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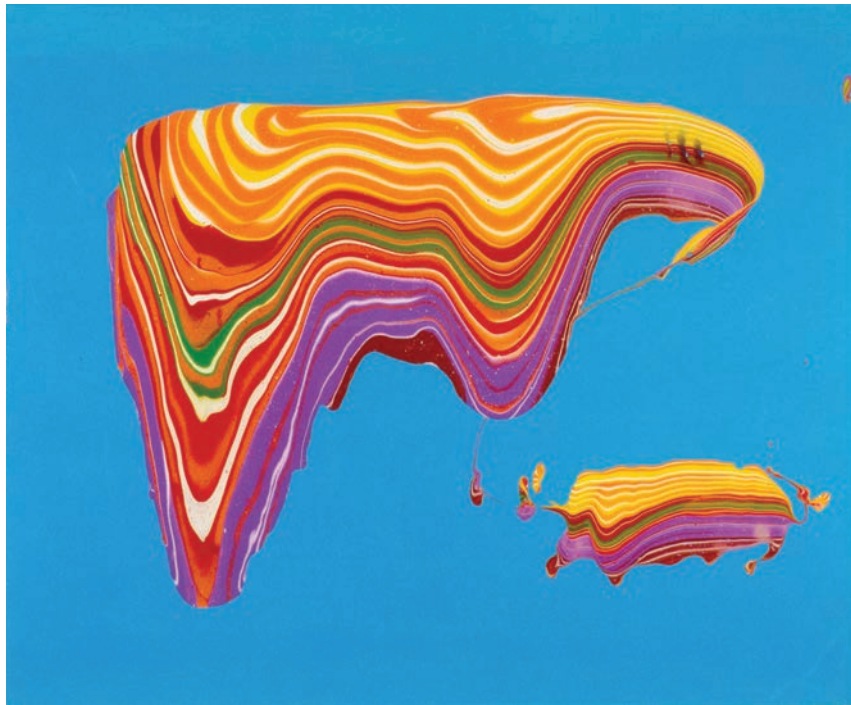
The Turn to Aesthetics: An Interdisciplinary Exchange of Ideas in Applied and Philosophical Aesthetics

Clive A Palmer, *University of Central Lancashire*



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The Turn to Aesthetics

Reporting on an international conference held at Liverpool Hope University 5th–8th June 2007. This was a wide-ranging inter-disciplinary conference which encouraged submissions from three general strands of study including; those subjects which have enjoyed a substantial history of involvement in the field such as Theology and Philosophy, those relatively new to the study such as Sports Studies and Management, and those which focus upon such applied dimensions as the Arts and Education. The overall aim of the conference was to learn from interdisciplinary debate and to encourage an exchange of ideas on research of the highest quality.

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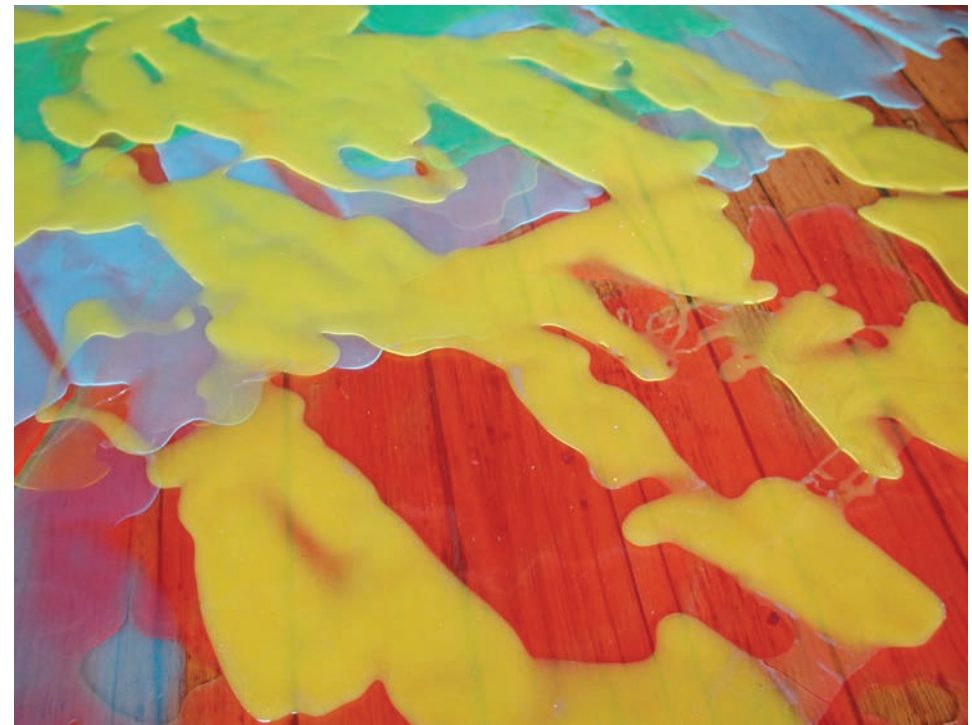
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The Turn to Aesthetics

Edited by Clive Palmer and David Torevell

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An Interdisciplinary Exchange of Ideas in
Applied and Philosophical Aesthetics



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Front Cover:

Detail of "LT", 2002, tinted resin, variable dimensions by Mark Titmarsh.

Back Cover:

"NKL", 2002, acrylic and resin on canvas, 90 x 110cms by Mark Titmarsh.

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Acknowledgements

David and I would like to thank and acknowledge the invaluable assistance given from all those who supported our endeavour to stage The Turn to Aesthetics conference and to make it such a success. Throughout this journey, their generosity to share their knowledge and show interest in us, and “our idea”, has been a sobering example of friendship and collegiality. Along the way we have been fortunate to benefit from their help at critical phases during preparation, during the conference itself and with this post-event publication. To these we owe a debt of gratitude for their tireless efforts and continued interest; we thank you most sincerely.

In particular we would like to acknowledge Richard Hooper, Val Sellers, Tom Foreman, Victor Merriman and Stephan Wassong for their support and enthusiasm during the early stages of this project. Thanks also to the staff at Hope University for their attentiveness to host the event and to ensure all our visitors were made comfortable during their stay in Liverpool. Also, a debt of thanks to those who chaired papers during the conference enabling the event to run smoothly: Patrice Haynes, Jenny Dagers, John Brinkman, Brendan Schmack, Simon Kawycz, and Matt Thombs. For the displays and live performances thanks are due to Karl Lennartz, President of IOSH (International Society of Olympic Historians) for loaning the images of Olympic Art Competitions included in our poster display, and to Neil Campbell (acoustic guitarist) and John Lindley (poet) for their “polished” performances during the evening breaks of the conference. I am also very grateful Graham McFee for being on hand to give occasional, but timely advice and to Mark Titmarsh for allowing us to feature his artworks on the cover design.

Finally, we wish to thank all the delegates for contributing to the conference so openly and making it such a stimulating experience for all those present. The creative mood to exchange ideas and take an active interest in other scholars’ applications of aesthetics is reflected in this book and I thank the authors wholeheartedly for their wisdom shared further in these pages, not least for their tolerance of my editorial interferences.

Lastly, thanks goes to my wife, Dorinda, for supporting me during this episode of academic life by tolerating the more than average number of distractions which have spanned long before and long after that memorable week in June 2007.

Clive Palmer
Liverpool
2008

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Contributors

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Contributors

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John Lindley is a freelance poet and creative writing tutor. An experienced performer, he has read at Ledbury Poetry Festival and at the Buxton and Edinburgh Fringe Festivals. He runs poetry workshops for writers' groups, festivals and in prisons, schools, universities, youth clubs and day care centres, as well as for those with learning difficulties. Widely published, his latest collection is *Cheshire Rising*. He was appointed Cheshire Poet Laureate in 2004. www.johnlindley.co.uk

Contributors

Neil Campbell is a classical guitarist, multi-instrumentalist and composer. As a solo guitarist he has produced three albums of original music, 'Through the Looking Glass' (Mayfield 2003), 'Night Sketches' (2004) and 'Fall' (2006). During postgraduate studies in musical composition at Liverpool Hope University, he began to develop a body of generative music compositions. Much of this work has been recorded, 'Rotations' (2002) and 'Assembly' (2005) and has received airplay on BBC Radio 3's Late Junction. His group The Neil Campbell Collective are an experimental/progressive rock band that have produced two albums of original music '3 O'Clock Sky' (2005) and 'Particle Theory' (2008). For more information see www.neilcampbellcollective.com.

Foreword

At the end of the conference that spawned this volume, the editors expressed to me the hope that the volume would accurately reflect that conference which, as they rightly noted, had been marked by a willingness to look optimistically across one's disciplinary fences, and commitment to engaging with the concerns of others, while recognising the commonalities between their approach and one's own. As I then pointed out, achieving this character in the volume would require that presenters — in writing up their contributions for publication — both respond to the event itself (where appropriate) and yet retain the flexibility and fluidity that might be associated with oral presentations. For only a 'juggling act' of this sort would achieve what they hoped (and desired) for the volume.

Now, readers must decide for themselves whether the volume succeeds in this aspiration. I can only reinforce for them my impression that this was certainly true of the conference; and hope that they can find that spirit in this text.

It may help to comment briefly on both volume and event. Thus, the volume should not be treated simply as a *record* of the conference; in attempting to capture the *spirit* of the conference (in particular, its spirit of collaborative contribution to shared concerns). Certainly the directives to authors were in line with the aspirations noted initially: that is why, although texts were re-drafted where appropriate, they remain *papers* (rather than chapters), with something of the spoken word about them.

The voices here were to reflect, as the title had it, *the turn to aesthetics* — with that 'turn' taking place within academic disciplines, fields of study, research areas, and the like. So, *very* crudely, the major presenters at the conference were invited as having something to say about 'Aesthetics and **X**', where "**X**" stands for different disciplinary areas within the *academe*, or different fields of study — I only came to realise this structure when it dawned on me that *my topic* was supposed to be aesthetics and sport; that (in this scheme) Peter Lamarque was there to represent philosophical aesthetics. But it is typical of the mood of the conference that this point was never made to me explicitly: consonant with the desire to theorise a *turn* to aesthetics, the organisers were happy to see that *turn* manifest in any way, shape or form — as long as it might seem fruitful to others. And, since their hope was precisely that we should escape from the boundaries of our backgrounds — as represented by those **Xs** — they were glad when the boundary fences were jumped almost immediately.

To an outsider (and perhaps there could be no real insiders to this project), a striking feature was the variety of topics/disciplines to whom the idea of a *turn* to aesthetics

made sense: one would readily have expected some cases — those where judgement or assessment might realistically take place in terms of grace, or line, or beauty, and the like (or their opposites?). But this simplistic version did not circumscribe the range of topics debated.

It might seem, though, that philosophical aesthetics had some key position here, as not *needing* a turn to aesthetics. Nonetheless, the survey of the current state of Anglo-American analytic aesthetics provided initially stressed a return within philosophy to a concern with aesthetics. This presentation was exemplary in at least three ways. First, it set the scene for the conference by discussing how a traditional strand of thinking had conceptualised the aesthetic; second, it pointed out that debates about the *extension* of the concept “art” — that is, debates about whether or not such-and-such was an artwork — could productively be separated from debates about the *meaning* (or some such) of the concept “art”. Thus, you and I might agree on the meaning of the term “art” and still debate the place — or otherwise — of Carl Andre’s *Equivalent VIII* (the firebricks from the Tate Gallery): is it art? That is, is it within the *extension* of the concept? And, third, this presentation manifested both the clarity and the detachment at which this mode of philosophising aims. Much that followed drew, to some degree or other, on the framework-ideas thus introduced.

Of course, as another representative of philosophical aesthetics (if not exactly the *designated* one), there were some debates which, from my perspective, resulted from the fairly *recent* ‘turn to aesthetics’ by some presenters and some areas. In these, in particular, the key *questions* were still being developed; and it was here that the interchange with others at the conference might prove the most useful. Two trends strike me as especially worthy of note. And discussing them will illustrate the potential for productive debate here.

First, for some, granting weight (or space) to aesthetics was a kind of short-hand for *not* being hog-tied by concerns with the utilitarian or the functional — and this was not so very different from, say, a turn to ‘assessment’ in terms of beauty rather than (mere) use, or economic efficiency. But in fact, in such debates, the *functional* or the *utilitarian* tended to “wear the trousers” (as J. L. Austin memorably put it): we might not know what exactly *the aesthetic* amounted to in such contexts, but we knew *in detail* what it did *not* amount to. So here, in effect, the turn to the aesthetic might better be seen as a turn *from* ... Or, in a related move, the ‘turn’ was to the sensory (or even the sensuous) as against, say, something quantifiable or numerical: the advocacy of different methods of assessment or evaluation, for instance. And, of course, the ancestry of the term “aesthetic” (In Classical Greek) sustains such a move — but the word “aesthetics” (and especially the perspective of aesthetics as an investigative discipline or process) has now moved us a long way from this root; say, about 300 years past it.

