity of productive nature.

Schelling still holds this view in *The Philosophy of Art* (1802–3): "*The organic work of nature represents the same indifference* [between freedom and necessity] *in an unseparated state that the work of art represents* ***after***

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[37] It can be argued that Aristotle's likening of a well-composed plot to "a single whole animal" (*ζῷον ἓν ὅλον*) is already in line with such a notion of mimetic art. See Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. Stephen Halliwell, in *Aristotle, "Poetics," Longinus, "On the Sublime," Demetrius, "On Style,"* Loeb Classical Library 199 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 1459a20. This "organic analogy," to speak with Malcolm Heath, in its turn bears resemblances with Plato's earlier claim about discourse/text (*logos*), which he states (through Socrates), in *Phaedrus*, "must be organised, like a living being [*ζῷον*], with a body of its own, as it were, so as not to be headless and footless, but to have a middle and members, composed in fitting relation to each other and the whole [*τῷ ὅλῳ*]." Plato, *Phaedrus*, in *Plato I: Eutyphro, Apology, Crito, Phaedo, Phaedrus*, trans. Harold North Fowler, Loeb Classical Library 36 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), 264c. See Malcolm Heath, *Ancient Philosophical Poetics* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 84.

[38] Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism*, 219 [HKA I/9.1, 313].

[39] Ibid.

separation yet as indifference."[40] In Schelling's terminology, the work of art is *ideal*, that is to say it is a product of mind (and thus separated from the real), while the organism, being a product of nature, is *real*. Nevertheless, both artwork and organism exhibit the same indifference between freedom and necessity, according to Schelling. The indifference between freedom and necessity in art is tantamount to "the absolute harmony and reconciliation of both," and for Schelling this equals beauty.[41]

4. Adorno, Kac, and the *GFP Bunny*

Absolute harmony is not a term that fits easily with the 20th century aesthetic theory of Theodor W. Adorno. Adorno is critical towards the idealist-classicist comparison of the artwork to a self-sufficient organic unity.[42] Instead, Adorno emphasises the fractured quality of the artwork and the artwork's expression of its own unnaturalness, that is to say the artwork's acknowledgment of itself as something human-made and historical.[43] Dissonance, according to Adorno, characterises all modern artworks in a broad sense.[44] For Adorno, artworks that appear to be closed harmonic unities risk deceiving us into believing that the universal and the particular, mind and nature, subject and object, have been reconciled, or that there is at least a sphere in our unreconciled society where these opposites are resolved, in which case art becomes merely an alibi for the status quo.[45]

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[40] F. W. J. Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, trans. Douglas W. Stott (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 30 [SW I/5, 384].

[41] Ibid., 31 [SW I/5, 385]. Even though Schelling's focus in these lectures is on beauty in art, he nevertheless talks in a manner reminiscent of Shaftesbury of the universe as "an absolute work of art."

[42] See Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (London and New York: Continuum, 2002), e.g. 170 (*Ästhetische Theorie* (1970, 1972), in *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2003 [henceforth: GS]), vol. 7, 255).

[43] However, as we saw in Kant, emphasising that the artwork should not give the false appearance of being a work of nature does not have to be tantamount to giving up the idea of an analogy between artwork and organism.

[44] Theodor W. Adorno, *Ästhetik (1958/59)*, in *Nachgelassene Schriften* vol. IV: 3, ed. Eberhard Ortland (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2009), 54.

[45] See also Adorno's discussion of dissonance and harmony in *Aesthetic Theory*, 109–10 (GS vol. 7, 167–68).

Nevertheless, Adorno shares a great deal with the tradition of criticising the domination of nature and the metaphysical conception of nature as a thing to be mastered and exploited, existing only for the sake of human ends. Thus he claims that it is "with good reason" that "the power of artworks to reconcile is sought in their unity."[46] Even if the unity-forming principle of artworks, in some ways, echoes the violence exacted upon the sensuous multiplicity of nature (so prevalent) in nature-dominating theory and practice, Adorno claims that "[t]he aesthetic unity of the multiplicitous [*Einheit des Mannigfaltigen*] appears as though it had done no violence but had been chosen by the multiplicitous itself. It is thus that unity […] crosses over into reconciliation."[47]

Artworks are not immune to the nature-dominating practices outside the sphere of art, according to Adorno. But neither should they uncritically embrace, for example, the achievements of natural science. In "The Essay as Form" (1958), Adorno criticises art that merely focuses on technique and unreflectingly incorporates scientific accomplishments:

> To be sure, art has always been so intertwined with the dominant tendencies of enlightenment that it has made use of scientific and scholarly findings in its techniques since classical antiquity. But quantity becomes quality. If technique is made absolute in the work of art; if construction becomes total and eradicates expression, its opposite and its motivating force; if art thus claims to be direct scientific knowledge and correct by scientific standards, it is sanctioning a pre-artistic manipulation of materials […] devoid of meaning […]. It is fraternizing with reification – against which it has been and still is the function of what is functionless, of art, to protest, however mute and reified that protest itself may be.[48]

Contemporary art practices are still as drawn to scientific findings as they were in Adorno's days. And since then, the possibility of manipulation of "materials" has increased to an unprecedented level. To name but one example, the bio-art of Kac intends a fusion of art and science that is very

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[46] *Aesthetic Theory*, 134 (GS vol. 7, 202).

[47] Ibid.

[48] Theodor W. Adorno, "The Essay as Form," in *Notes to Literature* vol. 1, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 5. ("Der Essay als Form," in *Noten zur Literatur*, GS vol. 11, 14).

much open to Adorno's critique. Kac's transgenic artwork *GFP Bunny* from 2000 was created with the help of genetic researchers at the National Institute for Agronomic Research in France.[49] GFP is short for Green Fluorescent Protein, and this protein – which in its turn comes from another animal: a jellyfish of the species *Aequorea victoria* – was used to genetically modify an unborn albino rabbit's DNA in order to create a rabbit that glows green under influence of ultraviolet light.[50] Despite Kac's attempt to individualise the rabbit by naming her Alba, she seems to have remained but an anonymous exemplar for scientific manipulation, just like the animals in Bacon's vision of Salomon's House,[51] especially since Kac's intention to bring Alba to his home in Chicago, USA, was prohibited by the laboratory.[52] In spite of Kac's emphasis on the importance of respect towards the transgenic life forms thus created,[53] it is difficult to interpret the result of his collaboration with the French geneticists as anything more than an unhappy and uncritical fusion of art and science, resulting in a "work" that fails to be art in the emphatic sense that was so central to the aesthetic tradition highlighted in this chapter: a reconciliation – or in the case of Adorno: hinting at the possibility of reconciliation – between humanity and nature, between human animals and non-human animals. It is one thing to compare an artwork's purposeful unity to that of a living organism, quite

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[49] One of the researchers has since then denied that the lab created a special rabbit for Kac, and claims that Kac only selected Alba out of several genetically modified rabbits.
See http://archive.wired.com/medtech/health/news/2002/08/54399?currentPage=all (retrieved 2016-09-14).

[50] The veracity of Kac's images of the green-glowing Alba has been contested by scientists who claim that Alba's fur could not glow green, since the GFP gene cannot be "expressed in the hair." See http://archive.wired.com/medtech/health/news/2002/08/54399?currentPage=all (retrieved 2016-09-14).

[51] The New Zealand white rabbit, with the genetic deviation albinism, is of course already a breed that is reared especially for different kinds of scientific experimentation as well as for meat and fur production.

[52] http://archive.wired.com/medtech/health/news/2002/08/54399?currentPage=all (retrieved 2016-09-14).
See also http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/story?id =119939&page=1 (retrieved 2016-09-14).

[53] Eduardo Kac, *Telepresence & Bio Art: Networking Humans, Rabbits, & Robots* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2005), 264.

another to actually "create" a living organism and call it art. Furthermore, "GFP […] can cause cell damage" and thus "might be toxic, if not fatal," as Frances Stracey emphasises.[54]

Despite Kac's outspoken intentions to create a public dialogue about "the cultural and ethical implications of genetic engineering," and his vision of "interspecies communication between humans and a transgenic animal,"[55] *GFP Bunny* remains stuck in the same Baconian dualist position that continues to hold sway today, almost four centuries after the *New Atlantis* was published: Man the manipulator holding the knife, with nature on the dissection table. Shaftesbury's holistic vision might from a contemporary standpoint seem naïve, but it nevertheless contains a resistance to the metaphysical conception of nature and animals as things to be mastered, a resistance that, as we have seen, continues to resound in the history of aesthetics.

[54] Stracey, "Bio-art: the Ethics behind the Aesthetics," 499.
[55] Kac, *Telepresence & Bio Art*, 266.

THE PAINTER IN THE LANDSCAPE

Aesthetic considerations on a pictorial sub-genre

Zoltán Somhegyi

One of the greatest landscape painters ever – and he is closed in his almost-empty studio. The famous pair of portraits of Caspar David Friedrich, created by his fellow painter Georg Friedrich Kersting (1811–1812, Berlin, Nationalgalerie) immediately brings us in the middle of a series of questions concerning the possibilities and responsibilities of an artist aiming to present the experience and beauty of Nature through art.[1] How is the landscape painter working? What is his real subject? How should he present that? Is that presentable at all? And is it more "authentic" if the artist is directly at his subject or it only has secondary importance in the aesthetic efficiency and artistic functioning of the landscape painting?

At first sight it might seem that, among the classical pictorial genres the landscape is the most "straightforward" pictorial category, a topic that does not need much further knowledge or understanding when appreciating it. For example one might argue that, in order to completely understand the significance of a portrait, we need to know who was the represented subject, in case of a still-life we have to be acquainted with the symbolic content of the objects that make up the seemingly random arrangement in the composition, in paintings showing historic scenes it is necessary to be familiar with the chronicled event, and even about genre scenes we have to have some knowledge about the everyday life in the represented period, so that we can appreciate the particular approach of the artist when depicting the scene. Compared to these, a landscape seems to be directly "consumable", and aesthetically valuable without any further comprehension, where the viewer can directly enjoy the "beauty of Nature" on a picture. However, this widespread opinion is not correct. A landscape

[1] On the various questions concerning the aesthetics and interpretation of the landscape experience, see for example: Arnold Berleant, "The Art in Knowing a Landscape," *Diogenes* 59/1-2 (2012): 52–62.

representation is, in fact, one of the most complex and complicated pictorial genres, that in order to completely appreciate requires the understanding how the artist himself saw the landscape.

But first of all: what is exactly that the artist saw? What is the landscape that appears on the landscape image or landscape representation? As I have pointed out in earlier occasions, including an essay in a previous IAA Yearbook, a landscape is not simply a "segment" or "fraction" of Nature, but it is automatically and strictly connected to the viewer who sees it and perceives it as landscape and especially interprets it as landscape.[2] We can say that Nature becomes landscape through the interpretative process of the observer. This "new unity" is deeply analysed by Georg Simmel in his 1913 essay on landscape, and later scrutinised by Joachim Ritter in 1963, who argues that a landscape is aesthetically presented Nature in the vision of the sensible and sensitive viewer.[3] He too, like Simmel, does not consider the elements of Nature as a landscape, but not only because of the lack of their unity, but because, according to his idea, landscape is born only if we look at it without practical aims and intentions, only in free vision and enjoyment.

Hence a landscape is never objective, and thus from the entire history of this genre we cannot find a pure and direct or really objective landscape representation. The image of the landscape will always be subjective, just like the way each of us sees the landscape differently – even the same landscape at the same time provides the different viewers with a different reading. This is true even if there were periods when the landscape images seemed to be particularly focusing on "objective" rendering. However, even these precise views turn to be modified, a great example of this is the analyses of the 18th century Italian painter Canaletto's work, who is often considered as a "photographer" of Venice, nevertheless a precise examination of his views and vedutas reveals that he too often handled the original

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[2] Zoltán Somhegyi, "From Domination to Respect. The Evaluation of Nature through its Representation from Enlightenment to Romanticism," in *Nature and the City. Beauty is Taking on a New Form. International Yearbook of Aesthetics, Vol. 17*, ed. Jale Erzen and Raffaele Milani (Sassari: Edes, 2013): 457–462

[3] Georg Simmel, "The Philosophy of Landscape," *Theory, Culture & Society* 24/7–8 (2007): 20–29. (originally published in 1913) and Joachim Ritter, "Landschaft," in *Subjektivität* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974), 141–166. (originally published in 1963).

motives quite freely for the sake of artistic reasons, like the maximum efficiency of composition.

The subjectivity in the landscape – and hence of the landscape-representation too – is then constant, but this very subjectivity became explicit and conceptualised with the understanding of our alienation from Nature – or in other words the loss of the original harmonious and natural state with it. The 18th century realisation and understanding of not being part of Nature anymore increased the interest in the proper and subjective interpretation of man's state in the world. It is not simply about the idea that is often referred to as a sort of "Romantic longing" i.e. to reconstruct the original harmony between Nature and the alienated, modern and "civilised" man. The Romantic artists and philosophers were absolutely aware of the fact that this harmony is not possible anymore – our only chance is to conciliate ourselves with our own and personal *attempt* of reconstruction of this harmonious state. Hence, instead of the "exact" reconstruction, or the striving for it, the creative, imaginative and personal reconstruction becomes important. *Mutatis mutandis* it is very similar to the question of creating or re-creating Antiquity – an idea that also often occurs in the aesthetic discourse around 1800. It is enough to think of Novalis writing in his "Fragment on Goethe" from 1798 that Antiquity is not obviously available and "present", but it should be brought forth by us (...")*sie soll von uns erst hervorgebracht werden*.").[4] Goethe himself, who with years became less and less Romantic and more and more re-classicized came very close to this idea even twenty years later, when in his "Antik und Modern" from 1818 he argued, that in his or her own way, but everyone should be a Greek (*"Jeder sei auf seine Art ein Grieche! Aber er sei's."*).[5]

Hence the proper vision, the individual, personal and particular interpretation of the landscape becomes of primary importance. How do I see, i.e. what is my point of view – in both senses. How does the artist perceive the landscape and show it on a landscape painting, and what can we learn

[4] "Der classischen Litteratur geht es, wie der Antike; sie ist uns eigentlich nicht gegeben – sie ist nicht vorhanden – sondern sie soll von uns erst hervorgebracht werden." in: Novalis, *Fragmente*, ed. Ernst Kamnitzer (Dresden: Wolfgang Jess Verlag, 1929), 656.

[5] Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Antik und Modern* (orig. 1818, online source) http://www.zeno.org/Literatur/M/Goethe,+Johann+Wolfgang/Theoretische+Schriften/Antik+und+modern, accessed May 5, 2017

about our own being from and through this image? How the landscape painting as an object – even if specific type of object, i.e. an artwork – will show the artist's attempts of bridging the undefeatable distance between Man and Nature?

The real landscape can be born only after having understood this special approach, in the sense that the natural forms are not simply referring to the environment and context of the episode depicted in the painting, and not just providing a nice background to the more important "official" subject matter, e.g. historical, biblical or mythological topic of the image. Although it might sound a bit exaggerated, but I am tempted to formulate it in this way: the main subject matter of the real – or, we can also say: modern – landscape image is not the proper landscape "in itself", but the artist's interpretation of it. In this way, the earlier forms of "landscape representations", including those mediaeval paintings where natural forms and elements appeared randomly just to indicate the outdoor context of the subject matter were not proper landscapes *yet*. But what we have in some successful instances from the 18th century onwards is not something that we can call proper landscape *"already"*, or *"finally"*, but something beyond that. Hence I claim that the autonomous landscape image is autonomous not because of the (pictorial) qualities of the "segment of Nature" represented on the picture, and not even because the artist, instead of using it as background for the main topic, focuses exclusively on the representation of Nature in itself (that, as we have seen above, is not possible). The autonomous landscape image is autonomous exactly because it shows – what's more: focuses on – the authentic relationship between the artist and his own vision of Nature. Thus when we look at Caspar David Friedrich's landscape painting of Rügen for example (ca. 1818, Oskar Reinhart Collection, Winterthur), we do not look at it – or, at least, not only – because we want to know how the cliffs of Rügen look like, but how Friedrich saw them. Since we are looking at an artwork, the subjective creation and product of an artist, we want to see his view, his interpretation of the subject, and his re-elaboration of the vision.

All this led in the late 18th century not only to the proper understanding of the essence of landscape and of landscape representation, or, in a double sense we can say: to the understanding of the "nature of landscape", but also to an increased interest in the very examination of landscape itself. So much that actually a new sub-genre was born: a landscape image that shows the painter in the landscape while painting the landscape.

After these considerations it is more understandable why from the late 18th century onwards we can see more and more often the artist himself appearing right in the act of observing and sketching the landscape. The landscape required the artist's own interpretation, and since his own vision became important for the viewer of the artwork, the artist made this sort of authenticity of his autonomous vision manifest. Hence positioning himself in the landscape is already a statement. The examination of the landscape is not only through its representation in art – or on an artwork – but on a meta-level too, through the showing of the figure of the artist in the act of experiencing, examining and representing this very landscape.

Let's quote some examples of this, in order to better understand the particularities of these images. Obviously, the sub-genre of a "painter painting the landscape in the landscape" is not homogenous either, and there can be several forms, purposes and meanings of these images. A relatively large group of them is not so much about the artist analysing his relationship to the landscape – and thus to Nature too –, but more like a document to attest and authenticate that the artist was present. It is especially true concerning those editions of prints where the painter was commissioned to document an actual view, hence the documentation of his real presence at the site is crucial. Just as an example we can remember the work of Ludwig Lange, depicting Ferdinand Stademann, the author of the views of "Panorama von Athen", published in 1841. Presumably the work was created in 1835, when Lange was in Athens, together with Carl Rottmann, on the commission of the Bavarian Ludwig I., to create travel drawings of the view and monuments of Athens as source of inspiration for the King's new constructions. The lithography was then reproduced in Stademann's collection of drawings, and we can interpret it as a pure document of his personal presence of the "exotic" location that provides a certain impression of authenticity for his landscapes and cityscapes.

For the Romantic interpretation of the relationship between Man and Nature it is more intriguing to analyse those images where the artist appears exactly in order to show the very act of his observation of the view, reflecting his working method, artistic ideals, as well as of the process of analysing his position, relationship or even emotional reaction to the vision of Nature through the landscape. The abovementioned type of "travel-documentary" images, when the artist shows himself in the process of registering the exotic views were destined for the commissioners and for the consumers of the prints. Compared to these, the works depicting the

observing artist focusing on his relationship to the natural scenery can be considered more "intimate" than the commissioned travel accounts, since they emphasise the painter's personal approach, experience and working method. Therefore, especially from the distance of two centuries, these sketches and paintings are often much more inspiring for us both from art-, as well as from aesthetic historical point of view, than the well-composed and a bit "theatrical" travel testimonies. Among these intriguing works we find many that were practically made either for the personal use of the artist, or just to show to the close circle of his fellow artist, friends or family, but definitely not for the wider public. This also explains why do we find so often works where the artists depicted each other while working.

From the numerous examples we can quote a work of Ernst Fries from 1821 (München, private collection), depicting most likely his friend Carl Sandhaas while he was working outside of the studio. As a nice example of the true collaboration and working-together of the artists, Fries used the same motive two years later for a self-portrait (1822–1823, Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett), dedicated to his grandmother, as we can read in the text below the image: "Meiner lieben Großmutter den 1 ten Januar 1823".[6] Another example: in 1826 Ludwig Richter, on his return from a three-year trip in Italy met Wilhelm von Kügelgen in Northern Italy, with whom they had decided to finish their trip together.[7] During their common trip Richter drew his drawing friend in the forest that most likely served as a departure point for Kügelgen for a self-portrait sixteen years later (both works in the Kupferstichkabinett in Dresden).[8]

In the case of certain works, through the positioning of the depicted figures the artist emphasises that it is not the personality of the painter that counts, i.e. who is the artist appearing in the image, just the representation of the process of working. This is what we can see in those works where the face of the artist is covered, or we see the figure from behind. A couple of

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[6] Marianne Bernhard, *Deutsche Romantik Handzeichnungen*, 2 vols. (Herrsching: Manfred Pawlak Verlag, 1973) vol. 1., 397 and 399.; Jens Christian Jensen, *Aquarelle und Zeichnungen der deutschen Romantik* (Köln: DuMont Buchverlag, 1978), 165.

[7] Hans Joachim Neidhardt, *Ludwig Richter* (Leipzig: Anton Schroll Verlag, 1969), 11.

[8] See both images reproduced in Bernhard, *Deutsche Romantik Handzeichnungen*, vol. 2. p. 1378. and vol. 1. p. 812., respectively.

examples include Johann Adam Klein's drawing form 1810 (Leipzig, Museum der bildenden Künste) – where we know the identity of the represented creator only from the inscription –, another one from 1813 (Vienna, Albertina) with a figure in the foreground dwarfed by the impressive castle of Aggstein in the middle ground.[9] We can also quote Johann Christian Clausen Dahl's drawing from 1844 (Oslo, National Gallery).[10] Another interesting example is Johann Christoph Erhard's work (Bremen, Kunsthalle), created during his 1817–1818 study trip around Salzburg, where one of his fellow artist is seen from behind, and his identification is not unanimous, it could be Johann Adam Klein or Heinrich Reinhold.[11]

Johann Christian Clausen Dahl: *Drawing Figure in Maridalen,* 1844, pencil, watercolour, 284 x 435 mm, Oslo, National Gallery, photo: Nasjonalmuseet / Andreas Harvik

[9] Reproduced in Bernhard, *Deutsche Romantik Handzeichnungen*, vol. 1. p. 691. and 694.
[10] Reproduced in Bernhard, *Deutsche Romantik Handzeichnungen*, vol. 1. p. 171.
[11] Jensen identifies him as Reinhold (Jensen, *Aquarelle und Zeichnungen*, 161.), while Bernhard as Klein (Bernhard, *Deutsche Romantik Handzeichnungen*, 247.)

From these couple of examples we could understand that this group of images is not about the depiction of the location, and not even the "portrait" of the artist either. It is much more about showing the painter working on his own landscape-interpretation, and on gaining direct experience of and by positioning himself in the landscape, and, in a way, against Nature. In this way we can state that elemental and existential questions, our own position towards Nature are at stake. This approach will be later – actually, not much later – simplified and even turned banal. In the Biedermeier era we can find such works where the artists do not seem to be any longer interested in aesthetically and existentially experience the sublime powers of Nature – just the contrary, they try to overcome its eternal forces with the pretense of dominating it. An example of this could be Friedrich Preller's work from 1854 (Bremen, Kunsthalle) showing his friend Ferdinand Marinus in his "working space", i.e. in the Sabin-Mountains, where his pose and careful gaze viewing the scene remind us more of a glorious general revising his battle strategy than a humble late-Romantic artist admiring the overwhelming Nature.[12] Actually, for curiosity's sake I have to add that this portrait was preceded by an earlier one a quarter of century before (1829, Heidelberg, Kurpfälzisches Museum), where we find the same figure – obviously, a bit younger – in a very similar position.[13]

In contemporary art, one of the most impressive examples where we feel a similar "seriousness", to what we have seen at the Romantic and pre-Biedermeier artists, as well as to that humble and respectful approach to the immense powers of Nature through the analyses of the artist's position in the landscape is among the Nordic artists. From the numerous examples here I quote Kalle Kataila, a member of the so-called Helsinki School of Photography, who made the act of observation of the landscape the focus of his works. As I have analysed in a recent article, in Kataila's series titled *Contemplation* (2004–2009)[14] a figure – presumably the artist himself – is shown in the foreground while facing and contemplating the

[12] Reproduced in Bernhard, *Deutsche Romantik Handzeichnungen*, vol. 2. p. 1175.
[13] Reproduced in Bernhard, *Deutsche Romantik Handzeichnungen*, vol. 2. p. 1157. Curiously however, Bernhard dates it for 1865 and titles as "Italienischer Bauernjunge".
[14] See images from the series at http://helsinkischool.fi/artists/kalle-kataila/portfolio/portfolio-8/, accessed May 5, 2017

Kalle Kataila: *Contemplation Lapland,* 2007,
pigment print, courtesy of the artist and Gallery Taik Persons

infinite Nature and infinity of Nature that seems to appear to him right through the landscape.[15] Therefore we can say that it is not only the infinity of Nature itself that is shown, but the very act of the artist observing this infinity, where the compositional solution clearly brings in mind Caspar David Friedrich's "Rückenfiguren", i.e. figures shown from behind while observing the landscape. This contemplation and meditation of the infinity are the real subject matters of Kataila's pictures, and the mediation of this meditation will be at stake, where the work of art will become the final result, the aesthetic object of this existential analyses. What is shown

[15] See more about the connections between contemporary and 18–19th century landscape representations in Northern art, including also Kalle Kataila's works in: Zoltán Somhegyi, "Mother Nature's Exhibition: On the Origins of the Aesthetics of Contemporary Northern Landscapes," *The Nordic Journal of Aesthetics* Vol. 52 (2016): 28–50

through the image is thus not only the eternity of Nature experienced in and through the landscape, but also the essential human necessity of finding and defining ourselves while encountering the sublime and powerful Nature.

This elemental experience is what can easily be harmed by the fake "experience-industry" of those "naturalist" art lovers who are often forcing the encounter with the sublime phenomena. A rather satirical representation of their activity can be observed on a series by the Serbian-born, USA-based Daniel Kariko, when the artist photographed a group of amateur art-lovers with their cameras ready, waiting for the sunrise.[16] The pieces show the almost desperate attempt of modern-day semi-professional artists or "Sunday photographers" who try to grasp the elemental forces of Nature in and through their artworks, but they end up in the trap of commodified, commercialised and fake art experience.

Daniel Kariko: *Overlook,* 2012,
digital photograph, courtesy of the artist

[16] See for example: http://danielkariko.com/substitute-cartography#/id/i9469974, accessed May 5, 2017

We have started with Kersting's double portrait of Caspar David Friedrich, the great German Romantic landscape painter who works in the closed emptiness of his studio. After our investigations we can again ask: Where is the artist? Where the landscape painter can be and should be? What is the "direct" examination of Nature through the landscape worth? How much can it add to the authenticity and aesthetic "well-functioning" of the final picture? We do know both from Friedrich's own writings, letters, as well as from the portraits of other artists showing him that Friedrich used to make study trips to collect motives and to register certain elements. However, these actual elements he used as construction materials for his own compositions that he executed in the studio. There was a different sort of creation outside and inside the studio. From imitation he arrived to creation, from *mimesis* to *poiesis*. He did not feel the need to be "in the landscape" throughout the whole process, as he understood that in any case, Nature's true essence remains out of his reach for ever.

This leads us back to the question if the artist can at all be part of the landscape? What we have learned from the Romantic painters is that due to the alienation of the urbanised and over-civilized modern man it is no longer possible. Thus even the contemporary attempts of the Chinese star-artist Liu Bolin, who literally lets himself depicted in the view – often also in a landscape (for example: Hiding in the City No. 94 – In the Woods, 2010[17]) – and then has himself and the landscape photographed, might be read from the perspective of the aesthetic questioning how the artist can be part of the environment he is working on or with. However, the viewer of his works can get the impression that in Liu Bolin's works the focus is mainly on the perfect technical execution and the trompe-l'oeil character of the illusion, and although this will definitely make his works entertaining, there is the danger of losing some of the seriousness of the questioning. Therefore, even if two centuries older, the drawing of Friedrich Christian Reinermann seems more striking.[18] We can see – or can we see? – the painting or drawing artist in the landscape, though unlike the rest of the aquarelle, that is accurately coloured, his figure is the only one that is left

[17] Reproduced on the website of Klein Sun Gallery, http://www.kleinsungallery.com/artists/liu-bolin?view=slider#27, accessed May 5, 2017

[18] Reproduced in: Udo Felbinger (ed.), *Drawings and water-colours of the German Romantic Era. An Exhibition from the Graphische Sammlung of the Staatsgalerie Stuttgart* (Budapest: Museum of Fine Arts, 2002), 81.

ghostly blank. The figure of the artist is "out-standing" – literally standing out of his context, beautifully illustrating his concern: leaving his studio to collect the direct visual impact, going out in and for the landscape and for understanding Nature, but whatever close he tries to come to Nature, the distance will be more than ever. He ideally finds himself where he would like to be and where he should be, but where he cannot be anymore.

Friedrich Christian Reinermann: *Waterfall in the Forest,*
without date, watercolour, pencil, 41,5 x 52,2 cm;
Inv.Nr. C 1927/62, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Graphische Sammlung,
Foto ©Staatsgalerie Stuttgart

Jan Gwalbert Pawlikowski

A forerunner of landscape aesthetics[1]

Mateusz Salwa

Philosophical analyses of the idea of landscape are usually dominated by an aesthetic approach, which is partly due to the fact that philosophical interest in landscape was inspired by art history and not, for example, geography.[2] Thus, the philosophers' understanding of landscape tends to imitate the manner in which artists and art theorists have traditionally interpreted it, associating it with the concept of the picturesque.[3] Following in the footsteps of such early theorists as Frédéric Paulhan, who discussed landscape painting, or Georg Simmel, who compared the experience of landscape to an experience of a work of art, 20th century theoreticians are likely to think of the landscape in artistic terms.[4] The landscape is treated

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[2] It would be, however, erroneous to limit the contemporary philosophical interest in landscape to aesthetic considerations – the "philosophy of landscape" is a much broader field as it covers ethical issues, as well; see e.g. *Mort du paysage?: philosophie et esthétique du paysage*, ed. François Dagognet (Seyssel: Champ Vallon, 1982); Paolo D'Angelo, *Filosofia del paesaggio* (Roma: Quodlibet, 2010); Adriana Veríssimo Serráo, *Filosofia da Paisagem. Estudos* (Lisboa: Universidade de Lisboa, 2011), see also this author's "The Philosophy of Landscape. Contemporary Perspectives," in *Cracow Landscape Monographs 1. Definitions, Theory & Contemporary Perception of Landscape*, ed. Piotr Kołodziejczyk (Kraków: Uniwersytet Jagiellonski – Politechnika Krakowska, 2016), 37–44.

[3] This heritage is underlined by, among other things, etymological inquiries which prove the artistic provenance of the term. See e.g. Marc Antrop, "A Brief History of Landscape Research," in: *The Routledge Companion to Landscape Studies*, ed. Peter Howard, Ian Thompson and Emma Waterton (New York: Routledge, 2013), 12–22.

[4] Frédéric Paulhan, *L'esthétique du paysage* (Paris: Alcan, 1913); Georg Simmel, "The Philosophy of Landsape," *Theory, Culture & Society*, 24(7-8) (2007): 20–29.

as a sort of mental representation of the world that is created whenever an observer assumes a particular attitude, i.e. he or she has a landscape experience that is analogous in a way to an aesthetic experience of art. The landscape experience is thought to consist of experiencing the world as if it were an artwork. Alain Roger refers to this "process" as *artialisation*, by which he means looking at the world through the lens of artistic categories and associations.[5] As such, the landscape turns out to be a historical phenomenon.[6] Treating the aesthetic experience of art as a paradigm for the landscape experience renders the latter aesthetic yet in another sense: the landscape is thought to be experienced in a detached and contemplative manner.[7] In other words, it is deemed to resemble a piece of visual art which is appreciated by a disengaged observer who – thanks to their attitude – may, for example, feel its mood (Simmel's *Stimmung*) or notice its particularly rewarding formal (scenic) qualities.

Because of its art-centeredness, the above approach was criticized by Allen Carlson, whose arguments largely contributed to the development of environmental aesthetics. He finds the landscape model, as he calls it, flawed for it implies appreciating nature in terms that are alien to it.[8] As a consequence, he suggests that the idea of landscape should be replaced by that of environment, which is supposed to be devoid of unwanted artistic or cultural overtones. The most discussed aspect of Carlson's theory is his idea that an adequate aesthetic experience of natural environment is to be based on pertinent knowledge offered by natural sciences. Even though his cognitivism is criticized for being too reductive as it dismisses such factors as emotions, imagination and cultural knowledge, other advocates of environmental aesthetics unanimously claim that some kind of knowledge is useful if not indispensable as it makes an aesthetic experience

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[5] Alain Roger, *Court traité du paysage* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997).

[6] Hence the issue of birth and death of landscape – see e.g. *Mort du paysage?...*, Michael Jakob, *L'émergence du paysage* (Gollion: Infolio, 2004) – as well as the notion that the concept of landscape is absent in certain cultures landscape, see e.g. Augustin Berque, *Les raisons du paysage* (Paris: Hazan, 1995).

[7] See e.g. Joachim Ritter, "Landschaft. Zur Funktion des Ästhetischen in der modernen Gesellschaft," in J. Ritter, *Subjektivität* (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp), 141–163, 172-190, Rosario Assunto, *Il paesaggio e l'estetica* (Palermo: Novecento, 1973).

[8] Allen Carlson, *Aesthetics and the environment: the Appreciation of Nature, Art, and Architecture* (New York: Routledge 2000).

richer.[9] Although environmental aestheticians tend to avoid the term *landscape* because of its artistic connotations, their theories may be said to offer a view of what could be called a "geographical landscape", in the sense that they are not interested in the landscape conceived of as a mental representation imposed onto reality but in the landscape as a real place (environment) that has its own aesthetic and non-aesthetic qualities which one should take into consideration. Landscape is to be experienced "on its own terms" and it is people's moral obligation to do so.[10] It has to be underlined that environmental aestheticians are interested in natural environments (landscapes) in the first place, yet their theories may be applied to human environments (cultural landscapes) as well.[11]

The art-centred theory of landscape experience is criticized for yet another reason. It is accused of misrepresenting the relationship between people and landscapes since it suggests that people are positioned in front of their environments just as they face stand in front of painted pictures. It is claimed instead that people are surrounded by landscapes, they are immerged in them and in fact they are elements of landscapes.[12] To Arnold Berleant, an aesthetic experience of landscape is an experience of continuity between the subject and the world around them.[13] Thus, landscape is conceived of as a lived environment.

Despite the fact that theoretical eclecticism is hardly ever advisable, it would be wrong to dismiss any of these approaches (as well as those not mentioned above[14]) in favour of others. Each of them adds to the under-

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[9] See the articles collected in the volume *The Aesthetics of Natural Environments*, ed. Allen Carlson, Arnold Berleant (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2004).

[10] See Yuriko Saito, "Appreciating Nature on Its Own Terms," in *The Aesthetics of Natural Environments*, ed. Allen Carlson, Arnold Berleant (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2004), s. 141–155.

[11] See e.g. *The Aesthetics of the Human Environment* ed. Arnold Berleant, Allen Carlson (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2007), Allen Carlson, *Nature & Landscape. An Introduction to Environmental Aesthetics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

[12] Ronald Hepburn, "Contemporary Aesthetics and the Neglect of Natural Beauty," in *British Analytical Philosophy*, ed. Bernard Williams, Alan Montefiore (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1966), 285–310.

[13] Arnold Berleant, *Living in the Landscape: Toward an Aesthetics of Environment* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1997).

[14] A typology of different approaches is discussed in D'Angelo, *Filosofia del*

standing of landscape as it shows different aspects of the idea of landscape as well as of real landscapes and various practices taking place within. It is important to accept the multifaceted character of landscape not only for the sake of theory but also – if not above all – for the sake of practice (be it landscape protection, use or design). As there is no way to avoid the necessity of influencing landscapes in one way or another – we live in the Anthropocene, after all – the real question is how we should do it. In order to answer it, we have to elaborate an adequate understanding of landscape.

Interdisciplinary studies of landscapes – including aesthetics of landscape – which try to tackle the above issue and respect the heterogeneous character of landscape are of a recent origin.[15] However, it would be erroneous to think that they are absolutely unprecedented. As it happens in other disciplines, in this case, too, it is possible to single out a number of much earlier concepts which in retrospect may be interpreted as forerunners of today's approaches or solutions. Certainly, such ideas are mainly interesting from the point of view of intellectual history. However, the aim of revisiting them is not so much to prove their historical priority over contemporary discussions or to fill a historical gap. They are worth recapitulating because they still may offer food for thought (and practice).

This is the case with notions advanced by Jan Gwalbert Pawlikowski, a Polish intellectual who pioneered, among other things, the protection of landscapes in Poland in the first three decades of the 20th century.[16]

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paesaggio. 83–104 see also *Estetica e paesaggio*, ed. Paolo D'Angelo (Il Mulino: Bologna, 2009), *Filosofia da paisagem: uma antologia*, ed. Adriana Veríssimo Serráo (Lisboa: Universidade de Lisboa, 2011).

[15] See e.g. *The Routledge Companion to Landscape Studies*, ed. Peter Howard, Ian Thompson and Emma Waterton (New York: Routledge, 2013).

[16] Jan Gwalbert Pawlikowski (1860–1939) was an economist, politician, agriculturist, historian of literature, and a pioneer of alpinism in the Tatra Mountains**.** He was also a prolific journalist, a founder of the Polish League for Nature Conservation and one of the authors of the general agenda of the pre- and postwar Polish laws on nature protection. He was also interested in vernacular art and architecture of the Tatra region. His main writings, including his 'manifesto' *Nature and Culture* (1913) were collected in the volume *O lice ziemi (For the Face of the Earth)* (Warszawa: WPROP, 1938); it includes, among other things, such articles as "On the Aims and Means of Protection of Nature", "Social Organization of Protection of Nature", "On the Law on the Protection of Nature", "A Remark on International Protection of Nature and its Development", "The Tatra Mountains and American

At the outset, it has to be underlined that Pawlikowski was not a theorist in the first place and had no philosophical aspirations, therefore any direct comparison between him and Paulhan or Simmel or any other philosopher would be risky.[17] Pawlikowski's aim was to prompt the general public as well as local authorities to appreciate and therefore to protect landscapes, primarily natural ones. Thus, he developed a theoretical approach only insofar as he needed it to provide a general basis for the practices he opted for, i.e. for a sort of respectful landscape management. This is the reason why his "philosophy of landscape" has to be extracted from his writings on the role and aims of the protection of nature, which entails the need to interpret his views in such a way as to apply them to landscapes.

Some preliminary remarks are required here. First of all, although wild nature was his chief concern (predominantly nature that could be found in the Tatra Mountains at that time, to be precise[18]), he did not draw a dividing line between natural landscapes and cultural ones. There are two reasons for this. On the one hand, he thought that every landscape is made of nature that can be either left untouched or shaped by human hand. As he was of the opinion that the need to protect the former was much more urgent and that it was paradigmatic for nature in general, it was on it that he focused more. On the other hand, he was very fond of the folklore of the Tatra region, which he thought to be in such a perfect harmony with the

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National Parks", "Style a Social Phenomenon", "On the Art of the Tatra Region"). His theories have been analyzed quite extensively in the past few years (all literature on this topic is in Polish except for one article: Barbara Tondos, "The idea of vernacularity and Jan Gwalbert Pawlikowski," in *Vernacular Art in Central Europe*, ed. Jacek Purchla (Cracow: International Cultural Centre, 2001, 361-275). Although his commitment to nature protection is well known in Poland, his ideas have never been interpreted in the light of aesthetics of landscapes – on that topic see this author's: "Lice ziemi". Filozofia krajobrazu Jana Gwalberta Pawlikowskiego" ("The Face of the Earth. Jan Gwalbert Pawlikowski's Philosophy of Landscape"), *Widok. Teorie i praktyki kultury wizualnej"*, 8 (2014) [http://pismo-widok.org/index.php/one/article/view/225/437. last access: January 31, 2017]; the present text is partly based on the Polish version of that article.

[17] His *Culture and Nature* was published in 1913, i.e. in the same year as the texts written by the other two authors, see footnote 4.

[18] The Tatra Mountains in southern Poland are a mountain range in the Carpathian Mountains.

surrounding landscape that it was difficult to tell where culture ended and where nature started – in a sense, the Tatra culture seemed natural to him. It is, however, implied in his theory that everything he said about the protection of natural landscapes may be applied to cultural ones, too, as all the landscapes, with no exceptions, contain nature.[19]

Second of all, Pawlikowski used the term *landscape* (*krajobraz*) but he never explicitly defined it. He seems to have understood it in geographical terms, i.e. as the appearance of the surface of the Earth – this is the reason why he uses the expression "the face of the Earth".[20] Yet, if one takes into consideration how he justifies the need for protecting nature, one readily sees that his approach is much more complex and that landscape has more dimensions than the material one implied by his *prima facie* physiographic approach, which makes it possible to speak of his "philosophy of landscape".

Third of all, one cannot forget that Pawlikowski's writings necessarily depend on the *Zeitgeist*. He was deeply influenced by Polish Romantic and Neoromantic literature that shaped the intellectual atmosphere in which he lived and worked. This explains some of his convictions, e.g. an opinion that on the one hand wild nature is paradisiacal and thus has to be left unspoiled while on the other, that it has to be conquered in a sportlike manner. His Neoromantic inspirations were also responsible for his hostility toward industrialized cities as well as his partiality for vernacular culture, which he takes to be an extension of nature and hence a paradigm for future culture. Finally, Pawlikowski's political views made him underline the national dimension of landscapes and their protection as well as promote the idea of *Heimat* and *Heimatschutz*.[21]

Although Pawlikowski deeply loved wilderness and was fascinated by the American national parks, he was a realist inasmuch as his theoretical *credo* underscored that humanity had irrevocably changed nature which

[19] Pawlikowski's views are as original as they are eclectic. He was conversant with the legal solutions (and their theoretical premises) adopted in various European countries in order to protect landscapes, yet he thought that they were all one-sided because they favoured either cultural or natural landscapes . He tried to combine these ideas into one theory (see his list of "motives for protecting nature" discussed below).

[20] In fact he borrowed it from Eliza Orzeszkowa, a famous, 19th-century Polish female writer.

[21] Pawlikowski was a member of a right-wing conservative party.

lost its virgin quality forever. As a result he dismissed any Rousseauian ideas of going back to nature as futile, for in fact they were based on the assumption that it is possible for people to go back to a pre-cultural state. According to Pawlikowski, humanity necessarily acts in such a way that it changes the "face of the Earth" in an unnatural way. Hence the crux lies in shaping the relationship between culture and nature in an appropriate fashion. An advisable mode of proceeding in this respect would consist of creating culture which would form a sort of harmony with nature, or a unity in which they would not cease to be what they are, yet they would not be opposites. That it is more than a chimera had been proved, according to him, by past societies and contemporary folk culture. The historical change that made culture theoretically and practically unfavourable toward nature was the advent of modernity together with the industrial revolution, which was epitomized in the constant growth of the cities. Yet, as Pawlikowski underlined, the beauty of wild nature had been discovered by nothing else than the bourgeois culture. Thus, the very same culture that was responsible for the destruction of wild nature (and the countryside as well), found nature to be a cultural good. The protection of nature was then a strictly modern invention: on the one hand it was (and still is) a necessity resulting from nature's exploitation and on the other – it is a cultural achievement characteristic for the well-developed countries.

In other words, in Pawlikowski's view protecting nature amounts less to leaving it untouched than to using it in such a way as to allow its non-utilitarian values to unfold. Nature's protection should therefore be driven not by a pragmatic concern but rather by an ethical one. He described protection of nature in ethical terms, claiming that it was based on human obligation and responsibility toward beings other than humans, or – as he wrote – towards "the whole silent kingdom" (having borrowed this expression from Adam Mickiewicz, a famous Polish Romantic poet).[22] He explained that, historically speaking, such an approach had stemmed from a more general, emotional attitude toward nature that was typical for the modern period and was expressed, among other things, by the urge of city-dwellers to walk in the countryside or hike in the mountains which, by the way, was another form of nature's abuse.[23] However, the fact that the

[22] Such an ethical approach is quite frequent among contemporary environmental thinkers, see footnote 10.

[23] See footnote 7.

19th century saw the birth of a sentimental love of nature on a mass scale did not mean to him that nature had not been treated as an object of appreciation before. To Pawlikowski, the fact that one does not know earlier expressions of such an emotional bond between people and their surroundings does not prove that these people were insensitive to the qualities of landscapes. Examples of such an unexpressed love to nature may be found, again, in folk culture. In a word, he claimed the landscape was not a modern invention while its protection was.[24]

What endows nature's protection with its ideal – as Pawlikowski wrote – character and thus makes it one of the noblest cultural practices is its disinterestedness. Nature should be protected as having inherent values as well as regardless of its being indispensable for people's existence. According to Pawlikowski, given that nature is priceless these values cannot be, strictly speaking, capitalized, but they are nonetheless real and may be used to counterbalance economic assets and as such may effectively enter the agenda of landscape management.

It is precisely these values that Pawlikowski referred to when he discussed the reasons to protect nature. Although the values under consideration are said to be inherent to landscapes, they are – as he claimed – assigned to them by people. In other words, in order to be protected a landscape has to be perceived as having inherent values, independent from the person who wants to protect it. When Pawlikowski analyzed different motives for protection, he in fact defined a set of values that landscapes may be thought to have in themselves. Thus, these values may be interpreted as factors that determine different ways of understanding landscapes.

The motives Pawlikowski enumerated were as follows: 1) an "aesthetic and landscape-centered motive", 2) "a scientific motive", 3) "a historical and commemorative motive", 4) "a regional motive".

The first of the above motives is related to aesthetic qualities of landscapes. What is to be protected is the beauty (or sublimity) of a landscape that he interprets according to the picturesque tradition: a landscape is beautiful when it resembles a painted view. Thus, the beauty is mainly visual and human intervention may aesthetically ruin landscapes by introducing eyesores into them. Accordingly, aesthetically good human works seem natural insofar as they are rooted in the landscape and enter into a harmonious dialogue with it. A paradigm of such a felicitous relationship

[24] See footnote 6.

could be found – as it has already been mentioned – in no other phenomenon than the vernacular architecture typical for the Tatra region. In this respect he was, without any doubt, quite traditional. Yet, curiously enough, he did not limit the aesthetic dimension of landscapes to their art-like aspects as he underlined that nature might be bodily experienced, too, as it happens when one is climbing a mountain. What is more, it is possible to find passages in his writings where he declares that this sort of multisensorial, organic experience stemming from one's actual immersion in a landscape is the richest form of landscape appreciation. In other words, Pawlikowski's views echo the ideas of his predecessors and contemporaries in this respect but at the same time they assume a "phenomenological" tone and consequently avoid possible critique that may have been sparked by the exclusively artistic understanding of landscape.[25]

The second motive for nature's protection, i.e. the scientific one, refers to the fact that a landscape contains various data indispensable for research on the origin and history of the place – or Earth in general – which in turn enables one to understand its present conditions. Wild nature should be then protected as a "laboratory and scientific museum" which may be passed onto subsequent generations. Getting to know the landscape amounts then to elaborating an adequate view of it as well as becoming familiar with it. These two aspects are combined in view of the fact that "cognitive impressions have their emotional shade", as Pawlikowski wrote. However, the study of nature does not have to be necessarily scientific and so it is not restricted only to professionals. In many respects a general everyday knowledge is much more important for it lays foundations for respect for nature: when people know their surroundings they do not treat them as alien territory that can be freely used and abused.

The scientific approach is hardly ever sufficient by itself, since it overlooks possible cultural aspects that almost every landscape has. Even in natural landscapes cultural factors may play a prominent role. Pawlikowski claimed that even a legend associated with trees or stones was a good reason to protect them. It has to be noted, however, that what in fact is protected in such cases is not only a physical object which has its own qualities (aesthetic and non-aesthetic ones) but also an immaterial heritage with which one has to become acquainted.

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[25] See footnote 13.

The most important is the fourth motive as in a sense it subsumes the other three even if – as Pawlikowski stated – it is not very different from the first one. What is more, it pertains chiefly to cultural landscapes and unlike the others it has serious political implications. As far as the regional motive is concerned, the asset to be protected is the individual character of a region construed as a result of interaction of natural and human actions. More importantly, the individuality of landscape may be understood in two different ways. On the one hand, it may be interpreted as the entirety of what makes a region objectively different from other regions and may be identified from an extra-regional viewpoint. On the other hand, the individual character of landscape may be understood as a specific character felt solely by those who live in a landscape and thus are its parts. As far as regional values (which have much in common with the idea of *Heimat*) are concerned, both perspectives are to be taken into consideration, yet the emic approach is to supersede the etic one. If one were to appreciate a landscape as an external observer they should not dismiss the dwellers' perspective as it is constitutive to that landscape. Thus, such an approach may be said to include the scientific and historical approaches, as it requires specific cultural knowledge thanks to which the *ethos* is revealed.[26]

It is noteworthy that this aspect of Pawlikowski's theory means that he effectively broadened the idea of landscape. Traditionally speaking, landscapes have been identified with spectacular places, which have made such expressions as "everyday landscape" sound preposterous. Pawlikowski implicitly claimed instead that banal places were landscapes too, insofar as they were meaningful to people who lived in them (or if not for any other reason than because they were scientifically interesting).[27]

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[26] See footnote 1.

[27] This is how landscapes are conceived of in e.g. humanistic geography; the idea that a landscape does not have to be necessarily spectacular is now widely acknowledged as attested to by the European Landscape Convention which reads: "(…) the landscape is an important part of the quality of life for people everywhere: in urban areas and in the countryside, *in degraded areas as well as in areas of high quality, in areas recognised as being of outstanding beauty as well as everyday areas*" (*European Landscape Convention* (2000), Preamble; http://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/rms/0900001680080621. Last access: January 31, 2017; italicized by author – M.S.).

In fact, Pawlikowski's efforts to inspire and animate the protection of nature or – more broadly – the protection of landscapes, were directed at propagating a sort of landscape sensibility which would be an important ingredient of the emic perspective on a national level. He wanted Polish landscapes – whatever they were as long as they were thought to have inherent values – to become a common good recognized and respected by all the citizens regardless of their actual place of origin.

To conclude, apart from the fact that Pawlikowski's views are an interesting intellectual document of his times and milieu, they are worthy of note because they have not become out of date, which is quite astonishing given that the theory of landscape protection (not to mention the aesthetics of landscape) has been recently developed to such an extent. What is more, they still are an inspiring example of how theoretical arguments may be intertwined with practical life.

As far as the former are concerned, it has to be said that his implicit "philosophy of landscape" was quite ahead of his times as it foreran the ideas that have gained in importance well after he had written his articles and have been under discussion ever since. Were one to offer a definition of landscape based on Pawlikowski's ideas, one would have to state that a landscape is "an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors"[28], where 'perceive' should be taken to mean to perceive an area as having either aesthetic qualities, or its "content", or historical values, or as a place meaningful to people who dwell in it. If the notion that a landscape may be conceived as an area of natural resources (which Pawlikowski does not allow) is added to the list, then the above definition seems complete in the sense that it covers all the possible terms in which people may perceive or think of their surroundings. Thus, Pawlikowski's "philosophy of landscape" may have important practical ramifications for landscape management insofar as it presents different understandings of landscapes as equally valid albeit more often than not contradictory.

Not only are landscapes common goods that have to be cared for but also they are areas of real conflicts stemming from clashes between different ways in which people perceive or think of their surroundings. The contemporary value of Pawlikowski's theory lies in that it offers a framework in which discussions on what to do with landscapes, how

[28] *European Landscape Convention*, art. 1.

to protect, use and design them, can be conducted in a rational manner based on testing various understandings of landscape in discursive application.[29]

[29] Thus, Pawlikowski's theory may be seen as a predecessor to environmental hermeneutics construed as an approach which is supposed to offer a common ground on which to discuss different modes of interpreting environments and to mediate inevitable conflicts between various notions of what a landscape is and what people can do with it, see e.g. John van Buren, "Environmental Hermeneutics. Deep in the Forest," in: *Interpreting Nature: The Emerging Field of Environmental Hermeneutics*, ed. Forrest Clingerman, Brian Treanor, Martin Drenthen, David Utsler (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 17–35.

Mis-construction: Changes in the arts and aesthetics East and West

Curtis L. Carter

In much of Western aesthetics since the 18th century, the separation of art and everyday life experience was grounded in a Kantian concept of beauty with the experience of art being valued for its ability to generate aesthetic experiences characterized by disinterestedness. Disinterested experience of art was founded in the free play of the mental powers of imagination, independently of desire or sensuous pleasure, and practical or other worldly consequences. Art thus was a creation of free imagination, and distinct from the world of nature and the practical activities and objects used in everyday life. Since the beginning of the 20th century, the thinking and practice in Western art has transitioned from what Thierry de Duve referred to as two distinct mental habits in our thinking concerning art: one follows the Kantian line and perhaps is focused on canonical masterpieces of the past, the other offers a habit of resistance grounded in the Avant-garde.[1] One question for us today concerns what changes have resulted from current reflections on these two polarities, and how are we to understand the outcome for contemporary practices in world art?

The relation of art to other aspects of living experiences in Chinese life appears to offer a different understanding than what exists in the West. Apropos of the differences, some Chinese scholars argue that the transition from everyday life to art in Chinese aesthetics does not suffer the rupture of these two domains, art and everyday life, that is apparent in Western approaches to art. This question is raised in the exhibition, *Pan Gongkai: Dispersion and Generation, 2013* at the Today Museum in Beijing, and in discussions on this topic with the artist.

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[1] Thierry de Duve, *Kant After Duchamp* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1996, paper edition, 1999), 20–24.

In this essay, I will first examine the problem of the relation of art to everyday life and its objects with a view of contributing to the understanding of how non-art such as found objects become art in reference to Western art. The focus will be mainly on the transformation of the non-aesthetic into resistance or Avant-garde art, as characterized by Thierry de Duve.[2]

As the situation concerning the relation of art and the aesthetic to everyday life in Chinese culture appears to differ from the practices in the West, I will also explore these differences with reference to the concept of Mis-construction found in the art and thought of Chinese artist and theorist Pan Gongkai.

I. Testing the boundaries in Western art

Since the beginning of the 20th century, the question of boundaries for distinguishing what can properly be labelled art, versus what does not fit under this label is referenced in various contexts. Marcel Duchamp challenged the art practices of the early 20th century with his ready-mades, consisting of found objects, which he then presented as art. According to Duchamp's account Ready-mades chosen by Duchamp consisted of manufactured artefacts that he took from their usual places in the world of useful everyday objects, and positioned them in exhibitions or galleries normally reserved for such items as sculptures and paintings.

Among Duchamp's ready-mades were his famous "In Advance of a Broken Arm," 1915 and "Fountain," 1917. The work, "In Advance of a Broken Arm" came into the world as what is otherwise known in the USA as a snow shovel. In fact, Duchamp, being French, reportedly had not seen an American snow shovel, and hence may have been unfamiliar with its function. In the case of "Fountain," its usual function as a urinal in a public toilet, would not likely result in a case of mistaken identity, however many material properties of its form it might share with a work of sculpture. Duchamp simply acquired the urinal from the J. L. Mott iron works plumbing supply company in New York and attached the signature, R.

[2] Thierry de Duve, "The Invention of Non-Art: A History," *Art Forum* (February, 2014): 13–23, and Thierry de Duve, "The Invention of Art: A Theory," *Art Forum* (March 2014): 24–33

Mott and the date of 1917. He then offered the piece for inclusion in an exhibition in the process of being organized by the Society of Independent Artists in New York in 1917. In part, his aim was to challenge the democratic admission policy of the exhibition's organizing committee, of which he was a member. His fellow committee member, the painter Joseph Stella, was not amused, and the original piece was never actually shown.[3]

"Fountain's" continued presence, as arguably the most influential work in modern Western art history, has relied on a photograph by Alfred Stieglitz, an American photographer and modern art promoter, and a series of replicas of the original. The original "Fountain" disappeared soon after its being photographed. In any event, we may be assured that Duchamp's interest was in the idea he intended to convey rather than any material properties that the urinal might possess. What was his idea? In this case, he meant to call into question traditional notions such as beauty that had served throughout Western history from ancient Greece as a feature attached to art.

The main point of Duchamp's ready-mades then was to challenge the prevailing notion that perceptual features of an object such as beauty provided a basis for identifying works of art. Instead, Duchamp proposed, a pre-version of Conceptual art where ideas, instead of perceptual features, are the key features of art works. Or, perhaps he meant to question whether the idea of art as a discrete category of experience served any useful purpose at all. That is, whether it is necessary to set apart art from the artefacts and experiences that we encounter in everyday life.

It is useful to note briefly the strategies that enabled Duchamp to challenge the view that art resided in a domain apart from other aspects of life experiences. What were the conditions necessary to transform these manufactured objects into works of art? Most importantly, Duchamp is already acknowledged as an artist of recognized credentials in the Western modern art world. Hence, his standing in the art world brought credibility, alongside controversy, to his experiments with ready-mades. Although he declined to be formally identified with Dadaism or Surrealism, the leading Western art movements of the time, he was well respected in both circles. Secondly, Duchamp was inclined to question established traditions by his

[3] Martin Gayford, "Duchamp's Fountain: The Practical Joke that Launched an Artistic Revolution," *The Telegraph,* February 16, 2008, accessed May 24, 2017, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/art/3671180/Duchamps-Fountain-The-practical-joke-that-launched-an-artistic-revolution.html

very character. This is evident throughout his art, even when it concerned his earlier paintings such as "Nude Descending Stair Case No. 2," 1912. (This work created a near sensation when it was shown at the New York Armory Show in 1913.) Further, Duchamp lived in an age where experimentation and the testing of new ideas and inventions invited changes in what was considered art. For example, photography and film increasingly challenged the assumptions concerning art based on painting and other forms of representation. New technologies in communication (the telephone and radio), industrial mass production, and the rise of sophisticated urban cultures in cities such as Paris and New York opened the way to new thin-king and interpretation of art.

Skipping ahead to the 1960s, we find another emerging paradigm shift concerning the question of the identity of works of art. Since Duchamp's intervention into art of the 1920's, the pantheon of art movements has expanded to embrace a variety of art styles including Dada and Surrealism, Abstract Expressionism and Minimalism (all continued to focus on art as a distinct entity separate from other aspects of human experience). With the rise of Pop Art, and in particular Andy Warhol's "Brillo Box," 1964, Conceptual art resurfaces. For example, perceptual differences between Warhol's "Brill Box" and a visually similar box that contains Brillo pads in a commercial warehouse are found insufficient to distinguish art from non-art. And then, the field of art opens through the doors of Postmodernism to a sea of artistic pluralism. Western art embraces not only these prior movements but traditional Realism, Neo-Dadaist Fluxus art, Neo-Surrealism, Neo-Expressionism, and whatever variations an individual artist might choose to introduce.

One result of these changes is that the challenge to previously held distinctions between art and non-art, foretold in Duchamp's championing of the ready-mades finds fertile ground in mid-20th century contemporary art. Consequently, the search for the aesthetic in Western art is increasingly open to "found art" and other forms of life not previously acknowledged in the Western art world. For example, consider the Turner Prize award winning British artist, Tracy Emin's (b. 1963) conceptual art installation, "My Bed", 1999. This work consists of "an unmade bed strewn with personal items, condoms, blood stained panties, bedroom slippers, bottles.[4] What

[4] Tracy Emin, "My Bed, 1998" *Encyclopedia of Visual Arts,* Internet, 3/11/2014. Exhibited at the Tate Gallery in 1999 and acquired by Charles Saatchi Gallery.

connects Tracy Emin's ensemble to art is a concept accepted by the contemporary art world, and the actions of appropriating found objects for creating art as initiated by the artist. Here, the artist is acting as an agent linking this particular set of objects assembled in a particular time-space module to the history of art. Emin's status as agent is validated by the art world: art school (London Royal Academy MA), museum exhibitions (Tate Gallery) and gallery exhibitions (Charles Saatchi), as well as the prestigious Turner Prize and the extensive media recognition accorded her work.

It is important to note here, that even when the form or material content of the art is drawn from found objects that had another form of existence outside of art, their status as art still depends on their being set apart from their prior life and being drawn into a separate space as developed by the art world and being given a new artistic identity. This process takes place through the found object's being transformed by subsumption under a concept or theory of art that originates and resides within the separate domain of art. There is the additional consideration that Emin's "My Bed" offers a narrative or a story coming out of the life experiences of the artist that contributes to other narratives in the history of art, not unlike other narratives that link contemporary art to art's history.[5]

II. Aesthetics and art in Chinese culture

There are important differences in how ideas or objects get positioned in the art and aesthetic realms, respectively in Chinese and Western culture. To address this question, it is necessary first to cite briefly certain assumptions that are carried forth in Chinese understanding of this matter. Starting from the period of the Six Dynasties (226-589) there appears to be no particular term that would serve as beauty has in the West to embrace art practices, or to differentiate art practices from everyday life.

Here I must rely on the scholarship of Zong-qi Cai for an account of the various terms such as *mei, yixiang,* and *wen* that have been offered from time to time to serve as an organizing concept parallel to beauty in Western aesthetics. Zong concludes that all of these proposed counterparts for Western beauty in Chinese culture fall short and do not reach consensus. He

[5] Noël Carroll, "Identifying Art," in *Philosophy of Art: A Contemporary Introduction* (London-New York: Routledge, 1999), 249-264.

nevertheless concludes that the serious practices of art and the presence of theories corresponding to these practices in Chinese society warrant the application of the term aesthetics, and offer prospects for a fruitful exploration of aesthetics broadly defined between Western and Chinese cultures.[6]

Perhaps one of the reasons for the relative absence in Chinese culture of concepts such as the Western notion of beauty is that no sharp division setting apart art from the remainder of living in the broader sense exists in how Chinese have viewed art in reference to the whole of living. Nowhere is this more exemplified than in the Chinese garden. The garden represents an idealized space where the sensible (physical nature) and the super sensible (mind and spirit), the sacred and the ordinary, design and function, and intimations of the cosmic heaven merge with earthly life. Images of a garden understood in this context might include various kinds of images available for contemplation including physical objects such as "bamboo groves, fish ponds, pavilions, meandering brooks, winding paths"[7] as well as rocks transported from nature to exemplify mountains. To the extent that paintings, sculptures, calligraphy and poems music, architecture, and other arts enter into the experience of the garden, as Zong-qi Cai has noted, their presence is made part of, or blended into the ambience created by the physical environment. The garden, often located in the midst of an urban environment, offers a space for contemplating nature and one's place in the complex of beliefs linking heaven and earthly life.

Moving beyond the garden experience, a central notion in Chinese aesthetics is this: the art of living, or life as art. This notion emphasizes the point that art is not something outside the boundaries of everyday life, but that art exists as an integral part of the forms of human life. This means that calligraphy, poetry, music, painting and the other arts are simply a part of everyday life and do not require a baptism into a realm of art, understood as something apart from other aspects of living, as seems to be required in Western art and aesthetics. Nature, with its mountains, streams, trees, and foliage, is an important source of inspiration and appreciation. Often the images from nature such as mountains and streams, as well as birds and flowers, are fed into life experiences through the forms of

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[6] Zong-qi Cai, "Prologue: A Historical Overview of Six Dynasties Aesthetics," in *Chinese Aesthetics: The Ordering of Literature, the Arts, and the Universe in the Six Dynasties*, ed. Zong-qi Cai (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004), 20–24.

[7] Zong-qi Cai, *Chinese Aesthetics*, 8.

discourse made live in the on-going stream of the arts of calligraphy, poetry and painting, as well as through sounds in music. These arts thus filter back the spiritual inspiration initially drawn from nature into the everyday experiences of the people, informing and inspiring daily life.

III. Mis-construction and the understanding of art East/West

The work of the artist and theorist Pan Gongkai, whose art was presented in the exhibition "Dispersion and Generation" at the Heijiang Province Museum (March, 2014) and previously in the Today Museum in Beijing (March 2013), invites further reflection as to how, or whether the views concerning the connectedness of art to everyday life might still hold in the actual practices of contemporary Chinese artists. Pan's art embraces a wide range of art practices ranging from contemporary calligraphy and ink paintings to design and modelling of architectural spaces. Each of these in its own way connects the art to the streams of everyday life. Calligraphy's forms and ink paintings both in their respective ways, "partake of worldly shapes and appearances" resembling "sitting and walking, flying and moving,"…"being sad and happy," …"water and fire, clouds and mists, mountain or stream or sun and moon."[8] Proceeding without fixed rules of composition, the forms of calligraphy and painting take us beyond the literal with their infinite varieties of lines and shapes freely imagined as needed to convey an idea or a feeling. Neither the brushwork of calligraphy nor painting gives us literal pictures. Rather, they form in the mind of the receiver experiences that metaphorically connect the recipient with nature and the built environments of human culture, perhaps even merging the spiritual and the physical, heaven and earth.

Pan Gongkai's concept of mis-construction as it applies to everyday life in Chinese culture today requires a different approach from the prevailing practices of art and life in Western cultures. Mis-construction is one of the key themes in his exhibition "Dispersion and Generation." Pan's theory of mis-construction or "fault-structure" as it is called in his thesis book, *On the Boundary of Western Modern Art,* consists of an examination of the

[8] Ronald Egan, "Nature and Higher Ideals in Texts on Calligraphy, Music, and Painting," in *Chinese Aesthetics: The Ordering of Literature, the Arts, and the Universe in the Six Dynasties*, ed. Zong-qi Cai (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004), 285.

relation of art and the rest of human life in Western culture as compared to the aesthetic in Chinese life.[9] As Pan views the situation, life in Western culture operates on two roads, one of these represents the road to survival and the development of human beings based on basic life requirements that form social history. The other road, where art is positioned, represents a search for human freedom apart from the rest of life as documented in the history of art. These two "worlds" coexist, but do not become reconciled. The result is an obdurate mis-construction that leaves art in Western culture in an astatic condition, often having to struggle to justify its existence when placed in competition with basic other requirements of life.[10]

Hence, one aspect of mis-construction points to the problem of how everyday life experiences are to be understood in reference to art and aesthetics. Of course, today in China the environment is increasingly dominated by densely populated urban sites that are being transformed daily with new construction and the demolishing of the old. And the compartmentalization of the world into categories such as East and West is called into question by large-scale globalization, resulting in change and transformation of both East and West. These changes are motivated in part by the forces of *dispersion* and *generation* as suggested in the themes of Pan's exhibition. Dispersion of ideas and practices across traditional national boundaries invites the collaboration of civilizations East and West. And experimental investigations along these lines offer new possibilities for rethinking the future including generation of new ideas and practices embracing the fullest scope of the human mind.

How these new conditions will alter the understanding of life as art is not clear at this point. Idea as expressed in calligraphy, spirit experienced in painting, and harmony in music will likely be recast with the changing environments as they have in the generations past, but will continue to be key links to the understanding of Chinese life as art.[11]

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[9] Pan Gongkai, *On The Boundary of the Western Modern Art,* originally conceived and drafted as a visiting scholar at the East Asian Studies Institute, University of California at Berkeley, 1992-1994.

[10] As reported in Sue Wang, "Pan Gongkai The Boundary and the End of Art," referencing a lecture given by Pan Gongkai at the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing November 19, 2013. The lecture was based in part on Pan Gongkai's *On The Boundary of the Western Modern Art, originally written* 1992–1994.

[11] Egan, "Nature and Higher Ideals," 304.

IV. Change and exceptions: Everyday life and art

While the discussion here has mainly emphasized differences in the understanding of art's relation to life in general as seen in Western and Chinese views, it is important to recognize that actual life experiences and artistic practices in both cultures are subject to exceptions and also to change. For example, Walter Benjamin, writing in 1925, gives an account of everyday life in Naples, a city in Italy known for its vibrant life style. For Benjamin at that time, it seemed that art functions as an essential part of daily street life:

The street decorations are loosely related to those of the theatre. Paper plays the main part. Strips of red, blue and yellow flypaper, altars of glossy coloured paper on the walls, paper rosettes on the raw chunks of meat. Then the virtuosity of the variety shows. Someone kneels on the asphalt, a little box beside him, and it is one of the busiest streets. With coloured chalk he draws the figure of Christ on the stone, below it perhaps the head of the Madonna. Meanwhile a circle has formed around him. The artist gets up, and while he waits beside his work (…) coins fall from the onlookers (…) onto his portrait. He gathers them up, everyone disperses, and in a few minutes the picture is erased by feet.[12]

In another account of street life in Naples, Benjamin continues:

Music parades about – not mournful music for the courtyards, but brilliant sounds for the street. A broad cart, a kind of xylophone, is colourfully hung with song texts (…) One of the musicians turns the organ while the other, beside it, appears with his collection cup before anyone who stops dreamily to listen. So everything joyful is mobile: music, toys, ice cream circulate through the streets. The music is both a residue of the last and a prelude to the next feast day.[13]

Looking at the situation in a more contemporary setting, the practices of street art and graffiti in Western cities represent forms of art that defy, or at least count as exceptions. They show that art in some forms emerges

[12] Walter Benjamin, with Asja Lacis, "Naples," *Frankfurter Zeitung, 1925.*Translated by Edmund Jephcott. In *Walter Benjamin Selected Writings: Volume 1, 1913–1926 edited by Marcus Bullock and Michael We. Jennings* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press, Harvard University Press, 199), 417.
[13] Ibid.

directly out of everyday life experiences in the West. The same might be said for street musicians and even pop concerts where the musicians, often self-taught, bring their art to the public in both informal and formal performance spaces.

With respect to the question of art in the main stream of everyday life, there are issues to be noted on the Chinese side as well. Of particular interest in this respect are works in the category of experimental art such as Xu Bing's "Book from the Sky or Heavenly Book," 1987 and "Ghosts Pounding the Wall," 1990. "Book of the Sky," 1987, consists of a monumental tablet of markings with the appearance of calligraphy, which could not be understood, leading to confusion and frustration. The result was a work that challenged a some 3000 year old tradition of reliance on calligraphy as both aesthetic expression and practical means of recording the transactions of history. "Ghosts Pounding the Wall" consists of a series of rubbings on paper of a 30 metre section of the historic long wall, a signature monument in China's history. This symbolic reconstruction was orchestrated by Xu Bing over a period of 24 days and recorded and documented on video and film.[14] This work consisted of ink impressions on rice paper, a process used in the reproduction of fine calligraphy, in the shape of a large scroll of 1000 meters ending in a tomb-like pile of dirt. Although the performance creating the work took place in China, the paper rubbing was introduced in a Western museum after Xu Bing's departure to live in the USA in 1990.

The question is, how do experimental arts such as these works fit into the Chinese view of life as art? Both pieces address important national symbols (calligraphy and the long wall), but in ways that seem to position themselves outside the main flow of everyday life in China. What was the message of Xu Bing's and others' creations of unreadable calligraphy? Was it that calligraphy has become a form of conceptual abstract art, or perhaps it offers the political message that calligraphy, or language in general is not to be trusted uncritically as a vehicle for presenting truth?

In "Ghosts Pounding the Wall" the Long Wall's meaning for Chinese culture as a national symbol extending as far back as 221 B.C., is again subject to examination. On one level "Ghosts Pounding the Wall" reflects

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[14] Wu Hung, *Transience: Chinese Experimental Art at the End of the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: The David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago Press, 2005), 31–34.

the experimental interests in printmaking of the artist who was a professor of print-making at the time at the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing, while at the same time transmitting symbolically the traces of history left on the surfaces of the wall. On another level, Xu Bing's "Ghosts Pounding the Wall" perhaps exemplifies scepticism about the traditional memories embedded in the Long Wall, ostensibly intended to keep out strangers. By analogy, the extraordinary scale of manpower necessary to produce "Ghosts Pounding the Wall," raising doubts as to beneficial outcomes, perhaps suggests metaphorically a similar futility in the production of the wall at great expense of human labour and other costs.[15]

How are we to view these and other works of contemporary experimental art? Do they represent a departure from the Chinese tradition of viewing art as connected to everyday life? Put another way, what is the place of experimental arts in the evolving climate of contemporary Chinese society?

Initially one might be inclined to assume that such experimental art lies outside the mainstream of art and life in Chinese aesthetics. However, given that the issues raised by both Pan Gongkai's and Xu Bing's art concern pivotal questions relevant to the future of art and life in Chinese culture, I conclude that these developments are in fact raising issues of vital importance to the future of Chinese culture and arts. Hence, it is necessary that we find ways to incorporate these new forms of art into the on-going history of the aesthetics in life that has so far distinguished the main stream of Chinese life and art from that of the West. This does not mean, of course that Chinese artists and society can ignore the flow of ideas from the West that an increasingly globalized world offers. Only that Chinese society can selectively appropriate what enhances understanding and enriches the forms and content of it art present and future.

[15] "Ghosts Pounding the Wall," *Bellebyrd* 25 October, 2005. http:www.xubing.com. Lucien van Valen, "Ghosts and Lovers on the Great Wall of China," *Bellebyrd* 25 October, 2005. www.lucienvanvalen.nl/paginas/Ghosts%20 Lovers.html.

V. Conclusion

Based on the discussion offered here, the differences between Western and Chinese approaches have offered two different directions to understanding the place of art in reference to other aspects of life. For the Western views, the main stream has shown two tracks one focused on art as a different path of human experience from the other aspects of life. This division has led Pan Gongkai to view the division of life and art in the West as a cultural mis-construction or logical flaw. In contrast, the main trajectory of art and the aesthetic in Chinese culture finds art and aesthetics positioned as part of the mainstream of life.

Still, our investigation shows that the division is not always operative, as there are at least minor instances (Naples street life) when the aesthetic and art are integrated into the everyday life in the West. On another level, the emergence of experimental arts in China, poses challenges to the tradition wherein art and aesthetic remain conjoined.

The investigations begun by Pan Gongkai, especially in his architectural works, invites further reflection on the two modes of understanding for art and the aesthetic. Here, he ponders the bridges being shaped by evolving globalization, which draws closer Western and Chinese understandings of aesthetic and other aspects of culture. His investigations on the future of East-West connections are buoyed with scholarly investigations East and West. Directing attention to perceived differences between Chinese and Western understandings of art and aesthetics has drawn increasing attention from scholars East and West. Among the rapidly increasing number of books on this topic are the Chinese aesthetician Liu Yuedi's 1997 work, *Living Aesthetics and Art Experience: Aesthetics as Life, Art as Experience, 1997;* American author Zachary Simpson's, *Life as Art: Aesthetics and the Creation of Self, 2012*; and the collection of essays, *Aesthetics of Everyday Life East and West, 2015*, edited by Liu Yuedi and the author. The latter collection examines the subject from a variety of Eastern and Western scholars' perspectives.[16]

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[16] Liu Yuedi, *Living Aesthetics and Art Experience: Aesthetics as Life, Art as Experience* (Nanjing: Nanjing Publishing House, 2007). Zachary Simpson, *Life as Art:Aesthetics and the Creation of Self* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012). Liu Yuedi and Curtis L. Carter, (eds.), *Aesthetics of Everyday Life East and West* 2015).

These scholarly developments and the movements stirring among artists working today in China and the West represent points of convergence. Artists in the West who employ found objects are at least in step with the aim of moving beyond the stage when art resides outside the main avenues of everyday life. Thus, for better or worse, it would appear that the disjuncture between fine art and everyday life in Western culture mandated by the Kantian aesthetic of disinterestedness has given way. That is, the assumed division between actions and artefacts of everyday life in the world and art is slowly moving toward collapse. At the same time the spirit of invention and openness to new forms of art that has dominated art in the West is also contributing to changes in the art of China.

THE WOMAN-AND-TREE MOTIF IN THE ANCIENT AND CONTEMPORARY INDIA

Marzenna Jakubczak

I. The tree motif

Trees, these long-lived plants which provide people, animals and birds with shelter or shady refuge, and bestow us with medicine, fuel, juicy fruits and colourful flowers, these magnificent slowly growing and oxygen producing organisms, patiently bearing all storms, chills and droughts, have been loaded across cultures with a powerful symbolic potential. They seem so solid though homely and vulnerable at the same time, motionless but pliable, they change their shape and colours over seasons while they keep growing and clinging to one spot on the earth. With their branches they touch the sky, with their roots they plunge deep into the ground. No wonder trees have stimulated the mythical imagination of man through ages and became a crucial and ambiguous symbol of growth, death and rebirth for various religions. We have, for instance, the space tree, or *axis mundi*, the paradise tree of life tempting with the promise of immortality, or the Biblical tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the pre-Islamic Persian sacred *haoma* tree, and some typically Indian examples like the *aśvattha* tree[1] and

[1] The cult of tree worship in India dates back to the times of the Indus Valley Civilisation (c. 3rd Millennium BCE) and it is borne out by a seal discovered at Mohenjo-daro, now in Pakistan, which depicts a sacred tree being worshiped. Then in the Vedic period (c. 1500 – c. 500 BCE), in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 2.6.1, Yama, the god of death, while instructing young Naciketas describes the eternal *aśvattha* tree with its root upwards and branches downwards, which is the pure immortal *brahman*, in which all these worlds are situated, and beyond which there is nothing else.

the *bodhi* tree of awakening[2] under which Siddhartha Gautama attained enlightenment (*nirvāṇa*) and became the Buddha. Some of the symbolic representations of the tree gained its importance and popularity over time. Although they appear independently in different cultural and historical contexts, they seem to point to the universal or archetypal source.

In Indian tradition trees are often depicted as sentient beings and commonly become objects of adoration and worship. The worship of trees in India is understandable for many practical reasons including the fact that the forests meant rain, which was essential for a purely agricultural economy. No wonder that trees being beneficial to humanity in various respects gained a religious value and were converted into abode of tree spirits called *vanadevatās*.[3] Thus, to cut down a tree meant depriving the spirit of its home and very often if it became imperative to cut down a tree, special prayers of forgiveness were performed before the tree was cut down or another abode offered to the *vanadevatā.* What is worth emphasizing, it is not the tree that was worshipped but the spirit residing in them.[4] The belief in

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[2] The term "bodhi tree" is sometimes used in a broad sense as a category of a sacred plant associated with any sage who received enlightenment under it; for instance Kaśyapa, revered in the Hindu tradition and mentioned in numerous myths of the Puranas and the Hindu Epics, is said to attain enlightenment under *nyagrodha bodhi* tree, while *uḍumbara* is a *bodhi* tree beneath which a former Buddha, Kanak Muni, gained enlightenment. Cf. M.S. Randhawa, *The Cult of Trees and Tree-Worship in Buddhist-Hindu Sculpture* (New Delhi: All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society, 1964), 13.

[3] The sacredness of trees in Indian traditions is discussed in several recent books such as: Pankaj Jain, *Dharma and Ecology of Hindu Communities: Sustenance and Sustainability* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011); and David L. Haberman, *People Trees: Worship of Trees in Northern India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), to name just a couple. Pankaj's focus in on three communities in India that have been actively involved in preserving local flora and fauna, namely the Swadhyayas of Gujarat and Maharashtra, a 20th century sectarian movement known for their building of "tree-temples," and the Bishnoi and the Bhils, two Rajasthani communities that have been fighting to preserve their sacred groves from deforestation. Whereas Haberman describes the *pipal*, *neem*, *tulasi*, and *banyan* trees being the most widely worshipped trees in the cities in North India.

[4] Cf. Shakti M. Gupta, *Plant Myths and Traditions in India* (New Delhi: Munshiram Monoharlal, 2001. First published Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1971), xxv. A reference to *vanadevatās* or the tree spirits is also made in Kālidāsa's play *Śakuntalā* where the *vanadevatā* blesses Śakuntalā as she leaves for her husband's home.

tree spirits is not held by the Hindus only but is also popular in Buddhism as seen from the Jātaka tales.[5]

Sometimes trees are depicted in literature as expressing desires for contact with people. What is believed then is that the contact of woman pleases them in particular. Hence, in some contexts trees are made male, and are said to have some cravings and wishes every year just before blooming. In poetic similes and imaginary, trees would blossom as a result of direct or indirect contact with women.[6] They are described as craving mainly for touching (*sparśa*), embracing (*āliṅgana*), or stroking and kicking with the foot (*pādaghāta*). The range of their cravings is partly determined by a tree species, e.g. in the case of *priyaṅgu* creeper touching is desired most, but sprinkling with wine from the mouths of young women is the whim of the *bakula* tree (also known as *vakula*), the red-flowering *aśoka* tree[7] – before it blossoms again – craves for foot of a maiden or young woman's heel kicking, whereas glancing is required by the *tilaka* tree, the *kumbaraka* tree expects embracing above all, while the *mandāra* tree needs pleasurable talk and the *cūṭa* tree's desire is just feeling human's breathing upon itself, whereas the *campaka*, *nameru* and *karṇikāra* trees enjoy laughing, singing and dancing respectively.[8] It is said that specially qualified women could make a tree blossom even out of season. There are also some connections with phallic symbolism, such as a woman draping herself around a tree like

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[5] Cf. Edward Byles Cowell, ed., *The Jātaka or Stories of the Buddha's Former Births* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1895-1901), Vol.1, 253, 268; Vol. 2, 276; Vol. 4, 97.

[6] See, for instance, *Karpūramaḥjarī* 2.49: "Even the trees bloom through the secret of beauty-of-form".

[7] The *aśoka* tree, literally meaning "sorrow-less" (in Sanskrit "*nāsti śoka yasmāt*" – "it excludes griefs and worries; in Latin *saraca asoka*) is an important tree in the cultural traditions of the Indian subcontinent and adjacent areas. Interestingly, the recent bio-chemical study has proved analgesic and anti-inflammatory activity of the extracts of the leaves of *saraca asoka*. Cf. Monojit Debnath et al., "Comparative Phytochemical and Biological Evaluation of Different Extracts Obtained from the Leaves of Saraca asoka" *Pharmacognosy Journal* 2(12/2010): 476–480. doi: 10.1016/S0975-3575(10)80034-3.

[8] Cf. Albertina Nugteren, *Belief, Bounty, and Beauty. Rituals around Sacred Trees in India* (Leiden–Boston: Brill 2005), 99–100; Gustav Roth, "The Woman and Tree Motif: *Śālabhañjikā*, *Dālamālikā* in Prakrit and Sanskrit Texts with Special Reference to Śilpaśāstras Including Notes on *Dohada*," *Journal of the Asiatic Society*, *Letters and Science* 23, Vol. 23/1 (1957): 91-116.

a creeper or climber, or adopting a classical erotic position (e.g. embracing a man while raising one leg very high against him, as if climbing him).[9] Therefore, a motif of tree is sometimes combined with a motif of woman as an additional iconic element that reinforces the symbolic meaning of the whole representation.

II. The woman-and-tree motif

An excellent example of the above is a complex motif of *yakṣī*,[10] also known as *śālabhañjikā* or *dohada*, which depicts a female figure – a goddess or a woman – with a tree, usually full of flowers or fruits.[11] She is typically bending or embracing a tree branch or a trunk with her hand, often also with her leg, sometimes striking a tree trunk with her heel. The obvious association evoked by this motif is the intimate bond of a woman with nature; the idea of their interdependence and harmonious flow of vital energy between them, as two meaningful manifestations of nature, is suggested through the combined iconic emblems, that is the goddess or a woman embodying the power of life and care giver,[12] and a tree being the

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[9] Nugteren, *Belief, Bounty, and Beauty*, 102.

[10] There are some important though subtle differences in the iconic setup and symbolic load of the respective terms used in Indian context to label the woman-and-tree motif, which is exposed in more detail further in this paper, but when I discuss the topic in the most general manner I confine myself to the term *yakṣī*, taken as the most generic and primal.

[11] Discussion on the numerous visual and literary depictions of this motif one can find in the following works: Claudine Bautze-Picron, "The Lady Under the Tree. A Visual Pattern from Māyā to the Tārā and Avalokiteśvara," in Christoph Cueppers, Max Deeg & Hubert Durt, eds., *The Birth of the Buddha*. *Proceedings of the Seminar Held in Lumbini, Nepal, October 2004* (Lumbini: Lumbini International Research Institute, 2010), 193–237; M.S. Randhawa, *The Cult of Trees and Tree-Worship in Buddhist-Hindu Sculpture* (New Delhi: All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society 1964); Susan L. Huntington, *The Art of Ancient India: Buddhist, Hindu, Jain*, with contributions by John C. Huntington (New York: Weatherhill 1985); Hank Heifetz, *The Origin of the Young God: Kālidāsa's Kumārasaṃbhava* (Motilal Banarsidass: New Delhi 1990).

[12] More on trees as care givers cf. Bansi Lal Malla, *Trees in Indian Art, Mythology and Folklore* (New Delhi: Aryan Books International, 2000), 20.

subject to the natural rhythm of growth, fructification, death, and regeneration through its survived seeds. *Yakṣī/yakṣiṇī*,[13] a female counterpart of *yakṣa*,[14] in Indian mythology is a sort of semi-goddess or a female demon, sylph or fairy whose touch can make the tree blossom or bloom. As an iconic motif *yakṣī* dates back to the 2nd century BCE. The cult of *yakṣiṇīs* and *yakṣas* – the nature-spirits who are benevolent, sometimes mischievous and sexually aggressive or capricious custodians and caretakers of natural treasures, hidden in the earth and tree roots – was associated with the belief in the holiness of the trees, and also with the conviction of the presence of the god-dwelling patrons of the trees, who spread over the man's custody.

Other popular terms referring to the motif of woman and tree in the Indian tradition are *śālabhañjikā*, the most common, and *dohada*, *vṛkṣakā*, *ḍālamālikā*, *surasundariṇī*, *suravīlāsinī*, etc. Jean Phillippe Vogel, who in his paper published in 1929, collected all available information on the topic and traced in Sanskrit literature the history of the term *śālabhañjikā* literally meaning "maiden breaking a *śala* branch", found its first occurrence in a Buddhist text, referring to a flower-gathering festival in obser-

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[13] These two terms are used interchangeably in the classical Buddhist and Jain texts.

[14] In Sanskrit, the term *yakṣa*, when used in plural form, refers collectively to both female and male figures. The etymology of the term itself is unclear. Some sources suggest that the word derives from the verb *yaj*, "to worship, sacrifice"; in the Vedic form *yakṣ*, "to reveal, be revealed, move quickly, flash upon", and in the Sanskrit *yakṣ* or *pra-yakṣ*, "to honor"; or *yakṣam*, "magical power". Cf. Ram Nath Misra, *Yaksha Cult and Iconography* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1981), 9. For more detail analysis of the motif of *yakṣī* cf. Ananda Coomaraswamy, *Yakṣa: Essays in the Water Cosmology*, revised, enlarged ed. Edward Paul Schroeder (Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, 1993. First published in 1931); and on the same but with special focus on Buddhism cf.: Miranda Shaw, "Magical Lovers, Sisters, and Mothers: Yakṣiṇī-Sadhāna in Tantric Buddhism" in Cynthia Hume and Rachel Fell McDermott, eds., *Breaking Boundaries with the Goddess: New Directions in the Study of Saktism*, Essays in Honor of Narendra Nath Bhattacharyya (New Delhi: Manohar, 2009); Gail Hinich Sutherland, *The Disguises of the Demon: The Development of the Yakṣa in Hinduism and Buddhism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991); Richard S. Cohen, "Nāga, Yakṣiṇī, Buddha: Local Deities and Local Buddhism at Ajanta.", *History of Religions* 37, no. 4 (May 1998): 360–400.

vance of which women climbed *śala* trees to pluck their blossoms.[15] Undoubtedly, the ancient cult of female nature spirits and local guardians flourished and found unparalleled artistic expression in Buddhist and also in Jain[16] settings. The *yakṣī* figures, graced the railing pillars and gates of the earliest known Buddhist monuments and were among the first images to greet devotees as they entered the sacred precinct and circumambulated the *stūpa* mound enshrining the relics of the Buddha. At the *stūpa* sites of Bhārhut (ca. 2nd BCE) and Sanghol (ca. 2nd-3rd CE), the *yakṣīs*, also identified as *vṛkṣakās* (which literary means "trees"), were prominently situated on the stone pillars of the *stūpa* balustrade. At Sāñcī (2nd c. BCE) in their images tower above all who pass through the massive gateways. As Mirinda Shaw aptly observes, "it is intriguing that worshippers at shrines erected to commemorate the Buddha immediately encountered an array of voluptuous, benign goddesses whose presence and symbolic import there, as has been remarked, bear little discernible relationship to the Buddhist ethos of detachment".[17] The presence in temples of these sensuous sculptures and figures in frankly erotic poses might represent the sphere of worldly affairs and delusion, which the worshipper is to leave behind as he enters the sacred enclosure. Since the early *stūpas* were not simply tributes to the Buddha but a full-bodied outpouring of the religious sentiments of those who commissioned and worshipped at the monuments, the figures of *yakṣīs* adorn them not as decorative elements but as icons with symbolic significance. They clearly played talismanic and protective function, serving as patron deities or "guardian angels",[18] and possibly had a ritual or

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[15] Jean Phillippe Vogel, "The Woman and Tree or Śālabhañjikā in Indian Literature and Art." *Acta Orientalia* 7 (1929): 201-31. Also an interesting discussion on *śālabhañjikā* presents Udai Narain Roy, *Śālabhañjikā in Art, Philosophy and Literature* (Allahabad: Lokbharti, 1979).

[15] On Jaina *yakṣa/yakṣī* cult and iconography, being mostly influenced by the Buddhist tradition, cf. Umakant P. Shah, *Jaina-Rūpa-Maṇḍana. Jaina Iconography* (New Delhi: Abhinav Publications), 62-63; Vincent A. Smith, *The Jain Stupa and Other Antiquities of Mathura* (Allahabad: Government Press, 1901), plates 34-35.

[16] Miranda Shaw, *Buddhist Goddesses of India* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006), 62.

[17] Coomaraswamy, *Yakṣa*, 16, 56–57.

[18] Heinrich Zimmer, *Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 70.

liturgical role. They are tutelary divinities of the Indian household, probably deriving from the pre-Aryan, aboriginal tradition, and playing a considerable role both in Hindu, early Buddhist and Jain folklore.[19] Their effigies sanctify the shrines with "an irenic and yet magically potent feminine presence".[20] Moreover, their presence is generally associated with features of the landscape such as trees and woodlands. Although *yakṣas* and *yakṣīs* are closely associated with trees in Indic religiosity, they might be worshipped in a range of sanctuaries and settings, such as a mountain, lake, river, cave, water tank, city gate, cremation ground, private dwelling, palace compound, or shrine, or any other image established for their habitation.

Many references to trees flowering out of season at the most crucial moments of Buddha's life appear to belong to a completely different theme, although the pose in which his mother, Queen Māyā, is often depicted – grasping a branch of a flowering *śala* tree, and giving birth while standing thus intertwined – is usually compared to the *yakṣiṇī* or *vṛkṣakā*, later codified in architectural terminology as the *śālabhañjikā* pose.[21] The theme of a woman giving birth beneath a tree may have struck a resonant chord in the Indian religious imagination, evoking a long-standing association between fecund women and flowering trees. Thus, as Shaw aptly emphasises, when Māyādevī's iconography was modelled on that of the *yakṣī*, "her visual persona inherited their rich symbolic connotations of fertility, auspiciousness, and abundance, with the difference that the 'fruit' she bore was a gift to the entire world, a son whose influence would endure for millennia".[22]

Apart from the early Buddhist sculptures and texts, there are numerous references to the woman-and-tree motif in the *Ślipaśāstras* and *Vāstuśāstars*, the Sanskrit aesthetic treatises on architecture and fine arts, as well as popular literary works, like Kālidāsa's *Meghadūta* (5th century). Attention should be also paid to the *dohada* motif, popular in folk tales and associated, on the one hand, with the cravings of trees just before budding, and on the other hand, with woman's pregnancy cravings, the peculiar appetites, wishes, and longings a woman might experience during her pregnancy. The term *dohada* literary means "sickness of heart", "nausea,"

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[20] Shaw, *Buddhist Goddesses*, 63.

[21] On architectural usage of the term *śālabhañjikā* cf. Vogel, "Woman and Tree," 201-31.

[22] Shaw, *Buddhist Goddesses*, 51.

if derived from Prakrit *daurhṛda*, or "two-heartedness" if derived from the Sanskrit *dvaihṛda*. In the former case, these cravings are a side-effect of her romantic heart problems, whereas in the latter case, they are caused by the fact that she has two hearts in her. It was believed that such pregnancy cravings came from the child inside the woman making its wish known. Moreover, it was considered essential for an auspicious birth that such a wish be fulfilled.[23] In the case of the tree such arboreal desires should be granted by a young girl embracing the tree, while the whims of the pregnant woman are to be granted by her husband. Aesthetically speaking, as Albertina Nugteren notes, "the alluring aspect of the feminine pose in close contact with a tree is elaborated upon, whereas the tree seems to be secondary, a contrasting and accommodating background for feminine charms".[24] Thus, the connections between tree and woman as recurring motifs in art and literature tend to dwell more on the woman than on the tree.

To conclude this brief overview of the popular terms and representations of the motif of woman and tree in the ancient and classical Indian culture, we should emphasize a major distinction between two types of elaborations: (1) the first type, which is associated with *śālabhañjikā* and *dohada* pose, where the woman and the tree are in merely temporal connection, and (2) the second type, associated with elaborations of *yakṣī* and *vṛkṣakā*, where the motif evokes the tree goddess, or spiritual potential dwelling in the trees. Gustav Roth, however, suggested that *śālabhañjikā* type of representation and *dohada* were complementary rather than interchangeable, and the key difference between them is that the later refers to the function of "fertilizing of trees, plants and creepers by the contact of woman, direct or indirect,"[25] while *śālabhañjikā* "denotes the act of bending down the branch of a tree,"[26] and, for instance, an image of the Queen Māyā, the future Buddha's mother, giving birth under the bent branch of a tree, should be understood in the sense that the tree renders its protection and fertility power in support of the successful deliverance of the child.

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[23] A detail and insightful study of the *dohada* motif is presented by Maurice Bloomfield, "The Dohada or Craving of Pregnant Women: A Motif of Hindu Fiction," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 40 (1920): 1–24.

[24] Cf. Nugteren, *Belief, Bounty, and Beauty*, 101.

[25] Roth, "The Woman and Tree Motif," 104.

[26] Cf. Roth, "The Woman and Tree Motif," 107, 108, 112–13, note 40.

III. Modern appropriation of the classical theme

To reconsider the subject matter critically from a wider aesthetic perspective and to reflect on its significance in the context of philosophy of culture, I will briefly discuss three selected examples of contemporary art and social activism which, more or less directly, refer to the motif of *yakṣī*. They will allow us to capture two basic aspects of the classical motif transformation that uphold its identity and usefulness despite the changes it has undergone. First of all, comparing and juxtaposing the modern *yakṣī* representations we can see that metamorphosis of such a popular iconic motif takes place on a material or formal plane, and, secondly, that contemporary reappropriation of the classical motif requires a certain change in the semantic content of the symbol, which may further entail amplification of its persuasive function in cultural communication. Also, this juxtaposition will let us see that a specific symbolic connotation of a visual motif is changeable and historically relative within a given culture, though still remains comprehensive. Although, at first glance, the visual form of a specific motif seems to refer to the same archetypal source, its meaning can undergo significant transfiguration and re-evaluation over time. Obviously, the necessary condition for transforming the content of a given motif is maintaining its basic formal continuity which guarantees the legibility of the sign and its usefulness in the language of a given culture. In other words, any modification of the axiological significance – either aesthetic or ethical – requires formal continuity of the iconic motif to be sustained. Essential recognizability of the symbol sets the limit of its possible re-elaboration and modification. It goes without saying that the logic of metamorphosis guarantees the reversibility of this relationship: the visual sign may be subject to change as long as the meaning of the symbol to which it relates remains legible.

The first example of the contemporary re-elaboration of the *yakṣī* motif – used to demonstrate its vital continuity but also the nature of transformation it undergoes – is a large and sumptuous Yakshi[27] statue, a single granite piece located in Malampuzha, a village in Palakkad district of Kerala, South India, created by Kanayi Kunhiraman, a recognized Indian

[27] Here I am using the popular anglophone notation of the word as it is mentioned in this form in all media.

sculptor.[28] This nude sensual feminine figure, erected in 1969, clearly referring to one of the most canonical motifs of Indian art seems to reveal quite a new understanding. This new Yakshi is presented in a provocative erotic position, sitting with her legs widely spread, far more defiant in comparison to her classical posture, being perhaps more vulgar and influenced by how sexuality is presented in a modern day context. This body posture might be, however, a birthing position, although we cannot see the presence of her pregnant belly or a baby. While the sensuous and seductive body of *yakṣī* decorating the Buddhist *stūpas* was perceived as a sign of fertility power or protection, that same body today may be seen as a mark of sexual liberalisation and women's empowerment. However, to look through the lens of contemporary gender bias, such a posture may rather evoke objectification of woman's body and the problem of sexual harassment reported in media on every day basis. To Kanayi Kunhiraman himself, the statue embodies Mother Nature, representing the subdued women of Kerala. This new re-elaboration of the *yakṣī* theme triggered huge controversies all over Kerala due to its explicit detailing of a woman's body. Now, after nearly 50 years it is considered the landmark of Malampuzha.