Second, some other key concerns were marked by their insistence, as a prelude to enquiry, on an *account* (or, even, a *definition*) of the term “aesthetic” or “aesthetics”. Again, this is grist to my mill, reflecting a series of debates in philosophical aesthetics; and in philosophy more generally. Now, a fuller account would discuss what a definition *is* in this context, and why it might be wanted (why we might want

it, of course, depends on what it was!). But I simply take a definition to be a concise yet comprehensive characterisation of whatever, having an ‘exact fit’ on that notion. Then, here, I will simply state three aspects of *my own* conclusion. The first is that a definition (or something similar) will not really *aid* understanding since, to utilise it, one must understand the terms in the putative definition then offered; and one must know enough about the topic to recognise that the definition offered was actually false or mistaken: this means one must know *a lot*, even if not, perhaps, the actual *word*. Then, second, one can use a term effectively without being able to define it: in the classic case, I can do everything I want to with the idea of time, but without being able to define it. So definitions cannot always be essential. The third point grows from this one: if there *is* some formal definition of (in our case) *the aesthetic* — the sort of thing discovered by detailed conceptual analysis or conceptual history — It cannot be the basis of my understanding, since I presently do not know it. Further, knowing it cannot add anything to my understanding if I can do all I need to in the *absence* of my knowing such a formal definition. And here the first group mentioned above has a strong position, since they manifestly do know a great deal about what the term “aesthetic” amounts to in their contexts. But just to be raising the question can, of course, be a prelude to *exploring* the concept; and that process was begun in the discussion-sessions.

Elsewhere, it was interesting to reflect on the variety of ways in which appeal to *the aesthetic* might find itself deployed, and the variety of explanations of the aesthetic thereby assumed or urged. For most of these (as above), it was revealing to ask oneself, “*Aesthetic* in contrast to what?”

Some of the presentations, though, were working a street familiar to me, and deploying the concepts and categories of philosophical aesthetics in recognisable ways. For there *seem* to be at least two or three importantly different contexts for the aesthetic: the first is the naturally occurring — waterfalls and sunsets, say; the second is the man-made, the result of human agency, which allows the possibility that beauty, say, was intentional rather than accidental. And the man-made was in turn subdivided (for me) into a concern with *art* and a concern with the rest of the aesthetic. As this is a topic of my own contribution, I will say nothing about it now. But, of course, part of the appeal to the aesthetic in other papers is, say, to the beautiful effects of human agency (for instance, in sport); and part is to human intelligence as manifest in literature or dance. To plot relevant similarities and difference here, and determine what (if anything) they mean, *is* to do philosophical aesthetics, even if applied to some context. Then the practitioners in these areas may be better equipped than the philosophical aesthetician to provide the requisite understanding to such analysis.

Nor would the spirit of the conference be adequately captured unless recognition were given to the poster-presentations: they offered a rich visual (and hence *aesthetic*) contribution, along with an intellectual one, enriching the debate on key themes from the conference as a whole. Similarly, the possibility for genuine engagement with the aesthetic — through the delivery of poetry and music — should be applauded by all participants. And it is rewarding to see those contributions acknowledged here.

The Turn to Aesthetics

The hope must be that the rich mix of concerns, reflected both in the conference as I have sketched it and in this volume, will be productive of future research. I am confident that it will be. Some, no doubt, will reflect individuals returning to their chosen fields with new ideas and (with luck) renewed vigour. Some of the research may itself be collaborative, reflecting some of the productive differences from both conference and volume.

Both conference and event were generously supported — all involved should want to thank Liverpool Hope University, as well as the tireless efforts of both Clive Palmer and David Torevell.

One final personal note: it is, of course, unusual for a contributor to a volume to — in addition — to provide a forward. And it might be said that this is an unusual forward. I can only suppose that the editors recognised both the objectivity of my comments (even where my own work was involved) and the depth of my commitment to the project of which, with any luck, this volume is the first step.

Graham McFee
Fullerton, California
2007

Introduction

Clive Palmer (Liverpool Hope University, UK)

Background and context

This book has grown from a shared interest in aesthetics between David Torevell (Theology and Religious Studies) and myself (Sports Studies) and stems from early discussions informed by our different subject perspectives. To some degree this may account for the unusual alliance of topics presented here, however, in this finished product the range of approaches to aesthetics goes way beyond anything we envisaged at the start and is all the more interesting for that, we think. For about a year our “aesthetics meetings” were always lively and stimulating, it being most enjoyable to find common ground and challenges to aesthetic understanding from these different angles. We planned various publications to share our enthusiasm for applying aesthetics in these ‘new’ ways. The meetings were always great fun but sometimes unproductive. Until – David conjured up the phrase “The Turn to Aesthetics” as a title for a conference and invited Peter Lamarque to be the opening keynote speaker. From this point forward and with growing enthusiasm we optimistically put out a call for abstracts, but not really knowing what the response would be like. This book is representative of that response which I hope reflects the spirit, diversity, specialism and shared interest of the speakers from that conference event.

Structure of the volume – a proceedings in context

In editing this volume it has been my endeavour to preserve the context of the conference as far as possible in an attempt to help readers create links between papers - in a similar way to which many delegates found common ground from seemingly unlikely titles in the conference programme. Briefly explaining my reasons for this will help to explain the structure of this book. However, within pages of *mere text* it is perhaps impossible to give an accurate account of experiences from that rich cultural, social and academic event. This weakness may be the Achilles heel of any secondary reporting in that it will always be an incomplete representation of what actually went on. With this shortcoming in mind some key editorial challenges were encountered; deciding what content to include and then, the ordering of the contents whilst being mindful of my initial audience, the conference delegates – all of whom I had met personally. Also, in its act of reporting this volume fills an important niche that could not be satisfied even by being at the conference. That is, that parallel sessions for papers necessarily prevented everyone from experiencing everything on the programme and that only a limited number of delegates could attend for the duration of the event itself. By striving for some degree of contextual faithfulness in these pages I hope to help readers identify links they may have made with other presenters

and topics at the conference – or even make new ones. Consequently, the order of presentation in this book is “conference-order”.

Conference order, then, is not a borrowed protocol for standard conference proceedings, whatever they are; it was an ordering which was determined primarily by the availability of speakers. On reflection, what this “timetable” set up was the context and framework for different experiences at the conference. Typically, these were the chance meetings of individuals who had an opportunity to listen to speakers they might not have otherwise met. Consequently, the conference programme itself seemed to have accrued a powerful new meaning in the light of that experience and has worked in favour of my editorial efforts to preserve the context of the conference in this publication. This inclination was confirmed for me when, in the process of editing the option to create chapters was rejected because it was proving too superficial and too difficult to achieve in any meaningful way. At first glance it does seem logical to group the papers into the general strands of academic disciplines that were identified in our invitation poster to the conference (see back cover for wording). Also, there is a strong trend in edited volumes to follow a pattern of grouping papers into familial chapters. As a novice editor I felt torn between what *all the others* seem to do and what I felt I wanted to do. I followed the latter. So powerful was the “new meaning” of experience from the conference programme that categorising papers under a fabricated chapter heading seemed to be only for the sake of grouping and therefore more of a hindrance than a help. Additionally, creating chapters seemed to categorise falsely some of the papers and perhaps their authors which was an uncomfortable risk. The line of least resistance and natural fit seemed to be that which was actually experienced, hence conference-order. I have also kept to the phrase “paper” rather than “chapter” because the topics in these papers were by presented in person to an appreciative and thoughtful audience. That is, our initial engagement with the paper was through a real-time engagement with the author and the memory of this is quite profound for those fortunate enough to witness it. Furthermore, the phrase “paper” is intended to remind the reader that the authors brought their diverse views and applications of aesthetics to share with an audience who held equally diverse interests in aesthetics. Their papers are not tailored contributions designed to fit within a larger jigsaw about aesthetics. That is to say that one concept of a book “chapter” is something that has been pre-designed, requested in advance and written with a purpose to dovetail in with other chapters to cover ‘all’ envisaged angles on a given topic. For *The Turn to Aesthetics* this was never our aim and a useful lesson learned from this was to realise in retrospect how restricted this volume may have been had we had been driven by a mission to select “chapters” for an edited book. In editing a conference proceedings that is contextually bound in so far as is possible I have chosen to let the papers stand as they were presented to celebrate their individuality and to recognise their conspicuous contribution and speciality in aesthetics.

Accessibility is a pleasing feature of the papers included in this volume and the Notes on Contributors tells an interesting story as to how this may have come about. You will encounter a satisfying mix of topics and presenters which brings a diverse range of applications of aesthetic knowledge without hierarchy or false grouping. At least ten of the papers were given by final year Ph.D. students, six of whom feature in this

volume. Some more accomplished presenters offered to “tighten up” their papers in terms of academic presentation but I asked them if I could keep to their “occasional format” as a true reflection of the accessible and discursive papers they presented. This again seemed to add to the contextual theme for the book and reflects the generous atmosphere in which they shared their ideas. I hope the reader will judge them in the manner they are offered. A complete listing of abstracts gives an overview of all presentations at the conference and represents what was known before the event by the delegates and the conference organisers.

A convenient way to sum up this volume might be to say it is one large edition on the diversity of aesthetics called *The Turn to Aesthetics*. Also, to acknowledge its limitations, that this particular turn was only a snapshot of that diversity at a given time - in June 2007. This may be a lazy way out of the problem but serves to highlight my realisation that producing a book that reflected our experiences was going to require considerable thought. It occurred to me at the end of the conference that an [almost] ethnographic approach to preserving the context of the event might help readers to recall something of the social fabric that prompted conversations and an exchange of thoughts. This has allowed me to include in these pages what some might consider quirky or peripheral elements in an edited book – but they are included because they were important contextual elements from the event itself, and therefore important in this conference proceedings. Thus, insofar as my methodology allows it, I have made concerted efforts to incorporate ‘signposts’ to this intended direction. For example, having “papers” and not chapters (many of which are written in the style that were delivered), there is something of the poetry performance, the music performance and the poster displays. The foreword hints at this unusual editorial endeavour and the closing comments from a delegate replaces what could have been a predictable plenary note. I am also pleased to feature two artworks from Mark Titmarsh on the cover design who is an artist and academic in Australia. His artworks were included and explained in his presentation at the conference and further enhances the personal signature of this volume for him and for delegates who are the primary audience for this conference proceedings.

Aesthetics as the common thread – unity and variety

The range of aesthetic knowledge and applications of aesthetic thought at the conference and in these pages was so varied that all contributions together could not be summed up, plenary style, without diluting their individual importance. As one of the principal instigators of the conference what could I usefully say that related my personal experience to the aesthetic discourse of the week? The artistic ideal of unity and variety seemed to fit reasonably in to this context. In a critical appraisal, achieving some degree of unity and variety in a product may be one of the highest accolades that might be bestowed upon an artist. From the conference and in this volume the unifying theme is an aesthetic one; a personal and deep curiosity to understand and impart the aesthetic implications of a given phenomena. In this philosophical aesthetic tug-o-war the diversity of the topics having their aesthetic minutia explained provided variety, from dance and installation art, photography and aesthetics in the war zone, to aesthetics in healing and in sport and archaeology, to philosophical aesthetics in literature, management, theology and education to mention but a few. The degree of variety is blatant as the contents page demonstrates, but the

The Turn to Aesthetics

unifying theme was less obvious, it being a given at an aesthetics conference perhaps. Consequently, the unifying theme of a shared intellectual interest in aesthetics crept up on me stealthily as I realised I had been experiencing this first hand during the conference. During every paper there was an audience who were keen and eager to understand a novel take on aesthetics in *their area* and were particularly receptive to someone who was prepared to come and explain their ideas to others. At every point there were academics with highly informed opinions who wanted to listen to other's aesthetic reasoning in order to expand their own interest, and likewise, to help others expand theirs. I think had to experience this unity before I could identify it with honesty. It is this profound experience which has informed my approach to present these proceedings in this way. I hope you enjoy it.

Aesthetics and the practices of art

Peter Lamarque (York University, UK)

Opening keynote address - The Turn to Aesthetics, 5th-8th June 2007, Liverpool Hope University.

It is a pleasure and honour to be invited to open this conference on The Turn to Aesthetics. The programme before us is immensely rich and exciting and the organisers are to be congratulated not only for assembling such a comprehensive array of topics and speakers but indeed for conceiving the conference in the first place. There could be no better or more auspicious time to reflect on the “turn to aesthetics”, what it is, what it means, why it’s happening.