Another example of contemporary Indian artist who re-elaborates the same motif is Ravinder Reddy,[29] the author of numerous female figures including *Sitting woman*, 1997 (gold gilded, painted on polyester resin fiberglass).[30] Being deeply influenced by the ancient *yakṣī* sculptures of Mathura and by the expressive facial language of classical dance forms like Kathakali as well as by American pop art painting, he used to create greater than life size sculptures and monumental busts made up of fiberglass. The huge figures of his sculptures are usually female and all are nude in appearance. Their skin is covered with gold leaf and sometimes with silver foil ornamentations, which are glittering with gold nudity. The stylized

[28] Kanayi Kunhiraman, born in 1937, is the first sculptor recipient of the prestigious Raja Ravi Varma Award, granted in 2005. Cf. *The Hindu*, online edition of India's National Newspaper, Saturday, April 30, 2005, http://www.thehindu.com/2005/04/30/stories/2005043011220500.htm

[29] Ravinder Reddy, born in 1956, is one of the first Indian contemporary artists to draw serious attention in America as a result of his show at Deitch Projects in 2001. Cf. his portfolio at: http://www.contemporaryindianart.com/ravinder_reddy.htm (Accessed July 2, 2017).

[30] Cf. https://www.artsy.net/artwork/ravinder-reddy-sitting-woman (Accessed July 2, 2017).

hairs, thick lips and black contoured eyes put an exuberance expression in these modern pop art *yakṣī* images. Reddy's sculptures recall the ancient *yakṣī* symbolism but reinterpret it in the context of contemporary cultural practice. These bewitching and bright images seem to masquerade an immediate resource of present scenario of life. Through their individual bodily form and easy-going posture modern transfiguration of *yakṣī* acknowledges the point to be real, self-confident and proud being a woman. A woman in this patriarchal world is alienated sexually in the contemporary Indian society. The stereotype projection of woman in some generalized character builds her image with the essential difference that cannot be omitted from their identity. In Reddy's *yakṣī* inspired figures the stereotype image of woman has been rejected; his women's heraldic heads become deliberately alienated to create an individual position against the constructed feminine images of the patriarchal society. Here the oppression and gender discrimination leads women to the extreme point where the sexual alienation could make a fetish power.

The third example is not a piece or visual art but a nonviolent social and ecological activist movement. I refer to the Chipko Movement, also called Chipko andolan,[31] initiated in 1973 by a group of rural women based in the Garhwal Himalayas, state Uttarakhand, who fought against the mass cut of trees. The Hindi word *chipko* means "to hug" or "to cling to" and reflects the demonstrators' primary tactic of embracing the trees to impede the loggers. In addition to the characteristic "tree hugging," Chipko protesters utilized a number of other techniques grounded in Mahatma Gandhi's concept of *satyāgraha*, that is nonviolent resistance. The movement quickly spread throughout the Indian Himalayas. This environmental campaign against the large-scale industrial logging started by a group of illiterate women was inspired by Gandhian social activist Chandi Prasad Bhatt who led villagers into the forest to prevent logging by embracing the trees. After many days of those protests, the government cancelled the company's logging permit. The success of Chipko movement which began as a local peasant and women's movement for forest rights not only

[31] For more details refer to: Thomas Weber, *Hugging the Trees: The Story of the Chipko Movement* (New Delhi: Viking, 1988); and Vandana Shiva, *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development* (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1989). Cf. also http://www.womeninworldhistory.com/contemporary-04.html (Accessed July 2, 2017).

significantly affected the ecological policy in the whole Himalaya region but also inspired many other autonomous socio-ecological and ecofeminist movements across India, especially in Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Karnataka and more recently in West Bengal. Thus, a traditional motif of the visual arts has been revived and re-elaborated by the activists of the social movement through rendering the symbolic potential of *yakṣī/śālabhañjikā* into social and political power.

IV. What does the cultural topos communicate?

The voluptuous feminine body embracing a tree, widely depicted in Buddhist, Hindu and Jain sculpture or described in Sanskrit literature, came to be endowed with a variety of meanings. The figures of *yakṣī* came to be read as symbols of fertility, bounty, and growth, as the embodiment of chthonic and divine maternal power, or as classical literary ideals. In the process, the sexual form moved from its initial primeval association with nature and fertility rites to its later, more complex divine and aesthetic connotations, and ultimately to the socially and politically engaged activism. Countless representations of *yakṣī* created in India since the ancient times have been coloured by various religious beliefs and historically changing socio-political conditions, and this unique iconic motif has conveyed its meaning in the language of a particular epoch. Therefore, what is crucial for closer reflection on the persistence and variability of this pan-Indian motif is the question of its semiotic value. After Karl Bühler we can identify three communicative functions according to which any linguistic communication can be described, namely the expressive function (*Ausdrucksfunktion*), the representation function (*Darstellungsfunktion*), and the conative function (*Appellfunktion*, i.e. appealing function).[32] Hence, to discuss the unique role of *yakṣī* in cultural communication we need to specify what it expresses (as a symptom), what represents or reveals (as a symbol), and what it is to appeal (as a signal). By the way, it is worth considering what *yakṣī* seems to overshadow, so to say, or in what sense it can serve as a tool for sociocultural manipulation.

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[32] Cf. Karl Bühler, *Theory of language*. *The Representational Function of Language*, ed. Achim Eschbach, trans. Donald Fraser Goodwin (Amsterdam–Philadelphia: John Benjamins 1990. Original work published in 1934).

And now, to comment a bit broader the abovementioned distinction between two major types of the woman-and-tree elaborations, namely (1) *śālabhañjikā* or *dohada*, and (2) *yakṣī* or *vṛkṣakā*, we can say that the former expresses grace, playfulness, and vitality in such a way that the decorated exterior of countless temples have made lasting impressions of auspiciousness on generations of believers; this type represents joined power of two complementary aspects or manifestations of nature – tree and woman – whose connection is based on contrast and their bond that requires a sort of collaboration, or intervening action, is merely temporary; this type of elaboration appeals woman/man to take care of natural potential dormant in the tree. Whereas the elaboration of *yakṣī* and *vṛkṣakā* implies the anthropomorphoid figure, be it a man or a woman, who is one with the tree; so it expresses close affinity of various aspects of nature embodied by a tree deity who was thought to live in the tree with which it was depicted, to share its nature in a way; this type of the tree goddess motif represents the secrets and mysteries of nature, its beauty covered with shadow and the auspicious life-supporting power; the conative function of this motif consists in appealing humans to adore and worship this natural power embodied by a tree goddess.

V. Conclusion

The *yakṣī* motif may serve as an interesting illustration of the process of transformation that makes the motif even more efficient in expressing, spreading and inducing a particular cultural *topos* defined as a line of argument that can be repeatedly used in public debate.[33] Communicators use *topoi* to generate arguments or to anticipate arguments they must prepare to refute. Widely used *topoi* include lists of values that audience members believe and are ready to act according to them. As Mary Douglas has observed,[34] a system of *topoi* may be used to characterize cultural discourse

[33] Cf. Greg Leichty, "Cultural topoi," in Robert L. Heath, ed., *Encyclopedia of Public Relations* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications 2013), 238.

[34] Mary Douglas, "The Depoliticization of Risk" in R.J. Ellis & M. Thompson, eds., *Culture Matters: Essays in Honour of Aaron Wildavsky* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1997), 129. Douglas distinguishes five *topoi*: fatalist, egalitarian, hierarchical, autonomous individualist and competitive individualist. Cf. Douglas, "The Depoliticization of Risk", 238–239.

within society; culture is essentially a dialogue that allocates praise and blame, and involves a clash between competing views of social reality. Thus, a cultural *topos* is a set of coherent premises that supports a particular way of organizing social relations. These premises, which often require considerable effort to uncover because they are automatically accepted, include perceptions of reality and value premises about what is desirable and good. For instance, according to the fatalist *topoi* both nature and human nature are capricious and unpredictable. As a result, the value imperative implied from these premises is that one has to accept reality as it is without trying to change it. But looking from another perspective, which Douglas calls autonomous individualist, we can see that nature is benevolent if one matches herself to it, while human nature is ignorant, but it can be enlightened, and the value imperative is seeking enlightenment. Again, different precepts are associated with another *topoi* that may be labeled as competitive individualist. In this approach nature is bountiful and resilient while human nature is self-seeking, but competition channels it productively. In this case, value imperative is a seek for liberty. Undoubtedly, the persistent presence of the motif of a woman embracing a tree in Indian culture was boosted and determined by more general concepts of nature and femininity, especially two indigenous complementary concepts of nature echoed in *yakṣī's* various re-elaborations, namely: (1) dynamic, creative, self-sufficient and inexhaustible power of regeneration and growth, and (2) passive and reproductive potential of primordial matter. Nevertheless, as it is highlighted above, the contemporary artistic representations as well as various forms of social activism indirectly inspired by the *yakṣī* motif uncover the risk of alienated womanhood and encourage contemporary women's search for a mode of resistance and empowerment.

Yakṣī or *śālabhañjikā*: a sandstone sculpture decorating the *stūpa* gate at Sāñcī, India, c. 1st century, h. c. 65 cm, Indian Museum, Kolkata, photo: Marzenna Jakubczak

Yakṣī standing on an elephant: a railing figure decorating the Buddhist *stūpa*, Bharhut, India, c. 2nd century, red sandstone, h. c. 150 cm, Indian Museum, Kolkata, photo: Marzenna Jakubczak

Life of the Buddha (at the bottom level the Queen Māya giving birth to Siddhārtha Gautama): sandstone stele, c. 5th century, India, h. 104 cm, Indian Museum, Kolkata, photo: Marzenna Jakubczak

SEMIOLOGY AND/OR ANTHROPOLOGY OF WESTERN PAINTING

Miško Šuvaković

Since the 1960s, French theory has incorporated the important tendency of studying historical painting, starting from a notion of the past as a collection or archive of arbitrary traces, then viewing the past as an *indexical* or *demonstrative* example, and, finally, as the organised discursive order shaping the meaning of historical narration and anthropological projection. For instance, this tendency may be observed in Louis Marin's and Jean-Louis Schefer's discussions of art. In their semiological and anthropological analyses of the system of representation in the art of painting, Marin and Schefer were at the forefront of late-1960s structuralism. However, French theorists, among them Schefer, have redirected their interests toward a lucid and, in a certain sense, pessimistic return to the logic of narrative historical representation and narration. Their historicism is the *modus* of producing historical knowledge by interpretation: presenting the *meaning* of the historical in pictorial synchronic systems.

Diagrammatically speaking, the history of modernity is over and therefore this is a *post-historical historicism*. Since the object of modernity is a *lost object*, loss or lack has become an important term in the history of representing the historical as a trace in cultural memory or, in other words, in the psychoanalytic description of a *lost object*, the Lacanian *petit objet a* within the pictorial order of painting and the history of painting.

In quite different ways, Marin and Schefer transformed a-historical semiological theory into an interpretative rhetorical system of *close* and, to be sure, *exhaustive* reading of the prehistory and genesis of modernity in 17th and 18th century painting. Their narrative historicism is not only an *archaeology of knowledge* in the footsteps of Foucaultian discussions (of power, the prison, the mental asylum, disease, and sexuality), but also an expression of *historical pessimism* attached to the location of the absence of a current historical object of desire. It concerns the visual enjoyment of that which is absent. This type of enjoyment is the enjoyment of a sign,

flux, or order of signs – a pictorial text or pictorial signification, which should form the basis of a visual pictorial affect. The pictorial affect relates to the visibility of a painting with its sign quality in attracting the gaze of the beholder, who sees/recognises and reads/understands at the same time.

Marin and Schefer spoke of the desire of the Other, the historical Other at the beginnings of the modern era, after the Renaissance and into the Enlightenment – at a juncture where one might expect the current desire of contemporaneity: the contemporary painter and beholder. This is a desire that sheds the power of the project, in fact, it concerns being unable to desire the future, to project the optimal possibility, to search for *principles of hope*. It is about being *hinged* to post-historical narration, i.e. narration in the pictorial representation of the historical, of culture, politics, religion, sexuality. They identified a projection of the future in historical pictorial compositions produced in the painting of past eras.

Louis Marin developed a semiology of painting or, more broadly, a theory of interpreting the pictorial. His semiology of painting begins by distinguishing between the linguistic sign and the pictorial figure *qua* sign and then *qua* the function of the sign. He poses questions regarding the possibilities of understanding painting as the language of painting in a literal and metaphorical sense. An interpretative chain thereby forms between the figure facing the eye and the concept of a scene featuring figures (turning a pictorial order into a scene) and, finally, the text, which *seems as if it spoke* of that which the eye cannot see (pictorial meaning, symbol, metaphor, and allegory). The question posed in the theoretical text is whether there are, in a given painting or in painting in general, equivalents or analogies to the linguistic syntagm? That is, whether one might posit an analogy between individual paintings and painting in general as there is between language and speech. What this semiological meta-discussion of the schism between painting and linguistics shows is the concept of signification effects, which always includes the affective potential of pictoriality itself. The pictorial order initiates – more precisely: causes, produces, accumulates, absorbs – the effects of the signification and transformation of a configuration of colours on the surface into *mobile* social meanings and values. Therefore, the semiology of painting is a systemic and exhaustive description, explication, and interpretation of the semantic, ideological, mythological, and theological effects produced by individual paintings and by painting in general as the diachronic and synchronic comprehensive system comprising individual paintings. Painting is a *language*,

because it shows pictorial matter in terms of representing, naming, suggesting, or signifying in the domain of visuality i.e. sensuality.

A digression. There is an essential difference between the pictorial, textual, and inter-textual meaning of a painting. The pictorial meaning of a painting is that which the beholder understands whilst observing, gazing at, and seeing the painting; in other words, pictorial meaning is the domain of establishing *meaning* between a configuration of colours, surfaces, and lines and the configuration that they, i.e. colours, surfaces, and lines, construct. The textual meaning of a painting is that which the beholder understands as a configuration of figures in a scene, which seems to conceal its material pictorially signifying constitution; in other words, one sees the painting not in terms of the material presence of colours, surfaces, and lines, but as a representation of an absent scene, which means a window or screen showing a configuration of iconic signs and the effects of their rhetorical and perceptual over-determinations. A painting's inter-textual meanings comprise the relations of its pictorial and textual meanings with the conceptualising powers of the beholder (her knowledge of art history, gazing experience, memory, cultural identity), with other paintings from the history of painting and with other texts from individual cultural histories.

Indeed, the effects of inter-textual meaning essentially appear when we compare paintings that, for instance, belong to different civilisations: for example, let us think of an *Italian painting* by Domenico Veneziano, *Sacra conversazione coi Santi Franscesco, Giovanni Battista, Zanobi e Lucia* (*c.* 1445–48) and, for instance, a *Japanese painting* by Sesshū Tōyō, one of his *Landscapes* (1495), or two contemporary European paintings, the German-born British painter Frank Auerbach's *The Shell Building Site* (1959) and the German painter Gerhard Richter's *Negroes (Nuba)* (1964). The pictorial and textual meanings of these paintings are comparable in spite of all the *formal differences* separating them, whereas their inter-textual meanings are incomparable because the paintings occupy different relations with different meta-texts stemming from different cultures: Italian Christianity, Japan's cultural isolation, and Western urban modernisation and colonisation. Reading a painting, which is always an uncertain momentary relation between identifying its pictorial, textual, and inter-textual meanings for someone, also entails a *theory of reading*. Every reading is open to gaps in reading, enabled by other paintings. Schefer accurately highlighted the difference between the memory of an event, the painting as a memory screen

or, by contrast, a phantasmatic screen. It is always an effort, when looking at a painting, to inhabit two separate worlds at the same time: between the referent and the datum, i.e. between the painting communicating a memory text and the painting covering that memory text with a phantasmatic experience. Regarding cinema, for instance, Schefer argues that our memories teach us nothing but how to manipulate time as if it were an image.[1] In a certain restrictive domain of static images, this likewise applies to painting before photography and film. For instance, in relation to figural painting, this concerns uncovering the "slippage" between the *living body* as the referent and the body in memory that constitutes an erased trace versus the phantasmatic body as a floating spectre. This spectre is an effect and affect of the imaginary mysterious working of the beholder's body, i.e. her eye, the sensory structure of her nervous system, as well as her mind, insecurely located in her brain, which processes what is seen according to what is remembered and imagined.

What is visually un-presentable becomes pictorially present – that is why theology and political history are vitally important in Marin's analyses, as referential source texts. The semiology of painting constitutes the basis of theological, philosophical, and political discussions concerning the historical effect of the meaning of that which remains invisible in the pictorial field of a painting. The fetishism or centrism of the invisible. From the perspective of Marin's discussions, it seems as though the entire pictorial productivity of Western historical painting were aimed at *that invisible*, which exists in the painting as the political, sexual, and theological. The impossibility of representing the political (the logics of power and mastery), the sexual (the genitals, desire, and libido), and the theological (God and a contemplative, *non-sensory* insight into the invisibility of death) in the pictorial field leads toward the indirect metaphorical and allegorical speech of *forced symbolisation*, which situates the gaze in the closed space of perspective and the promised *sequentiality* of narration *qua* visual narration of a political, sexual, and theological event. It is as if her gaze were returning from Yves Klein's monochromes or Piet Mondrian's grids to a fictional accumulation of the gaze enjoying gazing in the place of the absent God, death, sex, love, or power in the paintings of Caravaggio (*The Head of Medusa* or *Bacchus*, both painted around 1596) and Poussin (*The*

[1] Jean-Louis Schefer, *The Ordinary Man of Cinema* (Cambridge MA: The MIT Press, 2016), 15.

Arcadian Shepherds, 1637–38), as well as contemporary painters such as Andy Warhol (*Marilyn* from 1967 or *Mao* from 1972) or Gerhard Richter (*October 18, 1977* from 1988, *Mao* from 1968, or *September* from 2005).

Let us see how Marin self-reflectively locates the logic of his reading of painting. The text of the *discussion* transforms painting into discourse, diverts images into language:

> This text transforms painting into discourse, diverts images into language. What we are dealing with here is a kind of magic or rhetoric that constantly runs the risk of turning what can be *seen* by all into a purely private language, into what a single individual says to himself. (...) Put differently, I wanted to articulate the almost retinal, "visual noise" experienced by my eyes when I look at paintings and suddenly fall prey to the murmur of language just described, the murmur that convokes a new image, causing it to penetrate and disturb the one seen here and now. My narrative seeks the phantasms and exploding, starry constellations witnessed when pressure is applied to the eyelids, when the eye, in spite of the darkness, sees its own brilliance.[2]

In order to transcribe that noise and render it legible, Marin makes a number of discursive detours and twists. He deals with the procedures and instruments of reading and writing in relation to painting and looking at paintings. There emerge digressions, parataxis… It takes cunning and trickery to explore paintings through discourses.

For painting, the system of representation created in the Western tradition was a form of constituting a *practice of representation*: a specific approach to the exploration and formalisation of the gaze, i.e. eye, light, and the object of the reflection of light in relation to the invisible – in relation to the metaphysics of politics, sexuality, and theology. The definition of painting as an autonomous system of representation corresponds to the construction of society (to specific forms of producing meaning, sense, beliefs, and values) in a specific relation between the world, rationality, subjectivity, and transcendence of Western culture at the turn of modernity. Western mimetic painting rests on a specific type of pictorial signs: the sign of a figure, which projects the *pictorial text of the displayed scene*. The scene is then identified as a structure of figures.

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[2] Louis Marin, "Postscript in the Guise of an Introduction... June 12, 1977", *To Destroy Painting* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 1-2.

The figurative constitutes the character of the pictorial representation of the body. The figurable is conceived and conceptualised in relation to different instances of figures. Then let us look at the following chain of distinctions: (1) the figurative must be thought from the perspective of the figural – by means of a technique of pictorial shaping given as a representation of the body and (2) the figural derives from the figurable, from the episteme of the visibility of a potential body.

Society establishes the over/determination of the object, which is pictorially formulated by the production of art. That is why semiology must reconstruct systems of representation as ideological or mythological systems. For semiology, religion emerges as a productive ideological or mythological system, as locating meaning in the pictorial *void* of a meaning that may be suggested, but may not be shown. Therefore, there is an essential metaphysical difference between presenting and showing in painting and by means of painting. Presenting represents, even that which is not visible. Presenting makes the sensuous recognisable, primarily that which is visible.

For the semiology of painting, the status of the *figure* is essential and we must therefore dwell on it for a while, on its multivalent power of determining *pictorial reading*. The figure is *something* that is supplied in analogue *appearance* as a representation or scene. According to Eco, *figures* are *discrete units* that were set up "a long time ago" for whatever kind of figuration might be conceived in the tradition of Western painting or, more generally, representation.[3] Therefore, it is as if a figure were accepted by itself, without consideration, as if one said a figure could be modified, transformed, abstracted, relocated or multiplied, but not questioned, re-examined, or relativised. Figures are individualised, turned from *types* into *tokens*, special examples, or specific historical images. It is as if painting *desired* to show the incomparabilities of the body, figure, and face in relation to the subject and object of art, culture, politics, religion, and sexuality. They become the object of perception, although their semantic charge is *distinctive* in character. A figure is always determined by its difference from other figures. A figure becomes a sign with a reference only on the basis of certain historical conventions, agreements between production and

[3] Umberto Eco, "Introduction: Toward a Logic of Culture," and "Theory of sign production," in *Theory of Semiotics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976), 4, 153, 173, 215.

consumption (of painting, the gaze, and reading). Painting represents the possibilities of exhibition or technique. The gaze represents the body. Reading represents the schism between reason and language.

The concept of similarity is not necessarily something that constitutes a figure: (a) similarity may be a perceptual, i.e. visual and not an objective, total correspondence – similarity is correspondence only in certain aspects, (b) similarity may be a semantic, i.e. symbolic, referential demonstrative quality stemming from visual similarity affirmed by an agreement (convention, socially coerced acceptance of understanding), and (c) similarity may be a semantic, i.e. symbolic, referential emergence stemming from a contractually (by means of a convention, habit) established situation of linking a figure with a body, although not verified through visual similarity.

Another digression: what is the relationship between contract and desire? How do the possibilities of habit (certainty) and the uncanny (thrill) emerge in relation to the pictorial in a painting and an individual painting in relation to painting in general? Confronting a painting, the body *invests its gaze* so that reason may project language as a transgression in relation to the visual. At the same time, it is as if by means of desire one *desired* to shirk the contract (convention, habit), as if desire were *canonically* brought into the possibility of a contract.

Further, a *figure* functions in a painting in terms of the phenomenality or presentability of a *phantasm*. For the semiology of painting, a figure is not a phantasm, but its representation, display, or imitation. A gap – i.e. difference – is established, determined by the word *like*: like a phantasm. A figure is a phantasm's representative in the figurative space of a painting – in its *utopia* that exceeds its own self. A phantasm is a "figurative form" incorporating desire – the way desire takes the object, that is, the body in Andy Warhol may be a phantasmatic Marilyn or Jackie (*Jackie*, 1964), while in Gerhard Richter it may a reconstructed nude Ema (*Ema /Nude on a Staircase/*, 1966) on a staircase, following Duchamp's faceless nude on a staircase (*Nude Descending a Staircase*, 1912).

The figure's power of representation reminds us of its link with the functions of a subject (according to Schefer). Therefore, every figure is that of a subject, etc… The subject is a figure that is shown as a special character: a girl, a boy, an old man, a bride, a knight, a singer, etc. At the same time, the girl, the boy, the old man, the bride, the knight, the singer, etc. are not abstract characters, but are promised by reference to real characters, characters from cultural memory or fictional formations.

The inseparability of the concept of image and that of figure in Western painting affirms a hidden ontological link. The image is inseparable from text and the figure, at least analogically, from rhetorical figures of speech. Schefer expresses *this nexus* by claiming that the image is always the limit that marks the repetition of an epistemological text, in a different aesthetic space.

Let us now point to a certain retreat from the semiology of culture toward cultural history. In a short text, Schefer wrote:

> One day I'd like to begin writing a history of the body in Europe since the fall of Rome. More exactly, a history of representations of the body (of the rules of representation and the limits of figuration). Of course, such a project couldn't work exclusively on the terrain of art history. (...) Notice how bodies grow old in painting; how their synecdoche is reduced, how they stop emblazoning themselves in space, cease to have value, stop showing themselves, showing their skin.[4]

The growing old of European painting, manifested in the appearance of the image, is a turn from the visible to the invisible, and that means a turn from the semiology (synchrony) of painting to historical narration (the diachronic of culture, emotion and atmosphere of representation). History *qua* growing old! Quite at odds with history *qua* project (as in the work of historians of modernity such as Carlo Giulio Argan,[5] Filiberto Mena, or Ješa Denegri). Historical pessimism is obscene. Pursuing enjoyment, ostensibly mobile, but, in reality, multiplied old age. The *growing old* of painting emerges as moving from a narrative and fictional production of painterly figurative scenes toward the literal and essentialist non-figurative, surface-bound, abstract, concretist, and fundamental painting of the 20th century. These relations may be described as a certain *emotion* or *atmosphere*: that of knowing that painting is growing old. Let us see how cinema as an art condenses and mediates that awareness of the aging of painting. Remember Peter Greenaway's film *Prospero's Books*. The figure of an old man bent over a book and naked young bodies floating in

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[4] Jean-Louis Schefer, "On the Object of Figuration," in *The Enigmatic Body: Essays on the Arts by Jean-Louis Schefer,* ed. Paul Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 25 and 30.

[5] Giulio Carlo Argan, *Progetto e destino* (Milan: Il saggiatore, 1965), 9–74.

motion (in the interior, under water, over the old man's figure). The relation between the book's leather binding and the old man's skin. Before the cinematic eye, that is a certain visual narration that the film renders for painting and, via painting, for semiology. Inexorable aging taking place before the cinematic eye, for painting.

Schefer built his late discourse of the 1980s and '90s on memory and the uncertainty of narration – of performing narratives about painting and cinema. There is a place where he argues:

> Generally, I hardly ever quote a text as such, but I lightly modify it in such a way as to make it "meld" into my own text. This is much closer to the effect of memory in a text. The authors I quote are usually "naturalized" and the origin of the quotations hidden so as to leave the syntax free.[6]

Let us take a look at a certain logic (of the proposition) of Schefer's historical narration:

> I'm a writer without a story – someone who chronicles, bit by bit, his own intellectual adventure, which is articulated across a collection of multifarious objects. It's in the capriciousness of my own choices and preferences that I've found my universe, my procedures, my way of being – my happiness.[7]

These fragments *act* as propositions of writing, they are realised in different stories about a sign, figure, lexia, colour, for instance, the painters Uccello[8] and Cy Twombly,[9] as well as fellow writer/theorist Roland Barthes,[10] cinematic images, sequences from films such as Tod Browning's *Freaks* (1936), etc. The logic of *inscription* is reiterated from one topic to the next and produces differences in what is sought and not in that which

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[6] Smith, *The Enigmatic Body*, xv.

[7] Smith, *The Enigmatic Body*, xvii.

[8] Jean-Louis Schefer, *The Deluge, The Plague. Paolo Uccello* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1995).

[9] Jean-Louis Schefer, "Cy Twombly: Uncertainty Principle," in *The Enigmatic Body: Essays on the Arts by Jean-Louis Schefer,* ed. Paul Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 146-155.

[10] Jean-Louis Schefer, "Roland Barthes," in *The Enigmatic Body: Essays on the Arts by Jean-Louis Schefer,* ed. Paul Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 61–64.

is the author, hero, story, or, even, the truth. Schefer's discussions are therefore not ontological but semiological. The relativity of searching as opposed to the certainty of *whatness*.

Back to Marin. He suggests that *desire* in portraits of saints, even when tranquilised in the figure itself, finds ways to transcend all objects. *Desire* reveals that *death* is an integral part of its process. The figure of a living being as a dead being, the figure's power to double up as a representation of a representation of life and death. A figure in a painting, for instance, in a portrait, is not a representation of a living model, but a representation of a representation:

> (...) a substitution of signifiers in which every signifier plays the role of a signified for the signifier preceding it in this chain of subjection. In the portrait of the just man, desire burns itself out in the same way as concupiscence, and ends up as charity, tied up with the paradoxical figure of the living dead.[11]

Thinking about desire in order to comprehend the enigma that opens the space of desire and thereby, via writing that speaks of the secret, brings us to painting. The history of European painting therefore emerges as that which *provokes* the possibilities of enjoying desire (gaze) *qua* enjoying meaning (language). And, thus, to enjoy a painting by Cézanne (*Mont Sainte-Victoire*, 1904–1906), Picasso (*Houses on the Hill*, 1909), or, here in Serbia and Croatia, Šumanović (*Drunken Boat*, 1927), means the same as searching for pleasure in meaning in Poussin by way of the connection that exists between the gaze and language (painting and textuality) in relation to the pictorial form that unfolds between meaning and affect. European painting could never break free from text. And, therefore, the American Jackson Pollock, in his *drippings* (*Convergence*, 1952), moved the body against the surface of painting (a surface laid down on the stage of painting as an art), but there, in Pollock, the figure is already beyond the painting: the figure is beyond the pictorial surface, beyond death, which European painting, aging, was only learning to represent. Pollock's figure beyond image is also beyond text (the meta-text of European painting), his image becomes an erased trace of existence, showing the idea of "destructive plasticity",[12]

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[11] Louis Marin, "Portraiture, Mask and Death," *Art Press* 177 (1993 February): E21.
[12] Catherine Malabou, *Ontology of the Accident: An Essay on Destructive Plasticity* (Cambridge: Polity, 2012), 29–30.

which fundamentally changes our relation to painting and, furthermore, to the imago and imagobility.[13]

Let us return, once more, to the semiological (synchronic) interpretation of pictorial orders, which points to two distinct objects of study: (1) the structure of the painting and (2) the process of reading it. Juxtaposing the structural and semantic effects of a painting, Marin poses the following questions: What does the painting mean? What does it mean to describe the coloured field of a painting? How do the meanings of a compositional solution emerge and how do they get lost? A distinctive place in his analysis is the question concerning the *tension* between the visible and the invisible, that is, between representation and the effect of signification in European religious and political painting. Semiology must show how a pictorial configuration *produces* the invisible, as well as how the invisible, which encompasses the painting from all sides, disappears in, let us say, the aesthetic narcissism of the painting's pictorial surface. Does the *invisible* stem from the pictorial order of a painting: (a) as a quality of the pictorial, (b) as the relation between the pictorial and the transcendent, or (c) as the inter-textual relation between pictorial figurative and figurable texts that are only an analogy, extension, or inter-textual effect of linguistic texts, for instance, of the Biblical text? Marin aimed his interpretative apparatus at the central topics of the history of mimetic painting: religious scenes and allegories. His interest in theological writings led to an understanding of the difference between the painting, the semantic background of its narration (large-scale narration and its legitimacy for the relation between European rationality and subjectivity), and the visual effect attained. These were fascinations with the representational powers of painting, the power of paintings to act as communication channels (of mythic, theological, and ideological concepts) and, at the same time, to direct all the attention in the beholder's eye at themselves (to be pictorially self-referential in semantic terms). The slippage of theological rhetoric underneath pictorial rhetoric (the rhetoric that the painting produces for and due to itself, establishing visual codes for what cannot be seen) is one of the key aspects of the aestheticism of Western post-Renaissance painting.

[13] "Imagobility" is a word I that I concocted/constructed to describe the possibility of corporeally and thereby also mentally imagining the image independently from positing (*ge-stell*) the image by pictorial or mechanical means into painting or photography.

Caravaggio's *Medusa* as opposed to *Bacchus*. The enjoyment of a desire that cannot be enjoyed. There has to be at least a mediating linguistic text, which would later be supplied by Sigmund Freud, to confront the gaze – the horrified gaze facing a representation of the un-representable – with its desire (the absent object of desire). The gaze and the gazed at. The genitals and the details. The face. The invisible as thematising the visible. A metaphor, a visual pictorial metaphor. As opposed to details, to focusing on the detail, on a multitude of details that seem as if showing the phantasm of enjoying the corporeality represented. But there is no enjoyment in the painting, just a fragment of the warm softness and abundance that it presents (but does not show), that which is not seen. How do I know that I did enjoy, *Bacchus* seems to wonder? And now the cards are on the table: Jarman's cinematic *Wittgenstein*, Caravaggio's *Bacchus*, and searching for the text that will confirm the horror of *The Head of Medusa*. Death and sexuality are thematised the same way that the religious (the transcendent, the theological) and the political (the legal, the ethical) are thematised: with the pictorial promise and hiding in the quest for the text, the great text of Europe. Presenting and showing are essentially separate.

And what are the colours of death, sexuality, politics, and religion in European paintings? What are their meanings...? There emerges the power of dislocation (transfiguration) from colour to language and from language to colour. What *Western painting* and, indeed, the semiological effort (spasm) of revealing or, perhaps, producing meaning meticulously teach us is that colour and language *in the embrace* and *rapture* of power (politics), passion (sexuality), and transcendence (theology) operate *simultaneously* HERE and NOW not in terms of pictorial denotation, but in terms of pictorial connotation, which enables secondary and metaphorical (rhetorical) meanings. But where is that *European HERE* and *NOW*: on the canvas, in the discourse, before the eye, behind the eye, around the body, through the body, in the mind, in time, in history, in the archive, in desire, in the object of desire, in leaving a trace, in drawing over or erasing the trace, in the project, in seduction, or in the text of culture? Where are they? Where? Semiology brings us back to the connotative powers of a pictorial order that inscribes the meaning of an *X* at the location of a *Z*, in other words, shows how a patch of *goldish* ochre or the figure of a vertical configuration of patches in primary colours signifies something entirely different from what the eye sees: political power, sexual enjoyment, or divine grace. Grace, enjoyment, power… in a freezing night at a border

crossing between two parts of Europe, in rain and wind, it is as if I could see in my memories of painting the undulation of colours and *feel* power, enjoyment, and grace… as though I could feel… What is shown is that which cannot be seen and that means that something invisible is becoming visible.

Therefore, and only for that reason, one speaks of the "politics of presenting" and not the phenomenology of presenting and of the presented.

A GREAT FUTURE BEHIND US

Exploded traditions, avant-garde pasts

Tyrus Miller

This essay considers the question of tradition and avant-garde as reciprocally related aspects of 20th century artistic modernism. I begin first by reflecting on how tradition, subject to historical decay and crisis in early 20th century modernity, is treated in the poetry and poetics of T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound. Pound and Eliot, I suggest, took antithetical positions with respect to the loss of tradition's organic continuity and, despite their seemingly convergent use of a montage of quotations to compose their poetry (Pound even playing the role of editor-collaborator in Eliot's "The Waste Land"), only Pound embraced the avant-garde position of revaluing the past in light of a present moment of radical invention. As another perspective on the same fundamental issue, in the second part of the essay I discuss two chapters that the architectural historian Manfredo Tafuri dedicated to the 18th century architect and graphic artist Giovanni Battista Piranesi in his compendious study of avant-gardes and architecture, *The Sphere and the Labyrinth* (1980). In the first of the two chapters, entitled "'The Wicked Architect': G.B. Piranesi, Heterotopia, and the Voyage," Tafuri suggests that Piranesi's mining of the fragments of Roman antiquity for new inventions reveals an approach to the past that adumbrates the avant-garde relation to tradition, namely as a source of desemanticized, re-combinable material organized through a logic of montage. In the latter chapter, "The Historicity of the Avant-Garde: Piranesi and Eisenstein," Tafuri discusses one of Eisenstein's late writings that discloses, through an imputed relation between two Piranesi prints, the capacity of montage to explode the stability of representation, a characteristic aspect of avant-garde aesthetics. In the case of both Eliot / Pound as well as Piranesi / Eisenstein / Tafuri, the avant-garde establishes a relation to tradition that is both materially dependent upon the traditional past and liberated from its substantive content. Specific artistic practices of montage are the means by which these

apparently contradictory stances towards tradition are expressed. The composition of modernist artworks effects, I argue, a temporal reorientation from the past in which tradition resides towards a future-pointing present in which tradition may be reconstellated, reinvented, and creatively renewed.

In his famous programmatic essay of 1919, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," the poet T.S. Eliot set out a view of poetic tradition that explicitly viewed the past and present as reciprocally interacting, in terms that recall the later hermeneutical theory of Hans-Georg Gadamer, that textual traditions and present-day interpretations commingle in a "fusion of horizons."[1] The present-day poet, Eliot suggests, writes with an awareness of tradition (which is itself, of course, already a selective and interpretative act), and this awareness prepares the basis on which the new work will ultimately relate to tradition. But, Eliot stresses, this relation is not simply receptive or passive: the new work recontextualizes the older works in the tradition, emphasizing new aspects and casting into the margins other, previously important aspects, while possibly disrupting more general hierarchies of value that were assumed and embodied within the tradition at earlier moments. Eliot imagines a kind of force field of relations, energies, and nodal points that change all at once as something new enters into that field. He writes:

> [W]hat happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art that preceded it. The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the *whole* existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new.[2]

Eliot's aspiration here, like that of Gadamer later, was basically conservative: to identify the conditions of continuity of tradition, and also, to highlight the obligations of new writers to ensure that those conditions were

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[1] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Garrett Barden and John Cumming (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1975).

[2] T.S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," in *Selected Essays* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1950), 5.

sustained. However, given that Eliot – particularly in his own poetry – felt acutely the problematic status of tradition, his injunctions in "Tradition and the Individual Talent" also take on a diagnostic and critical valence, identifying why in the present day it is so *difficult*, if not impossible for something new to enter and influence this "ideal order," achieving a healthy "conformity between the old and the new." Thus Eliot's delineation of tradition passes over into artistic and even cultural critique with respect to the horizon of 20th century modernity.

Eliot's own artistic solution (prior to his conversion to a culturally and politically conservative Anglo-Catholicism) was to make a reflexive issue of this problem in his poetry, using crisis poems such as "The Waste Land" and "Gerontion" to explore the decay and possibility of renewal of the European literary and cultural – "spiritual" – tradition. He took his poetic building blocks from the literary remnants of various historical moments whose status in tradition were problematic – in many cases utilizing fragmentary quotations from earlier texts to make up, through a kind of montage of still-identifiable source materials, his own new poetic text. We might say that if Eliot's privileged image of tradition was an ideal pantheon of monuments that shift to make space for new works worthy of admission to their order, Eliot's own poetry, in contrast, was its negative complement: a storeroom of at least possibly arbitrary fragments, crowded together in one new poem as remnants of earlier literary monuments. "The Waste Land" is thus not an achieved image of tradition in the "conformity of old and new," but rather holds up a distorting mirror to tradition, intimating in much-quoted lines such as "I can connect / Nothing with nothing," and "These fragments I have shored against my ruins" that no synthesis or overcoming of fragmentation can be accomplished.[3] Eliot at most can stage the crisis of tradition in his poetry, and present his own modernistic poetry, the expression of his self-conscious awareness of tradition's problematic status, as a desperate gambit to save or at least temporarily extend a cultural legacy in danger of blowing away like a handful of dust. This stratagem was for Eliot, by its nature, tentative and unsustainable, to be taken more as an index of his deep apprehension of crisis than as a means of overcoming it. His subsequent religious conversion represented for him a more definitive answer to the crisis of tradition; yet arguably it came at the cost of that productive

[3] T.S. Eliot, "The Waste Land," in *The Complete Poems and Plays, 1909–1950* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980), 46 and 50.

artistic tension that legitimately enshrined "The Waste Land" as one of the acknowledged masterpieces of European literature of the 20th century.

Eliot's exasperated self-reflexivity about tradition was not, however, the only response available to poets and artists in the face of this perceived dissolution and depotentiation of traditional cultural forms, idioms, and exemplars. His fellow-poet Ezra Pound, who provided Eliot a strong collaborative hand in editing into its published form a sprawling, loquacious *ur*-text of "The Waste Land," also developed further than Eliot a poetics of montaged quotation that *positively* revalued the implications of tradition's decay and fragmentation. Eliot had approached his fragments and quotation with an anguished sense of loss of his materials' organic wholeness, a richness of meaning invested in them by their living relation to their historical context and to tradition itself. The past that they represented and indexed was something which, by virtue of this fragmentation and separation from context, appeared fundamentally inaccessible to Eliot, and precisely therein lay the pathos of such fragments. Pound, by contrast, saw in the fragmentation and decontextualization of traditional materials a poetic opportunity to remake them poetically, and to make them his own for present fame and future posterity. If for Eliot the past was inaccessible because of the fragment's separation from its original context, for Pound it was this very separation that rendered the past available for appropriation and reinscription – for the poet's granting not its original life back, but a new life projecting forward. As he vividly formulated his aim in his 1938 book *Guide to Kulcher*: "Properly, we shd. read for power. Man reading shd. be man intensely alive. The book shd. be a ball of light in one's hand."[4]

More specifically, as Pound suggests with light-hearted irony in his three-line poem "Papyrus," the losses of full context entailed through the passage of time may provide a model of condensation, brevity, and essentiality for modern poetry, such as his own taut "imagist" verse:

PAPYRUS

SPRING . . . . . .
Too long . . . . . .
Gongula . . . . . .[5]

[4] Ezra Pound, *Guide to Kulchur* (New York: New Directions, 1970), 55.

[5] Ezra Pound, "Papyrus," in *Personae: The Collected Shorter Poems* (New York: New Directions, 1971), 112.

After a long poetic tutelage, moreover, Pound would gradually discover how to extend those concentrated, brief constellations of fragments into an open-ended, epic long-form poem, *The Cantos*, which proceeded through continuous and extended montage of such terse historical clusters. Precisely the decontextualized fragments of tradition provided his poem with its ever-shifting flashes of historical references, contexts, names, languages, and thematic leitmotivs:

> Serenely in the crystal jet
> as the bright ball that the fountain tosses
> (Verlaine) as diamond clearness
> How soft the wind under Taishan
> where the sea is remembered
> out of hell, the pit
> out of the dust and glare evil
> Zephyrus / Apeliota
> This liquid is certainly a
> property of the mind
> nec accidens est but an element
> in the mind's make-up
> est agens and functions dust to a fountain pan otherwise
> Hast 'ou seen the rose in the steel dust
> (or swansdown ever?)
> so light is the urging, so order the dark petals of iron
> we who have passed over Lethe.[6]

In sum, if Eliot was troubled by tradition's increasing distance from the present and his inability to nourish his own poetic "waste land" with traditional materials, Pound's response was to reverse Eliot's temporal perspective and revalue the present. Rather than lament the breakage of the past, he affirmed fragmentation as the condition for the present-day poet to be able to regather the shards and shavings of the past and fuse them into an illuminated poetic image arcing from present to future. He invested the poet with a futuristic will-to-power ("Properly we shd. read for power."), a "*Sagetrieb*," which is nothing other than the will to unify the broken past poetically, not restoring it nostalgically, but making it new – as the expression of the most intensive modernity and artistic innovation.

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[6] Ezra Pound, "Canto LXXIV," *The Cantos* (New York: New Directions, 1972), 449.

The 18th century architect, engraver, and antiquarian Giovanni Battista Piranesi is best known for his famous architectural fantasies, especially the strange, indefinite spaces of his *Carceri* (Prisons), and for his fanciful depictions of Roman ruins, excavations, and monument fragments. Manfredo Tafuri, whose architectural history and criticism focuses especially on utopian aspects of architectural thought and practice from the Renaissance to the modern movement, identified in Piranesi a crucial example of a new relation to tradition that would come to full fruition only with the 20th century avant-garde. Piranesi, Tafuri suggests, while taking his departure from the immense accumulation of archeological fragments, ruins, and remains in Rome and its surrounding territory, turns from the humanist recovery of artistic models in the classical past to be imitated, towards a utopian imagination of the future that radical reinterprets and reconfigures the historical past:

> Piranesi… exalts the capacity of the imagination to create *models*, valid in the future as new values, and in the present as immediate contestations of the "abuse of those who possess wealth, and who make us believe that they themselves are able to control the operations of Architecture."
>
> Utopia, then, is seen as the only possible value, as a positive anticipation, as the only adequate outlet for an intellectual work that does not want to relinquish the commitment to making projects.[7]

In a metaphor that echoes Pound's self-congratulatory, machine-age image of the magnetic "rose in the steel dust" and the "dark petals of iron," Tafuri suggests that Piranesi's utilization of a fragmentary Roman past takes on "the appearance of a homogeneous magnetic field jammed with objects having nothing to do with each other. Only with extreme effort is it possible to extract from that field well-defined typological structures."[8] Tafuri argues that Piranesi accepts and puts to work the negativity that pervades the cultural legacy of Roman antiquity – the evidence of forces of destruction, decay, fracture, and fragmentation.

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[7] Manfredo Tafuri, *The Sphere and the Labyrinth: Avant-Gardes and Architecture from Piranesi to the 1970s*, trans. Pellegrino d'Acierno and Robert Connolly (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1987), 29.

[8] Tafuri, *The Sphere and the Labyrinth,* 35.

Through a practice of assemblage of otherwise distinct and disconnected shards of the past, adumbrating the montage poetics of later modern artists, Piranesi articulates an artistic framework in which this negativity nourishes the free imagination and invention of the artist, though at the cost of not being able to translate the results into real-world buildings and spaces, that is, of having his designs consigned to the "no-place" of utopia. "The dissolution of form and the void of the signifieds are thus the presentation of the negative as such," Tafuri concludes. "The construction of a *utopia of dissolved form* – what has been naively called Piranesian eclecticism – constitutes the recuperation of this negative, the attempt to utilize it."[9]

In his second, complementary chapter on Piranesi, Tafuri turns to an unusual artifact of the 20th century avant-garde: a chapter of the projected monograph *Nonindifferent Nature* drafted in the 1940s by the Soviet avant-garde filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein, entitled "Piranesi or the Flux of Forms" (1946-1947). This essay develops a key motif of Eisenstein's later aesthetics, the notion of "pathos": the emotional and conceptual heightening of artistic effect to the brink of ecstasy, through the powerful capabilities of film montage to disintegrate and reconstellate images of reality. In keeping with his general theoretical tendencies, Eisenstein here too seeks a range of historical precedents and analogies in other artistic and cultural media, of which he will present film as the summit and dialectical sublation. Thus, in successive chapters of *Nonindifferent Nature*, he discovers in both El Greco's paintings and Piranesi's architectural engravings an analytic / synthetic relation to built space that film montage (ie. Eisenstein's own practice) will further potentiate and perfect.

In both instances, Eisenstein's critical approach is the same. He compares the space of an earlier, more statically composed work and the space of a later, more dynamic and unsettled work, treating them as "versions" of each other, as if, in an iterative process of "revision," the artist had travelled from the point of departure in the earlier work to the exploded forms of the later work (even when this is not literally true in a philological-genetic sense). Thus, in the case of El Greco, Eisenstein relates two widely-separated versions of *The Purification of the Temple*, executed forty years apart; he discerns in the latter, more free version, with its extreme pathos, a radical but systematic dissolution of the more classical, solid forms of the

[9] Tafuri, *The Sphere and the Labyrinth,* 54.

earlier version. Eisenstein goes on, however, to extrapolate virtually the lines of force that shattered the forms of the earlier version, suggesting that if they were continued, they would burst out of the shared theme of the two versions altogether. He goes on to project the exaggerated verticality of the figure of Christ and the extreme dynamism of falling and recoiling moneychangers in *The Purification of the Temple*, which are composed on a horizontal format, into the vertical format of a wholly distinct work, *The Resurrection*. In this latter work, it is as if the grounded Christ of the "purification" theme had suddenly rocketed upward to manifest the "resurrection" scene in which an elongated Christ hovers above the ascending and falling bodies of the awakened dead. Eisenstein comments:

> How was such a "trick" possible of juxtaposing two apparently randomly chosen pictures from the gallery of works of the great Spanish-Greek master of the past?
>
> Two pictures, of which the second actually seemed like an explosion, into which the first burst along the line of all its basic features?
>
> It turned out to be possible because each of these two pictures – each in its own way – is truly a precise imprint of two different phases of the creative condition and development that relate to each other as an explosion and the static state preceding it.[10]

Eisenstein treats Piranesi's work analogously, using two Piranesi prints out of his own collection: *Dark Prison* from 1743 and *Dungeon*, also from approximately 1743. The first shows one of Piranesi's signature prison structures, but with relatively well-defined architectural elements, proportions and conjunctions between elements, despite the use of foreshortening and opening of new spaces behind others in order to suggest indefinite depth. The latter engraving, however, from the *Carceri* series proper, shows the exploded forms and impossible complexity that were characteristic of these fanciful engravings.