Quite by coincidence the timeliness of this theme has been brought home to me on several occasions over the past weeks. It wasn’t so long ago that a hairdressing saloon opened just up the road from where I live in York. It is an up-market establishment with the unlikely name of “Face, Etc”. What is striking, though, is that it has in big letters on the window the delightful epithet “Enhancing Aesthetics”. I wanted to go in and tell them that as an editor of a journal of aesthetics I was happy to discuss their commercial aspirations with them. Only last week I received a slim volume from Estonia—in English—entitled *Aesthetics and Government*. One of the papers in it caught my eye with the wonderful title: “Aesthetics of the Police Station in Three Countries: An Exercise in Using Fictive Material in Creating Aesthetic Profiles”. This is an intriguing study of the culture of police stations in Finland, Sweden and Russian, drawing on representations in modern detective fiction. On a similar theme, another paper from another volume is entitled “Tales from the Walled City: Aesthetics of the Political Prison Culture in post-war Greece”. Aesthetics is making its mark also in anthropology. Recent book titles have included: *The aesthetics of action: continuity and change in a West African town*; *Body and emotion: the aesthetics of illness and healing in the Nepal Himalayas*; *Taming the wind of desire: psychology, medicine, and aesthetics in Malay shamanistic performance*. But none of this is any more remarkable in its diversity than the programme of this conference itself.

So what’s going on? What is this renewed focus on aesthetics that seems to be gaining prominence? What do all these applications have in common, if anything? It is certainly not restricted to art, although art is not excluded. I think in very broad terms it’s this: a renewed interest in, yes, beauty, in appearance over utility, in form over function, in the pleasure of how something looks, in intrinsic qualities, in design, in the surfaces of things, colour, texture, the sensuous, the immediate, the visceral, the

vibrant, the emotional and expressive. In a word, an interest in *aesthetic* qualities, the qualities of experience and feeling, rather than merely utilitarian, instrumental or physical qualities. But is there a need to “turn” or “return” to such things? Have they ever gone away? Have we lost an interest in beauty, appearance, surface, design? Well, it’s a complicated story. In a sense, yes, we have, or had, lost those things; at least we’d lost the priority once given to them. We’d lost it in art and we’d lost it in theory.

The birth of conceptual art in the 1960s was a self-conscious turning away from beauty and aesthetic experience in the making of art. Here is Sol LeWitt, one of the foremost conceptual artists, writing in 1967: “What the work of art looks like isn’t too important. It has to look like something if it has physical form. No matter what form it may finally have it must begin with an idea. It is the process of conception and realisation with which the artist is [primarily] concerned.”¹ In other words in conceptual art the idea is more important than the appearance. Perhaps Sol LeWitt’s death on 8th April this year, aged 78, just two months before this conference, indeed marks the end of an era. Another prominent conceptual artist, Mel Bochner, writing in 1974, also rejected beauty in art: “the ‘ideal Conceptual work’”, he states, “... could be described and experienced in its description ... It must have absolutely no ‘aura’, no uniqueness to it whatsoever.”² The critic Lucy Lippard concurs: “Conceptual art ... means work in which the idea is paramount and the material form is secondary, lightweight, cheap, unpretentious and/or ‘dematerialized’”.³

The rejection of beauty in art went hand in hand with the rejection of beauty in art theory. There are many strands of this, of course. One strand is purely philosophical and is associated, above all, with the American philosopher Arthur Danto. Danto argued, to the satisfaction of many, that there is nothing in the concept of art per se that links it essentially to beauty or indeed to any particular kind of surface perceptible property. Famously he sought to prove this by showing that two objects could be perceptually indistinguishable—like Andy Warhol’s facsimile Brillo Boxes and ordinary commercial Brillo Boxes—while one is a work of art, the other not. From this he concluded that what makes something art resides not in its appearance, how it looks—what is perceptible—but in its embeddedness in theory. As aesthetic properties relate to how something appears, aesthetics, on Danto’s view, becomes irrelevant to art.

Another anti-beauty strand of theory is more political than philosophical. Postmodernist art theory in its many manifestations self-consciously turned against the aesthetic. Just as the concepts of truth, meaning, value, and reason, became radically relativized or dismissed as repressive and authoritarian, so concepts like

¹ Sol LeWitt, ‘Paragraphs on Conceptual Art’, *Artforum*, summer, 1967. Quoted in Lucy Lippard, *Six Years*, p. 29.

² Mel Bochner, ‘Mel Bochner on Malevich: an Interview’ (with John Coplans), *Artforum*, June 1974, p. 62. Quoted in Roberta Smith, ‘Conceptual Art’, in Nikos Stangos, ed., *Concepts of Modern Art*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1994, p. 259.

³ Lucy Lippard, *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972*, Berkeley: U of California Press, 1997, p. vii.

beauty and even art itself were thought to be equally tainted ideologically, complicit in the dominant social order and inextricably bound to spurious meta-narratives. Theorists like Terry Eagleton and Pierre Bourdieu, showed us, at least under one perspective, how deeply implicated was the birth of aesthetics, in 18th century Europe, with a peculiar set of social and economic conditions, how the central conceptions of aesthetic theory at that time, like taste, sensibility, refinement, genius, the sublime, strikingly mirror the interests of a leisured class, filtered through a philosophy of idealism and Romanticism. But Eagleton does not see the aesthetic as all bad: he describes it as an essentially contradictory concept serving to define "dominant ideological forms", as he puts it, through its links with the "subject", "autonomy", the aestheticizing of morality, but also in other respects offering a "powerful challenge and alternative to them", notably in its emphasis on the sensory, the irreducibly particular and the unregulated. Post-modernist artists, not just conceptual artists, typically eschew the easy consolation of the aesthetically pleasing experience, they denounce the false reverence of the art gallery or museum, and they reject the distinction between "high art" and "popular art". Remember Roquentin in Sartre's novel *Nausea*, deriding those who sought consolation from soothingly melodic music, like that of Chopin: "... the concert halls are full to overflowing with humiliated, injured people who close their eyes and try to turn their pale faces into receiving aerials. They imagine that the sounds they receive flow into them, sweet and nourishing, and that their sufferings become music, like those of young Werther; they think that beauty is compassionate towards them. The mugs." That was written in 1938. Similar sentiments, incidentally, can be found in Adorno, for whom only the more challenging and dissonant music of Stravinsky and Schoenberg could be true to fragmented modern society. The emollient tones of 19th century romantic music offered only false consciousness in the modern age.

So what's changed? If that was the thinking until recently both in the world of art and in the world of theory, has there really been a turn or return to aesthetics? Is this wishful thinking on the part of the conference organisers or does it reflect something real in the zeitgeist? I suspect the latter. But my own position in all this is a bit odd. I never really left aesthetics! Well, perhaps that's not entirely true as it would be more accurate to say that I have been working, for most of the last thirty years or so, on the margins of aesthetics, examining concepts like fictionality, truth in the arts, metaphor, meaning and interpretation, speech acts, reference and naming, authorship, the very idea of literature. Only since taking up the editorship of the *British Journal of Aesthetics* 12 years ago have I moved more into the mainstream of philosophical aesthetics. But even putting it that way is highly contentious. For what is mainstream philosophical aesthetics? Is there such a thing?

My main theme today is precisely to reflect on what contribution philosophy can make to aesthetics. Was the work I was doing on fictionality and truth really a branch of aesthetics? But I wasn't talking about beauty or the sensuous immediacy of things or appearance or indeed any of the phenomena I listed earlier. What I was really doing was a branch of philosophy of language. Yes, I had things to say about literature but my focus was not on the particularities of individual works or the values they exhibited or their place in ideological formations but on matters much more abstract: What does it mean to refer to a fictional character? What kind of entities are

these? What is the ontology of possible non-existent beings? This was a kind of applied philosophy of language or analytical metaphysics.

And that's the point, for the philosophy I do is analytical philosophy. When I do aesthetics it is philosophical aesthetics in an analytical mode. That makes my interest in aesthetics doubly specialist. Being philosophical it sets my work apart from that done by anthropologists or art teachers or educationalists or art critics. Being analytical it sets my philosophical work apart from that done by poststructuralists or phenomenologists or students of Heidegger and Gadamer. Is this so narrow as to be of negligible interest to those seeking wider and more practical applications of the aesthetic?

Well, I hope not and I believe that original and important work has been done by analytical aestheticians in the past twenty years—I will offer some illustrations in a moment—but I also think that this approach poses deep problems for the future of aesthetics. Not to put too fine a point on it, I believe that work by analytic philosophers threatens to pull the subject of aesthetics apart. Philosophical aesthetics as a unified field of enquiry is literally fragmenting at the very moment when the turn to aesthetics is growing apace elsewhere. Curiously, though, I don't think this fragmentation is altogether a bad thing not least because it promises to give the component parts a new lease of life. What are emerging are semi-autonomous intellectual domains, with their own questions, methods, and reference points, all loosely gathered under the heading of aesthetics.

So what exactly is fragmenting from what? First, there is a methodological split between analytic based approaches and historically based approaches. I'll come back to that. More substantially there is an ever-widening split between aesthetics as a study of a kind of experience and philosophy of art. The former goes back to pre-Hegelian philosophy where the emphasis was not on art but on a certain way of perceiving objects, a way of evaluating them. Philosophers have sought to characterise what it means to regard something from an aesthetic point of view, a distinctive kind of interest and value. The experience might or might not apply to individual works of art. But given what I have been saying about the rejection of beauty in art and in art theory it is of no surprise that this examination of aesthetic experience and aesthetic qualities has increasingly been carried out independently of any application to the arts. The philosopher Graham McFee, for example, who is one of our plenary speakers at the conference, takes a strong stance on this, arguing that aesthetic terms like "beauty" or "elegance" do not even mean the same when applied to works of art and non-art objects. He explicitly rejects the "unity of the aesthetic". Philosophers interested in aesthetic experience will tend to look to the aesthetics of nature and the environment to illustrate the kinds of experience they are studying. This has led to a blossoming of interest in the aesthetics of nature—an attempt to understand what it is that humans appreciate in their natural environment and whether all judgments about natural beauty are just in the eye of the beholder.

Here I think we can find another reason for the turn to aesthetics. If beauty doesn't matter any more in the arts it certainly seems to matter more and more in the environment where we see not only the destruction of natural habitats but also the

monstrosities of unrestrained urban development. Here the defence of some kind of objective aesthetic value seems to have real political urgency for if it's true that beauty is just in the eye of the beholder, just a matter of private personal taste, then the developer who is happy to ruin pleasant environments for the sake of profit can simply shrug off criticisms from an aesthetic point of view on the grounds that these are just subjective opinions and his opinion is as valid as anyone else's. Those inclined towards an easy subjectivism in aesthetics should bear this in mind; the consequence can be that appeal to how something looks and the pleasure it gives is simply dismissed as irrelevant and whimsical.

There is much of interest in the study of aesthetic experience but in fact my focus will be on the other side of the dichotomy, the philosophy of art. There is noticeable fragmentation here as well, for example, between philosophy of art *tout court* and philosophy of the individual arts. The former investigates the very concept of art itself, the aims, functions and values it exhibits and the place it occupies in human social and political life. The latter investigates distinctive features of individual arts and there are recognized divisions now between philosophy of music, philosophy of literature, philosophy of film, philosophy of the visual arts, and so on. My own work now finds a niche with its own name: philosophy of literature. In fact I have just finished a book with that title. Is it a work of aesthetics? Under the general umbrella, certainly it is. I have things to say about the idea of experiencing literature, the pleasures and values it affords, but it is not obvious that these have much in common with the pleasures and values of painting, say, or dance. However, other aspects of the investigation, into meaning, interpretation, truth, ontology and form point more, as I mentioned earlier, towards philosophy of language or metaphysics. The dividing up of philosophy of art into the philosophy of individual arts seems to threaten the autonomy of philosophy of art itself. Why ask about the definition of art per se—a holy grail that has proved so elusive—when it might seem more promising to ask about the definition of literature or sculpture or film or music? And is it helpful to talk about the value of art in general as distinct from the values of the different art forms?

A benign fragmentation is happening all round. Philosophical aesthetics is fragmenting into philosophy of art and the aesthetics of nature or the environment. Philosophy of art is fragmenting into the philosophy of the individual arts. But it doesn't end there. I think the philosophy of the individual arts is fragmenting into specific applications of other branches of analytic philosophy. Take a recent book by the philosopher Julian Dodd on the philosophy of music, which came out last month. Its title is *Works of Music: an Essay in Ontology* and it advances an ontological thesis about the nature of pure, instrumental music. It defends a type-token theory whereby such works are eternally existent types of sound-sequence-events, the tokens of which are performances. These event-types are discovered rather than created by their composers. Composers are more like mathematicians discovering pre-existing abstract theorems than potters fashioning a vase out of lumps of clay. The book also defends a seemingly simple thesis entitled "timbral sonicism" whereby musical works are identical just in case they sound exactly alike. This is a rejection of the view held by some that it is possible in principle for two distinct works to have a type-identical score. It is all fascinating stuff and carefully argued. But is it aesthetics? Surely only in the very broadest sense, which follows lines of enquiry through an ever

fragmenting philosophy of art. It is far removed from an investigation into beauty, pleasure, experience, appearance, intrinsic value. The title “An Essay in Ontology” seems to suggest its real home. But increasingly it is typical of the kind of contribution made by analytical philosophers to the philosophy of the individual arts. It points, I think, to a quite new direction for philosophical aesthetics.