In the transformational relationship Eisenstein discerns in the movement from *Dark Prison* to *Dungeon*, he finds evidence of a leap in Piranesi's creative consciousness from being a talented receiver of tradition to being a genuine creator of the future:

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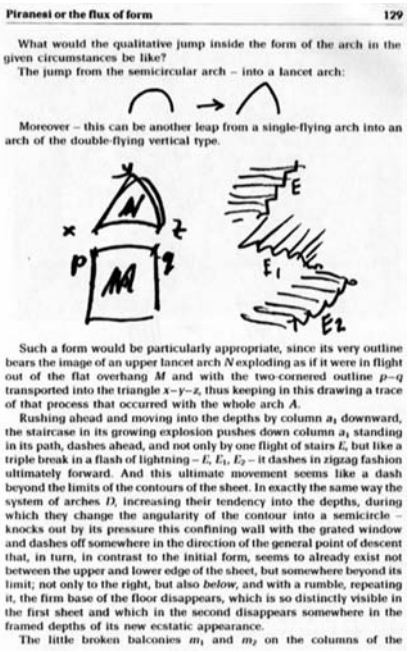
[10] Sergei Eisenstein, *Nonindifferent Nature: Film and the Structure of Things*, trans. Herbert Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 118.



Piranesi or the flux of form 129

What would the qualitative jump inside the form of the arch in the given circumstances be like?

The jump from the semicircular arch – into a lancet arch:

Moreover – this can be another leap from a single-flying arch into an arch of the double-flying vertical type.

Such a form would be particularly appropriate, since its very outline bears the image of an upper lancet arch *N* exploding as if it were in flight out of the flat overhang *M* and with the two-cornered outline *p–q* transported into the triangle *x–y–z*, thus keeping in this drawing a trace of that process that occurred with the whole arch *A*.

Rushing ahead and moving into the depths by column a_1 downward, the staircase in its growing explosion pushes down column a_1 standing in its path, dashes ahead, and not only by one flight of stairs *E*, but like a triple break in a flash of lightning – *E*, E_1, E_2 – it dashes in zigzag fashion ultimately forward. And this ultimate movement seems like a dash beyond the limits of the contours of the sheet. In exactly the same way the system of arches *D*, increasing their tendency into the depths, during which they change the angularity of the contour into a semicircle – knocks out by its pressure this confining wall with the grated window and dashes off somewhere in the direction of the general point of descent that, in turn, in contrast to the initial form, seems to already exist not between the upper and lower edge of the sheet, but somewhere beyond its limit; not only to the right, but also *below*, and with a rumble, repeating it, the firm base of the floor disappears, which is so distinctly visible in the first sheet and which in the second disappears somewhere in the framed depths of its new ecstatic appearance.

The little broken balconies m_1 and m_2 on the columns of the

Page from Sergei Eisenstein, "Piranesi or the Flux of Forms," in *Nonindifferent Nature,* trans. Herbert Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

[*Dark Prison*] – still a distant peal of thunder from the depths of the series of 1743 is of quite a different ring.

Within two years this distant peal bursts out like a real blow. During these years in Piranesi's consciousness and feelings there occurred one of those explosions, one of those inner "cataclysms" shaking his spiritual constitution, worldview, and relation to reality that transform a man. One of those psychic leaps that "suddenly," "abruptly," unexpectedly, and unforeseen raise man from the class of those just like himself to the height of a true creator, capable of wresting from his soul images of unprecedented might, with unabated strength burning the hearts of men.[11]

Implicit in Eisenstein's argument is that there is an underlying matrix of artistic space that is independently analyzable, though organically interwoven with an artist's whole system of works, versions, themes, and emotional tonalities. This matrix manifests itself in the explosion of form when

[11] Eisenstein, *Nonindifferent Nature,* 132.

the artist is seized by a future-facing pathos, whether that is motivated by religious prophecy (El Greco), creative frenzy (Piranesi), or revolutionary enthusiasm (Eisenstein). The formal elements received from the past, from artistic tradition are in Eisenstein's view explosively dissolved and composed in an image of that pathos that adumbrates and motivates a redemptive future. As Tafuri summarizes, "Eisenstein interprets the elements themselves as forms in potential movement, even though artificially frozen. The technique of 'ecstatic transfiguration' thus accelerates that potential movement, activates it, *frees it from the resistance of forms*."[12]

As Tafuri makes clear, Eisenstein conceives of the inheritance of tradition as the transmission of formal functions into present-day artistic works. But also, through his critical motif of "explosion" and his operationalizing of this motif in his analysis and criticism of works by El Greco and Piranesi still overly bound by tradition (hence also, by form), Eisenstein also emphasizes the artistic critique of tradition as the very *instrument* of aesthetic renewal and innovation – a typical conception of the 20th century modernist avant-gardes. Tradition, as transmitted by static forms, reifies the dynamic of pathetic (whether individual or collective) forces frozen within them, presenting a "false equilibrium," in Tafuri's words:

> What Eisenstein *explodes* in the [*Dark Prison*] is… the false equilibrium imposed by Piranesi on the contrast between the structure of form and the dissolution of objects. It is the *falsity of the equilibrium* that Eisenstein's ecstatic explosion attacks… Eisenstein, by forcing to the point of paradox the principles of the formal distortions already potentially present in Piranesi's work, causes the formal organization of the etching to react to the pressure of the concerted action of the "rebellion of the forms."
>
> *The criticism of the work thus becomes an operation on the work itself.*[13]

We might also formulate Tafuri's concluding sentence thus: the criticism of tradition takes place through a violence committed on the forms that transmit it; the critical work of the avant-garde advances through the destruction and reconstitution of tradition forms.

In fact, Eisenstein even projects a further, virtual stage of exploded form that carries beyond Piranesi's oeuvre altogether, into the avant-garde

[12] Tafuri, *The Sphere and the Labyrinth,* 57.
[13] Tafuri, *The Sphere and the Labyrinth,* 58.

tendency towards abstract, cubist, purist, and constructivist forms that not only decompose the solidity of forms, but also the concreteness of the elements through which forms are constituted:

> What is left to explode – is the concreteness.
>
> Stone is no longer stone, but a system of intercrossing angles and planes, in whose play the geometrical basis of its forms explode.
>
> Semicircles of their structural contour burst out of the semicircular outlines of vaults and arches.
>
> Complex columns disintegrate into primary cubes and cylinders, from whose interdependence the concrete appearance of the elements of architecture and nature is constructed.
>
> […]
>
> Not in the works of Piranesi.
>
> But beyond their limits.
>
> A leap beyond the limits of this opus.[14]

In taking this leap beyond even the most innovative artistic oeuvres of the pre-20th century European tradition, completing the dissolution of form and arriving at an elemental abstraction, the avant-garde reiterates the "pathos" released in the explosion of forms by El Greco and Piranesi while also critically surpassing them.

Eisenstein, like Pound, thus demonstrates his own avant-garde orientation by the very operation he performs on works from the artistic tradition. Submitting their forms to a critical violence that analytically dissolves them into conflicting, dynamic forces, Eisenstein reappropriates their paradoxical exemplarity not as "historical" artists from whom to take inspiration, but as "contemporaries" like Eisenstein seized by the pathos of the future. These earlier artists serve the 20th century avant-garde no longer as predecessors or formal models, but as models of how, in earlier historical periods, other artists dissolved traditional form and consequently achieved their aesthetic manumission from the past. For the avant-garde, Eisenstein implies, the only valid pronouncement of tradition can be those instances in which artists, exploding traditional forms, "made it new." The avant-garde sanctions tradition only in its negation and temporal inversion, as an anti-tradition of historical artists artists who transformed the broken image of tradition into an ecstatic picture of the future.

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[14] Eisenstein, *Nonindifferent Nature,* 136.

SUCCESSIVENESS AND SIMULTANEITY IN 20TH CENTURY AESTHETICS

Two models of "post-historical" art

Rodrigo Duarte

One of the most productive meetings between a thinker and an artwork of 20th century aesthetics was certainly Arthur C. Danto's with Andy Warhol's Brillo Boxes. The encounter originally occurred when the philosopher, with some daring systematic pretensions, a strong interest in the visual arts, and the desire to become a painter himself, returned from Europe to the USA, after having seen there reproductions of Lichtenstein's works in an art magazine. Just thereafter, he attended the exhibition at the Stable Gallery, in New York in April 1964, where he saw the boxes of soap scouring pads in piles scattered in the gallery's rooms. It is plausible to infer that this event had a dual impact on Danto: on the one hand, he decided to direct his intellectual energy toward pondering the artistic phenomenon that impressed him so strongly – the Brillo Boxes –, which gave origin to his paper "The Artworld"[1], about which he afterwards was proud to declare to have been the first philosophical article ever on Pop Art[2]. On the other hand, perhaps he considered his desire to become a painter pointless, considering – correctly so – that traditional painting was condemned to disappear. At the time, Danto probably thought that one of the reasons for this possible disappearance was the weight that the self reflection of artworks was acquiring – a self-reflection that was becoming comparatively more important than the physical traits of the objects that convey artworks. In his article, Danto takes this fact into account regarding Andy Warhol's then still controversial work:

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[1] Arthur C. Danto, "The Artworld," *The Journal of Philosophy* Vol. 61, No. 19 (Oct. 15, 1964): 571–584.

[2] Arthur C. Danto, *After the End of Art. Contemporary Art and the Pale of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 124.

What in the end makes the difference between a Brillo box and a work of art consisting of a Brillo Box is a certain theory of art. It is the theory that takes it up into the world of art, and keeps it from collapsing into the real object that it is (in a sense of *is* other than that of artistic identification). Of course, without the theory, one is unlikely to see it as art, and in order to see it as part of the artworld, one must have mastered a good deal of artistic theory as well as a considerable amount of the history of recent New York painting. It could not have been art fifty years ago. But then there could not have been, everything being equal, flight insurance in the Middle Ages, or Etruscan typewriter erasers. The world has to be ready for certain things, the artworld no less than the real one. It is the role of artistic theories, these days as always, to make the artworld, and art, possible. It would, I should think, never have occurred to the painters of Lascaux that they were producing art on those walls. Not unless there were Neolithic aestheticians.[3]

As it is well known, some points made in "The Artworld" later led to the central question of Danto's main work on aesthetics, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*[4], i.e., an ultimate definition of artworks. In addition to that, however, the aforementioned consideration of the right time for the emergence of some phenomena in the history of humankind in "The Artworld" gave birth to an inquiry of the possible application of Hegel's diagnosis of the end of art to understand the situation of contemporary art, as it appears in Danto's influential paper "The End of Art".[5] Here Danto attempts to show that the question as to whether art has a future or not renders it necessary to identify in its past up to the present a principle of progress which would enable us to speak of history in its proper sense. Initially, he finds a kind of development he terms "perceptual equivalence", meaning the mastery by visual artists in acquiring for their works representations of the objects they want to reproduce as indistinguishable as possible to the original. According to this principle, the Renaissance artist mastered the technique of pictorial and sculptural representation better than their medieval antecedents; the former's Mannerist, Baroque, Rococo and Romantic successors would later prevail them. Despite some particular issues arising from this point of view, whose consideration would be

[3] Danto, "The Artworld," 581.

[4] Arthur C. Danto, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace* (Cambridge, MA – London: Harvard University Press, 1981), passim.

[5] Arthur C. Danto, "The End of Art," in *The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), passim.

inopportune here, Danto himself is aware of the main problem of analysing art history only in terms of representational success: the fact that mainly from the post-impressionist painting on, artists seemed to intentionally transgress all the rules of an accurate visual reproduction of an external object, moving on to a conception more related to "expression" of feelings and states of mind than to precise representations of these objects**.** What he coined the "expression paradigm" could then be retrospectively applied to all art history, which would make it difficult to distinguish, in each of its periods, the lack of skills to represent objects from the conscious intention to express a feeling – a case in which the virtuosity in copying the external reality is not necessarily required. According to this viewpoint, "perceptual equivalence" would no longer work as a criterion of the evolution of artistic manifestations and hence it would not be adequate as a principle to the history of art itself. However, this is not a reason to simply abandon the task of thinking about the possibility of a historical succession, not only regarding art and culture, but also of humankind in general. Taking all these issues into account, Danto introduces his own interpretation – or rather an appropriation – of Hegel's concept of historical progress:

> That art is the business of perceptual equivalence is consistent with its having that sort of history, but then, as we saw, it is insufficiently general as a definition of art. So what emerges from this dialectic is that if we are to think of art as having an end, we need a conception of art history which is linear, but a theory of art which is general enough to include representations other than the sort illusionistic painting exemplifies best: literary representations, for example, and even music. [§] Now Hegel's theory meets all these demands. His thought requires that there be genuine historical continuity, and indeed a kind of progress.[6]

Hegel's consideration of history, and particularly of its end, in Alexandre Kojève's reading of the *Phenomenology of Mind*[7], directed Danto to approach Hegel's diagnosis of the end of art, as it appears in his *Lectures on Aesthetics*[8], as a theory of contemporary art. This premise compliments

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[6] Danto, "The End of Art," 107.

[7] Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2008), 288 et seq.

[8] Georg Friedrich Wilhelm Hegel, *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics* (London: Penguin Books, 1993) 13: "In all these respects art is, and remains for us, on the side of its highest destiny, a thing of the past."

what he had already presented, for instance, in the essay "The Artworld": "But there is another feature exhibited by these late productions which is that the objects approach zero as their theory approaches infinity, so that virtually all there is at the end *is* theory, art having finally become vaporized in a dazzle of pure thought about itself, and remaining, as it were, solely as the object of its own theoretical consciousness."[9]

The focus here, however, has shifted to this tendency of zero materiality and infinite theory to converge to the end of art, as the trend to abolish artistic objects points out, if not to the disappearance of art in a literal sense, at least to a drastic re-qualification of the aesthetic constructs once called "artworks". Supposing that artists would continue to create their works even after the end of art, Danto proposed to call art produced in this period "post-historical":

> If something like this view has the remotest chance of being plausible, it is possible to suppose that art had come to an end. Of course, there will go on being art-making. But art-makers, living in what I like to call the post-historical period of art, will bring into existence works which lack the historical importance or meaning we have for a very long time come to expect.[10]

Among other relevant consequences of the "end of art" and its "post-historical" condition, it is worth pointing out a conception by Danto that seems to be very helpful to understand contemporary expressions of art as something essentially plural and democratic, able to dialogue not only with all past periods of art history, but also to cross the borders of traditional artistic *métiers*. Danto makes this point humorously, paraphrasing the well-known passage of *The German Ideology* in which the authors describe humankind's activities after the possible overcoming of the division of labour: "As Marx might say, you can be an abstractionist in the morning, a photorealist in the afternoon, a minimal minimalist in the evening. Or you can cut out paper dolls or do what you damned please. The age of pluralism is upon us."[11]

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[9] Danto, "The End of Art, " 111.

[10] Idem.

[11] Danto, "The End of Art," 114. Cf. Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, "Die deutsche Ideologie," in *Ausgwählte Werke Band I* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1981), 225: "While in the communist society, in which each one does not have an exclusive set

This point about "aesthetic pluralism" is one of the most important achievements of the post-historical period in the arts. Danto – after following an allusion to the same passage of *The German Ideology* he had referred to ten years before – comments on a similar statement by Andy Warhol, in *After the End of Art*, in which he stresses the legitimacy of all styles in art, claiming that this should not mean the end of art criticism, since both good and bad solutions can result in all possible forms of art creation: "Warhol is saying that this no longer makes sense: all styles are of equal merit, none 'better' than another. Needless do say, this leaves the options of criticism open. It does not entail that all art is equal and indifferently good. It just means that goodness and badness are not matters of belonging to the right style, or falling under the right manifesto."[12]

The legacy of Danto's aesthetics, among other relevant points, includes the understanding of contemporary art as eminently post-historical, which means its being ascribed to what he conceived as the aforementioned "aesthetic pluralism". It is interesting to take into account that the passing from art history, understood as a progressive process, to the post-historical period – no longer subjected to any kind of progress – corresponds to Danto's model to comprehend some relevant aspects of contemporary art from the viewpoint of the conversion from successiveness to simultaneity. Although his approach to contemporary art is not the only one underpinned by a conception of the end of art in 20th century aesthetics,[13] it is perhaps one of the few that, due to its pluralism, allows an openness not only to incorporate styles of past ages, but also to reflect on the situation of art in cultures other than those of the Western world.

In the so-called Third World, however, this openness remained a more theoretical possibility, rather than become fruitful praxis in the philosophy of art and art criticism. Therefore, it would be interesting to approach

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of activities, but can be trained in any desired branch, society rules general production and so make it possible for me to do this today, that tomorrow: hunting in the morning, fishing in the afternoon, raise cattle in the evening and after dinner do the critique, just as it pleases me, without becoming hunter, fisher, shephard or critic" (my translation – R. D.).

[12] Danto, *After the End of Art*, 37.

[13] Rodrigo Duarte, "O tema do fim da arte na estética contemporânea," in *Arte no pensamento* ed. Fernando Pessoa (Vila Velha: Museu Vale do Rio Doce, 2006), 377 et seq.

another critic that developed his own concept of post-historical art. Vilém Flusser, despite being born in the Czech Republic in 1920, lived in Brazil for more than thirty years and acquired Brazilian citizenship in 1950. Flusser's best known work – philosophy of photography[14] – tells us something about his conception of post-history, but nothing about the excellence of his criticism of art and aesthetics, which I would like to discuss briefly here.

The conceptual constellation in which his notion of post-history is located originated in the second half of the sixties, in the final years of his extended stay in Brazil, and was not finished until the end of the seventies when it assumed its ultimate formulation in his book *Post-History*. Distinct from Danto, for whom "post-historical" can be just an adjective for artworks created in the period posterior to the end of art in the aforementioned sense, Flusser suggests that we are already living in an age that, as a whole, deserves the title "post-history". While pre-history was once dominated by what Flusser refers to as traditional images (beginning with the cave paintings), history began with the invention of writing in the Middle East in the third millennium B.C. and the emergence of technical images through the invention of photography in the middle of the 19th century was coetaneous to the advent of post-history. According to Flusser:

> Texts were originally aimed against images, in order to turn them transparent for our concrete lived experience, with the aim of freeing humanity from hallucinatory madness. Technical images have a similar aim: they drive against texts with the aim to turn them transparent for our concrete lived experience, in order to free humanity from conceptual madness. The gesture to codify and decipher technical images takes place at a level that is *one step* away from the level of writing and *two steps* away from the level of traditional images. This is the level of *post-historical* consciousness.[15]

It is possible to say that Flusser's concept of post-history is more open to issues of non-Western countries than Danto's for at least two reasons: first, because it sprouted in part from the philosopher's reflections on

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[14] Vilém Flusser, *Towards a philosophy of photography* (London: Reaktion Books, 2012).

[15] Vilém Flusser, *Post-History* trans. Rodrigo Maltez Novaes (Minneapolis: Univocal Publishing, 2013), 95.

Brazilian society and culture, which he considered essentially "non-historical", as opposed to the European and North American experience of history and progress (as related not only to economics, but also to the prevalence of writing in these regions since the beginning of modern times). According to Flusser, traits of the human condition in Brazil demonstrated some similarities with the post-historical situation that had already started in industrialized countries, even though, according to his polemical position, the South American country did not have a full experience of history.[16] Second – and more relevant to our task in this article – another important source of Flusser's conception of post-history, in addition to the fact that the connection to technical images has a congenial aesthetic appeal, was the particular attention he paid, while living in Brazil, to the artistic phenomena occurring in the country. These phenomena came from Brazilian-born artists, such as the writer Guimarães Rosa and the Concretist poets of the São Paulo School, or naturalized Brazilians, like the visual artists Samson Flexor and Mira Schendel. Perhaps it would not be an exaggeration to consider Flusser's encounter with these visual artists as comparable to Danto's approach to Warhol's Brillo Boxes, at least in terms of serving as inspiration for both philosophers in the construction of their respective concepts of post-historical art.

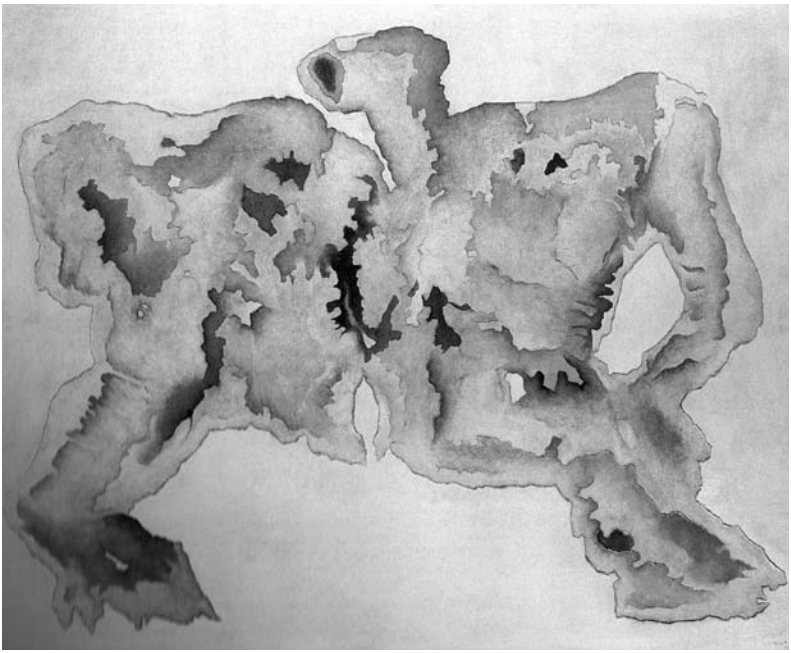
In the case of Flusser's viewpoint, it is not wrong to say that the acquaintance with their work influenced, however indirectly, the establishment of his conception of post-history in a broader sense. Taking into account one of his papers on Samson Flexor, I would like to comment briefly on Flusser's treatment of the artist's work as an example of pictorial representation of the crisis of the "old man" and the possible birth of the "new man". As we recall, these expressions are tightly linked to the conceptual family of post-history, the "old man" being essentially "historical" and the "new man" typically "post-historical". Flusser's object of analysis, canvasses by Flexor from 1968, point out a sort of "anthropology" of a post-historical humanity. For Flusser, the farewell to the "old man" and the welcoming to the "new man" are expressed through a pictorial

[16] The point references Flusser's concept that Brazil is a country with no history. He postulates that Brazil would be an ocean of non-history, in which there are some islands of history. For more information, see Vilém Flusser, *Brasilien oder die Suche nach dem neuen Menschen. Für eine Phänomenologie der Unterentwicklung* (Mannheim: Bollmann Verlag, 1994), passim.

language, which effectively and powerfully indicates the actual crisis in humankind, and possible ways to overcome it, more than the discursive language – even the philosophical one – could achieve. According to Flusser, the "old man", or the *homo faber, which* represents us all, is the one of history, science and technology. Conversely, the "new man", building on the achievements of his/her predecessors, will play *with* the rules; his/her aim is not to win the game, but just to enrich it in the same sense artists do by creating their works. He/she is going to turn him(her)self into *homo ludens*, whose motivation will be neither economic nor political, but just artistic, in a sense that evokes Danto's concept of art-making at the post-historical age. His position on the role of Flexor's painting is synthesized in the last paragraph of his paper:

There is, among Flexor's canvasses, one that can be interpreted as a hounded animal. It looks desperately backwards with a void gaze. Nothing chases after it. It is bound to run away from this nothing. But it has not started running away. But it is already breathless; it is condemned. But anyway it is going to run away – no doubt about that. The three 'buts' are – I believe – the proper description of the crisis. To put them in three sentences is easy. To put them on a canvass, so that they may be read, is to start overcoming the crisis. As long as by 'overcoming' one does not understand the articulation of naďve optimism, but the articulation of an agony, which is the inevitable death of the old man and the possible, but always problematic, rise of the new man.[17]

[17] Vilém Flusser, "Flexor e o Novo Homem. Suplemento Literário," *O Estado de São Paulo*, 14 (651), December 6, 1969, 5.



Samson Flexor: *Untitled, from the series Bípede Branco,*
1969, oil on canvass, 190 x 241 cm,
Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Niteroi, photo: Romulo Fialdini

While Flusser's ideas about Flexor's paintings are more general, stressing the relevance of translating into brushstrokes, compositions, traces and colours some anthropological topics related to the advent of the "new man" (and hence, post-history), he analyses some of Mira Schendel's works on the basis of a theoretical scheme that corresponds implicitly to a conceptual construction about that subject matter he would be ready to establish permanently a couple of years later, i.e., post-history *ipso facto*.[18] This

[18] For a more general appraisal of the link between Flusser's philosophy and Schendel's artworks, see Nancy Ann Roth, "Mira Schendel's Gesture: On Art in Vilém Flusser's Thought, with 'Mira Schendel' by Flusser," *Tate Papers*, 21 (Spring 2014): accessed February 15, 2017 http://www.tate.org.uk/ research/publications /tate-papers/21/mira-schendels-gesture-on-art-in-vilem-flussers-thought-with-mira-schendel-by-flusser.

scheme is based on the distinction between "diachrony" and "diaphaneity", developed in a homonymous article published at the end of the sixties, in the literature section of the Brazilian newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo*. According to Flusser:

> To simplify, I am going to suggest that the term 'diachrony' seeks to articulate the spatiality of time; the term 'diaphaneity' implies an overcoming of both time and space. Thus, time disappears in diachrony, as it occurs to both time and space in diaphaneity. Facing diachrony we are in front of a time that was frozen to a spatial structure displaying a strict linear sequence in its one-dimensionality. And facing diaphaneity, we are in front of space that – in the manner of time – vaporized itself to becoming pure dazzling of interfering and intersecting structures.[19]

In order to explain this cryptic passage that grounds his approach to Mira Schendel's work, Flusser states the existence of two conceptions of time: the first, with its origins in Ancient Greece, shows that things move circularly in space, thus making time reversible. The second, is from Jewish tradition and conceives time as a flow that drags space with it linearly and irreversibly. While, according to the former, time runs in space; in the latter, space runs in time. The Jewish conception gives birth to a diachrony that Flusser describes as "the attempt to synthesize three-dimensional, basically Euclidean, space and the vectorial concept of time. The strict one-dimensionality of the time frozen in space is the fourth dimension of space. And this, however, projects dynamism in all space."[20]

According to Flusser, this diachronic – vectorial – viewpoint of the cosmos, which is aimed toward progress, enters in crisis due to the fact that some of its processes yield too many results. As a result, it is not possible to choose just one to be considered correct. This problem would not occur to diaphaneity since it is a temporalization of space. In the case of diaphaneity, space vaporizes and time disappears, so that "past" and "future" become aspects of the present, so that conception can be considered the next step to humankind's development, meaning the overcoming of space and time due to the presentation of both. This is what Flusser believes to be

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[19] Vilém Flusser, "Diacronia e diafaneidade. Suplemento Literário," *O Estado de São Paulo*, 13 (622), April 26, 1969, 4.
[20] Idem.

the *concretizing* of the abstract concepts space and time. According to him, under the auspices of diaphaneity things disappear. In their place, interpenetrating structures remain which represent the overcoming of the crisis – opened by diachrony – through the possibilities brought by diaphaneity.

Having developed this abstract theory about the crisis of some of the most common habits of present humankind, Flusser starts to apply it to interpret two distinct phases of Mira Schendel's work, respectively linked to diachrony and diaphaneity. The philosopher states that we have actually to *read* her works. This is not due to the fact that in them letters and numbers are mixed with the plastic forms, but as something that could be explained by the theory of information: as it occurs normally in written matter, the signs of her works display a regularity that is interrupted by irregularities, so that redundancy is broken by noises that engenders aesthetic information.[21] This information does not come from "meaning" in the sense of discursive language, considered "indirect" by Flusser, but directly, as in a text composed by ideograms, meaning an essentially visual written language. Concluding his analysis of Schendel's works of the diachronic phase, Flusser declares: "It can be said by way of conclusion that these works of

Exhibition of Mira Schendel at the Fundação de Serralves
Museu de Arte Contemporânea, Porto (Portugal). Photo: Max Schendel.

[21] Vilém Flusser, "Diacronia e diafaneidade (final). Suplemento Literário," *O Estado de São Paulo*, 13 (623), May 3, 1969, 4.

Mira communicate to the open reader projects of original universes, densely significant, diachronically structured, but interfering with each other."[22]

When Flusser begins to consider the works of Schendel's diaphaneity-phase, he explains that, physically, the opaque surfaces over which abstract forms together with alphanumeric signs were spread is replaced by pairs of transparent, acrylic plates linked to each other with a gap between them, so that almost the same patterns of the works of the diachrony-phase are displayed in each plate, but with a considerably different effect. The works must be hung from the room's ceiling, which allows for multiple ways of "reading" depending on the side and angle from which they are seen. For Flusser, this represents a deep rupture with the diachrony of Schendel's previous works. Regarding the "third dimension", supposedly added to them, Flusser declares that "the works of acrylic are not cubes. They are plates and, although they are corporeal, they still suggest plane surfaces. The third dimension is not then 'thickness', but transparency, diaphaneity. (…) As a matter of fact, the reading of such transparent and hanging texts, with a slight swing in space, is a reading at a totally new, radically different level from the readings of the other phase. The terms related to traditional readings, which are terms related to time and space do not apply to the former."[23]

The fact that the texts do not allow for any distinction between direction or sense, or even front from back, or beginning from end of the reading, is linked to the absence of a key to decode the message. This is not ultimately understandable, so that two different readings are equally correct, having nothing in the text that helps to distinguish the validity of one from the validity of the other: we thereby have pluripotentiality, engendering a synchronization of the surpassed dimensions of time and space. As Flusser explains, this means the presentation of diaphaneity itself in a behaviour which overcomes both "contemplation" and "reading" of works to establish an active-passive attitude towards concreteness: "In this way, these works make diaphaneity catchable, which begins nowadays to predominate in all fields."[24]

The reader may have understood the connection between the passage from diachrony to diaphaneity in Flusser's aesthetic thought, on one hand,

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[22] Ibidem.
[23] Idem.
[24] Idem.

and the passage from successiveness to simultaneity as the main topic of this article, on the other. But the same reader may also be asking about the connection between the turn from diachrony to diaphaneity and the conceptual family of "post-history", just as displayed in Danto's philosophy of art, in which the inquiry on the end of art, conceived as the end of art history, led to his position on the post-historical period of art-making, characterized by "aesthetic pluralism".

The answer to the above question is not simple because, as previously suggested here, Flusser's reflections on art in general, and especially on the artworks of visual artists such as Samson Flexor and Mira Schendel, contributed, undeniably so, to the construction of his peculiar concept of post-history. In particular, the association of Schendel's work with the concepts of diachrony and diaphaneity underlines the temporal passing from history to post-history: diachrony, with its irrevocable linearity, standing for history, and diaphaneity, with its overcoming of time and space, for post-history. It is worth remembering that Schendel's works on the diaphaneity-phase are a sort of "proto-techno-images". Their ultimate visual effect is nonetheless caused by mixing alphanumeric signs and plastic forms in a permutable way, depending on the angle through which they are read, engendering the synchronicity that is typical for Flusser's concept of post-history. He himself, in his philosophical autobiography, linked Schendel's late work to a post-historical conception of the world:

> But now humankind is starting (and Mira's experimentation proves it) to put a mediating layer of representations between itself and the world. It is starting to free itself from its concepts, since it makes them objective, i.e., in the form of representations. It is starting to live among represented concepts. This – I believe – can be termed 'structural', 'synchronic', 'post-historical' existence. Concepts are processes: they are discursive, linear and gather representations in series. Representations, conversely, are states of being: they are synthetic, two-dimensional and gather things in surfaces. Representations of concepts are synchronizations of diachrony, un-processabilities. Mira's works, since they make concepts representable, are the first steps towards a revolution in human existence.[25]

[25] Vilém Flusser, *Bodenlos. Eine philosophische Autobiographie* (Düsseldorf – Bensheim: Bollmann, 1992) 205 et seq.

Robert Motherwell and John Constable

Intra-subjectivity and time as determinants of serial painting in American Abstract Expressionism and British Romanticist landscape painting[1]

Manfred Milz

I. Embedding the argument into its historiographic context

As a pattern of resonance, the form and technique of contemporary art tends to redirect the interpretative awareness focus of art historians retrospectively: in 1975, when Robert Rosenblum published his ground-breaking survey study *Modern Painting and the Northern Romantic Tradition – Friedrich to Rothko,* in which he pursued correspondences between American Abstract Expressionism and Romanticist landscape painting, Robert Motherwell was just completing the *Elegy to the Spanish Republic No. 100* that he had originally begun in 1962. In the mid-1970s, however, there was scarce coherent documentation about Motherwell's reception of Romanticism, which is possibly the reason why Rosenblum did not mention the artist in his role as an eminent mediator between The School of New York and the 19th century. According to Rosenblum, though, the common denominators of these two avant-gardes are subject, feeling, and structure. This examination, in fact, will show how these three subjects define the core of

[1] This article is based on original documents from the Dedalus Foundation in New York City, at Mills College, Oakland, and at the University of California at Berkeley, California. Its author is grateful to the College of Graduate Studies and Research at the University of Sharjah, for granting full funding of this project and to debates with and between his students in two seminars conducted at Johann Wolfgang Goethe Universität in Frankfurt am Main.

the aesthetic relationship between Motherwell and Constable, whom Rosenblum does frequently mention, while counting him to the secular wing of the European Romanticist landscape painters.

II. Bergson's cinematographic mode in Motherwell's medium of serial painting

Motherwell's specific mode of abstracting from nature is particularly coined by his academic and individual studies of John Dewey's, Alfred North Whitehead's and Henri Bergson's process metaphysics: it is concerned with the translation of the immediate experience of external and internal transition into spontaneous creative activity.[2]

Bergson, however, whose notions of *durée* and *élan vital* constitute one of the core common denominators between Dewey's and Whitehead's process thought, provides us with his distinction between *homogeneous duration* and *heterogeneous moments* with a particular perspective on Motherwell's serial painting.

It is in this regard first of all important to note that even though Motherwell works in an explicit intra-subjective mode, he does intentionally bridge, as he expressed in 1946, external and internal world through intuition:

> Structures are found in the interaction of the body-mind and the external world; and the body-mind is active and aggressive in finding them. […] Feelings must have a medium in order to function at all; in the same way, thought must have symbols. It is the medium or the specific configuration of the medium that we call a work of art that brings feeling into being, just as do responses to the objects of the external world.[3]

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[2] Manfred Milz, "Essay in honor of Robert Motherwell's centenary: "temporalized form": mediating Romanticism and American Expressionism – Robert Motherwell, Henri Bergson, and the ontological origins of abstraction around 1800," *Journal of Aesthetics & Culture*, 8:1 (2016), 29952, DOI: 10.3402/jac.v8.29952.

[3] Motherwell, "Beyond the Aesthetic" (1946), in *The Writings of Robert Motherwell,* ed. Dore Ashton and Joan Banach, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 54–55.

Through his readings of Bergson's *Matter and Memory,* Motherwell had become aware, while transforming the philosopher's notion of immediacy into gestural painting practice[4] that "our body is an instrument of action and of action only" and that "in no degree, in no sense, under no aspect does it serve to prepare, far less to explain, a representation."[5] In 1960 he had retitled one of his works *Painting*: to him, the primary painting process as a way of *dis*covering his self in its continuous responses to the outward world would become the main subject of his artistic experiments:[6] "The means left for the painter are those inherent in his medium, its structure, rhythm, colour and spatial interval,"[7] a mode of expression that, according to Motherwell in his article "The School of New York," had been persistently pursued by visual artists over the course of the past one hundred years. Bergson, who mediates through his process philosophy between Romanticism and the 20th century, had emphasized this immediacy of heterogeneous moments as an ideal of intuitive perception. As such, it directed Motherwell in his spontaneous impulse:

But to the artist who creates a picture by drawing it from the depths of his soul, time is no longer an accessory; it is not an interval that may be lengthened or shortened without the content being altered. The duration of his work is part and parcel of his work. To contract or to dilate it would be to modify both the physical evolution that fills it and the invention which is its goal. The time taken up by the invention is one with the invention itself. It is the progress of a thought which is changing in the degree and measure that it is taking form. It is a vital process, something like the ripening of an idea.[8]

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[4] Regarding its practice in his Beside the Sea series, see Milz, "Reflections of Bergson in Motherwell's creation process," in "Essay in honor of Robert Motherwell's centenary."

[5] Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1919), 299.

[6] See especially Katy Rogers, "Chapter 7. Motherwell at Work," in *Robert Motherwell 100 Years*, ed. Jack Flam, Katy Rogers and Tim Clifford, (Skira, 2015) 214.

[7] Motherwell, "Preface ["The School of New York"]," in Ashton and Banach, *The Writings of Robert Motherwell,* 155.

[8] Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution,* trans. Arthur Mitchell (New York: Random House, 1944), 370.

Due to the transitory character of nature, the resonating self tends to adapt as a medium the structure of the artwork to permanent internal and external changes. At a first stage, as Motherwell points out, these two simultaneous temporal processes of continuous adaptation concern the spontaneous impulse, whereas at a second stage, it implies alterations: "I began pictures automatically, the automatism consisting of dabs of paint scraped across the surface of the canvas with sticks or spatulas … but then in my efforts to resolve the picture a great deal of the canvas would slowly be covered over with a more formal, architectonic surface."[9] The process that he describes here with regard to one of his earliest paintings, *La Belle Mexicaine (Maria)* of 1941, is particularly representative for the treatment of his serial paintings.[10] In these, the revisions themselves become integral to the consecutive creation process in time:

I begin a painting with a series of mistakes. The painting comes out of the correction of mistakes by feeling. I begin with shapes and colours which are not related internally nor to the external world; I work without images. Ultimate unifications come about through modulation of the surface by innumerable trials and errors. The final picture is the process arrested at the moment when what I was looking for flashes into view.[11]

Inevitably, this temporal pictorial process is of a preliminary character; each image remains partial and "open" within a successively composed series that is inevitably incomplete by its very nature.[12] Bergson points out that heterogeneous moments can only internally be grasped by the intuiting artistic subject, but are subsequently reflected and represented as homogeneous duration. The dilemma "intuition versus consciousness" cannot be resolved, but is expressed by Motherwell through the serial structure of his medium. Bergson describes this dilemma by using the metaphor of chrono-

[9] Motherwell, "On the Forties" (1965), unpublished interview with Bryan Robertson, quoted in Flam, "Introduction: Feeling and Thought," in Flam, Rogers and Clifford, *Robert Motherwell 100 Years,* 18.

[10] See Rogers, "Chapter 7. Motherwell at Work," in Flam, Rogers and Clifford, *Robert Motherwell 100 Years,* 231–250.

[11] Motherwell, "Statement" (1947), in Ashton and Banach (eds.), *The Writings of Robert Motherwell,* 57.

[12] See Umberto Eco, "The Open Work in the Visual Arts," in *The Open Work* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 84–104.

photographical *instantanés* in chapter four of *Creative Evolution,* "The Cinematographical Mechanism of Thought and the Mechanistic Illusion:"

> In order to advance with the moving reality, you must replace yourself within it. Install yourself within change, and you will grasp at once both change itself and the successive states in which *it might* at any instant be immobilized. But with these successive states perceived from without as real, and no longer as potential immobilities, you will never reconstitute movement. Call them *qualities, forms, positions,* or *intentions,* as the case may be, multiply the number of them as you will, let the interval between two consecutive states be infinitely small […].[13]

From the late 1940s until his death in 1991, Motherwell used the consecutive character of serial painting to explore processes of internal and external realities in order to express resonances of his very self in the media of painting, printmaking and collage: in 1948, he started painting his lifelong "Elegy to the Spanish Republic" series, in an oval and rectangle, black-and-white format, a series that would consist of 172 numbered pieces until 1990. In the "Beside the Sea" paintings (1962), in which Motherwell synthesized abstract and naturalist representation, he adapted his creation process to that of nature; the subsequent composition "Lyric Suite" (1965) comprised over 600 fluid ink on paper works, single acts of spontaneity, executed across a short time-period. From the 1970s onwards, serial painting became increasingly important to Motherwell. With the "Open" series (executed in its core from 1967–74), he created a stark contrast to the organic nature of the simultaneously evolving "Elegy" paintings. In his "Opens," he worked with variations of tension fields through polar opposites: reiterations of drawn rectangular u-shapes contrasting the colour monochromes on which they are positioned, while opening to the upper part or the sides of a painting. The collage series in which ripped-off fragments of Gauloises cigarette packages are glued to a painted scarlet ground (1972/ 82); the "Drunk with Turpentine" series (1979), more than one hundred gestural oil and graphite works on paper in the spirit of the "Lyric Suite"; the "Night Music Opus" (1988-89), twenty-five collages that reflect, in their close kinship with music, sequential pictorial variations.

It is typical for Motherwell who tended to work with counterpoints in form and content, that he often started a new series in a different medium before concluding the former. Some of these series are either implicitly

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[13] Bergson, *Creative Evolution,* 334.

or explicitly intertwined. However, the diverse series outlined above can be differentiated into two categories: the paintings of the "Elegies" and "Opens" and the collages of "Gauloises" and "Scarlet" and those of the "Night Music Opus" are executed in a mode between feeling (spontaneity) and thought (revision) that Motherwell characterized in 1944 as "a dialectic between the conscious (straight lines, designed shapes, weighed colour, abstract language) and the unconscious (soft lines, obscured shapes, *automatism*) resolved into a synthesis that differs as a whole from either."[14] – Whereas the works of "Beside the Sea," "Lyric Suite," and "Drunk with Turpentine" are exclusively created through the artist's immediate impulse – while remaining unrevised.

III. Romanticist aesthetics from the perspective of American Abstract Expressionism

Motherwell's studies of Bergson's principle of vitalism correlated at Harvard with his reception of Romanticism as a pictorial, literary, and philosophical movement: parallel to the course on 20th century epistemology, in which he defended Bergson's world-view, he started to attend C.I. Lewis' Kant-seminar and throughout the academic year 1937/38 and he participated and contributed to a course facilitated by his mentor Arthur Oncken Lovejoy, "The History of Idea of Romanticism."

Despite the fact that Motherwell left Lewis' Kant-seminar after a few sessions (to fully concentrate on Bergson and on the Age of Romanticism), Kant constituted nevertheless, as he would underscore towards the end of his life, one of the embarkation points in Motherwell's search for intra-subjective modes of expression within the very process of creating art. Five years before his death, in 1986, he stated, while looking back upon these years in his invited speech at Harvard, "On not becoming an academic": "I now regard Kant most highly."[15]

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[14] Sidney Janis, *Abstract and Surrealist Art in America* (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1944), 65. This comment is part of a plate caption to Motherwell's painting *The Spanish Prison* (1943–44).

[15] Motherwell, "On not Becoming an Academic," text of a paper presented at a panel titled "Tradition and Innovation. The Realms of Scholarship," organized for Harvard University's 350th anniversary celebration at Cambridge, MA, September 4, 1986; reprinted in Ashton and Banach, *The Writings of Robert Motherwell,* 344.

Kant's concept of a dissociation between individual (subject) and nature (object) stands at the beginning of the Romanticists' and his own challenging search for an authentic apprehension and representation of the reality around him. This provocative notion of a dissociation between individual (subject) and nature (object) motivated both Motherwell and some of the Romanticist painters, novelists and composers, who were the first to experiment with attempts to depict or to close "the void between one's lonely self and the world."[16] Most of the novel resolutions that Motherwell and the Romanticists have in common as a response to this problem, emerged from the genesis and evolution of process philosophy. As Motherwell himself phrased it: "The origin of abstraction in art is that of any mode of thought. Abstract art is a true mysticism […] or rather a series of mysticisms that grew up in the historical circumstance that all mysticisms do, from a primary sense of gulf, an abyss […] Abstract art is an effort to close the void that modern men feel. Its abstraction is its emphasis."[17]

From Lovejoy's "Romantic Theory of Knowledge,"[18] Motherwell learned that the principle of an intuited processual union between subject and object that Bergson proposed (and that he was defending in Lewis's seminar on epistemology), was historically rooted – as a direct response to Kant's transcendental idealism – in the natural philosophy of Romanticism.

Particularly the time-period between 1775 and 1825 marks a crucial paradigm shift from *being* to *becoming* that constitutes, according to Lovejoy, a cultural foundation for the first decades of the 20th century. This development is historically coined by the earlier turn from objective rationalism of unchangeable mind-made concepts to subjective empiricism, in which the permanently changing world is directly experienced through our senses. Towards 1800, the temporal notion of natural philosophy that the Romanticist painters subscribed to, was supported by the dynamic

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[16] Motherwell, "What Abstract Art Means to Me," *The Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art* 18, no. 3 (1951): 2–15; reprinted in Ashton and Banach, *The Writings of Robert Motherwell,* 159.

[17] Ibid, 159.

[18] According to Marjorie Nicholson, who was the first to review and categorize the Lovejoy-papers (in 1963), the cultural historian had prepared substantial material for an extensive (but unrealized) research project in this explicit direction. See the Arthur O. Lovejoy Papers, Ms. 38 (Box 45 and Box 46), Special Collections, Milton S. Eisenhower Library, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, here: Survey File, Scope and Content Note (Nicholoson), 2.

development of a steadily growing industrialization and its new means of transportation that significantly changed the way in which people perceived the world: whereas the rational Neo-Classicist painter still aimed at a spatially structured adjacency of preconceived *objects,* the subjective Romanticist representative of "radical or absolute evolutionism" (Lovejoy)[19] tended to apprehend a temporal succession of unprecedented *processual appearances.* It is precisely this concept that Lovejoy repeatedly refers to as intuited "temporalized form" that attracted Motherwell to the landscape paintings of the British Romanticists – from the particular perspective of Bergson's theorem of vitalism.

Motherwell's following observations on the linkages between contemporary American and European Romanticist art document to what extent he would in his aesthetic views subscribe to Lovejoy's historical perspective: in 1944, when his studies in Paris still powerfully resonated in him, he traced in "The Place of the Spiritual in a World of Property," a talk that he had delivered in the section "L'art et la crise" of the "Pointigny en Amerique" programs, the origins of modern art to the immediate aftermath of the French Revolution and to Delacroix, in describing its development from the disappearance of the human figure and its substitution by the genre of landscape painting, up until its conclusion with the work of Cézanne and the beginning of Cubist figurative abstraction.[20]

Motherwell's articles and talks between the second half of the 1940s and the 1980s, however, document his deep appreciation for the non-academic, experimental techniques of British landscape artists in their direct confrontation with nature. By 1948, while pursuing the question "What is sublime in art?" Motherwell underscored their formative historical influence for the genesis and evolution of modern contemporary art:

> The history of modern art can be conceived as a military campaign, as a civil war that has lasted more than a hundred years – if movements of the spirit can be dated – since Baudelaire first requested a painting that was to be specifically modern in subject and style. Perhaps the first dent in the lines of traditional conceptions was made by the English landscapists and by Courbet […] The

[19] Arthur O. Lovejoy, The Great Chain of Being, A Study of the History of An Idea (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 317.

[20] Motherwell, "The Modern Painter's World," *Dyn 1,* no. 6 (November 1944): 9–14; here in Ashton and Banach, *The Writings of Robert Motherwell,* 28–33.

story is interesting if the essence of their goal is taken to be a passionate desire to get rid of what is dead in human experience, to get rid of concepts, whether aesthetic or metaphysical or ethical or social, that, being garbed in the costumes of the past, get in the way of their enjoyment.[21]

It is astonishing that Motherwell here saw Baudelaire's vision of a visual art that reflects an identity of form and content realized in British Romanticist landscape painting, while neglecting the definitive share that Delacroix had in this particular progress. Motherwell explicitly clarifies this remarkable preference of his decades later, in "Thoughts on Drawing," a text that he wrote for a national exhibition of the American Drawing Society in 1970. In his repudiation of concepts as preconceived clichés of form, he once again consults Baudelaire's anti-classicist aesthetics that he now directly aligns with the technique of Goya:

"The draughtsmanship of colourists is like that of nature: their figures are naturally bound by a *harmonious collision of masses.*" And Goya adds: "Where do they find lines in nature? As for me, I can distinguish only luminous and dark bodies; planes that approach and recede; reliefs and concavities. My eye never perceives lines and details … and my brush cannot see more or better than I." But the truth is that Goya's engravings are filled with lines.[22]

To Goya and especially to some of the British Romanticist landscape painters as well, the appearance of objects in space whose outlines are sharply rendered was to be subordinated to their subjective processual and thus heterogeneous appearance in time – to authentically capture permanent changes in nature. With Baudelaire and Goya, Motherwell identifies his own ideal of a spontaneous creation process – derived from Surrealist automatism – that eventually amalgamates at its climax with the organic transitions of nature herself, as he had pointed out five years prior in an interview: "It should be emphasized, because of the amateurish connotations of the word doodling, that doodling can be, in proper hands, *as high a mode*

[21] Motherwell, "A Tour of the Sublime," *The Tiger's Eye* I, no. 6 (December 15, 1948): 46-48; here in Ashton and Banach, *The Writings of Robert Motherwell,* 63.
[22] Motherwell, "Thoughts on Drawing" (1970), in *Drawing Society National Exhibition 1970,* exhibition catalogue (New York: American Federation of Arts for the Drawing Society, 1970), n.p.; here in Ashton and Banach, *The Writings of Robert Motherwell,* 248.

of drawing as any. By nature, doodling is one of the generic artistic modes of drawing and, when elaborated, of painting in general. The problem is *to make an abstract painting as rich as nature,* something the cubist tradition could not do."[23]

Due to this preference of non-figurative (absolute) to figurative (relative) abstraction, Motherwell furthermore distinguishes in 1970 between the French and British Romanticist aesthetic modes and techniques of rendering form, while developing an explicit predilection for the heterogeneous structures that the British landscape painters pursued in their continuous examinations of nature's permanent transition:

> Even the celebrated remark of Ingres, that haunted Matisse, "Drawing is the probity of art," doesn't necessarily mean that drawing is different from painting. On the contrary, Constable, and the English Romantic period in general, seemed not to have entered real discussion with their French contemporaries, so convinced were the latter that painting and drawing are "form," in the sense of clear contour and solid modelling. Certainly, in present-day America, if one looks at the group-exhibition like the present one, or Una Johnson's two volumes on 20th century drawing, many of the works could equally be represented in a painting show or a watercolour show.[24]

Motherwell's observations of British painting of the Romanticist age and of Constable in particular culminate in the example of the latter's pencil and sepia wash *Trees and a Stretch of Water on the Stour* that he had created together with the less abstract representation of Dedham church, between circa 1832 and 1836.[25]

In what is one of his latest works that Constable completed several months before his death, he may have either started with study sketches in front of nature that he then finished in his studio or entirely created this fragmentary landscape from his memory: the banks of the river Stour are

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[23] Motherwell, "Interview with Bryan Robertson" (1965); in Terenzio (ed.), *The Collected Writings of Robert Motherwell,* 143-144.

[24] Motherwell, "Thoughts on Drawing" (1970); here in Ashton and Banach, *The Writings of Robert Motherwell,* 247.

[25] Ibid. 248. John Constable, *Trees and a Stretch of Water on the Stour,* c. 1832 – c. 1836. Pencil and Sepia Wash Drawing on Paper, 205 x 162 mm. Prints & Drawings Study Room, Level H, Case WD, Shelf 20, Box C. Museum Number: 250-1888 of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

exposed to a storm; the scenery passes through a rapid transition that is captured by the loose rendering of a dynamic oscillation between light and thick strokes. Remarkable are the light and dark tones as delicately balanced opposite forces that Motherwell valued and that constitute the core of his own compositions. The fluid as well as cursory gestures of the fleeting scene *Trees and a Stretch of Water on the Stour* especially resonate in his *Drunk with Turpentine No. 2* (*Stephen's Gate*) of 1979,[26] as Motherwell substitutes Constable's pencil and sepia materials with a technical configuration of graphite and oil in spontaneous acts of immediate creation.

By 1970, Motherwell's view of the intra-subjective New York School as a late descendant of the European Romanticist tradition had been established in his self-understanding as a theoretician, teacher and as an artist. In a few of his catalogue contributions, articles, lectures and interviews, he had historically linked the way in which European Romanticist painting was composed to the techniques of American Abstract Expressionism. Motherwell saw the traditional distinction between drawing and painting that had marked the conflict between Neo-Classicists and Romanticists and French and English Romanticists as well, transcended by the affluent character of contemporary American drawing that he equated to the technique of "watercolour."

To him, the spiritual and technical kinship between European Romanticist landscape painting and American Expressionism stems from the open-air-tradition of watercolour and oil sketch – initially, as painterly exercises and at later, elaborate stages, as autonomous artworks of individual sovereignty. According to Motherwell, this historically grown constellation holds particularly true for the case of Mark Rothko, a close friend of his:

When Mark Rothko took his life, alone in his studio during the exceptionally cold winter of 1970, this country and the world lost one of the great modern painters and, what is more rare, a profound one. For modern painting – I speak of it in the specific sense of *l'art moderne* – in general has been characterized by a certain *éclat,* the sun-drenched brilliance of open-air painting (whether the work was in fact done outside or in a daylight studio) and by a section of the colour-wheel far more intense in hue-saturation than is the Renaissance tradition, with its several glazes of paint. It is believed that Goya, who died in 1828,

[26] Robert Motherwell, *Drunk with Turpentine No. 2* (*Stephen's Gate*), 1979. Oil and Graphite on Paper, 73 x 57.8 cm. Modern Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas.

purposely used to put the final emphasis on his paintings by candlelight. During Goya's lifetime, the English watercolourists, working outdoors from nature, began to lighten the painter's palette (and incidentally to begin the Romantic tradition, of which perhaps abstract expressionism is the last outburst in painting); later on, *chez* the French Impressionists, sunlight began to permeate the mainstream of modern art. Mark Rothko, an original colourist, sometimes dipped in this stream, especially in those paintings with warm colours […] Rothko was inspired by the Romantic tradition, and tormented by conflicts, by unrelieved anxiety.[27]

Once again, Motherwell sees with Baudelaire's notion of creative novelty the sublime in American Abstract Expressionism and in the works of English watercolourists interconnected through the creation of a language of feeling out of colour. In this regard, the case of Rothko is e xemplary to him: "In essence his belief was, *I feel, therefore I am;* this is what his colour expressed, even when it was ugly, as occasionally happened."[28] About Turner himself, with whom Rothko identified, Motherwell stated similarly, regarding the historical transition from figurative *mimesis* to non-figurative *poesis*:

The game is not what things "look like." The game is organizing, as accurately and with as deep discrimination as one can, states of feeling; and states of feeling, when generalized, become questions of light, colour, weight, solidity, airiness, lyricism, sombreness, heaviness, strength, whatever this is especially visible in artists of a wide range, such as J.M.W. Turner in the 19th century, or Pablo Picasso in the 20th.[29]

Motherwell developed an attraction as strong as Rothko's to the pictorial solutions of Turner and of Constable in particular, because he shared their motivating belief that the very act of painting – the process of

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[27] Robert Motherwell, "On Rothko, A Eulogy" (1970); first published in Terenzio, *The Collected Writings of Robert Motherwell,* 197-201; here in Ashton and Banach, *The Writings of Robert Motherwell,* 271.

[28] Ibid. 273.

[29] Motherwell, "On the Humanism of Abstraction: The Artist Speaks" (1970); first published in *Robert Motherwell at St. Paul's School,* exhibition catalogue (Concord, N.H.: St. Paul's School, 1970); here in Ashton and Banach, *The Writings of Robert Motherwell,* 253.

adapting colour-configurations to permanently novel, immediate impressions – was synonymous to feeling. This conviction is the common source of spiritual and technical correspondences between painters of the New York School and English Romanticist landscapists.

IV. Motherwell's reception of Constable's temporalized serial painting through Kurt Badt's *John Constable's Clouds* (1950)

In 1971, when an interviewer addressed Motherwell's space conception in his "Opens" series, he explained:

> When I was young, I was more obsessed with the materiality of things and I would have undoubtedly thought of paintings of this kind as walls. Today I'm more interested in air and atmosphere. This is why I treat space ambivalently. For example, an orange painting with white lines might be viewed as an orange wall with white lines, but the orange color is no less atmospheric for all of that. It abounds with white light and the white lines vibrate in a deep space too, as well as an orange "wall."[30]

It is in this specific regard of delineation that his "Opens" explicitly distinguish themselves (despite their initial outward appearance) from Minimalist art. A few months after his interview, in the Fall of the same year, he therefore requested from the Tate curator Ronald Alley that the "Open" paintings are to be ideally exposed to dimmed lighting conditions when being exhibited, so that "they become objectless and mysterious... they are not hard-edged paintings, but romantic ones."[31]

During the 1950s, Motherwell had broadly explored the historical origins of this redefined relationship between air and atmosphere on the one hand and space on the other through Kurt Badt's monograph *John*

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[30] Motherwell, Interview with Irmeline Lebeer, in St. Gallen, Switzerland, June 1971; first published under the title "Robert Motherwell" in *Chroniques de l'art vivant,* no. 22 (July – August 1971), 10-12; here quoted from a hand-corrected and underscored typescript by Motherwell, in: Jack Flam, Chapter 6. Opens, in Jack Flam, Katy Rogers, Tim Clifford, *Motherwell 100 Years* (Milan: Skira Editore, 2015), 309, fn6.

[31] Motherwell in an unpublished letter to Ronald Alley, October 15, 1970, quoted in Flam, ibid. 202.

Constable's Clouds that he kept as a spiritual companion in his studio library.[32] Through the lens of the art historian Badt, he was now enabled to magnify some of the aforementioned common denominators between Romanticism and Bergson that he had become familiar with in the 1930s and 1940s. The scientific classification of clouds as suggested by the meteorologist Luke Howard and by Goethe that Badt describes in chapter two of his book, would offer Constable a reliable source of solid orientation to counterbalance his spontaneous subjectivity.

In chapter eight, "The Humble Life of Nature," Badt reflects the resolution to Kant's concept of dissociation through consciousness by some of the European artists in chapter three that he devotes to contemporary German visual arts, "The Ideas of Carl Gustav Carus and the Dresden Painters:" "Man had to bridge the gap between himself and nature and driven by a new impetus he attempted to do so through the power of feeling to which he gave himself up in perfect confidence, thus abandoning the anthropomorphic interpretation of nature."[33] It is this profound insight of Romanticist aesthetics that resonates in Motherwell's statement from 1951, "Abstract art is an effort to close the void that modern men feel."[34]

Within a wider European context of aesthetics, Badt characterizes (through some of Goethe's observations) the paradigm shift of visual Romanticism from *being* to *becoming* by a drastic change in perception – from the rational linear and therefore static Renaissance perspectival system of space to Romanticism's contemplated dynamic perspective of continually changing "skyscapes" in time that Constable exposed his visual mind to in the open air.[35]

With the subconscious, intuition, process and spontaneity at the core of Constable's program, Badt addresses those essential components of intra-subjective creativity that mattered most to Motherwell and other American Abstract Expressionists.

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[32] Kurt Badt, *John Constable's Clouds,* translated from the German by Stanley (London: Routledge & Kegan, 1950). This volume is listed in the donation register compiled by Barbara Marks and her colleagues in the course of the acquisition of books from Motherwell's studio library, between June and November 1965: "New York University Library, Donation 1 of 2," in the Dedalus Foundation Archive (File "I.A. 46"), New York City.

[33] Ibid. 33.

[34] Please compare this fragmentary to the full quotation of footnotes 16 and 17.

[35] Ibid. 28–32.

As Badt emphasizes, it is in close spiritual kinship to Wordsworth's "doctrine of pure sensationalism"[36] that Constable stated: "Painting is with me but another word for feeling!"[37] In 1822, the painter expressed in a letter that such a distinguished identity of painting and feeling can best be practiced once traditional earthbound academic landscape painting is neglected in favour of representing an airborne ephemeral atmospheric metamorphosis close to immateriality: "It will be difficult to name a class of landscape in which the sky is not the keynote, the standard of scale and the chief organ of sentiments."[38]

Constable meant that the intensity of his sentiment depended on his particular choice of motive. When reading Badt, Motherwell will have embraced Constable's view, for, in 1946, still at a formative phase in search for his individual painting style, he had ubiquitously though precisely phrased what would become his lifelong artistic endeavour: "The junction of the aesthetic instead becomes that of a medium, a means for getting at the infinite background of feeling in order to condense it into an object of perception. We feel through the senses, and everyone knows that the content of art is feeling; it is the creation of an object for sensing that is the artist's task; and it is the qualities of this object that constitute its felt content."[39]

The case of Constable and that of Turner is exemplary indeed for the pictorial turn from a spatially structured adjacency of *preconceived objects* to a temporal succession of unprecedented *processual appearances.* Their challenging attempts to represent one motive, experienced in the passage of time, initiated a methodological reflection of the production process itself that subsequently caused an attention shift from the temporalized motive to the temporalization of medium and technique[40] – whereby the artwork becomes increasingly self-referential.

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[36] Ibid. 105.

[37] Ibid. 77.

[38] Ibid. 76.

[39] Motherwell, "Beyond the Aesthetic" (1946); first published in *Design* 47, no. 8 (April 1946): 14-15; here in Ashton and Banach (eds.), *The Writings of Robert Motherwell,* 54.

[40] The author of this article concurs with the findings in the M.A. thesis by Sylwia M. Chomentowska, *Vom bewegten Motiv zum verzeitlichten Medium – Zur europäischen Landschaftsmalerei zwischen 1780 und 1860* (Munich: Scaneg Verlag, 2004), 30-31; 69.

Constable's perception of change in time is subjected to his sentiment. To document his artistic intention, Badt focuses especially on Constable's numerous preparatory oil sketches of cloud studies that the he had painted outdoors at Hampstead during the late Summer and early Fall of 1821/22. Charles Robert Leslie, Constable's closest friend, a painter himself, described these cloud studies (of which twenty were in his possession) in his *Memoirs of the Life of John Constable* (1843):

(...) there is but one among them in which a vestige of landscape is introduced. They are painted in oil, on large sheets of thick paper, and all dated, with the time of day, the direction of wind, and other memoranda on their backs. On one, for instance, is written, "5th of September, 1822. 10 o'clock, morning, looking south-east, brisk wind at west. Very bright and fresh grey clouds running fast over a yellow bed, about half way in the sky. Very appropriate to the 'coast of Osmington'."[41]

Motherwell found out that in Constable's cloud studies temporalization concerned first of all the physical constitution and properties of the motive. By following the example of Howard's systematic cloud classifications, Constable indicated the main factors that contributed to specific atmospheric formations of structures that he attempted to portray as processual phenomena within a consecutive time-span. Badt: "He did not want to depict one single moment of time, nor a present tense removed from the passage of time; it was precisely the passage of time itself that he wanted to show and that could be indicated by various signs in a pictured landscape."[42] The "passage of time" conceived by Constable is the equivalent of what Bergson termed in his theory of consciousness "duration": once time as a mobile and incomplete dimension is measured, it is translated into immobile, spatial time, a succession of distinct parts. The indivisible whole of time, however, can only be experienced as pure mobility by means of intuition.[43] This intra-subjective duration is precisely what Badt had

[41] Charles Robert Leslie, *Memoirs of the Life of John Constable – Composed Chiefly of His Letters* (London: The Phaidon Press, 1951), 94. Badt deviates in his quotation from the original in content and spelling. Compare Badt, *John Constable's Clouds,* 41.

[42] Badt, *John Constable's Clouds,* 64.

[43] See e.g. Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind,* translated by Mabelle L. Andison (New York: Philosophical Library, 1946), 82–83.

circumscribed as Constable's "unstable feeling" of "the passively receptive soul" that was to experience "continually changing content."[44] In Romanticism's and especially in Constable's pictorial theory, Motherwell rediscovered components of relevance to his own technique that he was prepared to relate to through Bergson's notions.

The temporalization of Constable's dynamic pictorial motive in his direct exposure to nature's transitoriness triggered a consequent reconsideration of his medium. Badt underscores in this regard the "identity between the origin of inspiration and the means of expression."[45] Motherwell would equally conclude, regarding the immediate transformation processes from nature into art that were integral to his *Beside the Sea* series of 1962: "One might say that the true way to "imitate" nature is to employ its own processes."[46] The painter's concentration on his spontaneous perception and representation of change in time demanded a technical adaptation of the medium to the motion patterns of the natural phenomena that he was recording. For Constable, a single cloud study was not sufficient to create within the indivisible whole of time "a chain of sequences" that the meteorologist Leo Claude Bonacina had registered while examining the "suggestiveness of change" in front of an original.[47] Badt emphasizes the serial aspect of the cloud compositions: "This group of studies he painted at one go, in one concentrated effort as if by a special inspiration, as the outcome of some special experience or motive […]."[48] Coherently expressing the ongoing dynamic process of atmospheric transformation necessitated a multitude of consecutive studies on Constable's part that could potentially suggest an animated integrative whole of heterogeneous phases. Subsequently, he had to repeatedly create processual excerpts from the dynamic temporal continuum of motion that are by nature – like change itself – of an incomplete and therefore open structure.

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[44] Quarterly Journal of the Royal Meteorological Society, Vol. 63, no. 272 (1937): 483–490.

[45] Badt, *John Constable's Clouds,* 77.

[46] Hjorvardur Harvard Arnason, *Robert Motherwell* (New York: Abrams, 1981), 147. Statement of Motherwell in Arnason's notes to plates.

[47] Ibid. 47. Badt quotes the Foreign Secretary of London's Royal Meteorological Society, Leo Claude Wallace Bonacina, "John Constable's Centenary: His Position as a Painter of Weather," *Quarterly Journal of the Royal Meteorological Society,* Vol. 63, No. 272, 483–490.

[48] Badt, *John Constable's Clouds,* 42.

V. Conclusion

When Motherwell wrote in 1948 that the English landscape painters of Romanticism were the first to undermine traditional conceptions and stated in 1970 that these English watercolourists, by directly exposing their palette to nature, established a tradition that served as the foundation of American Abstract Expressionism, he did not merely refer to the exposure of outward physical form to subjective expression as the origin of contemporary non-objective art. While reading Badt through the lens of Bergson's process metaphysics and in the light of the Romanticist paradigm shift from *being* to *becoming* within Lovejoy's historical interpretation, Motherwell learned that the late Constable and Turner radically changed their artistic focus from the dynamic motive within a time-passage to its reflection through adaptable – equally temporalized – pictorial techniques. In the course of their routine-refined progression, Constable's and Turner's temporalized brushstrokes tended to disenthrall themselves from the actual motive. These expressive painterly gestures constituted simultaneously a temporal record of their own creation process. Motherwell would have seen in this self-referential aspect the historical hinge between English Romanticist landscape painting and Action Painting: both movements depart from an intra-subjective creation process, but whereas the temporalized brushstrokes of the Romanticists did not gain complete autonomy from the landscape motive, the primary dynamic gestures of Action Painting became as temporal phases of their creation process the actual subject of art.

In his lectures, talks, and articles, Motherwell reflected his affinity with the Romanticist movement and reminded other American Abstract Expressionists of their predecessors. Motherwell was aware that Action painters had inherited and were concluding the Romanticists' efforts to resolve the dissociation between subject and reality that Kant had addressed, through the very act of directly abstracting from nature. His life-long devotion to the temporalization of form within the context of serial painting, a medium he increasingly worked with from the 1970s onwards, was sharpened by and co-motivated through his identification with Constable's series of cloud studies. But he also distinguished himself significantly from other action painters by experimentally elaborating in his gestural series *Beside the Sea* of 1962 a technical inter-connectedness of motive and medium that the watercolourists of British Romanticism had aspired to attain. Ultimately, Motherwell discovered in Constable's

techniques a balance between spontaneity and control that he was to practice in his own work.

Published in 1950, when American Action Painting started to gain momentum, Badt's study is by itself one of the earliest examinations of temporal aspects in the history of art and as such a veritable example for the retrospective treatment of a research topic from the perspective of contemporary art.

The Body of Evidence?

From Danto to Kant and back

Zoltán Papp

My paper has nothing to do, at least I hope so, with the 1993 movie remembered mainly (or solely, or not even) for the hot scene between Madonna and Willem Dafoe. I just borrowed its title and added a question mark to it. Arthur C. Danto borrowed the title of his first book on the philosophy of art, although it is not clear why he thought that the doubly fictional *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace* – the title of a book written by the heroine of a novel by Muriel Spark – suited his purpose, which was to show how one of two (or more) perceptually indiscernible objects can become a work of art.[1] Transubstantiation would have been a better choice; it cannot be seen, nor does it modify the taste of bread and wine. Imagine that Raphael's last painting would correctly be described by a title like "Three ordinary-looking acrobats perform their boring levitation show on the top of a hill." Or imagine a *Brillo Box* shining with ethereal white, red, and blue.

This is the work of art (minus shine) which Danto was obsessed with for fifty years. He made his debut as a philosopher of art in 1964 with "The Artworld," in which he first tried to explain why Andy Warhol's boxes are works of art, while their commercial counterparts are not. His last book, *What Art Is*, displays two *Brillo Box*es (and a *Mott's Box*) on its cover. In *The Transfiguration* he takes it as his starting point that "any definition of art must compass the Brillo boxes" (vii).[2] Several years later he presents the result as follows:

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[1] All the less as in the Preface he refers to Matthew 17:2 and adds that "incandescence could not be the sort of differentia a definition of art would look for." Arthur C. Danto, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace: A Philosophy of Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1981), vii. I will henceforth refer to this book with page numbers in parentheses in the text of the paper.

[2] For a criticism of the approach that follows from this, see Richard Wollheim,

The Transfiguration of the Commonplace, in its effort to lay down a definition, hence chart the essence of art, did little better than come up with conditions (i) and (ii) as necessary for something having the status of art. To be a work of art is to be (i) about something and (ii) to embody its meaning.[3]

In *What Art Is*, Danto repeats that "works of art are *embodied meanings*" but goes on to "admit that I have done relatively little to analyze embodiment."[4] That is true. So much so that in *The Transfiguration* the words "embody" or "embodiment" do not occur at all in the context in which Danto suggests they do: he does not even describe, let alone define, works of art as entities that embody their meanings. It is in *The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art* (1986) that he begins to apply this formula. A minor issue, one might say, the author was betrayed by his memory, this can happen to anyone, why should it matter? Maybe it does not. Yet I will try to show that we do not necessarily have to come to terms with the fact that Danto does not use "embodiment" in *The Transfiguration* – especially in a passage in which he argues for the unsubstitutability of works of art – and that he later begins to use it as if he had secured it before. My main point is that he manoeuvers himself into a bad alternative between two senses of embodiment: a narrower, more specific one related to a paradigm already present in Immanuel Kant's doctrine of art, and a broader, less specific one that actually makes the term superfluous with respect to works like *Brillo Box*.

As a matter of fact, it is not just that *The Transfiguration* does not define works of art in terms of embodiment: it gives no formal definition at all. The passage I referred to is in the last chapter. In the first six chapters, four features emerge that could be included in a definition. (I) Unlike a mere

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"Danto's Gallery of Indiscernibles," in *Danto and His Critics*, 2nd edition, ed. Mark Rollins (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 30–39. Let me refer here to three more essays in this excellent volume with which mine has much in common: Noël Carroll: "Essence, Expression, and History: Arthur Danto's Philosophy of Art," 118–145, idem, "Danto's New Definition of Art and the Problem of Art Theories," 146–152, and Diarmuid Costello: "Danto and Kant: Together at Last?," 153–171.

[3] Arthur C. Danto, *After the End of Art: Contemporary Art and the Pale of History* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1995), 195.

[4] Arthur C. Danto: *What Art Is* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2013), 36.

real thing, a work of art is about something, i.e., it has a subject or content. (II) Its "*esse* is *interprari*" (125), i.e., interpretation is a necessary condition of its being a work. (III) It is made and interpreted within a context or framework of art history, art theory, and art criticism called the artworld. (IV) It expresses something of, or shows something about, its content, an "attitude" by the artist (143 and *passim*), and it does so through the way it represents the content. This last point is made in Chapter Six. And the question Danto has previously promised to "address […] in Chapter Six" is "what differentiates artworks from other vehicles of representation" (83), i.e., not simply from ordinary things that do not represent anything. According to one version of the answer he gives there – the one which he calls his "thesis" – "works of art, in categorical contrast with mere representations, use the means of representation in a way that is not exhaustively specified when one has exhaustively specified what is being represented" (147–148). A philosophy of art can indeed be expected to make a distinction *within* the class of representations. However, the "categorical contrast" simplifies matters. It only differentiates artworks from representations that are meant to be, and normally treated as, fully transparent onto their subject, such as "maps" (26), or the diagram in Erle Loran's book on Cézanne which Roy Lichtenstein famously copied into a painting (see 142–147). There are a lot of representations that do not qualify as artworks despite their mode of representation being considerably underdetermined by their content. I will call these non-mere representations. Think of an effective advertisement, for instance. It clearly has a subject; it might require some interpretive effort; and it expresses an attitude towards what it is about. Of course, it is neither made nor interpreted within an artworld framework. To this point I will return.

In Chapter Seven, Danto elaborates on the rhetorical/metaphorical character of works of art. As is well known, he basically regards them as enthymemic metaphors to be completed by the recipients themselves in an intellectual and emotional response. There are works of art that fit well with this model, such as a statue representing "Napoleon […] as a Roman emperor": the sculptor does not simply portray him but wants "to get the viewer to take toward the subject – Napoleon – the attitudes appropriate to the more exalted Roman emperors" (167). In this case, both the metaphor being at work and the attitude to be taken is easy to identify. But what would be *the* metaphor of a novel, for instance? Here Danto broadens his notion of art's metaphoricity to the verge of uninformativeness: "the

artwork becomes a metaphor for life and life is transfigured" (172). Anyway, what I am concerned with is another (though not unrelated) tension inherent in his approach.

> [I]f the structure of artworks is, or is very close to the structure of metaphors, then no paraphrase or summary of an artwork can engage the participatory mind in at all the ways that it can; and no critical account of the internal metaphor of the work can substitute for the work inasmuch as a description of a metaphor simply does not have the power of the metaphor it describes […]. It is always a danger, in connection with an artwork one admires, to put into words what the painting means, for it is always available to anyone to say "is that all?" [… W]hat more there always is is not merely a quantitative overcharge one may hope with more words to redeem; it is rather the power of the work which is implicated in the metaphor, and power is something that must be *felt*. (173–174, italics in the original)

Hardly surprisingly, it is in this passage that I believe the term "embodiment" would be at place. And I would agree with Danto if he had used it. But not without reservations.

I strongly doubt that metaphors as such have a "power […] that must be felt" and which would make them unsubstitutable. Although Danto later argues that metaphors as intensional sentences are unsubstitutable, this has not much to do with power. It follows from the fact that only "certain features of the predicate" constitute their "truth conditions" (188). In "men are pigs" (ibid.), the predicate cannot be replaced by any description that is otherwise true of pigs extensionally, but the meaning of the metaphor – of this one and countless others – can be described adequately without running the risk that someone asks "is that all?". It is not metaphors in general but metaphors-as-works that have power. The rhetorical aspect of Danto's approach raises a similar problem. In performing an oration, "more is involved than getting a certain description accepted as true. It is to get taken toward that object so described the sort of attitude that would spontaneously have been taken toward the object originally, had it been seen in the light it required the rhetorician to put it in" (169). Attitude, as Danto means it, is a conviction or belief supported by emotion. The participation to which the orator invites is limited: "the missing line" of an enthymeme "is an obvious truth, […] a banality," and to "the rhetorical question […] only one answer is possible" (170). The emotional component of the attitude remains subordinated to the cognitive one. For instance, if a rhetorician

wants to arouse anger at someone/something, she has to "know how to characterize the intended object of the anger in such a way that anger toward that object is the only justifiable response" (169). Or, generally, "emotions – in contrast with perhaps bare feelings – are embedded in structures of justification. There are things we know we ought to feel given a certain characterization of the conditions we are under" (ibid.), or an "object" is under. That is, the belief or conviction an oration causes, though emotionally charged, is a more or less clear meaning, and those who realise it must be able to articulate it and find it valid independently of its being actually caused by a speech. Indeed, whatever rhetorical means the speaker uses and however smart she is at playing on (or with) the emotions of the audience, she cannot, in the end, leave them in uncertainty, guessing at what exactly they are supposed to think (and do).

To return to the above passage, Danto seems to diverge for a moment from his rhetorical model. It would be funny if he wrote that it is "a danger […] to put into words" the obvious truth the artist wants us realise or to give the only possible answer to the question she asks. And if it is "power of the work […] that must be felt," then this feeling cannot be "a certain sort of emotion" (ibid.), all the less as works of art do not necessarily elicit emotions. What one feels is that the work itself "is right" – impressive, compelling, true – *and* that it is right without it being possible to render its meaning into abstractive language. This adds an aesthetic element to Danto's theory. The embodiment of meaning would, then, be a representation that resists, or, more precisely, is experienced as resisting the exhaustive description or conceptualisation of the meaning represented because of the feeling it has as its complement in the recipient. So whereas a meaning presented simply metaphorically/rhetorically can be said to be accessible externally to its carrier, embodied meaning generates a tension – makes one feel the tension – between the need to realise the meaning of the work and the impossibility of abstracting it from the particular form it assumes.[5]

In a rather baffling turn, Danto condemns those who

[5] For a detailed analysis of embodiment, see Gianluca Consoli, "In Search of the Ontological Common Core of Artworks: Radical Embodiment and Non-universalization," *Estetika* 53 (2016): 14–41.

claim that we ought to "pay attention to the work itself," that there is and can be no substitute for direct experience. It is a suggestion that has its analogue in certain very familiar empiricist theories […]. For there is no possible substitute for the direct experience of simple such qualities as red if one is to understand such predicates as "red," and no description, however protracted, can be equivalent to such primitive experiences. No doubt one could propose, on the basis of this analogy, that there is something as unique and irreducible about artworks as there is about the primitive qualities […]. And so one would have an explanation of the uniqueness of art! This is an attractive theory, but not a finally persuasive one. It is not because, once more, the structure of artworks is like the structure of metaphors and artistic experience is internally related to this structure. Because of this it is a cognitive response and involves an act of understanding of a complexity wholly different from those basic encounters between simple properties and us […]. (174–175)

First of all, this is unfair. No serious theory of art wants, or ever wanted, to explain the uniqueness of artworks by comparing them to "primitive qualities" and liken the engagement with them to "those basic encounters." Secondly, Danto seems to throw out the baby with the bathwater. Having argued that "no critical account of the internal metaphor of the work can substitute for the work," he now says that "direct experience" is substitutable. Just one paragraph earlier it was the necessity of feeling that followed from (what he calls) the metaphorical structure of artworks. Now it is "cognitive response" that follows from it. I would be the last to deny the necessity of interpretation. Danto is also undoubtedly right in stressing that the understanding of artworks requires a certain knowledge the acquisition of which "must, in many cases explicitly, be abetted by the mediation of criticism" (175). But the rhetorical model forces him to reduce feeling to an epiphenomenon or derivative of this knowledge. "The rhetoric of the work presupposes accessibility to the concepts out of which enthymemes, rhetorical questions, and the tropes themselves are completed, and without this the power of the work and hence the work cannot be felt" (ibid.). Nor can it be felt, however, without direct experience. And if there is to be an intrinsic difference between a work of art and a non-mere yet non-artistic representation using metaphors/rhetorical means, or being itself a metaphor/enthymeme, visual or verbal, this experience has to find "something […] unique and irreducible" in the work.

If there is to be an intrinsic difference… Danto draws an analogy between art and advertisement:

A picture of a bottle of beer may arouse thirst […]. But when the bottle is shown in such a way as to cause the viewer to infer that it is chilled […], he may perceive the beer as good to drink […], and it is the provocation of such perceptions that the commercial artist's rhetorical skills are exercised. Indeed, the pictures are painted in such a way as to require these inferences in order to be understood, and to arouse feelings of a sort it may be predicted the viewer will have toward the object as inferred. The distinction between the depicted frost, intended to move the viewer to imagine thirst and its surcease, and the depicted lacrimation of enlarged eyes in the paintings of Carlo Dolci, intended to move the viewer to a pious sadness, is not so great […]. (166–167)

To avoid a possible misunderstanding, I do not want to claim that every product that has ever been called a work of art necessarily embodies its meaning in the above sense. Indeed, Danto has a strong argument for this analogy and against "those […] who direct us to 'the work itself'": "the impugning of secondary works is part of what [they] have in mind" (175). But how will he differentiate, not between secondary or bad art and great art, but between art and non-art? If artworks and ads follow the same logic of representation, if there is no essential difference between them in terms of how they represent and how we respond to them, then the only safe criterion of difference that a philosophy of art seems to be left with is that the former belong to an artworld, the latter to an adworld. And if so, why does Danto's later definition not include artworldliness as a third condition that artworks must meet? And why does it include a notion that he has not used before and which is not obviously synonymous with metaphorical/rhetorical representation, to say the least?

If Danto had ever discussed Friedrich Schiller's philosophy of art, he could have come across something very similar to embodiment in the treatise on aesthetic education. In the Fifteenth Letter, Schiller introduces the notion of "living shape" as "the object of the play impulse":

a concept which serves to denote all aesthetic qualities of phenomena and – in a word – what we call *Beauty* in the widest sense of the term. […]

Beauty is neither extended to cover the whole realm of living things, nor merely confined within this realm. A block of marble, therefore, although it is and remains lifeless, can nevertheless become living shape through the architect and sculptor; a human being, although he lives and has shape, is far from being on that account a living shape. That would require his shape to be life, and his life shape. So long as we only think about his shape, it is lifeless, mere

abstraction; so long as we only feel his life, it is shapeless, mere impression. Only as the form of something lives in our sensation, and its life takes form in our understanding, is it living shape, and this will everywhere be the case where we judge it to be beautiful.[6]

Of course, it is not beauty that connects the theories of Schiller and Danto. But if I take Schiller's description, with some generosity, as referring to the encounter with (great) works of art, it might become evident why it is relevant here. Play, as the act of aesthetic reception, creates a dynamic equilibrium between "mere impression" and "mere abstraction" (the objects of sense impulse and form impulse, respectively). Instead of excluding one another, these two factors together constitute an experience different from both thoughtless pleasure and objectifying thinking, one in which the mind sort of oscillates between the sensible and the conceptual. A living shape offers some meaning, yet getting an abstract meaning out of it would amount to killing it. And inasmuch as living shape and embodiment are similar, Schiller can be credited with having conceived of embodiment as something that is present in a combination of "direct experience" and "cognitive response."

His insights go back to the third *Critique*. Kant is one of the few figures in the history of aesthetics to whom Danto does refer. He mostly mentions Kant either at the level of generalities or in connection with Clement Greenberg, whose aesthetic-formalistic approach he thinks has proven outdated and inappropriate with the rise of pop art and the emergence of artistic pluralism. I cannot discuss here either Greenberg's understanding of Kant or Danto's understanding of Greenberg's understanding of Kant.[7] In a late essay, however, Danto exerts a mild self-criticism: he was unjust to Kant when he saw him through Greenberg's glasses and failed to recognize that the aesthetic part of third *Critique* makes a U-turn in its doctrine of art.

I must make some amends to Kant, whose view on works of art takes a very different direction in a later section of the *Third Critique* – the brilliant Section 49 […], where he introduces his concept of *aesthetical ideas*. The Kant of

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[6] Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters*, trans. Reginald Snell (New Haven: Yale UP, 1954), 76.

[7] See Diarmuid Costello, "Greenberg's Kant and the Fate of Aesthetics in Contemporary Art Theory," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 65 (2007): 217–228.

Section 49 is not the Kant of Kantian aesthetics, which is based almost entirely on the "Analytic of Taste." I owe it to Kant – and to myself – to show how close my views are to his in this section of his book […]. He certainly realized that taste alone was not the entire story when it comes to art: "We say of certain products of which we expect that they should at least in part appear as beautiful art, they are without *spirit*, although we find nothing to blame in them on the score of taste." By spirit, he means "the animating principle of the mind"; and this principle, he goes on to say, "is no other than the faculty of presenting *aesthetical ideas*."[8]

I agree with Danto that there is an astonishing change in Section 49. "The **beautiful** […] requires the representation of a certain **quality** of the object, which also makes itself intelligible, and can be brought to concepts (although in the aesthetic judgment it is not brought to that)."[9] This is from a General Remark concluding the exposition of aesthetic judgments and represents very well the position of the analytic of taste. Now consider in full the locus Danto refers to:

Spirit, in an aesthetic significance, means the animating principle in the mind. That, however, by which this principle animates the soul, the material which it uses for this purpose, is that which purposively sets the mental powers into motion, i.e., into a play that is self-maintaining and even strengthens the powers to that end.

Now I maintain that this principle is nothing other than the faculty for the presentation of **aesthetic ideas**; by an aesthetic idea, however, I mean that representation of the imagination that occasions much thinking though without it being possible for any determinate thought, i.e., **concept**, to be adequate to it, which, consequently, no language fully attains or can make intelligible.[10]

It is as if Kant deliberately wanted to contradict himself.

I cannot deal at length here with the fundamental problems that penetrate his doctrine of taste. Unlike the majority of the interpreters, I am convinced that it has much more to do with a theory of experience than

[8] Arthur C. Danto, "Embodied Meanings, Isotypes, and Aesthetical Ideas," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 65 (2007): 126–127.

[9] Immanuel Kant: *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000), 150, henceforth referred to as CPJ. (Danto uses J.H. Bernard's translation.)

[10] Ibid., 192.

with aesthetics proper.[11] Insisting that phenomena are merely representations, Kant cannot, in the first *Critique*, avert the danger that what he wants to establish – without recourse to God – as a shared world of objectivity, one which is the same for everyone, falls apart into a manifold of subjective views. The categories that crystallyse the structure of thinking are purely formal means of the constitution of objectivity and hence insufficient to guarantee that, as far as the content of experience is concerned, everyone will order his or her representations the same way. The prime task of the theory of taste is to ensure a universal consensus of subjects on a pre-conceptual or pre-objective level, but on a level from which the mind can proceed smoothly to object-consciousness. The main argument with which Kant tries to prove the (allegedly) universal validity of judgments of taste is that the reflective act of judging the beautiful, i.e., the free play of the imagination and the understanding, counts as the subjective condition of objective empirical cognition. Even apart from the disastrous consequence that this leaves no difference, or a merely aspectual difference, between the beautiful as such and the empirical object as such, Kant cannot account for the decisive factor that could distinguish aesthetic reflection from a springboard of objective experience: the dynamism of the free play of the faculties. Play, as he notes in an isolated remark at the end of Section 12, must have "a causality in itself, namely that of **maintaining** the state of the representation of the mind and the occupation of the cognitive powers without a further aim. We **linger** over the consideration of the beautiful because this consideration strengthens and reproduces itself."[12] This indeed is how aesthetic reflection as play should be described. But can you "linger over" a condition? Does a condition "strengthen" and "reproduce" itself? And if it does, does it not thereby cease to be a condition?

Seen in this perspective, Section 49 is not simply different from, but a necessary correction of, the doctrine of taste. It is only here that Kant outlines a credible theory of the aesthetic reception, not of natural beauty – which he previously regarded, rather anachronistically, as the paradigm of the beautiful – but of artworks. The analytic of taste does not answer the question why the perceptual content is not brought to a concept if it "can

[11] For similar approaches, see Fiona Hughes, *Kant's Aesthetic Epistemology* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2007) and Hannah Ginsborg, *The Normativity of Nature: Essays on Kant's Critique of Judgement* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2015).

[12] Kant, CPJ, 107.

be brought to that" (or begs it, declaring that judgements of taste are void of concepts – which raises another question as to how the understanding as the faculty of concepts is involved in them). The only answer would be to deny that it can be brought to concepts, at least with respect to the "quality" that makes it "beautiful" and which withstands conceptualisation. This turns out to be the feature that defines artworks expressing aesthetic ideas. But the impossibility of grasping them in concepts is something that must happen, as it were, in the very act of reflection. They must prove concept-resistant for there to be a play "that is self-maintaining" in a way in which a condition is not. This is the tension that explains why play comes into, and remains in, motion, without leading to determinate cognition.

In the 2007 essay, Danto virtually equates the embodiment of meaning with the presentation of aesthetic ideas, although at this point of his paper he refers to the latter as "the aesthetical presentation of ideas."[13] Is it by chance? He takes one of Kant's examples, a weak poem by Frederick the Great (greater as king than as poet) using banal metaphors to describe how a sovereign ought to behave at the end of his life, and rightly remarks that this "has nothing to do with genius." But he is wrong in inferring that the "'aesthetical idea' is merely one meaning given through another, as in irony or in metaphor."[14] The example is misleading. A better poem, if Kant had known one, could have made it clear that an artwork expressing an aesthetic idea does not exhaust in the metaphorical transposition of one meaning into another and that it does have to do with genius. Less a psychological entity than a structural element in Kant's theory of art, genius something which is inaccessible by means of rational account. Kant needs it in order to make it plausible that a work of art generates a "representation of the imagination that occasions much thinking though without it being possible for any determinate thought, i.e., **concept**, to be adequate to it." As is evident from Section 46, he derives his notion of the artist from what he identifies as the crucial characteristic of the experience of art. A work of art does not have "one meaning" either for its producer or for those who think "much" about it. Although this thinking is a "cognitive response," it is at the same time a kind of metacognition in the sense that the mind gets confronted with its inability to come to terms conceptually with the representation of the imagination.

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[13] Danto, "Embodied Meanings," 128.
[14] Ibid., 127.

One of the mantras of the analytic of taste is the harmony of imagination and understanding. Now an experience that involves the insufficiency of the understanding (and an awareness thereof) is better characterised as disharmonious. Danto's wording, "the aesthetical presentation of ideas," as well as his rejection of genius, suggests that the artist associates representation with the intended meaning in a controlled and targeted manner, and that the work's recipient can sort of decrypt it, just like the audience of an oration are supposed to realise the meaning presented to them indirectly. Kant, however, separates poetry from rhetoric, and although his distinction is somewhat vague, so much seems to be clear that whereas in rhetoric the activity of imagination is restricted to "conducting a business of the understanding," in poetry it is employed with the aim of "giving life to its concepts."[15] The phrase "giving life" has nothing radical in it. But it is worth considering that for Kant the very term "idea" denotes something which is beyond the reach of concepts. An aesthetic idea – as opposed to "the aesthetical presentation of ideas" – does not leave the concept untouched: it is a representation "which aesthetically enlarges the concept in an unbounded way."[16]A concept losing its boundaries ceases to be a concept. Finally, it is in connection with aesthetic ideas that Kant mentions feeling as factor that plays a role in both the production and reception of works of art. The aesthetic manner "of putting thoughts together in a presentation […] has no other standard than the **feeling** of unity in the presentation"; an "aesthetic idea […] allows the addition to a concept of much that is unnameable, the feeling of which animates the cognitive faculties."[17] Otherwise not a champion of feeling, Kant is consequent here. If no concept can sufficiently cover and hold in check the representations emerging in the play of the faculties, then another medium is needed to make sure that this play is and remains one and the same act of aesthetic response to one and the same work.

Taken seriously, Danto's realisation of "how close" his views are to Kant's could imply that the embodiment of meaning has something special about it, something which distinguishes it from non-mere yet non-artistic representations. Of course, he is not obliged to follow Kant. And of course, I might be wrong in thinking that the very word "embodiment" suggests a

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15 Kant, CPJ, 199.

16 Ibid., 193.

17 Ibid., 196 and 194.

quality we are inclined to assign to pre-eminent works of art. Here I must correct myself a bit. It is not quite true that *The Transfiguration* does not mention "embodiment" in connection with art. In Chapter One, Danto differentiates between two conceptions of representation: an "extremely ancient theory" holds "that a representation embodies what, on a more modern theory, it merely stands for." Representation in the second sense is imitation, whereas representation in the first sense, which "must have been widely connected with the concept of art," is the act of "making a given reality present again" (20). I would not go as far as to say that Danto thinks of art as following this magical pattern. I just want to stress that he associates direct presence with embodiment.

Although I would not dare to try to reconstruct what exactly, according to him, *Brillo Box* was about,[18] at least one aspect is clear: it was "simply made for the end of art" and meant that "anything could be a work art."[19] Anything: there need be no perceptual feature or traditional aesthetic quality whatsoever that distinguishes artworks from non-artworks. I shall not go into details here about Danto's end-of-art thesis, which has widely been discussed and criticised.[20] Just two remarks. First, it is clear that *Brillo Box* cannot embody the end of art in the more specific sense of the term that corresponds to the ominous passage of *The Transfiguration* and to Danto's "closeness" to Kant. Of course, it can be said to embody the end of art in a broader sense, but this is no different from saying that it serves as a piece of evidence for that. The insight that anything can be art is external to its manifestations in particular artworks. Second, in a strange asymmetry to *The Transfiguration*, *After the End of Art* forgets about the rhetorical/metaphorical character of art. As a matter of fact, this is logical, for if anything

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[18] Mainly because it is (potentially) about billions of people I do not know. "There even is a sense, which I shall not develop here, in which *Brillo Box* is about the viewer of it – I leave it as an exercise for the reader to figure out how." Arthur C. Danto, "Philosophizing Literature," in *The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art* (New York: Columbia UP, 1986), 180.

[19] Danto, *After the End of Art*, 195 and 13.

[20] See, e.g. Sondra Bacharach, "Can Art Really End?" *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 60 (2002): 57–66; Jane Forsey, "Philosophical Disenfranchisement in Danto's 'The End of Art'," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 59 (2001): 403–409; Michael Kelly, "Essentialism and Historicism in Danto's Philosophy of Art," *History and Theory* 37 (1998): 30–43.

can be art, then there is no point in distinguishing a certain type of representation from others (or in pretending that it is a certain type). Similarly, "embodiment" itself becomes an uninformative concept in that it cannot stipulate anything as to what kind of meaning must be offered for interpretation in a material form and how it must be offered. Claiming that it is more specific would amount to denying that anything can be art.

So what might explain Danto's insistence on the embodiment of meaning? Despite dismissing the question of "what art […] essentially is" as "the wrong form for the philosophical question to take,"[21] he confesses himself an essentialist:

> As an essentialist in philosophy, I am committed to the view that art is eternally the same – that there are conditions necessary and sufficient for something to be an artwork, regardless of time and place. I do not see how one can do the philosophy of art – or philosophy *period* – without to this extent being an essentialist. But as an historicist I am also committed to the view that […] there is a history, enacted through the history of art, in which the essence of art – the necessary and sufficient conditions – are painfully brought to consciousness.[22]

This essence is reflected in the definition saying that artworks embody their meanings. Danto knows that the definition is partial,[23] yet he never completes it explicitly. The only thing he could reasonably add is the condition that artworks must be situated within an artworld context. However, "[t]he objective structure of the art world" is "now to be defined by a radical pluralism."[24] It is defined by the impossibility of defining what a work of art must be like. In rejecting George Dickie's institutional theory, Danto argues that members of the artworld must base their decisions on reasons. "Reference to an art world, at least as used by Dickie, just drops out of any definition of art once we recognize what are the reasons on which a member of it will base a claim that something is a work of art."[25] Something, i.e.,

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[21] Ibid., 35.