I want to pursue this enquiry into philosophy of the arts to see just where the limits and aspirations of aesthetics might lie when undertaken by philosophers. The key is in the peculiar nature of analytical philosophy. Let me take a moment to say what I take that to be. I won't give a history of analytic philosophy—if you are interested I have given some background both in my introduction to the Blackwell anthology on *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art* and in the Cambridge History of Literary Criticism edited by Christopher Norris. But there are some salient features of analytic philosophy relevant to our enquiry. One is the predominance of logic and conceptual analysis in its methodology. This is not as anodyne or theoretically innocent as it might seem for it connects with a second feature namely that the method is essentially ahistorical. The *logical* analysis of concepts contrasts with the *historical* analysis of concepts which is the mark of so-called continental philosophy. This was a point I touched on earlier. On the historicist view a concept can only be understood relative to the historical conditions under which it arose and the discourses in which it is embedded. For the analytic philosopher a more abstracted timeless approach is possible and desirable. If we want to understand what knowledge is or mind or consciousness or moral goodness it is not enough to engage a historical enquiry into what the Greeks thought of knowledge or medieval philosophers or Enlightenment thinkers or 19th century idealists; rather the concept must be tackled in its own right. After all these earlier thinkers might well have been wrong in their analyses so why dwell on mistaken views. The analytic philosopher seeks the *truth* about concepts, and timeless truth as far as that is attainable. If there is such a thing as the human mind then the philosopher's task is to say what it is; the fact that the Greeks said one thing, medieval theologians another and the Hegelians something else is neither here nor there.

So we have the famous clash of philosophical methodology, both sides convinced that their approach is correct. But how does all this apply to aesthetics or philosophy of art? Surely, it might be thought, when we are talking about cultural concepts like art or beauty the historicist position must be right. There just isn't any single ahistorical concept to define; the best we can do is track changing concepts across cultures and across time. Beauty is not a static idea fixed in stone for all generations and all peoples; and isn't art ever evolving and reinventing itself? And anyway isn't applying logic and conceptual analysis to art and beauty a kind of absurdity, a sacrilege? As Keats said: “Do not all charms fly / at the mere touch of cold philosophy?” Philosophy, he thought,

.... will clip an Angel's wings,
Conquer all mysteries by rule and line,
Empty the haunted air, and gnomed mine -
Unweave a rainbow.

But here I want to come to the defence of analytic philosophy. Not all philosophy destroys what it touches. Logical methods can give us insights into the very nature of concepts and definitions, which can help any kind of systematic enquiry. One distinction, for example, is important, that between the *meaning* of a concept and its *extension*. The extension of a concept is the set of objects to which it applies. Of course, the objects that *we* call beautiful might not be identical with the objects the Greeks or the ancient Egyptians called beautiful but it is not obvious that they had no recognizably similar concept of beauty or they didn't find things beautiful in much the way that we do. After all, when Shakespeare writes poignantly in Sonnet 65:

Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea,
But sad mortality o'ersways their power,
How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea,
Whose action is no stronger than a flower?

do we not understand perfectly what he means by beauty? Is it not worthwhile trying to explore what that meaning is, what Shakespeare's concept has in common with ours and indeed with Plato's? No doubt our judgments of beauty differ from theirs. We might not find Helen of Troy beautiful but that doesn't mean that we cannot understand what Homer means in calling her beautiful.

Perhaps the concept of art is a tougher case. The Greeks we are told had no concept of art (in our sense) and the idea of "fine art" is a quintessentially modern, i.e. 18th century, creation. But it is not as if analytical philosophers are not aware of the historicity of art. The idea that different cultures at different times take radically different kinds of things to be art and to be revered as art is hardly a revelation. But must we say, as seems a consequence of extreme historicist views, that other cultures at other times simply cannot be said to possess art, that we are only entitled to call something art that falls within a narrow Eurocentric domain? This seems to me at best a kind of cultural parochialism, at worst an attitude both patronising and condescending. Only we civilized Europeans have art strictly so called—we might appropriate the works of other cultures into our own artistic ambience but really the concept of art that we use applies only to us. Against that view, analytical philosophers at least don't rule out the thought that there is a concept of art that is genuinely trans-cultural and genuinely explanatory, something that unites us with, rather than divides us from, other cultures and other. The distinction between meaning and extension is again important but an even more significant contribution by analytical philosophers is to identify different forms that definitions might take. It is no longer assumed that to define art we must seek common intrinsic qualities, be it beauty, significant form or subject matter that all works of art share. There are other kinds of properties. Perhaps all art shares functional properties, such as engaging certain kinds of interests or promoting certain kinds of experiences. And if functional properties won't do the trick what about relational or institutional properties? What makes something a work of art might well be nothing to do with, as Danto thought, what it looks like, or what purpose it fulfils, but rather to do with the role it plays in complex social networks, in an art world.

The point about institutional definitions of art is that they are quite neutral on the forms that art takes or the content it expresses; this conveniently embraces both the diversity of art, from music to film to dance to poetry to installation art, and the cultural variability of art, from ancient Egypt to China to aboriginal Australia to pre-Columbian America. All that matters is that some objects are assigned a special cultural status which confers value on them. Some analytical philosophers, in so-called historical definitions of art, which are variants of institutional definitions, build historical variability into the definition itself, thereby sealing off the major objection to analytic philosophy by the continental historicists. Mind you, analytic philosophers are not always at their most perspicuous in this endeavour, as evidenced by Jerrold Levinson's historical definition:

X is an artwork = *X* is an object that a person or persons having the appropriate proprietary right over *X*, nonpassingly intends for regard-as-a-work-of-art, i.e. regard in any way (or ways) in which prior artworks are or were correctly (or standardly) regarded.

Or consider this by Gregory Currie:

... an art work will be an action type with two 'open places' (one for a person, one for a time) and having three constitutive elements, a structure, a heuristic and the relation *x* discovers *y* by means of *z*.

This is pretty turgid stuff admittedly and maybe it shows how difficult it is to grapple with a concept like art independently of the individual arts. In fact I don't think it is any less perspicuous than the efforts of, say, Heidegger in the same area:

In the work of art the truth of an entity has set itself to work. 'To set' means here: to bring to a stand. Some particular entity, a pair of peasant shoes, comes in the work to stand in the light of its being. The being of the being comes into the steadiness of its shining.⁴

These kinds of offerings can give philosophy a bad name. But it is not the density of their expression that is the main worry rather the fact that they are purely formal definitions; they tell us little of substance about the nature of art and they don't afford any practical method of determining which objects are and are not art.

This brings us back again to deep and intractable issues about the scope and ambitions of philosophical aesthetics. If the analytic philosopher really seeks to say something universal and timeless about the key concepts in aesthetics or philosophy of art then a dilemma raises its head. On the one hand, to achieve true universality the philosopher, it seems, must retreat to a level of generality that threatens to deprive its subject matter of any substance; on the other, if it is to attain substantial and specific truths about art or the aesthetic must it not abandon the search for universality and slip back into the relative and the parochial? Is the situation really as bad as that? To a certain

⁴ Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art', in David Cooper, ed. *Aesthetics: The Classic Readings* (Blackwell, 1997), p.234.

extent I think the dilemma is real and it partially explains the fragmentation of aesthetics that I described earlier.

Let me take up the challenge and end with some fairly speculative observations about a role for analytical philosophy – or indeed any philosophy – in aesthetics that can save it from the charge of mere vacuity. First we must return to the distinction between aesthetics qua study of experience and philosophy of art for the role of philosophy is different in these contexts. Aesthetics in the narrower sense, independent of art, highlights distinctive kinds of experiences and interests. Are there any elements in aesthetic experience itself that are characterisable at what might be called a *human* rather than a *cultural* level? Yes, I think there are. I think there are kinds of aesthetic responses to the world that rest not on cultural factors but on something deeper in human nature, even if they manifest themselves in different ways in different cultures. Fundamentally this is an interest in how things appear, in their form, apart from their function, and a distinctive kind of pleasure that arises from a sense that things, as they appear, are ‘right’ or ‘well suited’ or ‘fitting’. This can apply to one’s own physical appearance, one’s hairstyle, the clothes one wears, the house one lives in, the arrangement of furniture, the decorations in a room, outside spaces like gardens or parks, physical surroundings of all kinds. It is not reducible to the Kantian ‘judgment of taste’ or a contemplative attitude or ‘disinterested attention’, although those were the forms that the phenomena took in 18th century Europe. I believe this phenomenon is a genuinely human, not merely culture-relative, disposition, by no means restricted to art (perhaps nowadays not applicable to art at all), and that philosophical enquiry can help identify and characterise it as distinct from other human dispositions. The idea of giving value and significance to the perceptible qualities of objects is peculiarly human. It lies at the heart of aesthetics.

Perhaps the philosophical notion of an intentional object, or object of thought, can be invoked to cast light on it. The natural human capacity to make physical objects into intentional objects, to endow objects of perception with value and meaning, crops up in many contexts including religion, art, and game playing. When a piece of metal is transformed into a coin, a piece of wood into a religious icon or bodily tattoos into a symbol of power, this capacity is being exercised. Although it has multiply varied cultural uses it is not itself a capacity peculiar to any one culture or to particular times and places. In this sense it is universal and transcends culture and is apt for philosophical investigation.

The picture with regard to the philosophy of art, as distinct from aesthetic experience, is more complicated. Here cultural factors seem deeply entrenched. I think we can distinguish two roles for philosophy here: a role that is indeed culture-specific and relativised and a role that has more universal aspirations. Much philosophy of art that purports to be universal is in fact culture-specific. Take Immanuel Kant’s philosophical analysis of genius in the 1790s. Genius, as Kant defines it, is the talent for producing original and exemplary works of art for which there are no definite rules and which seem to arise, as he puts it, from nature itself, not from science. The idea of the untutored genius epitomizes European Romanticism but is already anticipated in Plato’s conception of divine inspiration. Yet it is clear that the concept of genius, of which Kant gives the definitive account, although deeply and essentially

involved with the European artistic tradition, is not a central component in all traditions. That it is not a universal or necessary adjunct of artistic value is in effect noted by Plato himself when he describes, with both admiration and amazement, the ancient Egyptian practice, which, as he saw it, prohibited innovation and rigorously applied the same artistic rules to produce an artistic uniformity lasting ten thousand years (The Laws, Bk 2).

Kantian or Romantic genius is not a key concept either in the aesthetics of Chinese or Japanese art, where of greater significance than originality are the ideas of perfecting a technique, as in calligraphy, and realising an appropriate state of mind. Chinese or Japanese aesthetics in fact provides a paradigmatic example of a culture-specific philosophy of art closely tracking a distinctive artistic tradition, with its own finely developed aesthetic vocabulary, often refined from Confucian or Buddhist thought, underpinning characteristic art forms.

Likewise, when Aristotle discusses tragedy in the Poetics he also is adopting a culture-specific perspective, both articulating the underlying principles of Sophoclean drama and laying down norms for tragedy within the tradition, drawing on concepts like mimesis, catharsis, and hamartia, from the surrounding philosophical context. But isn't Aristotle defining tragedy also in its universal aspects? No, for tragedy *conceived as an art form* is not a universal phenomenon. As an art form tragedy is grounded in a specific artistic, moral and philosophical tradition. Even when Hegel and Nietzsche tried to redefine tragedy beyond its Greek philosophical mode they retained the deep roots of that tradition. Perhaps only Schopenhauer's contribution on tragedy could be called universalist and that just to the extent that he emphasised its metaphysical rather than artistic nature.

What emerges from these examples is far from a negative or pessimistic picture. Yes, indeed some philosophy of art is culture-specific and forfeits a claim to universality. But it has a vital and important role nonetheless. It explores the discourse associated with a particular artistic tradition, it examines the concepts that underpin that discourse, it provides a rationale for the critical evaluations and interpretations that mediate between canonical works and their audience, and it identifies and analyses, in the manner of Hegel, significant stages in the history of the tradition. That's not bad for a supposedly limited prospectus.