[22] Ibid., 95.

[23] See ibid., 195.

[24] Ibid. xv.

[25] Arthur C. Danto, "The Art World Revisited: Comedies of Similarity," in *Beyond the Brillo Box: The Visual Arts in Post-historical Perspective* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 39.

a particular work. And the artworld, characterised as "a discourse of reasons," cannot function at a level more general than "the discourse of reasons that constitute that work as work."[26] A person who participates in such a discourse can, of course, use the word "embodiment". But she does not have to. Nor can she deny the arthood of a work on the grounds that, say, it merely "stands for" something that is external to it instead of presenting a unique meaning by presenting it uniquely; or that she is unable to "feel the power" of the work and "linger over" it. To avoid another possible misunderstanding, I have nothing against Danto's notion of the artworld. I am just claiming that his fifty-year long obsession with one artwork should at least have led him to be explicit about a dilemma: if art has an essence that can be reasonably expressed by "embodiment of meaning", then *Brillo Box* is not a work of art, and if *Brillo Box* is a work of art, then there is no reason to insist on embodiment as a specific feature essential to art.

[26] Ibid. 40 and 41.

MAKING HISTORY THROUGH ANACHRONIC IMAGINING

Notes on art history and temporal complexities of the present

Jacob Lund

"*To articulate the past historically...*" (Walter Benjamin)[1]

When discussing the art historical move from modern to contemporary art Arthur C. Danto explains that his famous declaration of the end of art should be understood as the death of *a certain history* of art, namely the linear and teleological one where each era builds upon and develops from the previous era: "It was not my view that there would be no more art, which 'death' certainly implies, but that whatever art there was to be would be made without benefit of a reassuring sort of narrative in which it was seen as the appropriate next stage in the story. What had come to an end was that narrative but not the subject of the narrative," and he then quotes fellow art historian Hans Belting: "Contemporary art manifests an awareness of a history of art but no longer carries it forward."[2] Thus, Danto employs the notion of the contemporary to describe an art historical period when there are no longer any periods and unifying traits, or rather contemporary art is not a designation of a period but a designation of a post-historical era in which there are no more periods that constitute a grand art historical teleological narrative where each era relates to and develops the preceding one.

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[1] Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 255.

[2] *After the End of Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), pp. 4–5. Danto quotes Belting from *The End of the History of Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987 [1983]).

Danto claims contemporary art to be post-historical art. But this idea about art now being post-historical may not only pertain to contemporary art. A significant artwork or artistic practice – we need not confine ourselves to delimited individual objects – not only changes the way we see the work produced after but also influences how we conceive of the work that came before. Art after the end of the linear teleological history of art therefore also changes our relation to art that is imagined to belong to that history. It is not only contemporary art that is post-historical; it is also the art works that the historical narrative was based upon. Contemporary art questions the art historical narrative that has been established as the interpretive framework of the practice in which it takes part and renders this narrative obsolete or at least deficient not only with regard to itself but with regard to works of art in general and at all times. It therefore seems that we have not yet learned the full lesson of Danto's art historical observation. What are its consequences for our experience of time? What are the consequences for the discipline of art history? And how might it affect the way we understand the work of images?

In the leaflet accompanying the exhibition *Soulèvements* [*Uprisings*] at Jeu de Paume in Paris 18/10/2016 – 15/01/2017, curator Georges Didi-Huberman muses over what makes us rise up and states: "It is also *forms*: *forms* through which all of this will be able to appear and become visible in the public space. Images, therefore; images to which this exhibition is devoted. Images of all times, from Goya to today, and of all kinds: paintings, drawings, sculptures, films, photographs, videos, installations, documents, etc. They interact in dialogue beyond all differences of their times." The exhibition, which will travel to museums in Europe and the Americas, orders uprisings in five sections whereby it re-articulates the very diversified image material in a new constellation or narrative that in a sense disregards the temporal and spatial distance of the origin of these images. Across geographical places and historical situations from the French Revolution to the Arab Spring it thus explores uprisings: I. with elements (unleashed); II. with gestures (intense); III. with words (exclaimed); IV. with conflicts (flared up); and V. with desires (indestructible). What interests me is this "dialogue beyond all differences of their times" or what I see as an activation of a number of different images, articulating or giving form to uprisings at different times and places, to take part in the same present, constituted by the exhibition. The following is an endeavour to address some of the theoretical issues relating to time and history occa-

sioned by Didi-Huberman's exhibition rather than an analysis of the exhibition itself, which I see as a way to make art history after "art history" in the traditional sense. It should be kept in mind that it is a certain understanding of history Danto's prefix "post" refers to; it is still possible – and necessary – to make history and to think historically. Before I return to some of the temporal implications of Didi-Huberman's exhibition and his concept of anachronism I would like to touch upon a couple of other theoretical challenges to the idea of unification and progression in traditional art historical thinking that have to do with the absence of generally shared aesthetic criteria and formal and medial discontinuity.

Around the same time as Danto and Belting, i.e. in the late 90s, Yves Michaud, in his book *La crise de l'art contemporain* (1997), also questions the validity of a certain interpretive framework of art. Thus the crisis that Michaud detects in contemporary art is rather in the concept and representation of art. In parallel to Danto's Hegelian declaration of the end of a particular art historical narrative he declares "the end of the utopia of art," which refers to a universal human community of taste, largely based on the Kantian concept of sensus communis.[3] Today, there are no universal aesthetic criteria – if there ever were – and art in reality only gives rise to relatively small and limited communities of taste. Any group and any individual are endowed with a right to pass a legitimate judgment of taste, and this occasions a multiculturalistic fragmentation of taste. In other words, the idea of the communicative function of art and a universal community of taste has been challenged by a democratic generalized pluralism or multiculturalism that does not profess to the ideal of a universal community, which was a cornerstone of modern art and of Kantian inspired aesthetic theory. This democratization and pluralism also challenges the universalizing art historical narrative. When the idea of a universal community of taste is dismantled the history of the objects of taste is pluralized too. It is no longer one unified history of art, namely the Western one

[3] Yves Michaud, "The End of the Utopia of Art," in *Think Art: Theory and Practice in the Art of Today*, ed. Bartomeu Mari and Jean-Marie Schaeffer (Rotterdam: Witte de With, 1999), 131–156. See also Jacob Lund, "*Sensus Communis* and the Public," in *Nyhedsavisen: Public Interfaces: Peer-reviewed Newspaper* (2011), 10–11, and Jacob Lund and Thierry de Duve, "'The Glimpse of Hope that Religion or Politics can no Longer Promise...' An Interview with Thierry de Duve," *The Nordic Journal of Aesthetics* 36-37 (2008–2009): 6–10.

– which in reality itself became internally pluralized in different modernisms long before "contemporary art" took over as designator of the art of our times – but multiple histories of art.

Nicholas Bourriaud formulated another important critique of traditional art historical thinking. In his *Relational Aesthetics* from 1998 Bourriaud understands art as a semantic remainder of a narrative called "art history" which is now obsolete: "A certain aspect of the programme of modernity has been fairly and squarely wound up (and not, let us hasten to emphasise in these bourgeois times, the spirit informing it). This completion has drained the criteria of aesthetic judgement we are heir to of their substance, but we go on applying them to present-day artistic practices."[4] Bourriaud therefore defines "art" as:

> 1. General term describing a set of objects presented as part of a narrative known as *art history*. This narrative draws up the critical genealogy and discusses the issues raised by these objects, by way of three sub-sets: *painting, sculpture, architecture*. 2. Nowadays, the word "art" seems to be no more than a semantic leftover of this narrative, whose more accurate definition would read as follows: Art is an activity consisting in producing relationships with the world with the help of signs, forms, actions and objects.[5]

In other words, art historical progression has now been cancelled, as the co-existing contemporary art practices do not necessarily take part in the development of the same narrative.

This art historical problematic and the move from modern to contemporary art is, of course, not independent of "history at large" and should be seen in relation to the modern concepts of time and history and how they have changed in the last decades of the 20th century.

The dominant modern conception of time is based on continuity and progress. History – since the late 18th century unified in the collective singular as shown by Reinhart Koselleck[6] – was seen as a continuous process

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[4] Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, trans. Simon Pleasance et al. (Dijon: Les presses du réel, 2002 [1998]), 11.

[5] Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, 107.

[6] Reinhart Koselleck, "'Neuzeit': Remarks on the Semantics of the Modern Concepts of Movement," in *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* [1979], trans. Keith Tribe (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT, 1985), 246: "[T]he

towards a qualitatively different future; a process that could be planned, created, and accelerated by humans. Thus, modernity is characterised by a "progress-oriented articulation of past, present and future, in which the future is constituted through the devaluing of the past and the erasure of the present."[7] The qualitatively different future towards which the temporal logic of modernity is orientated implies a certain idea of historical linear progression. Modernity as a discourse of progress, acceleration and teleology therefore also constitutes a practice of totalisation, which excludes those who do not comply with its parameters. It attributes lateness to colonized nations and subaltern subjects, and progress is thus defined in terms of the projection of certain – that is, Western – people's presents as other people's futures.

The grand narratives and the all-encompassing history authorised by modernity claims to have unified a vast plurality – in particular in the "imagined communities" of the nation-states – but, as Harry Harootunian has pointed out, this history "is actually undermined by the special histories and coexisting mixed temporalities that have steadily resisted its assimilating ambition."[8] Ernst Bloch remarked this failed assimilation or synchronization as early as the 1930s where he writes of the temporality of "non-contemporaneous contemporaneities" (*die Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen*):[9] "Not all people exist in the same Now. They do so only externally, through the fact that they can be seen today. But they are thereby not yet living at the same time with the others."[10]

In our current times we seem to have lost the modern belief in progress and all societies moving towards a better future. This lack of futurity has generated a feeling that a contemporary extension of the present is substituting for the temporal logic of modernity, observed by among others Boris Groys: "The present has ceased to be a point of transition from the past to the future, becoming instead a site of the permanent rewriting of both past

collective singular form of *Geschichte*, which since around 1780 can be conceived of as history in and for itself in the absence of an associated subject or object."

7 Christine Ross, *The Past is the Present; It's the Future too: The Temporal Turn in Contemporary Art* (New York and London: Continuum, 2012), 7.

8 Harry Harootunian, "Remembering the Historical Present," *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 33, no. 3 (Spring 2007), 471–494: 481.

9 Cf. Ernst Bloch, *The Heritage of Our Times*, trans. Neville and Stephen Plaice (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991 [1935]), 90.

10 Ernst Bloch, *The Heritage of Our Times*, 97.

and future – of constant proliferations of historical narratives beyond any individual grasp or control."[11] Thus, the self-reproducing presentness of the contemporary seems to have replaced the structurally momentary category of modernity that is defined by an inherent self-surpassing character in the form of a permanent transitoriness.[12]

The category of the present has developed into "presentism," and according to historian François Hartog the present has now become omnipresent.[13] In the Modern regime of historicity actions were guided by the future and they ceased to be understood in *direct* continuity with the past; the "horizon of expectation" was increasingly severed from the "space of experience" in the anthropological terminology of Reinhart Koselleck. In the contemporary regime of historicity, on the other hand, the present has become the privileged temporal category according to which the past and the future is conceived, but also a category that absorbs the past and the future,[14] whereby historical time and any ideas about a qualitatively different future seem to be suspended. The present reproduces itself without leading to any future, creating a feeling that the historical present in which we live is no longer defined by the directional vector of historical development.[15] In parenthesis remarked this was already Fredric Jameson's understanding of the postmodern, which for him referred to a weakness in our imagination because it seemed easier for us to imagine the deterioration of planet Earth and its ecosystems than the breakdown of the capitalist system that had caused the climatic and ecological changes.[16]

The present ways of articulating past, present, and future therefore not only makes our present, here and now, different from previous presents, but it also testifies to a change in our experience of time itself; an experience of an ever expanding, perpetual present, which in a certain sense can

[11] Boris Groys, "Comrades of Time," in *Going Public* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2010), 84–101: 90.

[12] Cf. Peter Osborne, *Anywhere or Not at All. Philosophy of Contemporary Art* (London: Verso, 2013), 24.

[13] François Hartog, *Regimes of Historicity: Presentism and Experiences of Time*, trans. Saskia Brown (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).

[14] Cf. Christine Ross, *The Past is the Present; It's the Future too*, 13f.

[15] See Juliane Rebentisch, "The Contemporaneity of Contemporary Art," *New German Critique* 124, 42:1 (2015), 223–237: 225.

[16] Fredric Jameson, *The Seeds of Time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), XI–XII.

be seen as a time-relation that has no temporal horizon other than itself. The virtual effacement of the categories of the past and the future means that the present is omnipresent, but if presence is all there is, then nothing is present any longer. Presentism names the dissolvement of presence and the present. It is a crisis of time.

Hartog, however, deals almost exclusively with time experiences within a European framework. What I find crucial about our present, the present present, is that it is conditioned by *con*-temporaneity, understood as a global interconnection of *different* presents, with different pre-histories, and of different time-experiences or *Eigenzeiten* in the *same* present.[17] It is an idea of contemporaneity as a shared present across divisive cultural and historical differences; of a temporary unity of the present across the planet.[18] This means that it is necessary to also try to establish a global or even planetary perspective on the present.

On this background I would like to argue that Didi-Huberman's concept of anachronism and "the dialogue beyond all differences of their [i.e. the images', JL] times" in *Soulèvements* appear to pave the way for at least *imagining* a potentially qualitatively different world, for projecting a futural moment, that transcends the all-encompassing temporal horizon of

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[17] On the notion of Eigenzeit see Helga Nowotny, *Time. The Modern and Postmodern Experience* [*Eigenzeit: Entstehung und Strukturierung eines Zeitgefühls*, 1989], trans. Neville Plaice (Cambridge: Polity, 1994). My understanding of contemporaneity is explained in greater detail in Jacob Lund, "The Coming Together of Times: Jean-Luc Godard's Aesthetics of Contemporaneity and the Remembering of the Holocaust," in *The Nordic Journal of Aesthetics* no. 49–50 (2015), 138–155, and Geoff Cox and Jacob Lund, *The Contemporary Condition: Introductory Thoughts on Contemporaneity and Contemporary Art* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2016).

[18] This understanding of contemporaneity as a *condition* has been developed by Terry Smith and Peter Osborne. Osborne states: "what seems distinctive and important about the changing temporal quality of the historical present over the last few decades is best expressed through the distinctive conceptual grammar of contemporaneity, a coming together not simply 'in' time, but *of* times: we do not just live or exist together 'in time' with our contemporaries – as if time itself is indifferent to this existing together – but rather the present is increasingly characterised by a coming together of *different but equally 'present'* temporalities or 'times', a temporal unity in disjunction, or a *disjunctive unity of present times*." Peter Osborne, *Anywhere or not at all*, 17.

presentism without falling back into the synchronizing and universalizing discourse of progress, which characterizes Western modernity. An anachronic approach is furthermore a way to wrest the image and its expressive value free from the straitjacket of a particular historical narrative and the restrained possibilities of generating signification that it provides. Thus, Didi-Huberman's anachronistic or what I would prefer to call *anachronic* approach not only questions a linear teleological art history, but it is also a way to break with the impasse of presentism, understood as the regeneration of the past and the future only to valorize the immediate.

Didi-Huberman's anachrony finds resonance in Giorgio Agamben's theory of the contemporary. In his often cited text "What is the Contemporary?" Agamben makes an explicit connection between anachronism and contemporariness. To him the contemporary is an *untimely* person. This apparently paradoxical idea of the contemporary is based on a particular *experience* of and relationship with time:

> Those who are truly contemporary, who truly belong to their time, are those who neither perfectly coincide with it nor adjust themselves to its demands. They are thus in this sense irrelevant. But precisely because of this condition, precisely through this disconnection and this anachronism, they are more capable than others of perceiving and grasping their own time. [...] Contemporariness is, then, a singular relationship with one's own time, which adheres to it and, at the same time, keeps a distance from it. More precisely, it is *that relationship with time that adheres to it through a disjunction and an anachronism*. Those who coincide too well with the epoch, those who are perfectly tied to it in every respect, are not contemporaries, precisely because they do not manage to see it; they are not able to firmly hold their gaze on it.[19]

However, Agamben, like Hartog and Danto, deals almost exclusively with Western tradition and history, that is, in the singular. Therefore, his – in many respects compelling – understanding of the contemporary as a non-coincidence with one's own time, as a sort of refusal of contemporaneity, is not adequate to account for contemporaneity as the coexistence of a multiplicity of traditions and histories in the same here and now. Furthermore his notion of the contemporary seems to be relatively ahistor-

[19] Giorgio Agamben, "What is the Contemporary?" in *What is an Apparatus? and Other Essays*, trans. David Kishik and Stefan Pedatella (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009 [2008]), 39–54: 41.

ical; a category that is applicable in any historical context. His conception of the contemporary is therefore in need of historicization. With Danto, Michaud, and Bourriaud in mind one could argue that the contemporary art historical present makes it very difficult to be untimely or anachronistic as it becomes increasingly difficult to identify a hegemonic time and history from which to differ.

The task is, in spite of this difficulty, to establish a disjunctive relationship with the presentist present, but also with a homogeneous linear history of art. Anachronism, according to Didi-Huberman, is the interconnection of heterogeneous times. Partly inspired by the psychoanalytical vocabulary of Freud and Jacques Lacan he thinks that images haunt time; somewhat similar to how Freud's *Nachträglichkeit* and Lacan's *après-coup* has to do with a symptom as an eruption of the past into the present, an anachronism experienced on the body. What Erwin Panofsky wanted to exorcise from his iconology and art history was, according to Didi-Huberman, the "life" of images that haunt time, their over-determination and dynamic aspects.[20] Panofsky wanted to exorcise "the alteration effected by images themselves on historical knowledge built on images."[21] The idea of anachrony is on the contrary related to the contemporary interest in heterochronicity and should be distinguished from achrony and anachronism in its ordinary art historical sense of the assigning of a work to a temporal frame foreign to it.[22] Thus Terry Smith speaks of "the idea of anachrony, of an artwork being, in some or all respects, in an open, adventitious relationship to time," and finds this "a much more interesting idea than achrony, and richer than anachronism, which implies being out of a determined temporal sequence."[23] The idea of

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[20] Georges Didi-Huberman, "Preface to the English Edition: The Exorcist," in *Confronting Images. Questioning the Ends of a Certain History of Art*, trans. John Goodman (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005 [1990]), XXIII.

[21] Georges Didi-Huberman, *Confronting Images*, XXI.

[22] Cf. Hal Foster, "Preposterous Timing," *London Review of Books*, vol. 34:21 (2012): 12. See also Keith Moxey, *Visual Time: The Image in History* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2013); Mieke Bal, *Quoting Caravaggio: Contemporary Art, Preposterous History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); and Jacob Lund, "An Ethically Nonindifferent Aesthetics: An Interview with Mieke Bal," *The Nordic Journal of Aesthetics* no. 42 (2011), 69-86.

[23] Terry Smith, "Seeing Art Historically Today: Where We Are, And Ways To Go." Power Lecture, Domain Theatre, Art Gallery of New South Wales, July 20, 2016. Full text version of unpublished manuscript dated 7.19.2016.

anachrony implies that an artwork might do more than simply embody its moment of origin, that it articulates an intricate temporal complexity.

In an article with the telling title "Before the Image, Before Time: The Sovereignty of Anachronism" Didi-Huberman argues in favour of an anachronic interpretive approach to a fresco by Fra Angelico from the convent of San Marco in Florence, probably painted in the 1440s.[24] According to Didi-Huberman anachronism is something positive internal to the ima-ges themselves whose history the art historian tries to reconstruct. "Anachronism," he states, "would be the temporal way of expressing the exuberance, complexity, and overdetermination of images."[25] When before Fra Angelico's and all other images we are thus before an object of complex, impure temporality:

> an *extraordinary montage of heterogeneous times forming anachronisms*. In the dynamic and complexity of this montage, historical notions as fundamental as those of 'style' or 'epoch' suddenly take on a dangerous plasticity (dangerous only for those who would like everything to be in its place once and for all in the same epoch: the fairly common figure of what I shall call the 'historian with time phobia'). So to raise the question of anachronism is to question this fundamental plasticity, and with it the combination – so difficult to analyze – of the temporal differentiation at work in each image.[26]

Images are temporally impure and overdetermined with a potential to activate and connect to a number of different temporalities and times.

Jacques Rancière likewise relates anachronic thinking to making history. Understanding the meaning of the central terms differently Rancière sees a critical potential in anachrony, which in his vocabulary is close to being a synonym of the positive version of what I in continuation of Peter Osborne and Terry Smith call contemporaneity, which on the other hand is a term that refers to something like temporal self-coincidence in the terminology of Rancière:

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[24] Georges Didi-Huberman, "Before the Image, Before Time: The Sovereignty of Anachronism," in *Compelling Visuality: The Work of Art in and out of History*, ed. Claire Farago and Robert Zwijnenberg (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 31–44.

[25] Georges Didi-Huberman, "Before the Image, Before Time," 37.

[26] Georges Didi-Huberman, "Before the Image, Before Time," 38. On Fra Angelico see also Georges Didi-Huberman, *Fra Angelico: Dissemblance and Figuration*, trans. Jane Marie Todd (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

There is no anachronism. But there are modes of connection that in a positive sense we can call anachronies: events, ideas, significations that are contrary to time, that make meaning circulate in a way that escapes any contemporaneity, any identity of time with 'itself.' An anachrony is a word, an event, or a signifying sequence that has left 'its' time, and in this way is given the capacity to define completely original points of orientation (*les aiguillages*), to carry out leaps from one temporal line to another. And it is because of these points of orientation, these jumps and these connections that there exists a power to 'make' history. The multiplicity of temporal lines, even of senses of time, included in the 'same' time is the condition of historical activity.[27]

Rancière understands contemporaneity as a kind of undivided present, as time's becoming present to and contemporaneous with itself. Such an achievement of Hegelian modernity, he argues, is, however, refuted by modernist avant-garde art forms, which are not ahead of their own times, but located in the difference of modern times with themselves.[28] I claim that such a temporal differentiation is at work in (some) contemporary art which try to register and sometimes even produce different temporalities in the constitution of our – at a certain "higher" level – globally shared present. It is this globally and even planetary shared present which makes the contemporary contemporary different from earlier spatially and culturally more restricted versions of the contemporary – including that of modernist avant-gardes whose untimeliness was established in relation to a relatively easily identifiable progressive and unified modern time.

Undeniably biased towards the Western history of art and image-making Didi-Huberman's exhibition seems to try to transcend this singular history of art by including images and material from historical and recent uprisings in South and Latin America, North Africa, Asia as well as Europe along with on-line material of a transnational, more global character. *Soulèvements* could be – and has been – criticized for aestheticizing the gestures of uprising and for neglecting historical specificity, but this kind of political anthropology of images is rather after the *forms* that the desire for emancipation and uprising take. It is, thus, about forms and images, but not an attempt to see a transhistorical "style" of past and present uprisings. It is

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[27] Jacques Rancière, "The Concept of Anachronism and the Historian's Truth," *In/Print* vol. 3:1 (2015 [1996]): 47f., accessed April 11, 2017, http://arrow.dit.ie/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1020&context=inp.

[28] Cf. Jacques Rancière, "Rethinking Modernity," *Diacritics* 42:3 (2014): 10–11.

rather a dialectical *montage* of images where they are brought into "dialogue beyond all differences of their times", forming different constellations that make us see and imagine new histories. In the words of Didi- Huberman in the last section of the exhibition: "Whenever a wall is erected, there will always be 'people arisen' to 'jump the wall.' If only by *imagining*. As though inventing images contributed – a little here, powerfully there – to reinventing our political hopes."

Any work of art embodies a complex temporality, not only as we stand "before the image" in "the present of our own experience," as Hal Foster phrases it, but also as different times are inscribed in the work through its history of reception and through its travel through history (Picasso's *Guernica* is an obvious case in point), "whereby it comes to double as the record of its own material alterations or programmatic transformations."[29] My point is, however, that we need to add to this complexity. Today "the present of our own experience" is a present, which is constituted by a number of different, interconnected temporalities, including an omnipresent co-presence of others through digital technologies. *Soulèvements*'s formal interconnection of previously unrelated images of different origins opens up possibilities for other histories in which hitherto unseen and invisible elements become visible and perhaps active in a shared present. It re-writes or re-imagines the prehistory of the contemporary present, and through these image constellations it articulates a desire for rising up and generates a sense of history and historical change being possible.

The anachronic intertwinement of heterogeneous temporalities should therefore not only be thought vertically, as connections between past, present, and future within one singular unified history (most often the Western one), but also horizontally as the interconnection of different vertical histories in the *same* present. The anachronic approach itself is practiced under specific historical conditions and today these conditions are characterized by a global contemporaneity, constituted by the coming together of *different* times in the *same* historical present. A historical understanding of anachrony and how it challenges a linear and unified understanding of history therefore has to take contemporaneity as a new historical condition and idea into consideration.

[29] Hal Foster, "Preposterous Timing," 12.

AESTHETICS IN CYBERSPACE

Contemporary mass culture and Korean Pop

Jiun Lee-Whitaker

I.

How might we imagine future changes of our ideas of aesthetics? An important double change in contemporary aesthetics is, first, the rise of more centralized mass communication technologies yielding to a mass culture and, second, the tempering of that mass culture increasingly under conditions of more interactive, networked, and "peer-to-peer" cyberspace. As digital technology is embraced by ever wider national and even global civil society, the mass culture of virtual or augmented reality shows us important characteristics of contemporary aesthetics in the 21st century are more embodied, interactive, and pleasure oriented, contrasted to aesthetics that valued what was distant, observational, and intellectually oriented. Korean "K-Pop"[1] is used as an example of this tempered mass culture experience, tempered and created by cyberspace[2] and its greater peer-to-peer interaction.

Before that case discussion, there is an argument in defence of the importance of 21st century mass art as a new concept of aesthetics, beyond attempting to categorize it within past dichotomies of high and low aesthetics debates. This is contrary to most views of mass art in the history and philosophy of aesthetics as a "low" art or experience, compared to the deeper or "higher" aesthetics of a traditional art. Such theories and their classificatory judgements are hardly timelessly useful or valid. Most were invented long before the novel developments of mass communication

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[1] K-Pop is an abbreviation of Korean Pop. It is a South Korea popular music that is characterized by audiovisual elements. It is highly linked culturally to the peer-to-peer Internet culture globally.

[2] Roberto Diodato, *Aesthetics of the Virtual.* trans. Justin L. Harmon (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012).

technologies and its facilitated mass culture.[3] This argument suggests that we should put 21st century mass art in its own category beyond this dichotomy – particularly now as it is under the regime of interactive cyberspace. However this argument perhaps does agree that past mass art might be categorized as low art, though we might reconsider our biases against this development of a later mass art that is more within the interactive medium of cyberspace, virtual reality, and augmented reality. In short, it is really difficult to attempt to put these novel artistic phenomena into aesthetic categories that predated them.

II.

The main theme of this argument is that by the 21st century, an increasing digital two-way medium and on-going globalization[4] is creating a very deep aesthetic experience through artistic products, particularly artistic products geared toward global cyberspace distribution characterized by ongoing participation. An increasingly globalized mass culture immersed in a deep broadband digital technology with increasing mobility and two-way interaction is a huge change. It may be called a posthuman condition[5] because it is not exclusively humans that are holding the reigns of culture per se: it is humans wielding electronic networks. Particularly it is suggested we stop trying to put this cyberspace artistry into past-dichotomized aesthetic categories. We might well compare our current lack of awareness of these aesthetic changes with the changes of the industrial revolution, which was not recognized or named until it was well underway generations later. However, our current digital media immersion revolution may even be more extensive and faster in its changes. For contemporary examples of the posthuman condition in life and aesthetics, first, we see the rise of artificial intelligence (AI). The South Korean professional Go player Lee Sedol competed recently with Google's AlphaGO project, winning one game of four.[6]

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[3] Noël Carroll, *A Philosophy of Mass Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

[4] Thomas L. Friedman, *The World Is Flat 3.0: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century* (New York: Picador, 2007).

[5] Bert Gordijn and Ruth Chadwick, *Medical Enhancement and Posthumanity* (New York: Springer, 2008), 107-137.

[6] Christopher Moyer, "How Google's AlphaGo Beat a Go World Champion," *The Atlantic*, Mar. 28. 2016, https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2016/03/the-invisible-opponent/475611/ Accessed: January 31, 2017.

Second, we can see augmented reality realized in the recent multi-player mobile phone game Pokémon Go. Third, we can see this in the rise of powerful and cheaper access points for such applications of virtual reality, like Oculus Rift VR goggles. VR goggles became "cheap" and more mobile for the first time in 2015, just as smartphones became cheaper and faster in 2007 with the launching of the iPhone by Apple Computer.

We see new aesthetic phenomena appear in the new digital media as well. For example in YouTube or social network services (SNS), the past split in analysis between creators of art and observers of art is less categorically meaningful. Moreover, in a tempered mass artistry, we see both mass cultural art starting to merge with such cyberspace worlds, as in how the popularity of internet stars and digital art memes are pulled increasingly into the past mass communication artistry of radio or television shows, political campaigns, or commercials that are built on the concept of discovering or popularizing already popular internet stars or digital art memes.

For a literature review, mass culture is a theory distinguishing the high culture and low culture in Western theory about aesthetics. Comparatively, mass culture is seen as lower or less aesthetic and less fulfilling than high culture. Contemporary philosophy has treated the mass culture phenomenon. Recently, Noël Carroll and Richard Shusterman focus on a greater valuing of the meaning of mass culture. Noël Carroll in his book *Philosophy of Mass Art* (1998) mentions the debate between high art and low art, and yet he defends mass art. He critiques Clement Greenberg's argument: "Perhaps Greenberg is tempted to speak of difficulty because he believes that difficulty is necessary condition for an active spectator response."[7] Instead, Carroll argued mass art can be real art. "In defining mass art – particularly in terms of the contrast between mass art and avant-garde art – I have emphasized the relation that mass art aspires to secure with its audience."[8] Richard Shusterman followed the pragmatist John Dewey. "Aesthetics was a very central concern of pragmatism's most active and influential 20th century figure, John Dewey."[9] Shusterman focuses on art as an experience connected to life. "Aesthetics becomes much more central

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7 Carroll, *A Philosophy of Mass Art*, 47.

8 Carroll, *A Philosophy of Mass Art*, 244.

9 Richard Shusterman, *Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1992), 3.

and significant as we come to realize that in embracing the practical, in reflecting and informing the praxis of life, it also extends to the social and the political."[10] Traditionally in Western aesthetics, art is separate from experience and life, so Shusterman was one of many who blurred this dichotomy by claiming that mass art could be an important kind of art.

Next however the argument is that, by the early 21st century, mass culture is making a new aesthetic experience beyond even the previous mass art categories of relational audiences and experiential art. Therefore, it is a mistake to attempt to pre-conceptualize mass art within aesthetic theories that predate a mass art that increasingly is digital, highly interactive, and open-ended. In this argument about virtual/augmented reality as a new mass art, we should think about our changing media environment. The features of a virtual reality aesthetics are the increasing fidelity of its interactive communication cascades of audio/video multi-media, immersion, and applications of augmented reality overlayed upon external reality itself. Socially, "VR" (virtual reality) cultural projects show a new phenomenon with a new space and time experience. Palmer Luckey is one of the main VR goggle inventors (in the product Oculus Rift), and he expects greater aggregate penetration of such technology and thus widened aggregate experiences of it for all in the coming years.[11] Even cheaper versions are already available in Google Cardboard VR, which puts VR on our smartphones, cheaply, with cardboard-based housing. VR is our next media ecology, and it will create surely a new digital cultural world in our future.

III.

This is the main case study concerning South Korean "K-Pop"[12], or popular music. The culture around this mass art – and in turn the content of this mass art – has been highly tempered by the increasing cyberspace penetration particularly among youth culture. This research claims that Korean

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[10] Shusterman, *Pragmatist Aesthetics*, XV.

[11] Jeremy Peel, "Why Oculus founder Palmer Luckey believes VR will kill off the TV," *PcGamesN Magazine*, April, 15, 2014, https://www.pcgamesn.com/why-oculus-founder-palmer-luckey-believes-vr-will-kill-tv Accessed: February 19, 2017.

[12] John Lie, *K-Pop: Popular Music, Cultural Amnesia, and Economic Innovation in South Korea* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2014), 1–6.

mass culture is a very good case of "second generation" VR mixed with "first generation" mass art and mass culture. Increasingly, Korean-pop has themes of making a new culture in Korea and the world through cyberspace with novel interactive and participatory cultural expectations for what such mass artistry should be.

Korean mass art in "K-Pop" is important in future aesthetics because it grew up within a political economy and culture that is one of the foremost in the world as a leader of manufacturing this new broadband and mobile digital technology that is now shared worldwide instead of only within South Korea. South Korea for over ten years has had the fastest Internet speeds in the world (currently averaging 26 MB/sec averages nationally) combined with the highest smartphone penetrations per capita in the world as well (88% or more now).[13] With this kind of digital technology coverage, it is unsurprising that such an embodied and participatory mass art became more hegemonic an influence in South Korea first, and then other countries later. K-Pop is one of the first examples of a more grassroots shared mass art that interacts with the larger "first generation" more centralized mass communication technologies of distribution, instead of really competing with it. It is hard to conceptualize the history of K-Pop without cyberspace, computer interactions, and peer-to-peer sharing globally as facilitating this artistry. In this digital system ecology, K-Pop started in the 1990s, but after 2012's *Gangnam Style* viral video by the K-Pop star known as "Psy", the whole world began to know more deeply about this K-Pop phenomenon, or at least a globalized teen culture version of it in cyberspace. This video was the first on YouTube to achieve 1 billion views. Previously, an older mass art would have had to rely on central distribution and advertising more securely for such a scaled phenomenon though volunteer, networked, peer-to-peer sharing helped it achieve such

[13] Pew Research Center, 2017, "Mobile Fact Sheet,"
http://www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheet/mobile Accessed: January 31, 2017; Jacob Pouschter, "Smartphone Ownership and Internet Usage Continues to Climb in Emerging Economies," from *Pew Research Center's Spring 2015 Global Attitudes Survey*,http://www.pewglobal.org/2016/02/22/smartphone-ownership-and-internet-usage-continues-to-climb-in-emerging-economies/
Accessed: January 31, 2016; Akamai, "State of the Internet Report,"
http://www.akamai.com/us/en/our-thinking/state-of-the-internet-report/state-of-the-internet-connectivity-visualization.jsp
Accessed: January 31, 2017.

scale instead. However, yes, major capitalist corporations of "older" mass art indeed are organizing, training, and recruiting the bands. That hardly has changed. What has changed is that promotional based mass art is only half of this more interactive phenomenon now. The other half of K-Pop totally is merged in the online interaction between fans and creators (users) – and fans as creators and re-creators through cyberspace. Some of the other current big names in K-Pop are Big Bang, 2NE1, Shiny, Superjunior, EXO, etc. These are of the "한류 , *hallyu*" ("Korean stream") stars. One criticism would be that many people may think it all sounds the same, even though there are 38 total girl groups working now with around 200 people. However, there are a few more unique girl groups like "21" that challenge the gender stereotypes. Koreans call that new female category of gender "girl crush."

Why do youth particularly like K-Pop? Certainly it has a great deal to do with artificially enhanced beauties of plastic surgery, attractive singers, addictive catchy songs, visual polish, perfectionism in group dance, or gorgeous, weird, humorous, or memorable fashion and colour. However, group participation and mass joy is very important in this cyberspatial mass art phenomenon instead of just past passive listening, watching, or collecting of commodities. K-Pop is very different than American or Japanese popular music, though that is a different topic. How can we explain the very high K-Pop enthusiasm? I think K-Pop is a world teen culture phenomenon that depends on distributed participatory cyberspace far more than J-Pop and American popular music cultures.

How can we explain K-Pop in aesthetics terms? Though we lack real world counterfactual situations to prove this, I argue that without the digital technology environment around this mass art phenomena of K-Pop, it would be very different kind of aesthetic experience, would not have an international global influence, and would need far more time to spread if at all since it would be attempting to battle nationally controlled radio playlists in other countries' cultures. Therefore, I argue cyberspace mediums are a necessary condition of K-Pop in the way it has spread. The more interactive digital aesthetic content of K-Pop is influenced more by the capacities of the interactive culture of cyberspace than its counterparts in Japanese or American popular mass cultural music.

The next question is how can we explain aesthetic experience of K-Pop? First, what is described is the philosophical theory of pragmatism. The mass culture is made of mediated masses, so it is very connected and

very close to life, and anonymous opinions are reflected in the mass. However, in the digital environment, mass culture has evolved again. It is becoming a far more interactive communication that is different than previously possible. Thus we are not just one-way consumers, we make moving images, upload, and share opinions and viral self-made videos. This means everyone is simultaneously creator and user. We are making a huge blurred producer/user culture, which shows an open structure. The ideas of Dewey and Shusterman can be applied to understand this phenomenon because their "aesthetic experience" concern as the basis of art is very different from Kant's contemplative concern of art. Nowadays our experience of art is judged increasingly on whether it is satisfying or making this embodied experience. First, pragmatist aesthetics can explain K-Pop, because life and art are mixed, and aesthetic experience is an open living concept. We can analyse the aesthetic content of K-Pop in this way. Second, K-Pop is an aesthetics of pleasure. 18th century European ideas of pleasure are important, but pleasure historically in the West was given a negative meaning, while aesthetic pleasure does not have that negative connotation in Korean aesthetics or obviously in K-Pop.[14]

IV.

In conclusion, Korean ideas of group aesthetic pleasure once had more of a deeply emotional religious and mystical connection, though this desire to share a pleasure in group conviviality continues in Korean K-Pop as well. It is facilitated less by shared cultural or national traditions now and more by modular, shared, embodied aesthetic experiences available to all globally as growing peer-to-peer producers and users combined.

In the deeper history of European aesthetics before Christianity, pleasure had a positive history from the Greeks onward. For Epicurus, what was pleasure was the only good, and for him, contemplation was useless if it detracted from pleasure. Later in a widened Christian era and influence, an idea of living and feeling pleasure as a moral good and aim of life was repressed of course, leaving intellectual and contemplative pleasures as the only recourse for "acceptable" aesthetic experiences. However, more modern philosophers of aesthetics like Shusterman insist pleasure doesn't

[14] Avraam Koen, *Atoms, Pleasure, Virtue: The Philosophy of Epicurus* (New York: Peter Lang, 1995).

have to have a negative or lower meaning. From the point of view of cyberspace-mediated and modulated art, it is clear that an embodied human pleasure is a very important aesthetic element in this evolving digital mass art.

In the history of the aesthetics of Korean pleasure, there is the concept of "신명나다, *shinmyong nada*". This term comes from the native Korean language culture. Koreans do have other terms for pleasure like "興, *hung*", represented as an imported concept by its Chinese character. However, first, "신명, *shinmyeong*" as a pleasure term has a connotation of a public group religious ritual and shared conviviality. K-Pop is a strange posthuman echo of this since it not just a simple personal private pleasure, though through this *shinmyong* experience, there is always an embodied, public, and group-oriented aesthetics. Second, it has the meaning of desiring to be friendly and social, i.e., to communicate and to share. So this deeper Korean idea of pleasure culturally in *shinmyong* may be reborn in an age dominated now by cyberspatial sharing and actions. In a strange way it echoes why Korean culture itself (instead of just K-Pop) feels more convivial than J-pop or American pop with their sometimes darker or personal/private, alienated, enraged, or violent themes. This conviviality of *shinmyong*/pleasure translates well to the conviviality across shared cyberspace and shared virtual realities.

Korean ideas of pleasure historically are innately shared and group related, so it is perhaps unsurprising that Korea culturally has embraced such cyber-conviviality more than the Japanese who seem to have much less interest in buying smartphones than Koreans. Japanese by 2015 only have about 35% of their population with a smartphone, compared to over 88% of South Korea. Such tools of endless virtual reality – in its interruptive and eruptive conviviality – are seen as more disruptive to Japanese hierarchies culturally even though the Japanese pioneered mobile phones and mobile phone culture per se.

Therefore, to understand this increasingly embodied, convivial, and pleasure-oriented aesthetics, there is no better place to see this in action than to experience the "futuristic" fast internet speeds and deep smartphone coverage of South Korea. South Korea has provided one of the world's first nationally scaled digital palette, so to speak, for this kind of artistry, through which on-going aggregate kinds of cascading digital mass art participation occurs like K-Pop. This is paired with the Korean traditional term of *shinmyong* that can come full circle now to help explain the aesthetics of this novel peer-to-peer and virtual-reality connotation of digital mass art.

21st century aesthetics will obviate the whole idea of a "low" or "high" art dichotomy as more of our lives are involved entirely in the big global exchange of virtual communities. Therefore, our past interpretations of mass art as secondary or shallow aesthetic experience may change a lot in the future due to the two-way interactive art and scale of public interactions that are very different than the older central distribution of mass art aesthetic influences in our lives.

Rock me Amadeus

A lowbrow reading of high culture – or how to deal with high cultured appropriation?

Max Ryynänen

Imagine what would happen if football was "elevated" to bourgeois "high culture" and shared the ideals, atmosphere and audience behaviour that surround the high mainstream of opera, ballet and national art galleries. What would it be like to experience a match without beer, hot dogs, the boisterous shouting and singing of fans and the physical contact on the pitch.

Football would continue its life in a new form detached from its history as a lively sport. How would fans react when they heard that FC Barcelona, Galatasaray or Boca Juniors were no longer what they used to be for them, whose love for the game, for good or bad, was one of the key elements in bringing colour to their world?

To some extent, Shakespeare in the 19th century was popular urban culture similar to football today. To understand what that means one has to think about a world that has been transmitted to us through the scholarly descriptions and archive work of Walter Benjamin and Georg Simmel (Berlin, Paris).[1] Although theoretically speaking their societal interest is holistic, Benjamin and Simmel are too bourgeois to delve into the really shady parts of society. In any event, when looking at the American popular Shakespeare, to get the full picture, you would also have to downgrade it to resonate with the literary work of Victor Hugo and Charles Dickens.

Mid-19th century Shakespearean actors were loved by their audience in the way that modern fans love footballers, singers and film stars. The plays

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[1] See e.g. Walter Benjamin *The Arcades Project* (Cambridge MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999) and Georg Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life" in Kurt Wolff (Trans.) *The Sociology of Georg Simmel* (New York: Free Press, 1950), 409–424.

were constantly updated to address local political issues. Some actors had names like "the Hurricane" as if they were professional wrestlers.[2]

In New York, Shakespeare was *only* popular culture, and so, it was not surprising that in May 1849 the first highbrow British performance was met with boos accompanied by eggs, potatoes, apples, lemons and shoes. This backlash of "cultural development" was frustrating for the cultural elite.

Aesthetically, the polarization was led by the two leading actors of their own Shakespeare genres. Edwin Forrest's audience consisted of the working class and gangs of New York. He drew followers from the violent immigrant enclave known as Five Points (today's China Town, and the site of Herbert Asbury's book *The Gangs of New York* (1927)[3], and the location for Martin Scorsese's 2002 film of the same title). This area was home to a lively cluster of music halls and theatres, and was the birthplace of tap dance. On the other hand, upper class, high cultured Anglophiles supported the freshly imported Briton, William Charles Macready.

The high society of New York was shocked that their new "civilized" low-key version of Shakespeare, which was based on eloquent reciting, was so poorly received. The elite protested and demanded that the police help usher Shakespeare to New York in style, that the act should be given a second chance, and that the city should defend its second coming. Among the people who signed the demand, we find several distinguished personages, including Herman Melville.

A few days later, on the evening of May 10, 1849, the demonstration of the lower class Shakespeare fans devolved into an attack on the Astor Opera House. A veritable army consisting of police, the militia, mounted troops, light artillery – 550 men in all, defended this highbrow Shakespeare against the lowbrow crowd.

Up to 31 rioters were killed and 48 were wounded, while 50 to 70 policemen were injured in the battle, with the high version of Shakespeare emerging victorious and driving the popular version away, not to return until the advent of feature films.

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[2] I am here following Lawrence Levine's description of the case in the book *Highbrow / Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1988).

[3] Herbert Asbury, *The Gangs of New York. An Informal History of the Underworld* (New York: Random House, 2008 [1927]).

Described in detail in Lawrence Levine's *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchies in 19th Century America* (1988), the story is uncanny from the point of view of aesthetics. It can be read as nothing more than the story of a clash between two classes of society or as an example of highbrow appropriation. Shakespeare in its original form touched upon nearly all levels of the society, yet in this story the cultural elite was interested in force-feeding New York with a new interpretation.

Today's debates of appropriation focus mainly on Western or mainstream culture when it appropriates African, Indian or African American culture. Here in Helsinki, the biggest debates on this topic are a result of the use of clothing of the indigenous Sami people of Lapland in contemporary art works and beauty contests.

The high and low problematics of appropriation represent a different story. The original Shakespeare was never modern high culture, but the culture of the people (for a variety of folk groups) in its original English context. Among many other cultural resources, at the advent of the construction of the modern system of arts in the mid-18th century, it was included in the story of art without critical reflection, like all other cultural history that was appreciated by the cultural elite at the time. Appropriation continued and many key works became the "victims" of cultural looting.

Picasso's "radical" use of African popular art and the Orientalism of the early 20th century in dance and visual arts represented the theft and appropriation of another culture that was interesting but not necessarily considered to be on the same level as the European.

In "Appropriating like Krazy" (1986),[4] Jim Collins talks about how contemporary popular artists have created more mature and reflective versions of popular culture, while doing everything possible to prevent their work from being labelled as Art with a capital A. Collins cites 1980s cult classics like Frank Miller's existentially realistic Batman comics and Kinky Friedman's campy detective novels to show that there are mass culture artists who consciously and appropriately cultivate classical forms of popular culture while not in any way knocking on the door of art.

The degree of appropriation of popular culture in the history of high culture is amazingly extensive if you think about it. Classical composers

[4] Jim Collins, "Appropriating like Krazy: From Pop Art to Meta-Pop," in Patrick Brantmore and James Naremore (eds), *Modernity and Mass Culture* (Bloomington Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 203–223).

have "artified" popular/folk (often Roma) music (Bartok, Dvorak, Glinka). Toulouse-Lautrec, an excellent advertiser, was high-washed so that his visually witty adverts could become "modern art"; unfortunately, as a result, the history of visual popular culture lost one of its true masters (the same thing happened to another advertising professional moonlighting in the underground scene, Andy Warhol). The operetta, which was originally a lowbrow form of opera, was elevated to the level of opera in the 20th century. The work of early cinematic masters like Meliés and Eisenstein (whose Potemkin was originally meant to be an educational film for a museum) went through the same process. As did jazz when it became academic.

From a literary point of view, books like the national epic of my country (Finland), the Kalevala (where the oral tradition of poor Eastern Finnish people was collected and edited in post-Greek epic fashion by a Swedish university scholar who was enchanted by the exotic locals)[5] stand for the same type of structural appropriation.

In *Aesthetic Theory* (1970)[6] Theodor Adorno considers Mozart to be the last composer to create fun and easy (art) music. He goes on to say that the false reconciliation of capitalist culture started to push all cultural activity towards pleasure in a way that made it impossible for artists to be light and fun if they wanted to make a difference (and Adorno thought they did) in relation to the entertainment industry – or in his own words, in relation to the negative whole of capitalist society

Adorno is famous for having created the concept of the culture industry, and he wrote as critically about mass culture as about high culture. Mass culture might have been the primus motor of the culture industry, but

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[5] We Finns who have a Swedish background have often appropriated Finnish culture in various ways.

[6] For Adorno's thoughts on Mozart, see e.g. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedeman (eds.), *Aesthetic Theory* (London: Continuum, 1997), 141, 162, 177, 200. Sabine Wilke has criticized Adorno for making too much of a problem out of laughter, which needs according to her no excuse. Sabine Wilke, "Torn Halves of an Integral Freedom: Adorno's and Benjamin's readings of mass culture," in Ronald Roblin (ed.), *The Aesthetics of the Critical Theorists: Studies on Benjamin, Adorno, Marcuse and Habermas* (Lewinston NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990), 124–151. The ideological seriousness of Adorno's work forces him to explain why Mozart's lighthearted work is acceptable.

the concept is as much about compromising a Sunday afternoon concert series with a couple of safe Mozart (and local national) pieces and then a modern composition. Aside from Mozart, Adorno found Beethoven to be the first clearly negative, non-consumable composer; he was to be followed by modernists, represented by Schoenberg at the height of such movement, and on the literary side by Kafka and Beckett, who were able to reflect the true (negative) nature of late capitalist society.

Adorno was extra critical about how the Central European (for him, universal; for us Northern people, ethnic) tradition of the music of the elite was packaged into the consumable.

The whole concept "classical music" stood for a certain kind of interpretation of the tradition. Adorno's non-reflective Eurocentric education did not lead him to think that this was an appropriation of an ethnic tradition labelled to be classically high, but that the edge of the tradition where music (universally) had been developed to its peak was taken away through compromising attitudes.

Although Adorno did not have the concept of appropriation in his use, (he thought of tradition itself only through classical art research terms, e.g., compositions), one can surely say that even the work of the artists he discussed, such as Mozart, represented something that would be more appropriately referred to as popular culture in their world.

In my opinion, the artistic spearhead of the story of Mozart does not lie in his compositions, which Adorno's cultural system had stripped of some their original context. It is the masses drinking cocktails of hot chocolate and spirits, dancing, shouting and having fun in (some) of his (less courtly) concerts, and the resonance of this audience culture and his music, their way of belonging together, which has escaped our critical eye. Perhaps one could say (I am paraphrasing Brecht here[7]): that Mozart's audience was the last to be able to enjoy that tradition of music as if they were attending a boxing match?

Abhinavagupta, the 10th century Kashmiri philosopher, was possibly the first to work on the resonance of the work and the audience culture in his rasa-theory. Abhinavagupta's work relates to a broader cosmogony, but on a very basic level he discusses the importance of having the audience

[7] Brecht dreamed about a "smokers theatre" where the audience would smoke cigars as if watching a boxing match, and where they would develop a more detached and critical outlook.

and the performance tuned in to the same *rasa* (which could be roughly translated as atmosphere).[8] He talks about resonance, the way dynamic experiences are shared by the artist and the audience, as one of the key issues of art, and I think his perspective on art is illuminating.

In both of our main artistic examples, Shakespeare and Mozart, a life work changed categories, and through that change it encountered new requirements from a new audience. Talking through rasas, which is something Abhinavagupta borrowed from 6th century philosopher Bharata Muni (*Natyashastra*), one could say that in Mozart's case the *Comic* also became the *Pathetic* (the list of rasas is the Erotic, the Comic, the Pathetic, the Furious, the Heroic, the Terrible, the Odious, the Marvellous and the later addition, the Peaceful), as anyone who comes from another cultural territory can easily detect when entering a bourgeois cultural joint anywhere in the Western world where Mozart is being played (i.e., stiff and "contemplative" attitude).

Of course, we have plenty of opera and classical music that strives to establish these lost traditional ways of playing and enjoying music, and in some areas the tradition has survived better than in others (In some Italian towns, popular outdoor opera performances where people come to eat and listen to music can still be found). It is just that we have to note this high cultured matrix in which appropriated works and practices have to bump into and which puts pressure on them to change.

The Greeks often arrived late at spectacles and drank and made noise. Loose audience culture was also quintessential for the golden age of film. The auteur enthusiasts, in the French film circles of the 1950s and then later all over the world, who brought Hitchcock to film clubs, changed the setting radically – so much so that I agree with Ted Cohen, who in his article "High and Low Art, and High and Low Audiences", takes Hitchcock to be an example of art which is actually bilingual, or as Cohen says it, bilateral, as people in film clubs and the people who watch it as entertainment provide quite different cultural contexts, ways of use and enjoyment.[9]

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[8] Raniero Gnoli (ed.), *The Aesthetic Experience According to Abhinavagupta* (Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1956).

[9] Ted Cohen, "High and Low Art, and High and Low Audiences," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* Vol 57;2, 137–143,

Film clubs, classical music audiences and museum audiences share the same focused, silent and nearly religiously laden atmosphere. Maybe these are some of the echoes Benjamin interpreted as an "auratic" object gained from magical practices, i.e., could it be that audience culture took some of it, not only the objects which' aura Benjamin was so keen to write about? This atmosphere stresses, of course, certain aspects of the works of art and their performances, and makes others less well functioning. As in our first speculative example of football, it is easy to guess what was or is going to happen if a work or practice enters the world of "high culture". There is a shared order, pattern of behaviour, auditive side (silence of the audience) and interest in freezing classics in appropriate and inappropriate versions, which marks the move from lowbrow to high.

Without a doubt, popular culture is also full of orders, from performing to be "relaxed" (a rock culture cliché) to always doing the same dance moves in a disco, but there is something in the high end which brings to mind Foucault's description in *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison* (1975)[10] of the controlling systems of early modernity, which, near if not even exactly at the same time as the Shakespeare riot, did not just end public torture as entertainment, but brought the need to show your hands on the pulpit at schools, and took the order of army culture to a new level, without forgetting Foucault's famous descriptions of prisons and their surveillance systems.

Is classical high culture one of the branches in the process which Foucault saw developing in prisons, schools, the army and in many others territories of culture, a system of order, self-subordination and surveillance, which was to become one of the keys for understanding Western modernity? Just think about people's faces when you raise your voice in an art museum or how the freaks in the film club look at you if you open a bag of peanuts during the film.

Many popular culture enthusiasts would probably say yes. Jazz and "world music" musicians are angry when their gigs are booked in high culture joints where the audience cannot stand up and dance (the janitor comes and says: "dancing is forbidden") – and the audience might protest when faced with the situation. And one must remember that not all art fits neatly into the culture of high culture. Alternative and grass roots galleries

[10] Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975).

work hard to keep the atmosphere light, a bit unorganized, and free for noise and chatting, in order to not fall into the web of constraints typical for the main institutions, which the people running them often actually mock as being "high culture". There has always been a difference between avant-garde, underground and alternative art scenes and then the high culture system. Picasso (and his generation) rebelled against the institutional power of Louvre by stealing art works and throwing them in the river.[11] The historical avant-garde groups also made clear that they were against high culture and its fetishes.[12]

Idea art historians, and here I'm mainly thinking about Paul Oskar Kristeller in his "The Modern System of the Arts" I and II (1951–1952) and Wladyslaw Tatarkiewicz in his "History of Six Ideas" (1980), have written about the formation of the concept, the institution and the system which made it possible to gain autonomy for the arts and to protect their development.[13]

We are still waiting for the first scholarly work on the history of the aforementioned audience culture and this aesthetic matrix of high culture that we have bumped into here – and we lack a history of how the appropriated works were reinterpreted and changed to fit into their new context. We might of course guess that the social rules and atmospheres portrayed above have their roots in court culture, high society events and then the (performative) modern culture of rational order. From this perspective, it easy to understand why emotions should still run through a sordino in a high cultured context and why the cult of neutrality (where a distorted version of Kant's idea of contemplation has been given a central position) is so central.

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[11] See e.g. Noah Charney's *The Thefts of the Mona Lisa: On Stealing the World's Most Famous Painting* (Arca Publications: 2011).

[12] Andreas Huyssen's *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987) describes well in detail the rebellious and more mass culture friendly history of the historical avant-garde movements. High cultured appropriation brought in of course the myth of the genius to the practices it endorsed. See e.g. Christine Battersby's witty analysis of the role of the genius in high culture in *Gender and Genius. Towards a Feminist Aesthetics* (London: The Women's Press, 1989).

[13] Paul Oskar Kristeller, "The Modern System of Arts: A Study in the History of Aesthetics" I & II, in Peter Kivy (ed.), *Essays on the History of Aesthetics* (New York: University of Rochester Press, 1994), 3-64. Wladyslaw Tatarkiewicz, "Art", in *History of Six Ideas* (Warsaw: Polish Scientific Publishers, 1980).

Why would anyone be against the fact that the upper class or the guardians of high culture would accept a form of art? If it were only that, it would mean better access to economic and political resources. But, many graffiti artists don't want to be seen as artists because they fear the world of art, and this is not because of the grassroots galleries or the experimental music joints (where they are often well connected), but because of the bourgeois high culture tradition and its matrix that can affect works of art and their use. Frank Zappa for sure stayed on the pop-side consciously,[14] to keep his work anchored to a certain type of interpretation, experience and audience culture.

John Dewey's famous museum critique partly addresses this issue. He claims that the works of art which "now" (1930s) hang in the Louvre, packed on the walls to be "contemplated" upon, had a living role in another time and in another place. Dewey turns to popular culture following his interest in lively experiences, and describes everything and all high culture as a stiff and not very effective context, at least for most works of art.[15] He did not have the now very illuminating discussion about appropriation, and he was not into the lively, less-bourgeois margins of art – most aestheticians have contact only with the public service art sphere (museums, concert halls) – but what he writes about critically is easy for us to recognize as being the high matrix discussed above.

When something becomes appropriated as high culture, not just in the classical sense, but often also today, it seems hard to return to the source. Bosch painted his feverish works on heaven and hell without a system of art and without a cold museum contemplation as context, but still, having his work on the cover of a Deep Purple record seems for many to be just a loan from high culture – even if it was high culture that originally "borrowed" it without any intention of returning it. I cannot come up with an opposite example, where a work leaves the higher ground and becomes entertainment. When classical pianists choose parts from romantic concertos and play them to a mass audience or when tourist masses go to museums to use art in an entertainment fashion the label high culture stays on these works. High culture (which at its core is a way of

[14] I have myself touched upon this "unwanted label of art" in my article "Nowbrow", *The Nordic Journal of Aesthetics* 2005:1, 86–98.

[15] John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1980). The museum conception of art is mainly introduced in chapter 6.

nurturing cultural heritage) slowly sucks all appreciated artistic works into its black hole.

As museums nowadays work so hard to make art accessible, to show that entering an art museum is no big deal, why couldn't they actually start working on giving back, at least provisionally, the original context and audience culture for the works? This is why we need mass culture museums. They could have Mozart concerts where the musicians played like entertainers and the audience could drink hot chocolate with spirits. And they could present classical paintings in the original context, e.g., build a Venetian room for a work of Tintoretto, with a window looking out on green water (the same green which in many shades surrounds Tintoretto's Jesus).[16]

I also believe that opera would be more satisfactory for most people, if they could see and listen to it as entertainment, which it always was in Venice, where Gondoliers could sing the tunes at La Fenice even before the premieres of the productions. For many, the high cultured matrix, bourgeois culture and hierarchical structures imbedded in these systems are the problem, and a sign that they are being consumed by the elite – not the fact that they are highly appreciated by artists and art researchers.

It is not just that the upper and middle classes use the arts to oppress the poor, the "uneducated" and the "ethnic" others (as Pierre Bourdieu has taught us), but that the high culture matrix overshadows the wide aesthetic potential of many artistic traditions and works of art. Aesthetics does not have to be an advocate for the "original" use of works of art (this would be a typically high culture attitude), but it could help people to see that the same piece could have two (or more) lives.

Like Jeff Koons' glass art works from the early 1990s which are also works by the glass master Pino Signoretto (in glass art circles) – this might be Koons' most interesting artistic achievement[17] – we could foster a popular Rigoletto alongside the high bourgeois version.

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[16] Another interesting, although not that successful strategy used by Socialist countries, especially the Soviet Union in the 1970s and the 1980s, was the conscious creation of official high culture by developing new versions of popular culture traditions, e.g. art circus and art disco dancing.

[17] Max Ryynänen, "The Double Life of Jeff Koons' Made in Heaven Glass Artworks", *Nordic Journal of Aesthetics* 2004 (29–30), 99-111.

The true nature of so many works of art and artistic traditions oscillates between high and low, and I believe that we have to come out from the dominance of the modern high and can start working on taking back some of the less-thought out and embraced features and sides of our cultural heritage.[18] Aesthetics scholars need to study a new the history of the modern system of arts and to acknowledge that similar to the late 20th century scandals of Eurocentrism and male-dominance, we have again found a new perspective for rewriting history. The history of high culture is essentially the history of folk art and mass culture and their appropriation.

[18] There are scholars who have analyzed "low culture" and popular culture as cultural heritage which aims at satisfying different needs than the high. See e.g. Sung-Bong Park, *An Aesthetics of Popular Art* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1993).

THE RENEWAL OF THE PAST TOWARDS THE FUTURE

The case of Jean Nouvel's architecture

Jale N. Erzen

I. Introduction

Culture as the accumulation of values extended in time and space, is always related to traditions, whether old or modern. All cultures have their traditions such as the "Modern Tradition", or traditions of democratic practices, and others. The past is never totally dead, its memories and occurrences visit the present in varied forms. Yet, traditions do not necessarily have to belong to the past, although all contemporary practices contain residues of the past. In fact, humanity is only possible through the handing down of values and ways of knowing and doing from one generation to the next, preserving certain ways and gradual mutations of these. Adorno describes tradition as "the pre-given, unreflected and binding existence of social forms".[1] All ways of doing and producing, all creative acts display a certain belief in a technique or practice, a conviction which stems from a former application which has proven successful or an insight about a future act which is believed to prove successful. Traditions do not necessarily have to belong to a common and largely accepted practice. There can be family traditions, personal traditions, and traditions belonging to groups.

It would be wrong to assume that traditions are fixed and unchanging. We know about traditions usually through works that have been preserved and which point to a common practice at a certain time. But at any given point in history we can also find practices that seem to defy a certain largely accepted practice. Such considerations suggest that traditions are evolving, fluid and flexible practices which can only be understood through their products and not through any recorded discourse.

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[1] Peter Osborne, *The Politics of Time. Modernity and the Avant-Garde* (London & New York: Verso, 1995), 127. Originally published in Theodor W. Adorno, "On Tradition" [1966], *Telos* 94 (Winter 1992–3): 75.

Traditions, as systems of belief and method, affect the present sometimes visibly but often quiet invisibly. In this sense, art or the arts of a certain epoch that become fixed like traditions are sources from which artists continually feed and quote. For Gulammohammed Sheikh, quoting is an important tool to share art with others and to relate to others:

The idea of quotation, the choice of quoting from everywhere, anywhere, including one's own past work, overturns the real and the imaginary, back and forth. What were "real" characters assume different form, become figures from fables, stories from an autobiography, enlarging the imaginary world. The mundane world of autobiography turns into a larger biography that is then available to others.[2]

Tradition is not just consciously remembering and adopting certain fixed methods or knowledge. More generally it is an unconscious relatedness to a way of seeing and feeling, to certain social customs and conventions, often without questioning them. According to Benjamin, traditions are also means for the communicability of experience within the present, related to problems of cultural form.[3]

Gulammohammed Sheikh, *Gandhi and Gama,* 2014, triptych, acrylic on canvas, 288 x 624 cm

[2] Gulammohammed Sheik, *City, Kaavad and Other Works*; Catalogue (New Delhi: Vadehra Art Gallery Publication, 2011).

[3] Osborne, *The Politics of Time*, 133.

Contact with traditions happen in myriad ways, as we journey to other lands and meet cultures and people, we often enter a different space of time. One can also say that tradition is the imprint of time on space and physicality. Traditions visit us in the form of art or in the form of remembered images of art. If we are sensitive about the way other people see and feel, their traditions will inevitably enter our quotidian in some way. In this paper, I would like to investigate tradition as a tool of renewal.

II. Modernity and the past

The past, which is an unstable, unfixed, nonlinear accumulation of mnemonic traces is the foundation on which we build our identities; it is the clay with which we mould ourselves according to how we inhabit time and space. Our present is also a point in constant back and forth movement. The new, the now, the actual have stemmed from this fluid and unfixed past. For Agamben being "contemporary" means always a certain relation to the past.[4] He writes about it as the source of a discomfort, something that cannot be totally forgotten or completely remembered. For him, our relation to the past is like a pendulum that swings back and forth changing the hierarchy over one another; the concepts of tradition, culture, spirit and memory overlap and relate to each other.

The discourse about "Modernity's" rupture with the past and its avoidance of historical reference misinterprets both Western and non-Western modernisms, which, as they tried to temporalize history and to create a distinct epoch and consciousness, nevertheless had to refer to the past and had to constantly find its identity in relation to its opposition to tradition. At the same time, modernity was seen as a provocation to established values, and for reactionary politics tradition became a repetitious hampering of "essential" values.

In the late 19th century, when Ottoman culture was faced with the exigencies of modernization jeopardizing Islamic traditions, Ottoman architects tried to revive traditional forms in the effort to create a national style, not only by using historical Ottoman decorative forms, but also using new structural and building techniques. In contrast to Orientalist eclectic

[4] Giorgio Agamben, *Qu'est-ce que le contemporain?* trans. Maxime Rovere (Paris: Editions Payot & Rivages, 2008).

approaches that tried to copy exotic Islamic elements, they were trying to use the purer and geometric forms adopted from traditional Ottoman architecture. This was important in creating a national identity with historical consciousness.

The Arts and Crafts movement was a precursor to industrial production and also tried to revive the craft ethics and understanding of the Middle Ages. However, it was not an exact copy of Medieval practices, quite the contrary, by following the model of a past, traditional approach to arts and crafts, the members of the movement appeared innovative and progressive. In mid-19th century many revivalist movements appeared as efforts of reform and renewal. The past was brought into the present as a viable rejuvenation and novelty. In the mid-19th century, as an aftermath of the French revolution widespread national consciousness in Europe began to influence new cultural forms and gave rise to a historical awareness instigating cultural revivalism.

Traditions constantly change and adapt to new conditions, to new ways of seeing and understanding. Traditions are codes inscribed in behavioural forms or in artefacts. Certain of these forms may have acquired constancy in physical patterns related to locality, politics, social norms or to greater contexts such as how the universe or the earth are understood. In each culture there are forms that function as constant symbols and become part of the constructed physical world. These may refer back to tradition and to certain cultural identities, but with time they are adapted to new conditions through interpretation. They retain their validity and credibility, applications through new technologies or new materials.

Conservative and reactionary approaches take their support from retrograde ideologies and apply traditional forms and values through political impositions. Conservative and fundamentalist cultures repeatedly use traditional forms to strengthen ideologies favourable to them. Where scientific, technological and artistic innovations are not supported in the fear of weakening ideological adherence, such repetitious enforcements become part of political practices. Societies that adhere to strict religious codes usually use traditional forms in their artefacts, which are cliché repetitions. Iran and Turkey can also be cited as examples where municipalities apply traditional decorations on buildings that are replicas of historic religious forms. Peter Osborne refers to this as the "invention" of tradition. "More recently, attention has been drawn to the pervasive tendency within modernity towards the "invention" of traditions, with a hitherto unseen degree

of self-consciousness, as an integral part of the formation of nations, as the destruction of tradition provokes its willed restitution, in increasingly artificial forms."[5]

Traditional forms used out of context, with the aim to construct new political/national identities lead to false convictions and constructions of reality severed from the general social and world political context. Traditional forms function as symbols that refer to the values of the past. During their time they were understood subconsciously, referring to everyday practices and to how individuals understood their relation to the world. Traditions as they develop and change stay in coherence and unity with the consciousness, knowledge, beliefs and values of a society. If they belong to artefacts they can in later times be enjoyed as historical forms especially if their background can be known. Where traditional forms are applied in urban contexts and in architecture in repetitive ways and as "ready to use" clichés, to impose certain ideologies on the masses, the urban environment loses its aesthetic reality. In other words, these repetitive and "cloned" forms do not stimulate responses that are natural and alive. These applications become shallow, surface signs without relation to contemporary values or life practices. At best they create double schizophrenic values, because they relate to realities and symbols, which no longer have meaning in actual life experience; they just crowd the visual field as meaningless additions.

III. Tradition and innovation

Many architects have used traditional patterns or traditional architectural elements in innovative and modern ways to be able to create congenial relationships with the society where they build. Rasem Badran from Jordan often refers to traditional forms and materials in his modern designs, to create coherence in the larger environmental and social context or to meet climatic needs. Turgut Cansever from Turkey, and Raj Rewal from India, as many other socially and culturally sensitive designers, have had recourse to traditional forms, using them in surprising and innovative ways.

The most obvious and common reference to tradition appears in decorative applications. With modern techniques and materials it has become

[5] Osborne, *The Politics of Time*, 157.

extremely easy to use traditional patterns on buildings. This practice has become widespread in Turkey with the rise of fundamentalism, and with the rise to power of religiously engaged political powers. As many construction projects for mass housing were allotted to conservative firms, traditional decorative patterns began to be seen on many buildings in the new development areas of Turkish cities.

The modern movement in the West has consciously avoided the use in architecture of both decoration and traditional forms, to be able to relate to new urban experiences, to pre-fabrication and to the aesthetic of the machine. As industry and technology became the new paradigmatic forces, industrialized cultures tried to express their identity in novel forms and inventions within an international platform. Developing or underdeveloped cultures that imported or tried to adopt modernism as an exigency of economic and political survival felt the need to redeem their identity in traditions. Today in Turkey, as well as in many developing countries, the polemics of modern versus tradition is the basis of a perpetual controversy. Tradition is to be redeemed both in decorations that are applied as ready-made forms in cheap materials because the traditional workmanship that had produced these forms in history no longer exist, and in the use of architectural elements that are deemed to relate to a cultural identity, such as arched doors or windows, domes and examples of similar familiar vocabulary.

IV. Islamic patterns and the case of Jean Nouvel

Jean Nouvel, an important international architect, has been using traditional forms in many of his buildings, such as the "Arab World Institute" in Paris, the Agbar Tower in Barcelona, and the new Louvre Museum in Abu Dhabi. In his "Philharmonie de Paris" he has applied a contrastful and brilliant decorative pattern on the exterior, which functions as an eye-catcher for the fast moving traffic. Yet, in an interview he made with the postmodern philosopher Jean Baudrillard, Jean Nouvel has expressed his criticism of decoration and of aesthetics, as they are commonly used in architecture today:

…many people are under the illusion that depth comes about through omnipresent decoration. Decoration is used to palliate this absence of intent, the

incoherence of architecture. Generally the architecture is hidden behind an ersatz facade. (...) Style… is one of the big questions in architecture. Style addresses the problem of the evolution of architecture. We can say that architects, in the twentieth century, have positioned themselves as artists in the plastic arts. They've appropriated the field; they've pretended it was also their own. Once this formal identification was made, the number of caricatures began to multiply: the ones who made everything white or everything blue, all in garlands, and so on.[6]

In none of Nouvel's buildings the use of decoration or tradition is merely decorative or traditional in the common use of the term. Jean Nouvel has applied traditional Islamic patterns using advanced technologies to fulfil effective architectural functions such as lighting, atmospheric effects, transparency and novel visual forms. The works of Jean Nouvel are in great contrast with examples that use traditional patterns as "cloned" forms, repeating old examples without architectural concepts.

To compare the applications of Islamic forms in the architecture of Jean Nouvel, it would help to refer to some in-depth analysis of Islamic traditional patterns in the work of Islamic scholars.

Islamic geometric patterns used for decoration are derived from complex over-layering and combinations of squares and circles, resulting in triangles, diamond shapes, lozenges, stars and more irregular geometries. A variety of resulting tessellations used with colour on three-dimensional forms, on plaster or with tiles and bricks, essentially relate to the movement of the square understood as the human world, within the context of the universal symbol of the circle. Thus basically, Islamic decoration in all its varied forms evokes an understanding of the relation of the human world to the universe, and therefore transcends mere decorative function.

As expressed by Titus Burckhardt in the Foreword he wrote for Ayşe Parman and Issam El-Said's book, these traditional patterns were means to create the basic geometries of architecture.[7] Their application on walls and other surfaces went beyond mere decoration and created an overall unity in the building.

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[6] Jean Baudrillard and Jean Nouvel. *The Singular Objects of Architecture.* trans. Robert Bononno. (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 76

[7] Ayşe Parman and Issam El-Said, *Geometric Concepts in Islamic Art* (London: World of Islam Festival Publishing Company Ltd., 1976), Foreword by Titus Burckhardt, x.

…the geometric models used in traditional art have nothing to do with a rational, or even a rationalistic, systematization of art; they derive from a geometry which is itself creative because it is linked to data inhering directly in the mind. At the basis of this geometry there lies the circle which is an image of an infinite who and which, when it is evenly divided gives rise to regularly shaped polygons which can, in their turn, be developed into star-shaped polygons elaborated indefinitely in perfectly harmonious proportions. (...) In the Islamic perspective, this method of deriving all the vital proportions of a building from the harmonious division of a circle is no more than a symbolic way of expressing Tawhid, which is the metaphysical doctrine of Divine Unity as the source and culmination of all diversity.[8]

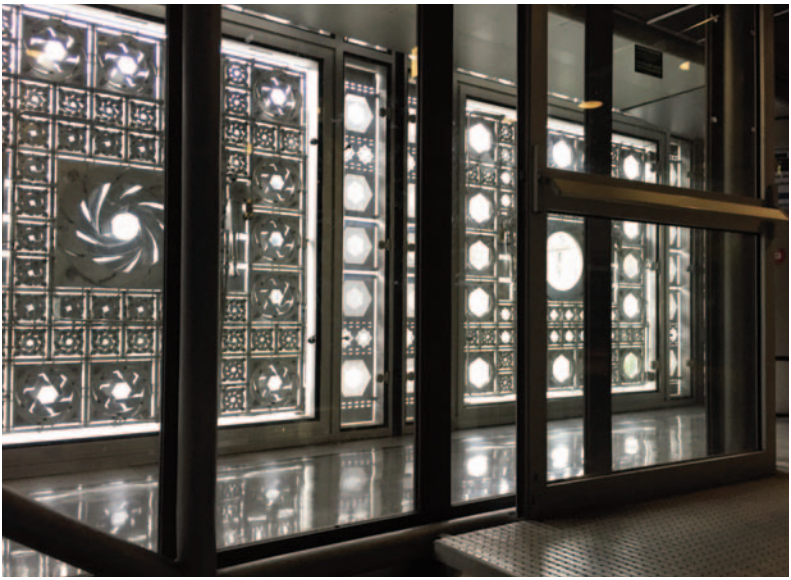
A stone carving from Anatolia using typical Islamic decorative pattern. Photo by Ömür Bakırer

A wood carving with Islamic decorative patterns from the Beyşehir Eşrefoğlu Mosque Minbar. Photo by Ömür Bakırer

[8] Ibid.

Keith Critchlow, like some other Islamic scholars, argues that Islamic patterns are created to lead the viewer to an understanding of the underlying reality, rather than being mere decoration.[9] The use of their basic geometries, to calculate the overall proportions of a building, lead to an awareness of the basic unity of the world.

Today, however, the proportions of buildings using surface decorations have nothing to do with these basic geometries, and the materials often come from industrial productions. Moreover, people living in cultures where these forms are being used for artificial decorative reasons, have no sense or aesthetic relationship to these forms; their everyday experiences are ruled by technology and industry. The forms are merely surface additions, or can be called "visual habits" without depth.



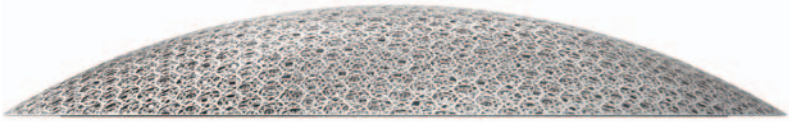
Arab World Institute by Jean Nouvel, Fenestration seen from the interior.
Photo by Jale N: Erzen

[9] Keith Critchlow, *Islamic Patterns* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976). Sayyed Hossein Nasr, in his introduction to the book, mentions the widespread use of these basic geometric patterns as reference to cosmological relationships, as evidenced in Japanese and Chinese paintings and woodwork and in American Indian art.

In his two outstanding designs for museums, the Arab World Institute, and the Abu Dhabi Louvre Museum, Jean Nouvel has used traditional Islamic patterns to regulate lightning, and to condition the sense of space, using advanced digital computation. In the Arab World Institute, which was completed in 1987 the south façade is composed of metal squares which have electronically controlled openings in the form of Islamic patterns similar to wooden lattice work used in traditional Islamic fenestration.[10]

These window units open and shut automatically, responding to photo-electric cells according to the light conditions outside. Thus, the exterior of the building has a vivid reference to Islamic culture while the interior light is kept at an optimum level creating at the same time attractive patterns of light and shade.

In the Abu Dhabi Louvre Museum which is now in its latest phase of construction, about half a million profiles of 120 different sizes, as well as of a great variety of angles and drilling holes have been applied to the eight superimposed layers of the 24 000 meter square dome. The positioning of these layers create more or less dense areas depending how much light is required under the space of the dome which houses various museum halls.

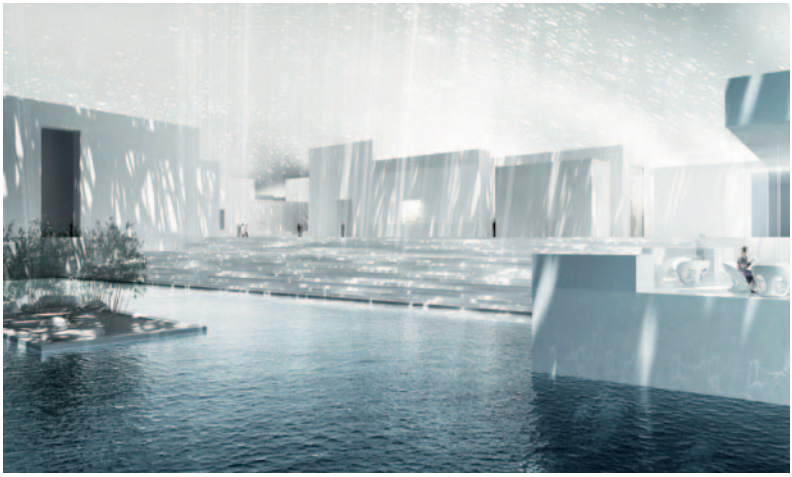


The Louvre Abu Dhabi's Dome, exterior elevation,
© TDIC, Architect: Ateliers Jean Nouvel

By using these traditional Islamic patterns in extremely advanced technological ways, Jean Nouvel has been able to not only create a singular style, but formulate the essence of his architecture controlling and designing light, space and relation to a culture. He has used fenestration as a way to condition the exterior form of his design as well as the atmosphere of his interiors. In his Agbar Tower in Barcelona he has used Catalan forms in the various shapes of the fenestration, in the Central Park building in New York, 11th Avenue, he has also used a variety of window elements as the conditioners of his architectural form.

[10] These types of windows are called 'çıkma' in Turkish, or Mashrabiyya - (مشربية), *shanshūl* (شنشول) or *rūshān* (روشان) in Arabic, and Persian.

In all these examples it becomes evident to what degree light is essential to the architectural understanding of Jean Nouvel's design. What is singular here is how he has found the means to create this singularity with traditional patterns, also to create a relationship to the cultural environment where he builds. Like Louis Kahn, Nouvel has expressed the importance that light has for him in his interviews and lectures: "What interests me in the evolution of architecture right now is the relation between matter and light, which can become something highly strategic. I am much more interested in the relation between matter and light exposed by the transparency or opacity of glass, for example, than by formal spatial parameters."[11]



The Louvre Abu Dhabi's interior,
© TDIC, Architect: Ateliers Jean Nouvel

In his thinking on architecture Jean Nouvel has always been concerned with the new developments in architecture and urban space, especially as they are related to new technologies and science. This awareness is one of the bases of his creativity and singularity:
But the problem of "essence" (of a form, an architecture, a given space) is a much more contemporary problem, associated with the evolution of our know-

[11] Baudrillard and Nouvel, *The Singular Objects of Architecture*, 61–62.

ledge about matter and quantum physics, the discovery of fractals, et cetera. These are the consequences of the advance science and technology have on our awareness of how we apprehend the world, space, time, which are also going to change our perceptual relation to space.[12]

Nouvel's conviction about how science and technology affect our awareness of the world in which we live is made evident in the way he uses technology to transform old forms into contemporary realities. Just as old Islamic architects like the 16th century Ottoman Sinan or the builders of the Cordova Great Mosque and the Alhambra, who used cultural forms and symbols according to contemporary technologies, making the buildings relate to contemporary experiences, Jean Nouvel naturally uses forms and symbols in up to date applications. As the architect summarised the concept:

The museum and the sea

All climates like exceptions. Warmer when it is cold. Cooler in the tropics. People do not resist thermal shock well. Nor do works of art. Such elementary observations have influenced the Louvre Abu Dhabi. It wishes to create a welcoming world serenely combining light and shadow, reflection and calm. It wishes to belong to a country, to its history, to its geography without becoming a flat translation, the pleonasm that results in boredom and convention. It also aims at emphasizing the fascination generated by rare encounters.

It is rather unusual to find a built archipelago in the sea. It is even more uncommon to see that it is protected by a parasol creating a rain of light.

The possibility of accessing the museum by boat or finding a pontoon to reach it by foot from the shore is equally extraordinary, before being welcomed like a much-awaited visitor willing to see unique collections, linger in tempting bookstores, or taste local teas, coffees and delicacies.

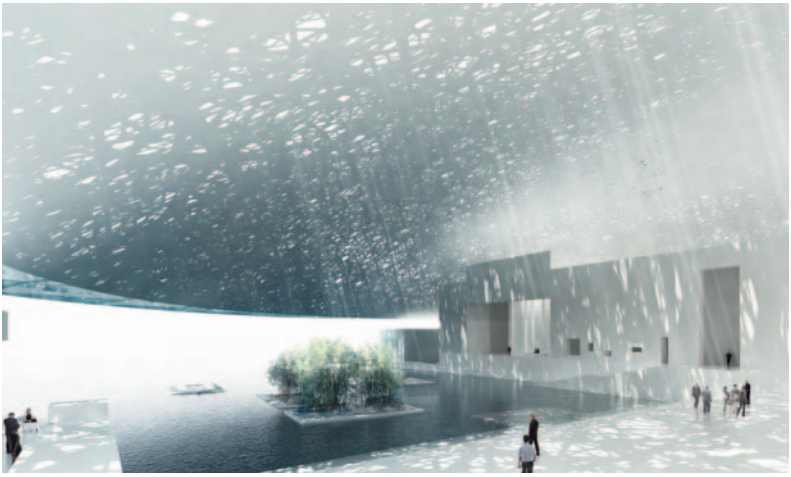
It is both a calm and complex place. A contrast amongst a series of museums that cultivate their differences and their authenticities.

It is a project founded on a major symbol of Arab architecture: the dome. But here, with its evident shift from tradition, the dome is a modern proposal.

A double dome 180 meters in diameter, offering horizontal, perfectly radiating geometry, a randomly perforated woven material, providing shade punctuated by bursts of sun. The dome gleams in the Abu Dhabi sunshine. At night, this protected landscape is an oasis of light under a starry dome.

[12] Ibid.

The Louvre Abu Dhabi becomes the final destination of an urban promenade, a garden on the coast, a cool haven, a shelter of light during the day and evening, its aesthetic consistent with its role as a sanctuary for the most precious works of art.[13]



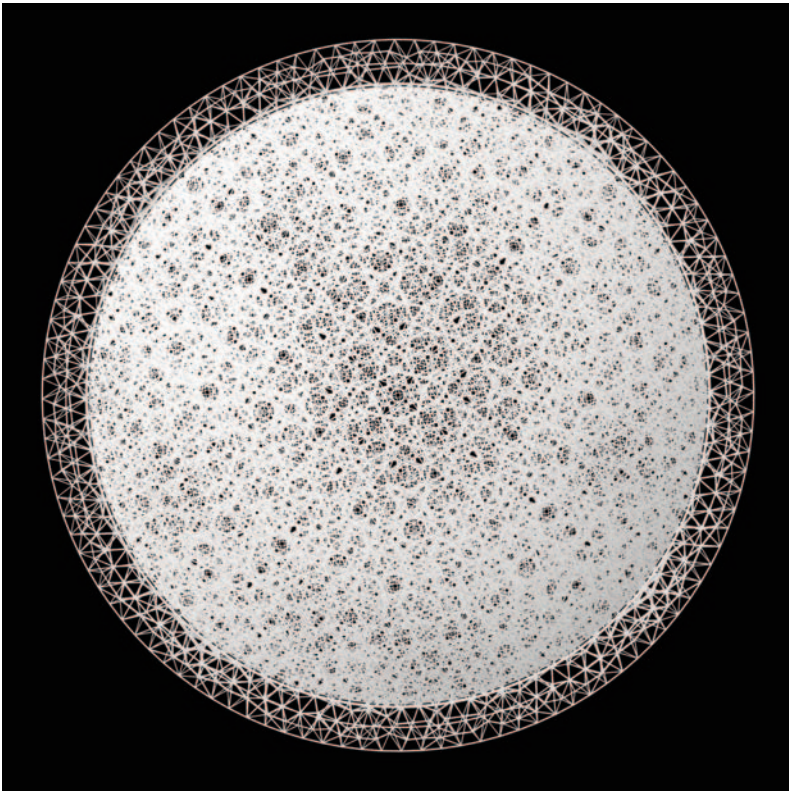
The Louvre Abu Dhabi's Dome, seen from the interior,
© TDIC, Architect: Ateliers Jean Nouvel

V. By way of conclusion

Jean Nouvel, as many creative artists all through history, has used any means that serve his creative intentions, by moulding them with contemporary means, to create original and surprising forms and to move his profession progressively into the future, without forgetting his relation to the past. This has often happened in architecture at all times: the Ottoman architect Sinan's great spatial innovations were due to his use of the half-dome which was an element taken originally from Byzantine architecture. Yet in the hands of Sinan this historic element created new possibilities of space. Use of tradition in all cultural expressions, has always served as a stepping-stone to the future.

[13] Explanation by Jean Nouvel, sent to the Author by Jean Nouvel Ateliers

Thus, tradition renewed and remoulded according to the present and the technologies of the time becomes an element leading to the future and creating the ties with heritage and ancestry. Otherwise, as it is often used by repressive regimes, it becomes a retrograde agent.



The Louvre Abu Dhabi's Dome, exterior elevation,
© TDIC, Architect: Ateliers Jean Nouvel

KATSUHIRO MIYAMOTO'S *THE FUKUSHIMA NO. 1 NUCLEAR POWER PLANT SHRINE*

"Acting-out" and "working-through"

Yoshiko Suzuki

Introduction

The 9.0-magnitude Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami on March 11, 2011, caused a nuclear accident at the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant, which was comparable to that of Chernobyl. One year later, Katsuhiro Miyamoto, a Japanese architect, exhibited a miniature model, *The Fukushima No. 1 Nuclear Power Plant Shrine* (2012, hereinafter called *The Nuclear Power Plant Shrine*), to illustrate his idea of converting the ruined power plant into aquatic tombs containing highly radioactive waste.

Figures 1 and 2 show *The Nuclear Power Plant Shrine*, displayed at an exhibition in Osaka in March 2012 [Fig. 1] [Fig. 2]. It is a 1:200 scale model that is so large it occupies one side of a 44-m^2 room. The damaged buildings of the power plant (cube-shaped reactors) are crowned with traditional Japanese-style roofs.

Why did Miyamoto present the Japanese people with this miniature model of the ruined power plant reactors crowned with traditional Japanese-style roofs?[1] Miyamoto commented on *The Nuclear Power Plant Shrine* as follows:

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[1] This recalls "the roof controversy" from 1925 to 1926 between Gropius (the leader of Bauhaus, who advocated for a flat roof in the international style) and conservative German architects who pushed for traditional pitched roofs. Later, this roof controversy developed into ideological disputes on the national identity of Germany.

Fig. 1
Katsuhiro Miyamoto,
The Fukushima No.1 Power Plant Shrine, 2012, S=1:200, foam polystyrene, wood, paint, and wallpaper, H70 × W670 × D360 cm, Katsuhiro Miyamoto & Associates.
Installation view of *The Fukushima No. 1 Nuclear Power Plant Shrine*, March 2012,
Tachibana Gallery, Osaka.

Fig. 2
Installation view of *The Fukushima No. 1 Nuclear Power Plant Shrine*, March 2012,
Tachibana Gallery, Osaka.

The most important thing is to clearly specify the existence of any danger. This could *directly affect the human race of 10,000 years in the future, by which time the culture and language are bound to have undergone a variety of changes*. It also includes exposing the confetti-like patterns that are painted on the deceptive stage sets that serve as the exterior walls of the reactor facility. This blue pattern seems like a device to conceal danger. Conveying the fact that something is dangerous is an important role of architecture. In order for this mysterious box of a building to function as architecture, I propose that *a large wooden roof, which would act as an icon*, be placed on top. It would ideally have *a crowned, exaggerated, and stylized design, like that of a shrine*. It would be *a Japanese-style roof that would respectfully serve as an icon to enshrine the souls of the departed, but prevent anyone from approaching*. […]

In terms of engineering, the roof would protect the plant from the elements, and the steel structure that supports it would provide seismic reinforcement and a robust covering. An *irimoya-style* gabled roof equipped with a *kohai* pent roof (covering the area where visitors would normally worship) would be built on the No. 2 to No. 4 buildings (W44.93 m × D44.93 m [upper section: 33.93 m] × H46.05 m; reinforced concrete construction), which contain BWR-4-type reactors. And a *hogyo*-style hipped roof (without a *kohai roof*) would be built on the No. 1 building (W41.56 m × D41.56 m [upper section: 31.42 m] × H44.75 m; reinforced concrete construction with partial steel frame), which contains a BWR-3-type reactor that is one size smaller than the others. The dimensions of the large roof on the No. 2 to No. 4 buildings would be 82 m × 75 m, with a maximum height of 88 m. The design is also a key factor. For the *nakazonae* secondary supports in the kohai section, I would use *kaerumata* (frog-leg struts) with a carving of a tsunami – a common sight on Tohoku's Pacific coast. I would also use a wave design to preserve the memory of the disaster in the *ebikoryo* and *kashiranukibana* tie beams.

[…] Most importantly, every available method should be used to ensure that *these memories are maintained in order to pacify the malevolent gods*.

As for maintaining negative legacies, one might cite examples, such as the restoration of the Frauenkirche in Dresden or the frozen preservation of the Atomic Bomb Dome in Hiroshima. The method that I propose for the Fukushima No. 1 Nuclear Power Plant is *a kind of* "*watchful preservation*" and, in order to make this possible, a "feature preservation" of certain aspects of the facility.[2]

In the following sections, I discuss Miyamoto's choice of Japanese Shinto shrines as an extreme eye-catcher. I begin my discussion with an overview of several of his works relating to two Great Earthquakes. In Section 2, I describe some public memorials built in Japan before the Second World War, and examine what the Japanese-style roofs of *The Nuclear Power Plant Shrine* mean in comparison with these older memorials. In Section 3, I consider the history of Miyamoto's works from the viewpoint of "acting-out" and "working-through," i.e., two ways of reacting to trauma. In the Conclusion, I argue that *The Nuclear Power Plant*

[2] Katsuhiro Miyamoto (translation by Christopher Stephens), "The Fukushima No. 1 Nuclear Power Plant Shrine. Pacifying Malevolent Gods," retrieved January 18, 2017, from http://dancer.co.jp/?cat=5&paged=3. Emphasis mine, except for technical terms.

Shrine is a study model that not only attempts to propose a site-specific solution in transmission of memory of the nuclear accident for the distant future, but also has positional value, in reading the historical unconscious of post-war Japanese society.

I. Miyamoto's approach to preserving memories of the disaster as architecture

Miyamoto (1961–) was born in Hyogo Prefecture. He experienced the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake in 1995 and has reflected on it during his career as an architect. Here, I trace the history of his work and discuss some moments that appear to lead to *The Nuclear Power Plant Shrine*.

I-1. A gaze into ruins and debris

Topographical Healing. Accumulus of Debris for the Public Service Place in Ashiya (1995), is composed of "concept models for an earthquake or flood memorial," and is presented as an alternative to land adjustment by the local government in the aftermath of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake in 1995 [Fig. 3]. It is a project to build a huge bank as a "memorial embankment" along the Ashiya River by accumulating earthquake disaster debris. It passes down the memories of disaster to future generations, while at the same time functioning as a platform for urban communication. Miyamoto's idea is that the city preserves and conveys the memories of

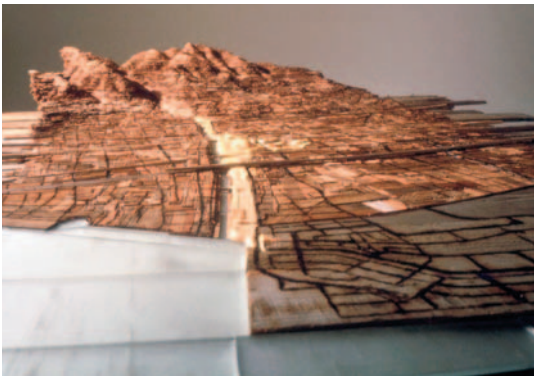

Fig. 3
Topographical Healing: Accumulus of Debris for the Public Service Place in Ashiya, 1995, S=1:2500, H40 × W207 × D260 cm, debris (Japanese cypress, plywood, bamboo, frosted glass), Katsuhiro Miyamoto & Associates.

a disaster (as well as its local geological formation) by rendering them in architectural form as a kind of civil engineering structure, constructed from the rubble and debris that would ordinarily be removed and disposed. The ideas in this project seem to lead to *The Nuclear Power Plant Shrine*, which is meant to contain spent nuclear fuel and the deposited debris produced by the meltdown within the ruins of the nuclear power plant buildings.

During the 6th Venice Biennale in 1996, Miyamoto displayed a floor installation in the Japanese Pavilion titled *Fractures* [Fig. 4] [Fig. 5].[3] Miyamoto mocked up ruins on the floor of the Japanese Pavilion – a building with a white, modern geometric structure – by using more than 20 tons of real debris from houses destroyed by the Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake. Miyamoto had this debris transported from Japan to Venice. The configuration of this installation – modern architecture that holds debris within – is similar to *The Nuclear Power Plant Shrine*.

Fig. 4
Fractures, 6th Venice Biennale installation, 1996,
the Japanese Pavilion,
Katsuhiro Miyamoto & Associates.

[3] Japanese architect Arata Isozaki (1931–) commissioned the exposition at the Japanese Pavilion.

Fig. 5
Fractures, 6th Venice Biennale installation, 1996, the Japanese Pavilion, Katsuhiro Miyamoto & Associates.

I-2. *"ZENKAI" HOUSE* (a.k.a. *House Surgery*)

One of Miyamoto's most famous works is *"ZENKAI" HOUSE* (1997).[4] *"ZENKAI" HOUSE* is a project to preserve Miyamoto's childhood home, which was badly damaged by the Hanshin-Awaji Great Earthquake. To clarify my discussion in the following two subsections, I note here that in Japan, the ideas of "preservation" and "restoration" were, and are still, completely different from those in Western countries because the houses in Japan are built mainly of wood.

"ZENKAI" HOUSE, where Miyamoto lived during his childhood, was seriously damaged by the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake. The extent of the damage led the local government to judge the original house as

[4] Concerning *"ZENKAI" HOUSE*, see Katsuhiro Miyamoto, *When "ZENKAI" HOUSE Was Born* [*"ZENKAI HOUSE" ga Umaretatoki*] (Matsudo: Okoku-sha Publishing, 2006), 40–52. Regarding his other works, see Katsuhiro Miyamoto & Associates, *Katsuhiro Miyamoto & Associates* (Goyang-si: Nemo Factory, 2016).

Fig. 6
"ZENKAI" HOUSE, interior, 1997, Katsuhiro Miyamoto & Associates.

Fig. 7
"ZENKAI" HOUSE, façade and side view,
Katsuhiro Miyamoto & Associates.