But is there no scope at all in philosophising about art to transcend cultures and find genuinely universal truths? I think there is but again it takes us back to another aspect of the fragmentation issue. One way to secure trans-cultural rather than culture-specific truths is through what I call theoretical abstraction. There are two forms this might take: either, first, seek out aspects of culture-specific concepts, such as genius or taste, tragedy or the sublime, that are not themselves culture-specific (as I say, perhaps Schopenhauer does this with tragedy); or, second, retreat to a metaphysical, psychological, or semantic level, bringing to the fore more abstract concepts like representation, fictionality, expression, meaning, symbolism, ideology, intentionality, truth, moral value, even perhaps the concept of art itself shorn of its relativistic accoutrements. Take my own interest in fictionality. In trying to define fictionality, to distinguish the fictive from the non-fictive, to characterise the semantics of fictional

discourse, I have not seen myself as engaged in a culture-specific enquiry. Some notion of fiction, of make-believe, of imaginative story-telling, making things up rather than finding things out, has manifested itself throughout history and throughout cultures. The analytic philosopher can pursue and perhaps illuminate such a concept, however thin it might be in its trans-cultural guise. The same I think is true for a notion of representation in pictorial art, expression in music, meaning in poetry, symbolism in religion. The philosophical enquiry into these concepts might genuinely seek to transcend cultural variability. Recent work by analytic philosophers on the logic of depiction, how it is possible to depict three-dimensional objects in two dimensions, is a case in point; as is work on the possibility of expressing emotion in music. Even though they draw on scientific theories of perception or psychological theories of emotion, such efforts are readily described as aesthetics but, if done properly, surely not the aesthetics of any particular culture.

Nevertheless, there is a price to be paid in all this, the price in effect of fragmentation. The trans-cultural interest in art can indeed attain a kind of universalism, rising above the parochialism of individual artistic traditions, but at the cost of losing the specific application which links philosophy of art with art history and art criticism. The culture-specific role, in contrast, serves the important function of supporting and articulating a cultural tradition and its attendant concepts, but forfeits the claim to speak universally of the human institution of art per se. To go the trans-cultural route, via theoretical abstraction, is to dissipate aesthetics into sub-branches of other areas of philosophy, like philosophy of language, metaphysics, and philosophy of mind. To go the culture-specific route, and focus only on concepts drawn from a single artistic tradition, narrows the scope of aesthetics and fragments the subject along cultural lines, leaving only European aesthetics, Chinese aesthetics, Japanese aesthetics, African aesthetics. And how narrow should that go? Do we need an aesthetics of each micro-culture? And how do we individuate those? Are there specific aesthetic or artistic concepts for each of the 6912 living languages in the world? Surely that is a *reductio ad absurdum* of relativism? The best thing is to leave culture-specific aesthetics to those cultures that desire it. Of more importance is that we recognize when we are being culture-specific and when we are transcending cultures. I suspect that Aristotle writing about tragedy and Kant about genius were both mistaken on this score.

A final word, though, on the “turn to aesthetics”. What is so exciting about the programme before us is that it shows the huge diversity of interests that come under the umbrella of aesthetics, a diversity even wider than that within philosophical aesthetics. Yet for all this commendable diversity, we seem to share certain core interests, whether we are hairdressers, anthropologists, students of management or politics or religion, or philosophers, analytical or continental. The aesthetic point of view on the world is a distinctive one and difficult to pin down. I have argued that it is not merely a cultural phenomenon but a human one, an outlook or attitude that helps us make sense of the world and to derive pleasure and value from it. I have spoken of the philosophical contribution to understanding this phenomenon. I have also identified a benign fragmentation within philosophical aesthetics in moving out from the purely aesthetic to the artistic. Perhaps a renewed aesthetic interest in art will help close that gap. When we study the aesthetic from different perspectives I plead

The Turn to Aesthetics

for an open-mindedness to new approaches, imagination to see the multiple ways the aesthetic impinges on our lives, and a vision of the future where aesthetic concerns e.g. for the environment and the preservation of nature, are never overridden by the commercial, the material or the philistine that can threaten that beauty, in Shakespeare's words, "Whose action is no stronger than a flower".

Aesthetics and Management

Heather Höpfl (University of Essex)

On first encounter, the relationship between management and aesthetics might seem somewhat tenuous. After all, management is concerned with strategy, projects, trajectories, staff; with marketing and sales, with accounting and the control of budgets. Business schools, it seems, deal with business analysis and with the functional aspects of management. Yet, if this is the case, it is surprising to note that over the past twenty years management theorists have embraced aesthetics in both a theoretical and practical way. In particular, organizational theorists have become interested in how aesthetics, aesthetic judgement and perceptions based on the arts can be used to gain a greater understanding of the way that organizations work and can be conceptualised. Consequently, the primary concern here is with the question of why aesthetics and the visual have become an integral part of organizational theorizing. My purpose in this paper is to identify a range of influences. However, it must be said that what I am presenting here is a highly personal view of the emergence of the turn to aesthetics in management studies. There are whole areas of work to which I will not attend and also a number of related areas of work, for example, in dramaturgy, in art *per se*, and in various uses of so-labelled *aesthetic* aspects of consultancy and therapeutic work with management – all of these I will ignore. I have also decided to offer examples which draw on work at the University of Essex and universities with whom Essex collaborates. Again, this narrows the field but my intention here is to provide a brief overview of the emergence of a notion of aesthetics in management theorising and to offer some thoughts on how the relationship between aesthetics and management works. Of course, this is open to speculation but a number of strands can be identified.

Over the past twenty years or so the study of meaning in organizations, tacit knowledge, artefacts and cultures and other ways of *seeing* organizations have all influenced the emergence of a concern for the aesthetic aspects of organization. However, what this means in practice is more difficult to define. It would be wrong, for instance, to assume that such concerns are rooted in a desire for beauty, elegance, symmetry, and graceful form in the architecture or structures of organization. Rather, they are about different ways of seeing and construing the process of organizing, the meaning of artefacts, the power of symbols and the role of the senses. As Strati has argued, an “aesthetic understanding of organizational life.... is an epistemological metaphor which problematizes the rational ... analysis of organizations”, (Strati, 1999: 7).

The Turn to Aesthetics

In the Spring of 1999, Antonio Strati produced his impressive introduction to organizational aesthetics, *Organization and Aesthetics* (Strati, 1999). In it, he traces the various movements towards a systematic study of the aesthetics of organization over the previous two decades. Notably, Strati identifies the influence of the Standing Conference on Organizational Symbolism (SCOS) as one of the primary influences on the development of an interest in organizational aesthetics and points to the contribution of SCOS to the development of the field in the 1980s. The literature on organizational aesthetics has been dominated by SCOS members past and present during the period of its emergence as a subject of serious study within organizational theorising. In particular, it is possible to identify a conference on “corporate image” which was organized by Vincent Dégot in Antibes in 1985. This conference and others around that time which developed similar themes included the Third International Conference on Organizational Symbolism and Corporate Culture which was held in Milan in 1987. This conference was organised by Pasquale Gagliardi and considered the physical aspects of organisation including buildings, objects, settings and products. This conference resulted in a book which was to become significant and influential in the development of the notion of organisational aesthetics: *Symbols and Artifacts: Views of the Corporate Landscape* (Gagliardi, 1992).



Antonio Strati, Trento 2006

First in 1995 and then again in 1999, with Stephen Linstead, I organized two conferences on the *Aesthetics of Organization* at The Egerton House Hotel in Bolton. These two conferences were part of a series of conferences on alternative perspectives on organizational life including *After Dark*, a conference on the night-time economy, *Symbols of Oppression*, a conference given over to an examination of artefacts and their meanings, and *The Production of Consumption*, an exploration of the nature and consequences of consumption. However, the most popular conferences were those which examined organizations and aesthetics. Consequently, it was by request that in 1999 we held *Aesthetics II* which coincided with the publication of papers, from the first conference, *The Aesthetics of Organization*, (Linstead and Höpfl, 1999). What was apparent in the production of this collection of papers was the very different ways in which organization theorists were using the notion of the aesthetic in their work. Some papers, for example, dealt with aesthetic theory, with how theoretical positions derived from the study of aesthetics might be used in a management context; others

were concerned with aesthetic processes, with the aesthetics of organizational interactions of all types; yet again, other studies examined aesthetics and modes of analysis, with how aesthetics might contribute to ways of studying organizations. Some papers took up the relationship between aesthetics and the study of identity while others proposed a radical aesthetics for examining change. Clearly, even without an attempt to define the relationship between aesthetics and organizations, a range of possible ways of describing the relationship began to emerge.

For many years Pierre Guillet de Monthoux has been an influential figure in bringing together aesthetics and organizational theorizing. He is well known for this contribution to arts events and for his encouragement of an aesthetic appreciation of organizations. Guillet de Monthoux is often at the centre of arts and aesthetics events related to management across Europe. This has included his well-known MBA (Master of Business Arts) event at the gallery *Haus am Lutzoplatz* in Berlin which brought together academics, artists and performers for a week of arts activities and discussion.

In 2000, Antonio Strati and Pierre Guillet de Monthoux organized a workshop on Aesthetics in Siena. The conference was convened in a former monastery now owned by the University of Siena and all papers were presented under the aegis of an early fresco of the Last Supper painted over a vaulted arch. Again, this conference opened up a range of issues which related to processes, symbols, artefacts and meanings. Subsequently, Strati and Guillet de Monthoux organized two workshops on art and aesthetics in Gattieres, France (2003, 2007). These workshops involved installation art, performances and academic papers and continued the elaboration of themes and applications linking aesthetics to management.

Nowadays, there are a number of centres where work on aesthetics is being conducted. In Denmark, the Learning Lab in Copenhagen has specialised in art, drama and aesthetics in organizations to create both a theoretical and practical contribution to organizations. At my own university, Essex, the Essex Management Centre has art and management as one of its primary areas of research interest. My colleagues, Ian King and Ceri Watkins organize the Art of Management conference which is held every two years and attracts a large number of participants. In 2002, they held the conference in London in conjunction with Tate Modern, in 2004 it was held in Paris and included a reception at the Pompidou Centre. The 2006 conference was held in Krakow in Poland and in 2008 it will be held at the Banff Centre in Canada. What has been different about this series of conferences has been the involvement of practitioners, artists and performers. In Paris, participants were met at registration by two women jewellery makers who provided the wherewithal to make a unique conference badge. There were plays and art exhibitions and various installations. I will say a little more about this later. In Krakow, as well as several pieces of art work being produced during the course of the conference, there was also craft, graffiti and *parcour* [parkour]. The involvement of so many artists made this conference a vivid and colourful event but what was perhaps distinctive was the mutual level contribution from artists and academics. Often artists contribute to the periphery of a conference or are invited to speak about their work in a way which is largely ancillary to the main theme of the conference. In 2007, Ian King and Ceri

Watkins launched a new journal *Aesthesis* which is dedicated to original work in aesthetics and management. They are now about to launch a project (2008), *Aesthesis-CREATE*, largely funded by business which will invite proposals from artists for art projects which link to organizations throughout the world. In this respect, it is important to understand that aesthetics and management have any number of points of contact but all have relevance to practice and offer new insights into business and management.

Above all, however, the main point about the notion of an aesthetic appreciation of organizations is the contribution which it makes to an understanding of work life. One of the striking aspects of the range of papers submitted to the various conferences on aesthetics is the way that the absence of aesthetics in work organizations seems to predominate. Even where research focuses on aesthetic design there is usually some reference to an absence which can be considered as relevant to an understanding of aesthetic practice. In other words, good design is not necessarily associated with what recipients might describe as aesthetic experience. Research studies tend to draw attention to a lack of aesthetic judgement, to an absence of elegance in design, to a range of ways in which organizations can be criticized for a lack of aesthetic sensitivity. Attention to aesthetics then draws such absence into prominence. Aesthetics, according to Guillet de Monthoux, widens the discourse of creativity to the topic of interpretation (Guillet de Monthoux, 1999). It destabilises conventional understandings and opens up the possibility of new ways of seeing organizations.

In short, it seems that the study of aesthetics brings new insights into work life. In part, SCOS opened the agenda by concerning itself with the symbolic aspects of organization and rapidly became a forum for critical and post-structuralist ideas and theorising. In Kristeva's terms, SCOS opened up the space between the Body and the Law, "the catastrophic fold of being" (*Tales of Love*). In other words, the space between the functionalist - the management as control view of the world - and the sensual, poetic, processual aspects of organization. These early discussions began to consider work from a different perspective and to offer imaginative perspectives on working life, organizational behaviour, and management practice. As a result, organization theorists became more interested in the workplace, in the working environment and in labouring bodies. It is not surprising that in this context, an interest in aesthetics began to emerge.

What is apparent is that over a period of over twenty years there have been concerted attempts to produce a notion of organizational aesthetics either:

- for the study of organizations from an aesthetic perspective
- as aesthetics of organizations – concerned with design, work environments, ambiance
- as a critical standpoint from which to theorize

Of course, one question which is often asked is why this concern with aesthetic aspects of organizations has come about. In part, this is reflected in the decision by founder members of the Standing Conference on Organizational Symbolism to differentiate themselves from the European Group for Organization Studies. SCOS took the feminine position to the (then) masculine posturing of EGOS. SCOS

concerned itself with different ways of seeing organizations, with the symbolic, with how meaning is created and manipulated in organizations and by whom. However, why this constellation of interests came about is more difficult to specify. It is, in part, reflected in the interests of early members of the group in psycho-analytical approaches to the analysis of behaviour, in European philosophy, art and art criticism, photography, music and drama. What is perhaps most striking is the way in which the concern with aesthetics registers as a resistance to the status quo. Ironically, this tends to support the view that the aesthetic turn in management emerged from a reception aesthetic to conventional management theory.