"completely collapsed." However, Miyamoto questioned "the public subsidy system for demolition" (Kohi Kaitai Seido) because he thought that such an administrative measure might indifferently delete each family and their local history. He had often experienced such cases first-hand. Miyamoto resisted public pressure and transformed his childhood home into his office. The old wooden tenement house, which in 1995 was approximately 100 years old, is now supported by complicated, bone-like steel frames [Fig. 6]. Not only did Miyamoto reinforce the structure with steel frames, but he also exposed its steel in a way that was criticized for excess expression. For example, the brace on the façade looks like either a cross (which in Japan means failure or denial, and might be associated with the judgment of the structure as "completely collapsed") or large pieces of Band-Aid on a wound (an icon sometimes seen in old-fashioned Japanese Manga) [Fig. 7]. Such eye-catching features have something in common with the large Japanese-style roofs of *The Fukushima No. 1 Nuclear Power Plant Shrine*: they act as "features" or "icons."

The project "*ZENKAI" HOUSE* is regarded as the starting point for a series of Miyamoto's works, such as the ones mentioned above, which were triggered by two Great Earthquakes in Japan. In other words, throughout Miyamoto's career, an obsession with the preservation of memory can be observed. This obsession is associated with his autobiographical details.

I-3. *"HANKAI" HOUSE*

"HANKAI" HOUSE (2007) [Fig. 8] developed from the concept of *"ZENKAI" HOUSE*. The project aimed to renovate a 90-year-old traditional Japanese house, which was also damaged by the Hanshin-Awaji Great Earthquake and was judged as "partially collapsed" by the local government. The other original 300-year-old structures on the same premises must have been demolished because of damage and deterioration. The newly-added structure designed by Miyamoto supports the main house from the outside, as if supporting an elderly person by the arm [Fig. 9], without the use of inserted or exposed steel frames like the ones used in *"ZENKAI" HOUSE*. According to Miyamoto, external walls, which are a part of this addition, inherit the function and vestiges of the demolished original gate, built about 300 years ago. In short, Miyamoto constructs an architectural composition by decoding the multiple layers of history of the household grounds.

Fig. 8
"HANKAI" HOUSE, main house, 2007, viewed from roof of added structure,
Katsuhiro Miyamoto & Associates.

Fig. 9
"HANKAI" HOUSE, main house and added structure,
Katsuhiro Miyamoto & Associates.

Fig. 10
"HANKAI" HOUSE, Katsuhiro Miyamoto & Associates.
The interior, which shows various exposed textures as vestiges
of the demolished parts of the original structure.

I argue that in both *"ZENKAI" HOUSE* and *"HANKAI" HOUSE,* Miyamoto does not eliminate but instead preserves "negative" vestiges of the disaster as the identity of each house. "*ZENKAI" HOUSE* preserves these vestiges, without demolishing the original house judged as "completely collapsed." Building on this previous concept, *"HANKAI" HOUSE* renders the demolished parts of the structure into architecture, while still holding up the old, damaged house [Fig. 10]. Both projects are studied as alternatives to public reconstruction policy – that is, for problems such as numerous solitary deaths in the aftermath caused by post-disaster public housing policies, or problems with the prefabricated houses provided by major housing makers, which have increased rapidly in number and have eliminated various local histories. When relating "*ZENKAI" HOUSE* to his personal history, Miyamoto states that the architecture is generated as "a vessel for memory." Thus, the memory of the disaster is integrated in his autobiography. Similarly, in *"HANKAI" HOUSE*, the memory of the disaster is integrated with the entire history of the household, and its vestiges are translated into the architectural composition. One can

easily find similar concepts in *The Nuclear Power Plant Shrine* of buildings being preserved and reinforced without eliminating the vestiges of the disaster.

I-4. *Environmental Noise Element Project*

Before the *"HANKAI" HOUSE* project began, Miyamoto had developed another project titled *Environmental Noise Element Project* [Fig. 11] [Fig. 12].[5] This project aimed to read the invisible historical structure of a terrain – in other words, the "genius loci." In this project, Miyamoto focused on the spatial "noise element" emanating from an invisible structure in the topography. This noise element interferes with a modern urban design at a certain location, and one can perceive it as a strange configuration in the

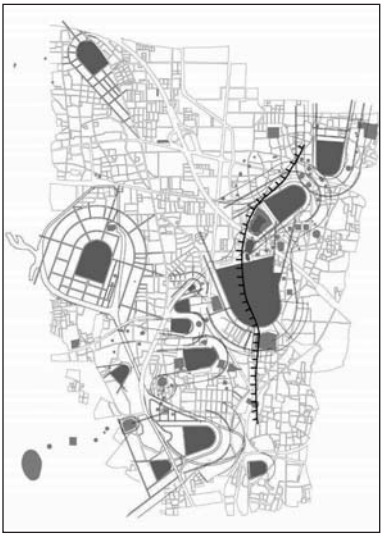

Fig. 11
Map of "Chikatsu Asukanomiya" in *Environmental Noise Element Project*,
Katsuhiro Miyamoto & Associates.

Fig. 12
Map of "Chikatsu Asukanomiya" in *Environmental Noise Element Project*,
Katsuhiro Miyamoto & Associates.

[5] Miyamoto, *"ZENKAI" HOUSE*, 180.

landscape. Miyamoto tried to decipher these noises, or the seemingly strange topographical elements that have appeared from the overlapping layers of history in one visible current landscape. For example, the Furuichi Kofungun, an ancient tumulus cluster built between the late 4th and early 6th centuries in Fujiidera, an urban area on the Southeast of Osaka, is assumed to be constructed using the upthrow caused by an active fault and its seismic activity. Miyamoto suggests that those nine tumuli might be sited to appease earthquakes, or to conceal the site of the calamity with the power of the dead.[6]

In this case, by reading the topography of a site, Miyamoto demonstrated that the deep structure of ancient times interfered with the town planning of our time. The concept of *Environmental Noise Element Project* – that ancient times affect the present beyond a thousand-year scale, or thousands of years of geological time – clarifies what he really means when he proposes "a kind of watchful preservation" beyond 10,000 years for the Fukushima No. 1 Nuclear Power Plant.

I-5. Characteristics of *The Nuclear Power Plant Shrine*

Once we reflect on the history of the above-mentioned works, we can better understand the characteristics of *The Nuclear Power Plant Shrine*. The project has a great deal in common with those preceding works. However, the preceding works are characterized by a resistance to the systematic removal of debris and damaged buildings by administrative measures. Currently, the Fukushima No 1. Nuclear Power Plant is on an extremely lengthy road to dismantlement. As of 2017, there are no plans to remove the spent nuclear fuel or deposited debris produced by the meltdown. As a result, it is very difficult for the Fukushima No 1. Nuclear Power Plant, where the disaster is ongoing, to function to the masses as a legacy, such as with the Frauenkirche in Dresden or the Atomic Bomb Dome in Hiroshima.

In summary, in the case of *The Nuclear Power Plant Shrine*, because the government and electric power company can never easily remove the ruins and debris, the conditions of the study change in terms of the meaning of preservation. Therefore, he came to propose in *The Nuclear Power Plant Shrine* a new site-specific solution for preserving and passing down memories of the nuclear accident for the sake of people in the distant future.

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[6] Miyamoto, *"ZENKAI" HOUSE*, 181.

Then, what solution does Miyamoto propose to preserve the Fukushima No 1. Nuclear Power Plant? It is "a kind of watchful preservation." Primarily, "watchful preservation" means the minimized maintenance of modern ruins, and their control under safe conditions.[7] Additionally, Miyamoto proposes adopting a traditional idiom of Japanese shrine and temple architecture called "*Sayado*". Sayado is a type of outer shell structure that covers the sacred building or monument inside. Extending this definition, the Pyramid of Khufu in Egypt is also counted as a double structure, as with Sayado. The structure generally referred to as a "pyramid" refers to the outer shell. *The Nuclear Power Plant Shrine* seems similar to a pyramid in its double structure. First, its Sayados cover reactors with the hugeness and shape of their pitched roofs. Second, the structure conveys a warning across time, like a curse on an approaching person.

As a matter of fact, there is a tremendous gap between the concept of *The Fukushima No. 1 Nuclear Power Plant Shrine* and its realization. However, this gap corresponds to the gap between the half-life of radioactive wastes decaying to harmless natural levels, and the limits of current technology. In the *Environmental Noise Element Project*, Miyamoto's gaze saw multiple elements overlapping in one landscape: the trace of seismic activity in prehistoric times, animistic operation in ancient times, and urban planning in the present. In the same way, *The Nuclear Power Plant Shrine* requires us to imagine that someone deciphering the events of a distant past will appear. This vision enables such dizzying long-term preservation across 10,000 years. Therefore, whether watchful preservation across 10,000 years becomes a reality or not, depends on the potentiality of the emergence of such a subject in the distant future. However, why should the reactors be crowned with large Japanese-style roofs? If an eye-catching feature is important for warning of danger while simultaneously "preventing anyone from approaching," then why not use giant pyramids?

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[7] For a primal meaning and case study of "watchful preservation," see the following article: Ryuju Tateishi and Katsuhiro Miyamoto, "The Study on Value of Japanese Modern Ruins" ["Nihon Kindai Haikyo no Kachi nikansuru Kenkyu"] (paper presented at Academic Lectures by Architectural Institute of Japan, Hokuriku, July 20, 2010). In *Summaries of Technical Papers of Annual Meeting, Architectural Institute of Japan. F-2, History and Theory of Architecture*, 2010, 285–286.

II. Meaning of the traditional Japanese-style roof

Now, we turn to the huge Japanese-style roofs of *The Nuclear Power Plant Shrine*. First, I describe two major examples of public memorials established in pre-war Japan, because Miyamoto characterizes *The Nuclear Power Plant Shrine* as a shrine that "enshrines the souls of the departed." Second, I examine the problematic relationship between modernism and tradition that has haunted the modern history of Japanese architecture. It is to be noted in advance that for the Japanese, modernization has approximately the same meaning as westernization. Western-style architecture (whether historic or modern architecture styles) functioned as a façade of this late modern nation-state. Against this westernization, "Japanese style" came to be newly invented in various fields as representing Japanese identity.

II-1. Yasukuni Shrine

Yasukuni Shrine was founded by Emperor Meiji in 1869 to commemorate those who died in war or who sacrificed their lives for the nation. Their souls were enshrined together as "gods," forming an aggregate showing no differentiation. Today, Yasukuni Shrine is a focal point of issues of historical recognition. To understand Yasukuni Shrine, I must briefly mention "State Shinto." State Shinto was invented as a spiritual support intended to unite the Japanese into one, created by a Meiji government facing the challenges of modernization. Yasukuni Shrine was a center of State Shinto. In the late 19th century, Yasukuni Shrine deepened the relationship with the emperor under the national policy on the unity of Shinto and politics. Until the end of the Second World War, the shrine functioned as an apparatus for enhancing nationalism, and fostering a spirit of self-sacrifice.

Now let us look at the architecture in Yasukuni Shrine, a modern monument founded by the state, despite the fact that many Japanese people mistake it for a much older structure. At the outset, a medieval-European-castle-style building named "*Yushu-kan*", which was opened in 1882 as an armoury museum, was prominent in the precincts.[8] Moreover,

[8] Concerning historical facts, see Taro Igarashi, *Modern Gods and the Architecture: from Yasukuni Shrine to Salt Lake City* [*Kindai no Kamigami to Kenchiku: Yasukuni Jinja kara Salt Lake City made*] (Tokyo: Kozaido Publishing, 2002), especially 59–69.

Yasukuni Shrine hosted circuses and spectacles from Western culture. At the beginning of the 20th century, however, traditional Japanese-style buildings began to be added; this tendency culminated in the main gate, "Shinmon" (1934), which means the gate of gods. It was built in the "Shinmei-zukuri" style, the most ancient style of Japanese Shinto shrines, and was designed by Chuta Ito, one of the founders of the history of Japanese architecture. In sum, it can be observed that Yasukuni Shrine, as a national memorial, gradually changed with the rise of nationalism into a purely Japanese space.

II–2. Earthquake Memorial Hall and Reconstruction Memorial Hall

Fig. 13
The Earthquake Memorial Hall (1930). Photograph by the author.

Next, I discuss "the Earthquake Memorial Hall" [Fig. 13] and "the Reconstruction Memorial Hall" [Fig. 14]. The former was founded in 1930 by the Tokyo metropolitan government in Honjo, an Eastern urban area in Tokyo, to commemorate victims of the Great Kanto Earthquake in 1923, which caused the most serious damage of all natural disasters in modern Japanese history. In total, the disaster caused approximately 100,000 deaths. After the Second World War, victims of the Great Tokyo Air Raids on March 10, 1945, were interred together. Today, the building is called "the

Fig. 14
The Reconstruction Memorial Hall (1931). Photograph by the author.

Tokyo Memorial Hall." The latter building, the Reconstruction Memorial Hall, is a museum on the same premises.[9]

In 1924, the Earthquake Memorial Project began to erect a memorial on the site, where tens of thousands of victims had been burnt. In December 1924, a public design competition was held. The winning design was based on a neoclassical vocabulary with art deco embellishments. However, this design drew loud criticism from the general citizenry and religious groups because "the architectural rhetoric of the memorial was too Western to express the profoundly national and spiritual nature of the quake tragedy."[10]

[9] In what follows, concerning historical details, see Hiroyasu Takano, "Study of Disaster Memories: On the Exhibits of the 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake at the Tokyo Memorial Hall and Museum" ["'Shinsai no Kioku' no Hensen to Tenji: Fukko Kinenkan oyobi Tokyo-to Ireido Shuzo Kanto Daishinsai Kankei Shiryo wo Chushin ni"], *The Study of Nonwritten Cultural Materials* 6 (2010): 37–75. See also Gennifer Weisenfeld, *Imaging Disaster: Tokyo and the Visual Culture of Japan's Great Earthquake of 1923* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2012), especially 314–341.

[10] Weisenfeld, *Imaging Disaster*, 274.

Finally, this design was scrapped. In 1927, Chuta Ito, a jury member, submitted a new proposal. Ito's design can be described as "a pan-Asian design," "both traditional and modern," "that could still express 'national taste'."[11]

The year 1929 is historically known as the year Tokyo's reconstruction was completed. During the following year (1930), many memorial events were held in Tokyo, and the Earthquake Memorial Hall was finally completed. Meanwhile, the Reconstruction Memorial Hall was opened in 1931 as a museum at the same location. This museum was originally planned to be incorporated into the Earthquake Memorial Hall, but was separated in the process. In contrast to the Earthquake Memorial Hall, the Reconstruction Memorial Hall seems very modern – it has a rectangular structure with Frank Lloyd Wright-style details – although its tiled roof conveys a slight sense of Japanese style.

Fig. 15
View of main exhibition room of the Reconstruction Memorial Hall.
Photograph by the author.

[11] Weisenfeld, *Imaging Disaster*, 275.

Now, we move on to a discussion of the inside of the museum. Figure 15 shows the main exhibition room of the Reconstruction Memorial Hall [Fig. 15]. The room has only one entrance. If you stand at the threshold of the room, you will see on the opposite side an image of the Showa Emperor, who mounts a horse in a landscape of debris caused by the Great Kanto Earthquake. This painting, titled *Kojimachi Gobancho: Visitation by the Prince Regent,* serves as a symbolic focal point for the space. This central perspective, which runs from the visitor toward this focal point, is materialized by many other exhibits: other paintings and several cabinets of miniature models and dioramas, almost all of which represent the ruins of Tokyo.[12]

The true subject of the room is at the centre of the painting: the young Showa Emperor as Prince Regent on horseback. Then, the central spatial perspective redirects into a future temporal perspective – namely, for the successful completion of reconstruction in 1929. However, under this success story, the real dreadful existence and memories of each victim are deleted. In a word, it can be observed that the disaster landscape here is represented as a ground zero of national history, beginning as the capital is successfully reconstructed as one of most modern cities in the world, under the reign of the emperor.

These two contrasting buildings form a bipolarity not only by their appearances but also by their functions. The former is a space in the traditional spiritual culture. The latter, on the other hand, demonstrates modern national power or resilience by retrospectively spatialising a ground zero from the point of view of the political end of reconstruction. Moreover, under the gaze of the emperor, numerous sufferings of the Great Kanto Earthquake are rewritten in the national history.

II-3. "Conflict" between modernism and tradition

Harry Harootunian (1929–), an American historian, discusses symptoms of "conflict" in the cultural unconscious of pre-war Japan. In the 19th century and through the Meiji Restoration, Japan became a modern nation state. This meant that Japan had to immediately face powerful tides of both

[12] cf. Masahiro Terada, "On Representation of Disaster in the Museum Displays: Case of the Reconstruction Memorial Hall" ["Museum Tenji niokeru Shizen Saigai no Hyogen nitsuite"], in *Culture and Education Living with Disaster: Message from the Great Disaster* [Saigai to tomoni Ikiru Bunka to Kyoiku: "Daisaigai" karano Dengon], ed. Nobuhiko Iwasaki et al. (Kyoto: Showa-do, 2008), 176–187.

capitalism and modern Western civilization. Capitalism (and the society it created based on the division of labour) was a ruinous historical regime that caused indiscriminate destruction, like a storm, to every traditional *Gemeinschaft*, breaking bonds of solidarity. To escape from this crisis, the Japanese searched for a hidden archaic communal body united by blood, tradition, and history. This social imagination of timeless origin was projected by folklorists onto surviving forms of practice and performance in language, as well as onto real households or villages in rural areas. This substantialized origin was finally "condensed in the figure of folk."[13] "As a collective subject, the folk body was presented as an unmarked, smooth surface figure, showing no differentiations, seams, or divisions."[14]

In a word, against the divisions and corrosions caused by capitalism, an imagined folk body associated with the pure Japaneseness was summoned, while the body was fused with the modern concept of the subject. Hence, "the folk" is "counterfeit currency […], authorized by spurious and abstract conception of subjectivity."[15] Furthermore, such a "folkism" could not help but resonate with fascism in the desire "to enact a new community, to bring it into existence by acting it out."[16]

Now, we return to the problem of tension or powerful bipolarity between modernism and tradition. Western-style modern architecture positively demonstrates the national power and modern technologies produced by a capitalist system. Japanese-style architecture and architectural vocabulary seemingly resist the former as a countervailing force, and instead embody the spiritual culture of Japan. However, we should recall the fact that the buildings of Yasukuni Shrine and the Earthquake Memorial Hall are modern monuments with traditional appearances – abstract modern subjects with traditional appearance, if we follow Harootunian. The folk body is spatially enacted in those memorials. The traditional elements of both sites are seemingly countervailing, but have in fact played their own roles in the drive of a capitalist mechanism rushing into war – even activating that drive – so that it finally expanded the folk body, claiming the folk's "*Lebensraum*".

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[13] Harry Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity: History, Culture, and Community in Interwar Japan* (Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000), 400.

[14] Harootunian, *Overcome*, 400.

[15] Harootunian, *Overcome*, 413.

[16] Harootunian, *Overcome*, 401.

II-4. Disempowerment of modernism and nationalism in *The Nuclear Power Plant Shrine*

Under the large Japanese-style roofs of *The Nuclear Power Plant Shrine* lie the ruins of cube-shaped buildings. Cube-shaped buildings are the most famous form of modern architecture. *The Nuclear Power Plant Shrine* seems to repeat or act out the forms of major public memorials in pre-war Japan. Therefore, we should carefully ponder whether it simply shows symptoms of nationalism or not.

The nuclear accident has an element of man-made disaster, and its ruins point to the breakdown of historically driven capitalism and modern technology. As long as the radioactive materials inside the ruined reactors are nothing more than "waste" without dump, the real Fukushima No. 1 Nuclear Power Plant cannot become such a memorial space that exalts the national identity of the Japanese. In the first place, "Japaneseness" would no longer make sense 10,000 years in the future, when the Japanese will not exist. In addition, radioactive materials belong to the realm of nature, whose story is detached from both human meaning and narrative, and from blood, tradition, and history. Thus, nationalism (a connotation of the Japanese-style roof) malfunctions here. In summary, modernism in the form of technology and nationalism as a revenant of history are simultaneously disempowered in *The Nuclear Power Plant Shrine*.

III. Acting-out and working-through in *The Nuclear Power Plant Shrine*

In this section, I introduce a pair of psychoanalytic concepts: "acting-out" and "working-through." In the conclusion, with reference to these concepts, I attempt to link Miyamoto's study and practice to the problem of the inability of post-war Japan to mourn.

Acting-out and working-through are two ways of reacting to trauma. Freud thought that acting-out comes from repetition-compulsion – namely, it is a symptom to be diminished. By contrast, working-through is a process that eliminates resistance to the acceptance of the unconscious, and has been assigned a therapeutic dimension that transcends acting-out. Dominick LaCapra, a historian known for trauma studies, criticized this dichotomy. According to him, "acting-out and working-through are intimately related

parts of a process."[17] They are countervailing forces, but cannot be separated from one another. Additionally, he says that the latter cannot transcend the former against common understanding.[18] LaCapra applies this concept to the relationship between "melancholy" and "mourning," a pair of psychoanalytic concepts. He extends these to historical study and argues that historical study requires a kind of transference, a form of repetition, which the scholar would have to otherwise avoid. By this transference, a historian will be implicated in a specific object or person and will relive the experience of others. At the same time, however, s/he is required to keep a critical distance to the object, just as in working-through. It is the countervailing and inseparable relationship of acting-out and working-through that enables her/him to change into an ethical agent. I think that LaCapra's views are also useful for us when considering *The Nuclear Power Plant Shrine*.

Miyamoto has suffered from disaster, and the history of his works leading to *The Nuclear Power Plant Shrine* clearly reflects his own and/or communal collective experience. On this level, it can be simply said that a repetition-compulsion or acting-out happens to him. However, the history of his works and his practice as an architect evince what LaCapra proposes: working-through coupled inseparably with acting-out. *The Nuclear Power Plant Shrine* should be also grasped in terms of this coupling, just as his preceding works show.

Conclusion: Shrines facing the ocean

Now, I will examine Miyamoto's comments in order to link his approach (described above) with the problem of the historical unconscious in Japan. By this I mean that *The Nuclear Power Plant Shrine* also possesses a positional value when one attempts to read the historical unconscious of post-war Japanese society. We should take notice of the fact that Miyamoto calls this comparatively large miniature model a shrine, intended "to enshrine the souls of the departed." However, who are "the departed"? In

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[17] Dominick LaCapra, "'Acting-Out' and 'Working-Through' Trauma" (Excerpts from Interview with LaCapra), *Eclipse of Humanity*, Yad Vashem, 2. Originally from Multimedia CD. Retrieved January 31, 2017, from http://www.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%203648.pdf

[18] LaCapra, "'Acting-Out,'" 6.

early 2012, it was said that the Fukushima nuclear accident had resulted in almost no direct fatalities, except for cases of disaster-related death or fatal occupational disease. Certainly, "the departed" refers to victims of the Great East Japan Earthquake. However, I argue that it conveys a far wider range of meaning.

In summer 2016, a special-effects monster film was released in Japan: *Shin Godzilla* (*Godzilla Resurgence*), the 29th film in the *Godzilla* series produced by Toho since 1954. Japanese literary critic Norihiro Kato (1948–) insists that the first *Godzilla* (1954), in which an ancient creature called "Godzilla" emerges from the sea and destroys Tokyo, represents the semantically ambiguous war dead, and victims of the war and nuclear bombing.[19] According to him, Godzilla symbolizes firstly an aggregate of the souls of the war dead enshrined in Yasukuni Shrine, whose existence has become a post-war Japanese taboo. Alternatively, I think, it can also be described as a monstrous heteromorphic figure from the "folk body" of which pre-war nationalism was dreaming. Secondly, Kato goes on to suggest that Godzilla represents the victims of the Great Tokyo Air Raids on March 10, 1945, whose invasion course Godzilla traces, as well as fear of the air raid itself. The most famous scene in the film, in which Godzilla destroys Tokyo, is a kind of repetition-compulsion of collective trauma from the air war. Third, Godzilla represents an aggregate of souls of atomic bombing victims. In addition, the monster, which spews radioactivity, represents the atomic bombs too, precisely because the production of the first *Godzilla* was triggered by the exposure and contamination of the tuna fishing boat Daigo Fukuryumaru (Lucky Dragon No. 5) by nuclear fallout from the thermo-nuclear weapon test at the Bikini Atoll on March 1, 1954. Additionally, Kato says that the emergence of Godzilla in *Shin Godzilla* is, in itself, a metonymy of the earthquake, accompanying tsunami, and nuclear accident on March 11, 2011.[20] By linking the emergencies of 1954 and 2016, the Japanese people have, so to speak, become aware of the historical position of the 2011 disaster and the true meaning of the Fukushima nuclear accident in post-war history.

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[19] In what follows, see Norihiro Kato, *Good Bye, Godzillas: Far from the Postwar Years* [*Sayonara, Godzilla-tachi: Sengo kara Toku Hanarete*] (Tokyo: Iwanami-Shoten, 2010), especially 143–182.

[20] Norihiro Kato, "On Shin Godzilla" ["Shin Godzilla Ron"], *Shincho*, October 7, 2016, 165.

Godzilla is a form of acting-out originating from Japanese historical trauma, and can therefore be regarded as "the uncanny," which returns repetitively in post-war Japan, if we follow Kato. I argue that the value of *The Nuclear Power Plant Shrine* for current Japanese society lies on this level. The shrine would potentially focus on historical trauma or collective psychological lacunae in post-war Japan. The shrines holding radioactive wastes face the ocean, waiting for "the souls of the departed" of war, radioactivity, and the tsunami. What Miyamoto calls "malevolent gods" are, I think, not only the awful power of nature (i.e., earthquakes, tsunamis, and radioactivity) but also the souls of the departed, for whom the post-war Japanese nation could not carry out the work of mourning during its long trailing historical repression.

Indeed, in a sense, *The Nuclear Power Plant Shrine* can be interpreted as an acting-out of the Japanese historical unconscious on a collective level. However, it is more important that *The Nuclear Power Plant Shrine* undertakes such an acting-out as a mimesis of the above-mentioned "modern" public memorials, while it mimics the old shrines that mark the sites of disasters. At the same time, it is also a study model for working-through – a process for gaining critical distance from the object from which the acting-out originates, and for rendering it into a creative architectural composition. In other words, Miyamoto's personal psychical acting-out resonates with the historical inability of the post-war Japanese nation to mourn. At the same time, however, his personal way of working-through interferes with it.

The Nuclear Power Plant Shrine is a study model for resisting a political or capitalist rhetoric of "reconstruction." The work aims to preserve and pass down memories without counterfeiting the nation and its substantialized identity, disempowering modernism and nationalism simultaneously. Given the opinions of LaCapra with Freud and Benjamin, it is a stage for a mourning play (*Trauerspiel*) in the endless back-and-forth between acting-out and working-through, where an ethical subject will arise.

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TOKYO, THE VERSATILE CITY

Glimpses between postmodernity and tradition

Federico Farnè

"Night city was like a deranged experiment in social Darwinism, designed by a bored researcher who kept one thumb permanently on the fast-forward button."[1] It is the metamorphic metropolis of *cyberpunk*, with a sky the colour "of television, tuned to a dead channel."[2] Incarnating the imaginative archetype of Tokyo, this is the Gibsonian city par excellence for its unique ability to stage the *future of the future*. Scenes of Tokyo's vertiginous views and frantic infrastructure, like the connective tissue of an artificial body, stretch beneath spectacular architecture, giving life to amazing spatial choreography, and take the form of a fantastic city straight out of the sharp frames of a film (animated in particular), giving us a static image than we can presume is the final stage of the metropolis. The immense Japanese capital is now the unmistakable destination for a third *Grand Tour*.

The first Grand Tour was centred in Rome, the conclusive location in 18th and 19th centuries of discovery, selected by the intellectuals and artists of Northern Europe, who sought the ancient and the regenerative power of the exotic. For the second Grand Tour, set in the vast spaces of the United States, the goal was New York, a city that has become, especially after the Second World War, the symbol of the most advanced progress, the magic door to a country of freedom and adventure where it is possible for every dream to come true.[3]

The charm of Tokyo, though far from being reduced to a *forma urbis*, which apparently blends futuristic architectures and short-circuit Escherian modules, seems to stem from the fact that "everything identified as the

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1 William Gibson, *Neuromancer* (New York: Ace, 1984), 7.

2 ibid.

3 Francesco Purini, Introduction to: Livio Sacchi, *Tokyo-To* (Milano: Skira, 2004), 7.

newest of the new is born directly from tradition in a sort of mystical coexistence of each temporality."[4]

In an almost postmodern retelling of the Periegetic literature *wonders*, the Japanese megalopolis appears, at first sight, an unintelligible reality where the neologisms of urban planners, sociologists, and philosophers such as *Ecumenopolis*, post-metropolis, cosmopolitan and global cities, seem blind attempts to escape the insensitive through a mere sense of attribution rather than provide directional coordinates to decipher the substance.

If the Western city is a city of space governed by prospective laws, Tokyo differs from European and American metropolises for its absence of an urban project. It is nearly an immense, tumultuous and dynamically radical shipyard in continual redefinition, where architectural entities, accidentally accosted without any spatial hierarchy, self-organize by forming the interdependent cellular organisms of a *Gestaltic* reality, whose order flows from the very breast of chaos, which, incredibly, seems deterministic to us.

The city entity seems lost forever, it is *Sprawl*, the metropolitan area without borders dominating its infinite and distorting *continuum*, whose figure is that of a multidimensional labyrinth structured for independent layers in which men and vehicles swarm as well as extras into a seductive and indifferent urban representation, implacably endowed with meaning and yet resistant to any logical restriction.

From within a station, for example, we can access an underpass on top of a *department store*, and from here descend into a subterranean place glittering with sophisticated shops, restaurant windows from which irresistible smells escape, multi-storey libraries that pull curious readers into new lands, [...] and anything else that can make us forget we are in an underpass so far as we have known in the West; to make us remember to let suddenly just before the entrance of a subway line with which we reach another city-like palace, different from the first [...] and so on, going through constant ebbs between internal and external, orthogonal waste and horizontal-vertical transitions, passages between perfectly homogeneous or surprisingly inconsistent building aggregates.[5]

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[4] ibid.

[5] Francesco Lizzani and Laura Ricca, "Tokyo città aperta, capitale del XXI secolo. Ritratto di una città racconto" in *Sguardi sulle cittŕ in trasformazione*, ed. Laura Ricca (Imola: La Mandragora, 2012), 30.

In this context it is no longer possible to get lost, as Benjamin when he spoke of the Western city, as in the largest Asian megacities you are already completely disoriented. The individual is nothing more than an electric glow on the circuits of a hypertrophied *microchip*, appears to be completely transcended, for he does not just have a holographic appearance in the great mass transit where space is caught in an irreversible process of liquefaction; this is the perfect analogy between an urban and digital universe environment, that it seems inevitably spilling over itself.

This is all the more true when we analyse the seemingly unbridgeable gap that exists between architecture on the one hand and cities and urban culture on the other. While it is true that currently Tokyo is the most spectacular showcase for contemporary architecture, it is equally true that the strongest and most persistent impression, one that creates a real visual *shock* for the traveller, is not given to us, as is the case in Berlin in the last few decades, but rather comes from the chaotic nature of the built-up, invasive and pervasive infrastructure and the enormous electronic hypersurpluses of Shibuya, Shinjuku, and Ginza – which mesmerize the careless traveller with their dazzling and lazy spectacle – and never from the factories that make up its physical support. It is no coincidence then that the Italian architect Gregotti, in his editorial titled *Disoriented Modernity* states:

> Japanese architecture reproduced in magazines is wide and often very good on a morphological and technical level; but those who want to trace this to a portrait of the country is essentially taking on a virtually impossible endeavor, even with the best indicators from the best architecture of those years.[6]

One must then wonder if the mutation of the Japanese metropolis, where the virtual dimension overlaps or replaces the physical, coincides with the last phase of a degenerative process of the contemporary city and is the first example of a hypermodern and vertiginous *post-metropolis*, wherein the physical substantiality of stable and solid characters of the city tends towards a progressive but inevitable virtualization. Whatever the answer, this phenomenon is rooted in the second half of the 20th century when, as noted by Isozaki,

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[6] Vittorio Gregotti, "Una modernità dis-orientata," *Casabella* 608–609 (1994): 3

During the war many Japanese cities lost all their forms, then were quickly filled by buildings that assumed to look prior to the ruins without any visual order. Steel and concrete were mixed with billboards, neon lights, and telephone poles. The cities lost their massive aggregations of substantiality behind oscillating, light, and superficial elements. They began to communicate their meaning more with their semiotic codes than with solid, actual forms. The city is in a state of fluidity. Invisible, is virtually simulated by the codes that fill it.[7]

The liquefaction process, intended in the Baumanian sense of the term, which renders the metropolis contemporary, leads to collision, when not conflict, between the virtual space and the real space, giving rise to a hybridization whose matrix has a viscosity of an unstable form in continuous redefinition.

The borders and walls become more and more volatile and multifunctional places, thus creating a syncretic interaction where the physical and architectural reality is blended with the digital sphere on different scales and different levels. We are faced with an urban augmented reality, made of assembled *pixels* and synthetic illusions, where smart screens, video projections, and interactive media mix with the material substrate of the traditional city. From this perspective, the online and digital systems of the contemporary city become counterparts to the ancient waterways, to the caravan roads, to the railways, and to the highway systems that have marked the historic city from Antiquity to the 20th century.

This continuous fluctuation of contemporary urban space in general, and of Tokyo in particular, between real and virtual, makes the contemporary post-metropolis similar to a labyrinth: the archetype and metaphor of the human condition, tragically poised on the brink of nowhere. It is no coincidence that it is "the dark place where the network of roads does not follow any rules. Chance and surprise reign supreme in the labyrinth, witnessing the defeat of pure Reason."[8]

That's why Tokyo is not a *city of space*, governed by the strict laws of perspective, but a *city of situations*, different at each point, in which the complexity of the blueprint, the interpenetration between volumes and the connection between distant levels, even opposite, of the urban text, requires

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[7] Arata Isozaki, "Città e architettura come rovina," *Casabella* 608–609 (1994): 25

[8] Jaques Attali, *Chemins de sagesse: traité du labyrinthe* (Paris: Fayard, 1996), 23.

the visitor to process dynamic and changing mental maps. Also present in the Japanese city, taking the category themed by Nishida Kitarō, *basho no ronri*, is that which is understood as much a field as an opening of possibilities. Berque defines logic of the place or areolar space,[9] "to be understood in a perfectly opposite way to the geometric-Cartesian geometry of the modern Western city, but also to the reticular-orthogonal format of the Chinese capital city."[10] All this creates an urban space that, proceeding for successive waves, is temporalized, forming a dialectic relationship between the gestures, the physicality of the movements, and the constructed environment. It wanders far from geometry and mathematics.

A similar state of affairs seems to be rooted in the very origins of the city. Edo in fact was born as *jōkamachi* (a fortified settlement) at the beginning of the second half of the 15th century. Likely founded by Ota Dokan, a small feudal lord of a cadet branch of the Uesugi family, Tokyo still betrays its military origins; not only for its labyrinthine road structure, made from a myriad of "T" junctions and closed inputs designed for defence purposes, but also for the strength and hardness that distinguishes its construction and urban structure, contrasting it to the aristocratic refinement of the ancient capitals such as Kyoto and Nara.

To the unwary traveller, the visual and cultural shock of the Japanese megalopolis is caused by a series of perceptual difficulties that, before complicating your orientation, makes you feel uncomfortable from a psychological point of view. It is no coincidence that the Italian writer and essayist Alberto Arbasino wrote in this regard:

> Tokyo is pretty horrendous; [...] the streets and highways cross through irregular and exhausting plazas among immense skyscrapers that are brightly lit until late at night, and dry gardens, and sparse shops, and suddenly crowded streets, and absurdly narrow rural streets and houses made with the most miserable and perishable materials, like wood, emaciated metals, and crumbling cement in a state of limitless desolation.[11]

Of a similar opinion, the art critic and historian Cesare Brandi:

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[9] Augustin Berque, *Du geste à la cité* (Paris: Gallimard, 1993), 101.

[10] Francesco Lizzani and Laura Ricca, *Dalla cittŕ celeste al labirinto metropolitano* (Imola: La Mandragora, 2013), 74.

[11] Quoted in Fosco Maraini, *Ore Giapponesi* (Milano: Corbaccio, 2000), 61.

Tokyo is a scary city, the biggest and the ugliest in the world, oppressed by a constant blanket of smog, so you never see the sky, [...] urban planning is chaotic, does not exist. Like the dragons of their legends, but functional dragons, the elevated roads will climb over each other and seem, in some places, where you can get up to three over your head, like a caricature of Piranesi's obsessive prisons.[12]

The dragon's image, juxtaposed to that of kindness and grace, also refers to Milani, whose deep gaze manages to transcend that first discordant and disconcerting impact that springs from the irritating urban disorder that is Tokyo, revealing a dialectic between modernity and tradition, delicacy and harshness, that not only represents the style of the urban-architectural culture, but of Japanese culture as well.

The vision before us is [...] that of the dragon, evoked by a certain hardness, as a bitter and disjointed surface by a rough, uniform cortex. […] From the shapes of the city, in reality not a city, it appears to almost spread an air of offense, something inhuman and flat. […] Where then are there gardens and temples, traditional works, and examples of enlightened, modern architectural genius? To understand this split reality, we have to go and experience the overwhelming expanse of living and operating. Slowly we discover that there are woods and forests, just behind the dragon's robe, and that almost every home has a corner of garden, [...] and that tradition and modernity, monstrosity and lightness, can surprisingly coexist.[13]

Therefore, with a gentle grace, the apparent architectural void is unveiled before our eyes. We begin to read it, to make it our own. It is kept hidden, lacking the ostentatious grandeur of the Western city. Indeed, what strikes us most in the Japanese city is the very absence of the monuments that characterize the great European capitals, because in the Far Eastern city, the historical and collective memory is entrusted "essentially in practices and customs deposited in the traditions, gestures, and collective rituals which have chosen the street as their home."[14]

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[12] Cesare Brandi, *Viaggi e scritti letterari* (Milano: Bompiani, 2009), 293.

[13] Raffaele Milani, "La grazia e il drago. Impressioni di un viaggiatore," *Parol* 22 (2012): 212–213.

[14] Lizzani and Ricca, *Dalla cittŕ celeste al labirinto metropolitano*, 18.

The city, far from being a mere physical-building complex, then reveals an intricate system of material relations, both symbolic and imaginary, rooted in a specific *Lebenswelt*. From this perspective we can also read Tokyo, decoding, little by little, the hidden semantics in which beauty and grace compete with monstrosity for the role of protagonist, in a report that, far from conflict, is slowly revealed as a *coincidence of opposites*.

Torn over the centuries by earthquakes that have shaken the foundations, by the bombings of World War II and, more recently, from the hectic and prevailing industrial domain the cityscape of the Japanese capital still reveals fragments of a world that, through careful observation, manages to combine history with mythology, the fantastic, dreamlike world of creative design. Because "in the land of the East, even after great devastation, no one escapes the power of the dream: the flow of innovation is an integral part of the traditions that run beneath the surface in the delirium of incessant changes."[15] As Barthes already noted about Tokyo, it revolves around a hollow centre, a place that is "puzzled together and indifferent, masked by dwellings of vegetation, defended by water moats, inhabited by an emperor who is never seen."[16] A centre that is "like an idea evaporated, does not radiate power, but offers to the whole urban movement the support of its central vacuum."[17] The same Japanese home revolves around this evanescent and fluctuating identity.

Even in Japanese architecture, from the end of the 20th century to the present, that often seems to prey on the various -isms of the Western avant-garde, we can observe signs that the traditional has not been abandoned, but rather hidden in essential forms; it belongs to the private sphere and is accessed in an almost subconscious way. An ancient heritage that has its roots in the "genetic heritage" of Japanese culture.

The *Engawa House* (2003) of the Tezuka Architects studio is, in this sense, a case in point. "The architectural originality of this building lies in the revival of the *Engawa* concept that does not try whatsoever to follow in the example of the classic tradition."[18] The wood is what ensures and

[15] Raffaele Milani, "Trasformazioni e permanenze nella cultura del paesaggio e della città giapponese del dopoguerra," in *Kenzo Tange e l'utopia di Bologna*, ed. Giuliano Gresleri and Glauco Gresleri (Bologna: Bononia University Press, 2010), 49.

[16] Roland Barthes, *L'impero dei segni* (Torino: Einaudi 1984, orig. 1970), 39.

[17] Barthes, *L'impero dei segni,* 42.

[18] Leone Spita, "L'eco del wabi-sabi nei giovani architetti giapponesi," in *Culture del Giappone contemporaneo*, ed. Matteo Casari (Latina: Tunuè, 2011), 95.

harmonizes the morphological unit of this house on a single floor, which is bordered to the south with the road, while in the north opening onto the green space that connects the interior and exterior. The *Engawa*, the Japanese veranda which connect the house with the garden, of the traditional Japanese house, in this build, finds a new *raison d'être* in the glass that covers the northern wall, which replaces the most classic *fusuma* (the Japanese sliding screen). In liquid contemporaneity, it is the glass' transparency that resonates with the natural space of human creation. In this regard, it is worth remembering that, in the *Engawa* word (縁 側) the first *Kanji* means affinity, relationship, to point out that in Japanese culture, unlike in Western culture, there is no cessation but instead harmony between the artificial and the natural space; one and the other are in continuity. Indeed, nature becomes almost the poetic principle of Japanese art. "Its essence is precisely in the street lighting, which can be recognized in the form and in the sound of bamboo, in the light of the peach blossoms, the teaching of the wind among the trees, the way of the *satori* that impressed the mind of Andrè Malraux: truth and reality, illusion and imagination vanish."[19]

In fact, the *Engawa* embodies a concept of Japanese aesthetics, creating an intentional continuity that connects the interior with the exterior, becoming a perfect representation of the *ma*. "As the space between one column and the other is called *ma,* also *Engawa*, placed between the interior and the exterior of the house can be defined as *ma*."[20] Its liminal essence in fact brought it to a place of mediation par excellence. The pictogram of *ma*(間) is constituted by the radical *mon* (門) meaning portal, and *nichi* or *hi* (日) means that day and represents the sun.[21] From its graphical configuration, we can see that it calls the categories of time and space into correlation and binds them together. It is to be understood "as a «between»: a time within events, a space between things, a relationship among two people [...] is to pause attention, to ponder the existing gap between the perceptual and emotional state"[22], seizing the moment that cancels the act's and the mind's dualism and which has to do with a void. A vacuum that, far

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[19] Milani, "Trasformazioni e permanenze," 52.

[20] Seike Kiyoshi, "The role of ma in Japanese homes," in *But. Japanese aesthetic sensibility,* Ed. Luciana Galliano (Turin: Angolo Manzoni) 142.

[21] Laura Ricca, *Dalla città ideale alla città virtuale*, (Roma: Carocci 2014) 60.

[22] Milani, "Trasformazioni e permanenze," 56.

from being somewhat similar to the Western *Nihil*, it opens to a profound cognitive experience as a manifestation of an original universal background. It is reflected in all levels of existence in Japanese culture; not by chance, a foolish person is called *manuke*, or deprived of *ma*. In architecture, we are also found within the traditional home spaces (*chanoma*, *tokonoma*, *ima*, *nema*), so that the same schedule of the interior is the *madori*, literally to accommodate*ma*.

In *Tokyo City Hall Complex* (1991) by Kenzo Tange we can see on magnified scale a reinvention of models and classic shapes of some elements of the typical Edo house, such as: a closed-loop structure, the short partition that descends from the ceiling, and decorations placed over the sliding panels that separate the various parts of the house. Through this revival, "in the work of Tange we can observe [...] criteria of distance, the *ma* which creates rhythm in an illusion of repeated geometric truth."[23] *But* here is the rhythm of *iki*, a seductive charm devoid of affection, renounced spiritual energy; in architecture, as in the example of *Tokyo City Hall Complex* tends to avoid curved geometric shapes in favour of a depth of interruption, an interval between vertical lines. "This progressive break is like the progress of the decorative *iki* lines, linear sectioning in architecture that can also be reversed horizontally, linked to the idea of simplicity and impermanence, and able to assert amazement."[24]

Also *Omotesando Hills* (2006), a shopping centre designed by Tadao Ando, is a perfect example of the creativity that elevates past and future together, as mentioned by Kenzo Tange. From the start of its design, we can see the typical Japanese care to integrate natural and constructed space, creating a harmonic concordance. In fact, the height of the building was designed in accordance with the zelkova that grow there in front, in such a way that its height does not exceed that of the trees. Here too the sensitivity of the *ma* seems to permeate space, both in the interval, in that continuity capable of containing the discontinuity, which is realized in the relationship between art and nature, also referred to in the system of hanging gardens present at various levels in the build, as well as in its internal structure. Here, the internal space which develops the *spiral slope* is a perfect embodiment of *ma* in its being, at the same time both a local and temporal entity. It represents an interval, a pause that, in the era of rampant

[23] Milani, "Trasformazioni e permanenze," 58.
[24] ibid.

globalization, is a suspension and withdrawal from the compulsions of consumerism.

The last example I want to provide on the presence of *ma* is at the urban level, the area outside of the *Tokyo International Forum* (1997). Here people can take a break in an extremely vital space, where artistic performances occur, and one can also enjoy an outdoor cafe. A temporalized place, propped up by trees, creates a delicate alternation between the inner formality and the external informality – another postmodern realization of *ma*.

Two other aesthetic concepts, that have forged Japanese traditional culture, still reverberating in architecture today, are those of *wabi-sabi* (侘び寂び) and *iki* (粋). While the former is based on the acceptance of the ephemeral transition of existence, revealing the beauty of what transcended, imperfect, incomplete and humble; the second represents a seduction devoid of affectation, which occurs in a progressive shrinking of distances however, without nullifying the differences. *Wabi-sabi* is the union of two terms: the first derives from the verb *wabu* (侘う), which indicates the sense of bitterness and discordance due to a state of deprivation; the second originates from the verb *sabu* (寂う) which originally embraced a spectrum of meanings that ranged from being old, falling into ruin, to degenerating. It is through Zen Buddhism, starting from the Kamakura-Muromachi periods and passing through the Edo period, that the two terms begin to gain a positive value by delineating a rich aesthetic concept of nuances. *Wabi-sabi* is the taste for a secluded and modest life; a life in harmony with the nature in which one must immerge to find the beauty of what is sober and resigned. *Iki* however, "originates from the geisha's gesture that breaks predictability of behaviour, balance and chooses chance, preferring inclined over frontal or straight postures and sideway glances." In architecture, this refined kind of disdain is highlighted on the one hand, by the duality, on the material's surface, of the contrast between wood and bamboo; and on the other hand, in structures that, like the *iki* decoration on the *geisha's kimono*, tend to avoid curved lines as much as possible except in half-moon windows.[25]

[25] Hiroshi Nara, *The Structure of Detachment: The Aesthetic Vision of Kuki Shuzo* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), 83–85.

Traditionally, the two aesthetics *wabi-sabi* and *iki* find their perfect harmony in *chashitsu* (茶室), the room in which *chanoyu* (茶の湯), the Japanese tea ceremony codified by Sen no Rikyū in the 17th century, takes place. Yet the echo of this aesthetic, characterised by minimalism, rustic simplicity and refusal of ostentation, reverberates throughout centuries, even in contemporary architecture. In this sense, *Tokyo Home,* established by *Fujiilab*, is an emblematic representation, with its white cubes overlapped in batches. Firstly, because "in many ways, the aesthetics of white cube, as well as that of *wabi-sabi* architecture, are the aesthetics of shy designers, who want to remove as much of his or her subjectivity from the object being designed."[26] Secondly, because the contrast between the two materials, wood and cement, creates that duality that excludes any plurality found both in *iki* and *chanoyu.* In the last instance, both the rustic and minimalist décor, as much as the prevalence of wood and the absence of curved lines, create that frugal and inexperienced beauty ideal that is the aesthetic matrix of *wabi-sabi* and *iki.*

These examples, which are not exhaustive, but rather glimpses of the unusual fragments of a city that appears to be discarded, create a new organic agglomeration in which you can trace "a place that has not lost the character of its roots that bind it to the earth and of the divine that bind it to heaven."[27]

[26] Geetha Mehta and Deanna MacDonald, *New Japanese Architecture* (Hong Kong: Periplus Editions, 2011), 24.
[27] Spita, "*L'eco del wabi-sabi*," 108.

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