However, not only were these interests a resistance to the tidy world of management and organizational theorizing as it was in the early 1980s but also to the dull, dry world of the management text book which holds little appeal to anyone who is actually familiar with organizations and has experienced them first hand. Similarly, the standard management text book completely ignores the complexity of work and management practice. I have taught many MBA students who regard the conventional management text as a necessary evil rather than a useful reflection of the business world. Of course, it is necessary to break down business practices into digestible pieces but this inevitably takes away the visceral reaction, for example, the fear of work or of a working for a domineering manager; of ugly work-places and intimidating organizational structures. In the ordered world of the management text book, the sensual appears to have neither location nor acknowledgement. Another area which has produced a response is in the area of performance definition, measurement and control. The period in which aesthetics has come to prominence has coincided with an increasing metrification of organizational processes and performance. It has been a time of performance indicators, targets and metrics but this has produced a loss of contact with embodied experience. Nurses report their behaviour in terms of tasks achieved rather than in therapeutic terms. Patients and their care become subordinated to the efficient measurement of performance. In education too, the same pattern has been observed with an insistent commitment to student care at the same time that massive increases in student numbers have ensured that such commitment is barely feasible. In both cases, there is an emphasis on the text to the exclusion of the body. Not surprisingly then the interest in aesthetics can be seen as a resistance to:

- Crude utilitarian theories of organizations and organizational behaviour
- A world reduced to simple statistical measures
- One dimensional accounts of organizational life and simple “case-studies”
- An absence of the senses and embodied experience
- A culture of performance measurement and monitoring
- Matrix structures and other definitional simplicities
- Naive change strategies
- An absence of compassion
- Rationality privileged in theories of organizing
- A view of organizations in which “people skills” are only relevant to the extent that they support organizational objectives
- A commitment to continuous improvement which implies a loss of contact with the moment.

In *The Handbook of Organization Studies* Pasquale Gagliardi's ([1996] 2006) says:

There is a growing body of literature on aesthetic themes, one in which systematic reflection is conducted on the relationships between these and organization (..... Strati 1999) and between art and management (Guillet de Monthoux 2004); there are research anthologies as well as special journal issues (*Organization* 3/2, 1996; Linstead and Höpfl, 2000; *Human Relations* 55/7, 2002), which have resulted from seminars and conferences expressly devoted to analysis of the methodological implications of taking an aesthetic approach to the study of organizations.

Moreover, Antonio Strati (2007) has identified the concern with aesthetics in management as being part of a "passionate" methodological-epistemological debate which involves a "*new methodological awareness*" - rather than a set of methodological techniques in the study. This he sets in the context of a "*new humanism*" in organizational and work practices or at least in the desire for such a thing. However, he also comments on the stages of the development of an interest in aesthetics to argue that the late 1980s saw a concern with what he terms "archaeological" approaches to aesthetics and attempts to identify and apply aesthetic theory to organizational behaviour. The 1990s, he defines in terms of an "aesthetic approach" which involves attempts to restore the senses to organizational theorizing and finally he speaks in terms of an "artistic" approach which he argues has characterised the early years of the twenty first century. However, this particular framing of the recent history of aesthetics and management might result from the prevalence of art and management as a visible manifestation of the aesthetic turn. Certainly, at the University of Essex we have a number of artists, poets and a drama therapist who are all undertaking doctoral work in management from the perspective of art.

One, Anna Scaffi, an actor and artist has been examining the thesis as a work of art. Anna Scaffi who worked with Antonio Strati at the University of Trento, Italy has an impressive record of work in the arts which is of direct relevance to management. I first became acquainted with her work when she contacted me about a stream I was running at the Art of Management conference in London in 2002 on the Violence of Framing. This was a term used by Derrida in *The Truth in Painting* (1987) to highlight the specific problems of definition and capture by framing. As a concept, this idea had direct relevance to framing within organizations and gave impetus to the analysis of how such frames are created and maintained. In 2004 in Paris, Anna Scaffi undertook a piece of performance art in which she taped off an entire section of the auditorium where participants in the conference were sitting watching a performance of a play. The audience were cut off by yellow police crime scene tape: they were framed and defined. At EGOS in Berlin in 2005, she erected a wall of books over three feet high which blocked off a corridor in the main conference building.



2005 “Free University” at the 21th EGOS Colloquium “Unlocking Organizations”, Free University of Berlin, Berlin, Germany

Anna Scalfi’s recent work has involved a flags. She took seventy five flags, the national flags of seventy five countries, and cut them down to the proportion of women’s participation in national government. After a procession of flags of all nations these remnants were exhibited around a gallery, first in Milan and then in Rovereto, some tri-colours were reduced to monochromes. It is possible to see that Anna Scalfi’s work operates on (*at least*) two levels. She is working with concepts, for example, framing and definition, cutting and diminishing and at the same time she is working with issues: restrictions on education, definitions of learning and so forth in Berlin, women’s participation in government in her recent exhibition. This makes her work readily accessible to both organization theorists and practicing managers with whom Scalfi’s art makes immediate contact both intellectually and viscerally.



Anna Scalfi 2007 Rovereto

The Berlin artist, Henrik Schrat, is also a doctoral student at the University of Essex. He has worked in many countries from Canada to India and, like Anna Scalfi, has a

conceptual approach to his work. His doctoral thesis which is presently planned to be submitted in part in comic book style deals with an exhibition he held at The Slade. Although organizations are familiar with the concept of the *artist-in-residence* in industry and commerce, Schrat takes the unusual step of envisaging the *manager-in-residence* and considers what this role might mean through a range of different media. These range from the mere presence of the manager in the art school, to an exhibition, film and photography. Again, it is the conceptual aspect of Schrat's work which makes it accessible to managers. Already a successful professional artist and, by implication, manager of his own projects, Henrik Schrat has an immediate connection with management ideas and processes which he can communicate both through his art work and his own management experience.



Henrik Schrat's *Manager in Residence*

However, the aesthetic approach at Essex is not confined to artists and actors. Sumohon Matilal is an accountant but his thesis on visual narratives of Bhopal considers the aspects of the Bhopal disaster which statements of final accounts and cost-benefit analysis studies ignore. This type of work is typical of an aesthetic approach in the study of management and organizational theory as it uses an ethnographic methodology but gives particular attention to the visual and the sensual. In a similar way, Jun Luo is working on the stigmata of organizations, the wounding effects of organizational life, the pain of labour. She is concerned with the absence of *flesh* in studies of organizations. Matthew Trustman, a drama therapist from Roehampton Institute is also undertaking a doctoral research at Essex and looking at school management using photo-ethnographic techniques and an analysis of space in school buildings. Achilles Karayiannis's thesis looks at dramaturgical performances in air-line cabin crew and he has also been working with a Cypriot theatre company in order to compare notions of performance in both settings while Przemyslaw Piatkowski has been making a *prayerful* ethnographic study of Opus Dei. Sarah Horne, an MBA lecturer at Colchester Institute, is examining leadership behaviour in terms of charismatic performance and the management of meaning and so forth. Christine MacKay, a lecturer at Nottingham Trent University is just completing a

thesis on *haunting* in organizations – memories and spectres of staff who have retired or been removed: a metaphysical study of absence. All of these and other students in the Essex Management Centre draw on aesthetic analysis in their approaches to their study. Some take particular interest in aesthetic presentation, or aesthetic theories, while others take an interest in aesthetic performance or aesthetic judgement.

In the Autumn of 2006, I was invited to spend my sabbatical leave in Trento working with Antonio Strati and his students at the University of Trento. This was a rare experience. Trento is a beautiful town and I was provided with an attractive flat with views over the river. As part of my time at the university I taught on the Masters programme and worked with the doctoral students. This was very enjoyable but one of the most interesting aspects of my time in Trento involved working with the research team lead by Antonio Strati which sought to bring an aesthetic analysis to various pieces of empirical research. One of the most interesting of these was a piece of work directed by Alberto Zanutto which examined the work of a specialized military force and was conducted via ethnographic observation and interviews. The aesthetics issue was concerned with how members of this military force manage their institutional performance, with the way in which they develop trust in the team, and how humour becomes a vital element of their performance. Alberto Zanutti explained how starting from the metaphor of dance, and mediated through the personal experience of the researcher, this study explored the rhythm of action. Consequently, the study came to focus on the aesthetics of movement, metaphors, performance, reliability, and rhythm. Researchers found to their surprise that the movements of the military group were choreographed even balletic.

Another Trento study involved a hospital in Rome that specialises in hearing and speech disorders. Again, the methodology was ethnographic, with interviews, and the analysis of documents. Here the aesthetics issue concerned whether or not an artist could “become” involved in the research process in the same way as a sociologist. This study showed that although the hospital staff valued the contributions of the artist, it was not ready for this kind of contribution. The artist’s contribution was always secondary to the formulation of the problem as a medical “problem” which required a medical “solution”. Under the direction of Antonio Strati, researchers in Trento did five different “*aesthetic*” studies of organizations and concluded that aesthetic theories, analysis and judgement did have a contribution to make to organization studies.

I have been a Visiting Professor at the University for Humanistics (UvH) in Utrecht for several years and have worked on the doctoral programme with many of their students. The doctoral programme at UvH under the direction of Hugo Letiche is well-conceived and aimed at mature, practicing managers. This approach works very well and students are encouraged to adopt methodologies which work best from their own personal standpoint and work interests. Consequently, two doctorates which were awarded in 2007 had a strong aesthetic dimension. One piece of work was that of a senior consultant with KPC Group, Ton Bruining, who undertook to write his thesis on the police as a detective novel, “I found it strange to have an appointment with the police in a building that looked like a big squat”.... His thesis is written in a curious Runyonesque style: a delight to read unlike so many doctoral theses. Chris

Kuijper's thesis is more directly located in an aesthetic tradition. It deals with his work in a therapeutic situation and with the way the therapist-client relationship can be represented artistically. His defence includes the presence of the works of art which have been produced as part of the process. They are not his work so they do not form part of the thesis as presented but they illustrate the work and the institutional processes they depict.

What I have offered here are some brief examples of emerging work in the aesthetic tradition. They demonstrate the ways in which aesthetics is influencing thinking in organizational theorising. In Essex, Trento and Utrecht there is work which is significantly affected by its commitment to what is considered to be an aesthetic approach to research. However, there are several other places where similar work is going on. The American actor and director Steve Taylor has made a valuable contribution to theorising about organizations through plays he has written and directed to explore organizational themes such as power, gender and capitalism. Similarly, the work of David Boje in New Mexico has exposed organizations such as Nike and McDonalds through what Boje has termed *the theatre of capitalism*. Chris Steyaert and Daniel Hjorth have presented plays at several conferences and have delighted audiences with their perceptive engagement with philosophical ideas through the medium of theatre. Stefan Meisiek in Lisbon is also someone with an interest in the use of drama to explore ideas. Finally, I must mention David Barry who is the inspiration for the Arts, Aesthetics and Creativity in Organization Research Network (AACORN). This large network of international scholars in management, creativity theorists and practitioners, artists, poets, drama teachers, actors, and therapists share information about events and engage in debate about the role of art/aesthetics in management theory and practice.

To summarise then, the past twenty five years have witnessed a growing interest in aesthetic aspects of organizations. This is because management theories and management text books are often ugly, inelegant, and deficient in terms of human experience. Ironically, they mirror a world of work which is functional, imperial in its encroachment into all areas of life, subject to performance metrics and a world which has lost contact the senses. Consequently, both the experience and the text are deficient and unsatisfying. However, this should not be confused with a desire for completion and symmetry. Critical Management scholars also have a deep mistrust of the construction of appearances. Consequently, the production of an elegant set of final accounts, or a report on "the quality of student experience", hospital waiting lists, A level results, unemployment statistics is regarded as a cause for suspicion and not celebration. The aesthetic approach, particularly when combined with ethnographic and photo-ethnographic approaches seemed to offer a rich alternative to conventional methods of theorizing about organizations especially where they are able to go beyond appearances and to expose the fallacy of superficial management assumptions.

Of course, expressed in this way, there is something of a contradiction in the commitment to an aesthetics of organizing. On the one hand, there is the desire for the restoration of the body, the sensual, the graceful flow as against the linear imperative, the structured solution, the merely logical. But alongside of this, there is

the fear of completion, of logo-centric capture, appropriation: of an ugly project – beautifully presented, a bureaucratic aesthetic – elegant but devoid of sensuality. However, this said, an aesthetics of organizing is about finding ways to remind ourselves of our humanity, about ways of organizing which sustain the body and cherish the soul. After all, the word company comes from the Latin *com + panis, to take bread* with, here is a notion of organization which might produce community as well as results. Well, of course, this is idealistic and might seem to have little to do with formal studies of aesthetics but perhaps it is a start.

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Turning toward the aesthetic, turning away from responsibility

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Art and social critic Hal Foster (2002) once suggested that much cultural autonomy — Kraus’s (1912) ‘running room’ (*Spielraum*) — has collapsed into a world where “everything from jeans to genes seems to be regarded as so much *design*” (17). For Foster, this ‘total design’ has co-opted the semi-autonomy of art and architecture and placed society in a narcissistic loop of hybrid aestheticism from which its members cannot escape. In this sense, Foster suggests art and life have finally connected but “according to the spectacular dictates of the culture industry, not [by] the libratory ambitions of the avant-garde” (19). Foster traces this conflation to its roots in Art Nouveau’s pledge to *Gesamtkunstwerk* or ‘total work’ and the Bauhaus’s¹ attempts to mediate modernity by transplanting aesthetic concepts about beauty, through fitness of form, into mass produced objects. These two instances of aesthetic and utilitarian conflation are unique, however, only insofar as they occurred within the burgeoning market-driven juggernaut remaking society in the late 19th and early 20th Century. Throughout history, for good or ill, in large and small ways, fine and applied artists have been called upon to turn their aesthetic endeavors towards larger social ends, the primary variable being the cultural milieu, ideology, or political force pressing them into service (Carroll, 1998) — art endowed with moral content (Armstrong, 2003) or propaganda valorizing state imperatives (Devereaux, 1998), for example.

In response to these traditional social or political expectations, modern artists and designers have sought to create their own running room: new worlds “operating according to [their] own aesthetic laws and universals” (Weston, 1996:89). During the same modernist period in which the Bauhaus was recasting society’s relationship with industrialization by forging links between aesthetics and utility, many avant-garde artists were simultaneously attempting to reform society and recalibrate their role within it. Establishing a tradition of the new, many avant-garde artists including Futurist, Constructivist, Vorticist, and Dadaist,

...claimed the right to be true to their inner selves, to ignore outmoded traditions and social mores, to transgress inhibiting academic conventions as they responded to the exhilarating changes around them (Weston, 1996:89).

Meanwhile, applied artists of the time were also claiming the right to turn away from existing social conventions or established economic dependencies. In 1927 for example, many of the key figures shaping pan-European modernist design formed a professional alliance — *der ring ‘neue werbegestalter’* (The Circle of ‘New

Advertising Designers’) — in part to aestheticized technology’s precise rhythms but more importantly according to László Moholy-Nagy, to become “part of the foundation on which the *new world* would be built” (n.d.:38).

It is clear that the tug-of-war between aesthetic concerns and social responsibility, communication designers share common ground with other artists in their attempts to reconcile autonomy with responsibility. Artists and now designers stand within a larger tradition of social involvement while at the same time living with their more recent antipathies toward it. Responding to social upheavals, rapid industrialization, and creeping materialism, the two groups sought new or recasting of existing *raisons d’ être*: for artists, idiosyncratic formal self-expression; for designers, commercial engagement and market validation.

Thus, both groups find themselves at the center of the recurrent debate over the artist’s proper social role, duties, and obligations. For many, artists should enjoy unrestricted social autonomy. Grounding their belief in the assertion (e.g., Beardsley, 1981; Bell, 1914; Lamarque & Olsen, 1994) that artwork — being in large part an amalgam of aesthetic properties, experiences, and attitudes — can only reach its full measure when unencumbered by the world of practical, moral affairs (e.g., Bullough, 1912). Conversely, others believe artwork pivotal to cultural ideals, behavior and values. Marxists (Lukács, 1963; Marcuse, 1977), cultural conservatives (Hoekema, 1991), and feminists (Gablick, 1984; Lippard, 1983) for instance. Although holding marketed different perspectives about the matter, these groups nonetheless agree that artists are responsible to society in some fashion.

In order to better understand this relationship and its moral implications, this essay will consider communication designers: applied artists whose actions have both subtle and acute social significance. To that end, evidence supporting the assertion that these designers are aesthetically biased will be offered. Specifically, that this group embraces formal, neo-formal, and functional aesthetic sensibilities in their values and discourse — an aesthetic posture that raises hard questions. For example, is it morally problematic to valorize formal visual qualities irrespective of the messages they lionize? When creating visually compelling artifacts that nevertheless promote unsustainable lifestyles or gloss the activities of environmentally questionable companies, are designers not unlike other artists who diminish society by aesthetically polishing its pernicious elements — Riefenstahlⁱⁱ or Hamsunⁱⁱⁱ for instance. Or, does applauding the relationship between content and its aesthetic embodiment not ignore the formed content’s nature or the broader effects it may induce? Is appreciating a design work’s ability to fulfill its function merely commending its instrumentality with little regards to the ends at which this agency is aimed? Moreover, beyond informing their practice, does the primacy of aesthetics in designer’s discourse limit the conversation’s ability to engage broader social issues or concerns? In this context are questions about the whether or not the discipline’s broader principle values are tied to social goals intelligible? In effect, is aestheticism’s centrality in these public discussions and debate — unquestioned and thus largely imperceptible — framing morally clipped normative standards or perspectives? With these types of questions in mind, communication designers’ aesthetic posture will then be reconsidered in light of two correlative moral rubrics: artistic accountability (Cheatwood, 1982) and social

responsibility (Berleant, 1977). This juxtaposition will illuminate the ways in which this creative community uses its aestheticism to limit ideals, shape dialogue, and serve private rather than public ends — ignoring what many might consider forms of artistic responsibility: “a social ethic of a kind that relates specifically to human relationships ... a demand put upon the individual by others” (Tisdale, 1996:253).

In its closing, this essay will suggest that while the debate over aesthetic autonomy and artistic responsibility remains unsettled, insights derived from examining the ways in which designers use aestheticism to limit their artistic responsibilities are useful insofar as they can be generalized across a broader artistic range and can add to the discourse surrounding art, aesthetics and social responsibility.

Good design, bad design: aesthetic perspectives

Communication designers busy themselves with transforming mental constructs into tangible, reproducible forms of identification, information, and persuasion. “The vast majority of people come into contact with [these] designs as consumers learning to discern among [their] innumerable offerings” (Blauvelt, 2003:14). For non-designers, these objects distinguish themselves instrumentally rather than intrinsically — signage directing, manuals explaining, brochures selling, or labels displaying. Despite the ephemeral functionality of their artifacts, designers nonetheless keep score: fretting endlessly over what they believe to be their work’s intrinsic merit. These concerns are both animated and limited by this group’s core belief that their artifact’s value — its style or beauty or fitness — should be determined in large part using aesthetic sensibilities rather than by other means.

In this sense designers have adopted particular perspectives of or philosophies about aesthetic properties, attitudes and experiences. Aesthetic properties are sometimes thought to be objective: a work’s sensuous appearance, expressive properties, and formal visual relations. They may also be considered relational properties insofar as they are thought partially constituted by viewer involvement. This attention to the aesthetic object constitutes an aesthetic attitude while aesthetic experiences describe the engagement between absorbed subject and aesthetic object. More importantly for designers, aesthetic sensibilities can also be concerns for how well form embodies content or fits function. Evidence for these aesthetic biases or perspectives can be found in the ways designers valorize their work and prioritize their public discourse.

Like other professionals, designers promote practice standards through peer review. Unlike many of these groups, however, designers produce tangible artifacts open to external scrutiny. As a result, peer assessments focus more often on designed objects than on their creators and more often than not occur during the many annual worldwide design competitions^{iv} and within the pages of national and international trade publications.^v While each event or publication is unique in its entry procedures, judging, and awards, in most instances all employ aesthetic standards to frame admissions, review entries, and laud winners. For example, designers entering professional competitions routinely submit work accompanied by entry forms that rarely allow for more than the most cursory entry information: attributive, biographical, and so forth. This prescribed brevity neither compels entrants nor allows judges to consider what Novitz (1995) terms messages found *through* the work:

“certain widely held beliefs and values that surround its production and display ... the social space works occupy” (85). Absent broader social, ethnographic, or ethical contextualization, design competition judges have little on which to base their decisions beyond aesthetic qualities or what Carroll (1999) calls ‘design appreciation’.

As a result, judging often defaults to one or more of the following aesthetic sensibilities: formal or a designed form’s visual characteristics and their relationships; neo-formal or a designed form’s ability to embody content; and functional or a designed form’s ability to bring about intended ends (Carroll, 1999; Goodman, 2001). This truncated contextualization in turn leads to designed artifacts being viewed as “... isolated formal esthetic expression ... emphasizing the esthetic sensibility of the individual designer” (Tyler, 1992:21). Design competition judges are not unique in this respect either. Other design professionals viewing the published results of these competitions do so under similar constraints. Formal, neo-formal, or functionally sophisticated design works, displayed with little or no commentary, often enfold their viewers within an isolated aesthetic celebration.

The preponderance of design competitions that laud design work chiefly for its surface visual appeal or ability to match meaning or ends with suitable form is evidence of this creative community’s marked aesthetic focus. Other evidence of this *zeitgeist* can also be found in seminal design publications and on popular design web logs. Many professional designers in the United States and around the world consider *Communication Arts* (CA),^{vi} *Print*,^{vii} and *Graphis*^{viii} essential reading. Collectively the three publications represent a well-established public forum within which the professional design community expresses its values and clarifies its standards. In this capacity, these magazines become prisms for the attitudes and beliefs of their readership, their editorial focus reflecting this group’s concerns. For many designers, these concerns often reflect a keen interest in what could properly be considered formal, neo-formal, or functional aesthetics.

For instance, a recent visit to CA’s website^{ix} found 54 stories spread across its main feature section and five recurring columns. Of those stories, 21 or 39 percent focused on aesthetic sensibilities, creativity, or self-expression while only ten or 18.5 percent centralized social, cultural or ethical concerns. This apparent bias towards aesthetics is neither new nor unique to CA’s online presence. In 2000 for example, CA published 144 articles and columns in its magazine. Of those, two or just .013 percent took up social, moral or ethical concerns. The vast majority of articles that year (and years subsequently) focused on instrumental aesthetic creativity or business best practices by visually showcasing design work and its creators: design firms or designers, photographers, illustrators, typographers and other creative professionals. The same widespread bias towards formal, neo-formal, or functional aesthetics and business pragmatics is also evident in past and present issues of *Graphis* and *Print*. Although central to their existence, these magazines’ readers do not directly dictate their editorial content. Thus any widespread focus on aesthetic concerns rather than social responsibility or other competing concerns is as much a part of editorial oversight and commercial realities as it is reader interest. Less so with web logs — the interests and biases of these ‘blogs’, their authors, and readers are largely

synonymous. What concerns are being voiced on popular communication design web logs?

Started in 2003 by well-known designers^x Michael Bierut, William Drenttel, and Jessica Helfand along with design critic Rick Poynor^{xi} the blog *Design Observer*^{xii} characterizes itself as a forum for commentary on design and culture. Another respected blog is *Speak Up*^{xiii} founded in 2002 by Armin Vit.^{xiv} Shaped by Vit and authors Marian Bantjes, Bryony Gomez-Palacio, Randy J. Hunt, M. Kingsley, Jimm Lasser, Tan Le, Debbie Millman, Gunnar Swanson, Jason A. Tselentis, and David Weinberger, *Speak Up*'s mission in part states that it aspires to:

...further the graphic design profession from within with the goal of creating a stronger and clearer sense of what our role is as professionals endowed with the duty of creating social, cultural, political and/or economical communications ... (Vit, 2007, 1)

Clearly *Design Observer* and *Speak Up* both share a belief in the connection between design, culture, and society. Thus each site's archives are illuminating insofar as their topology frames discussions about these relationships, and their content reflects the interest in them expressed by each site's respective authors and readers. The *Design Observer*'s 1000+ post archive is organized into 32 categories of which eight have some apparent link to broader social concerns: cities and places, culture, education, history, politics, religion, science, and technology. Of these, only two could be considered overtly normative or prescriptive in nature — politics and religion. *Speak Up*'s 1200+ post archive boasts 22 categories of which two reach beyond design proper: design academics and international. Neither topic carries overt normative or prescriptive weight. If each site's archival structure frames discussions in certain non-prescriptive ways, the content of these discussions, and their relative weighting, reflect similar sentiments. This normative perspective becomes evident when a selective keyword search^{xv} is conducted to mine each site's respective archival history and culture. The results would clearly show that although numerous posts residing in the *Design Observer* and *Speak Up* archives address social responsibility or related themes (106 and 165 respectively), a substantially larger group of posts archived on the two blogs (713 and 828 respectively) voice aesthetic concerns.

Granted, a cursory review of professional design competitions coupled with a limited assessment of design magazines or web logs offers little more than a glimpse into a complex belief system framed by aesthetics. Moreover, it could be argued that even if designers are biased towards formal, neo-formal, and functional aesthetics, it does not necessarily follow that their aestheticism is incommensurate with or antipathetic towards the idea of artistic responsibility. Many early modernist designers, for instance, believed that a rationally focused aestheticism could effect positive social change (Ewen, 2003; Jobling & Crowley, 1996; Whiteley, 1993). Moreover, this sentiment continues to be echoed by scores of contemporary design practitioners (Heller & Vienne, 2003; Bierut, Drenttel & Heller, 2002). Nevertheless, when consideration is given to the ideals or entities to which communication designers believe they are responsible and the reasons why — it becomes plain that despite their

best intentions, this group often privileges the aesthetic qualities of its works while downplaying its social implications and the designer's artistic responsibilities.

Good design, bad design: moral perspectives

The previous section offered evidence suggesting that communication designers often value their work aesthetically — formally, neo-formally, and functionally — rather than by other means. These three aesthetic sensibilities in turn reflect a corresponding connection to and undivided concern for designers, their profession, and their clients. Can these correlations diminish vital interests in social responsibilities? Yes, and to see why, designers' aestheticism will be further explicated through the application of Cheatwood's (1982) five-part model of artistic accountability and Berleant's (1977) moral framework. Cheatwood developed his model to account for "the paradox of the [private] artist [operating] in a public world" (71), Berleant his list when systematizing "the moral issues that center around the artist as an individual" (195).

Designers' concern for formal aesthetic properties is an interest in their work's expressive or sensuous properties and visual relations. Thus, attention to or engagement with these properties constitutes for them an aesthetic experience (Goldman, 2001; Carroll, 1999). In one sense, designers' interest in formal aestheticism could be viewed as simple design appreciation or connoisseurship. They, like others, possessing refined tastes or special visual training recognize that certain objects including their own can reward close aesthetic apprehension. Regardless of how it is viewed, however, this attitude has implications beyond formal aesthetic appreciation. Recast in Cheatwood's (1982) third and fourth accountability models, formal aesthetic appreciation is also one way in which designers, wittingly or not, "place the responsibility of the artist outside any specific social institution" (78). This separation occurs because formalized aesthetic appreciation in part rests on the modern belief that artists are primarily responsible to art (*l'art pour l'art*) or to their own personal creative self-concept. In Cheatwood's sense, artist (or designers) are accountable to art insofar as they are vessels through which the ultimate intangible 'art' moves itself forward through history. Thus, "the artist is not accountable in the public realm. Rather, the public realm ... is responsible to [and should support] the ultimate truth — or beauty — of art" (79). A modern artist may also feel that they are "... ultimately responsible only to [their] personal construction of self, with the art produced being a reflection of that self" (Cheatwood, 1982:79). Berleant (1977) echoes this sentiment by suggesting that there exist moral claims "that apply uniquely to artists since the demands derive from the peculiar character of the tasks and powers of artists" (196). According to him, this obligation urges artists (including designers) toward artistic sincerity: to follow paths charted by their work and creative impulse however contentious. Berleant believes this obligation to art — a specialized form of truth telling — eclipses social morality. In both senses, however, public accountability is diminished when primacy is given to aesthetic rather than to social concerns.

For instance, arguments for artistic autonomy often "assume the automatic benefit of the artistic enterprise to the social welfare" (Berleant, 1977:197) or more broadly in a simultaneity between art's flourishing and the world's. A contentious assumption to be sure but more so when applied to the highly commercialized artifacts created by

designers. It is often not the case that the obvious consumerist ends to which aesthetically pleasing designed artifacts aspire benefit society. Nor are the environmental or social degradations often attributed to many of the commercial enterprises aestheticized by communication designers. Furthermore, a singular celebration of design work's intrinsic aesthetic properties ignores the commercial or instrumental desire that brought the work into existence or the plurality of consequences that might result from its existence or agency. Thus, to adopt a largely disinterested or sympathetic attention to a work's formal aesthetic properties — out of loyalty to art's metaphysic or a need for self-expression — is to minimize its agency and corresponding ethical concerns for effects the work may have in or on the practical, moral, or social world. If formal aesthetic sensibilities tie communication designers to metaphysical expression or self-actualization, neo-formal aesthetic sensibilities also curtail this group's social concerns by reinforcing their understanding of the good as forms of peer and professional recognition.

Neo-formal aestheticism recognizes content as well as form but concedes primacy to neither. Rather, this artistic sensibility is relational: valuing the ways in which content and form are united in an aesthetically satisfyingly manner. Where meaning is identifiable, a determination can be made whether content has been skillfully embodied (or successfully designed). Thus, neo-formal aestheticism gives design practitioners what they believe is an objective rather than subjective standard against which they can assess their work's suitability and excellence; critical for a profession that determines standing through peer review (Keedy, 2003 & 2002). Moreover, by evaluating their works in this manner, communication design broadcasts what appears to be an intelligible standard for excellence and its assessment. Thus, the external audiences on whom these designers depend for economic survival could view the profession as one filled with objective practitioners employing rational means to determine whether they are effectively solving the problems in which they are engaged; also critical for a group aspiring to a professional social status akin to architects or engineers (Martin, 2000).

Communication design's reliance on neo-formal aestheticism is much like Cheatwood's (1982) second accountability model — an artist's responsibility to 'artistic' structures in society. In this model, "Artists are accountable not to the agencies that sponsor their work but only to the elite structure of art within society" (77). Designers claim elite status for their profession by virtue of their reliance on the rational nature of neo-formal aestheticism. The same aesthetic posture is used in attempts to elevate the profession in the eyes of external audiences. This reliance on neo-formal aestheticism places designers under Berleant's (1977) second moral obligation. This claim entails demands made on all artists by virtue of "the distinctive features of their profession and that which gives them a certain significance and control ..." (197). Implicit in this claim is the recognition of this group as one having a distinct social role by virtue of their unique contributions and the effects these actions may precipitate. Thus, this moral stance distinguishes between personal and professional morality, professional morality being "... the shared mandatory [moral] requirements developed as a consensus within a profession and imposed on all its members equally" (Martin, 2000:32). However, if in this distinctive social role designers enjoy differentiated internal moral status, they also labor under the external

moral expectations society places on those to whom it awards specialized roles. Society grants this dispensation believing professionals — apart from their specific callings — collectively promote or protect the public trust.

In light of this second moral demand, designers' self-professed professional standing^{xvi} should give them reason to reconsider their aesthetically motivated prescribed standards. A reliance on this closed value system to discern and promote professional excellence may diminish this group's ability to distinguish role-related public duties. Moreover, designers who claim aesthetic exemption from public accountability by virtue of being visual "conduits for ... the institutions to which they have pledged their allegiance" (Gibson, 2003:21) stand on shifting ground. In some instances, their concern for their clients' or their own private interests may run counter to the common good. Neo-formal aestheticism closes off designers and their artifacts from society by defining excellence in narrow ways resistant to shared concerns. The group's third aesthetic posture, functional aestheticism, does the same by encouraging practitioners to value private success over public good. Functional aestheticism is generative rather than descriptive or relational. It values aesthetic qualities that enable work to realize its intended function. Knowing that their work is instrumentally rather than intrinsically valuable, designers are acutely aware of and adept at manipulating formal qualities that further their work's point or purpose. That their work is purposeful poses no moral conundrums for designers *per se*. After all, many creative expressions exist for some 'reason' — moral, political, economic, or otherwise. However, when the private ends become aesthetic means, problems arise.

Communication design as a business is contingent. It exists in large part to serve the private needs of its clients and itself. Not surprisingly then, its practitioners seek to pragmatically align their self-interests with their clients' by creating work whose sole function or purpose is to ensure both parties respective success. However, to the degree that design ties its fortunes to and aesthetically supports these private goods, it too becomes a party to the criticism leveled at all those who subscribe to the contested and often disproved belief that private and public goods are largely synonymous or at least compatible. In their contingency and concomitant loyalty, communication designer's actions fall within the first of Cheatwood's (1982) five models of artistic accountability: that the artist has responsibility to their sponsoring agent or agency to the degree that the production of art is supported by any agent or individual external to the artist, one may reasonably expect some accountability for the resources expended in that sponsorship (72).

Artistic conflicts between accountability to sponsors and society, and designers' loyalty to their clients and its effects on the public good, find parallel expression in this model. For instance, Cheatwood suggest that this form of accountability creates antipathy between artist and mass audience. Loyal to patronage and the status it brings, artists come to view the common man derisively. Likewise, designers serving the private economic needs of their clients, often minimize concerns for the common man, the target audience, the consumer, the social group ultimately affected by functionally adept designed artifacts. In similar fashion when artists come to identify institutions within society as society, their work serves restricted rather than broader agendas. For instance, "when the artist is valued ... only to the extent to which he

serves the policies of the state, then his art is reduced to propaganda” (Alvarez, 1970:238). So too designers when they serve their clients private interests by creating works that may be aesthetically persuasive but socially irresponsible in a larger sense. In its day-to-day practice, with little or no self-examination, commercial design routinely aestheticizes ... hazardous ideas about the use of environmental resources, about the nature and concentration of power, and about the ordering of the values by which we live (Ewen, 2003:193).

Designers’ who privilege their own or clients’ private good at the expense of larger social imperatives also ignore Berleant’s first moral claim: obligations “that apply to everyone as a moral beings and therefore apply to artists” (196). Accordingly, all artists (including designers) stand under moral obligations that apply to them as persons living in and impinging on sociality. Thus, when questions arise over accountability or responsibility, designers’ adopted commercialized social role and any claims for immunity arising out of it are incidental rather than central to the situation, even if their questionable actions follow from that role. As coherent sovereign persons, these individuals share a common morality with all other moral beings. Taken as a whole then, the functional, formal and neo-formal aestheticism communication designers find so compelling appears to have a direct and some would say harmful bearing on the group’s generally accepted sense of social responsibility.

Hope remains for change, however. Despite this community’s widespread turn toward the aesthetic, many of its individual members continue to involve themselves in socially aware practice. Charity or pro-bono work, organizational affiliations, and spirited advocacy in support of public goods are evident throughout the profession (Heller & Vienne, 2003; Bierut, Drenttel & Heller, 2002; Margolin, 2002; Whiteley, 1993). Yet, these activities play out under an aesthetic mandate. Thus, a tension exists between the collective aestheticism that overarches the profession and its individualized ethical foundations.

Conclusion

While both sides in this debate share a common belief that operating *in* their role, artists *are* responsible *to* certain ideals, institutions, or persons, the further each of these two groups moves away from this central point the more divergent their thoughts become about the nature of these roles and responsibilities. For many, artists of all types must remain distinct from society in order to best serve human flourishing. For others, social morality should inform creativity’s free play. As members of this conflicted society, designers not surprisingly share similar moral uncertainties. Thus, no consensus exists within this group whether designers turn toward aesthetics and away from artistic responsibility places them under moral jeopardy. Moreover, an increasingly interconnected and complex world assures that few easy answers exist. Instead, the proliferation of movements and styles in the arts has coincided with the dissolution of widely supported social norms, and the dominance of commercial culture and political ideologies ... has charged an already ambiguous domain with new complexities (Berleant, 1977:195). Nevertheless, the fact remains that many designers, having adopted an aesthetic posture informed by modes of formalism and economic success, believe they can aestheticize commercial messages while ignoring their social implications. In a world increasingly filled with

commercialized, branded social transactions, this agency “folds society back into a system of contemporary consumerism” and creates “a new kind of narcissism, one that is all image” (Foster, 2002:25).

What lesson then does this position offer the many artists who, having adopted an aesthetic posture informed by formal self-expression, believe they can create form while ignoring its social meaning? Rather than illuminating “an intensified awareness of the world” (Berleant, 1977:198) are these artists, like designers, instead not offering visual hubris without limits? In both instances central values may have been lost, ones predicated on the belief that artists of every kind are not distinct for the society but rather are embedded in human sociality. Thus, artistic expressions however idiosyncratic remain vital to and should account for society’s collective flourishing. Despite their need for a certain level of aesthetic autonomy, designers and other artists may wish to “pay more attention to the social, political and economic constraints under which they [create]” (Christensen, 2006:53).

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Endnotes

ⁱ Bauhaus is the more common name for the *Staatliches Bauhaus*, a seminal German architecture and art school that operated in Weimar, Dessau and Berlin, from 1919 to 1933. The Bauhaus style became one of the most resonant currents in Modernist architecture and the art school had a lasting influence upon subsequent developments in art, graphic and interior design, textiles, and typography. For more information see: <http://www.bauhaus.de/english/>

ⁱⁱ Leni Riefenstahl directed the film *Triumph of the Will*, a visually compelling and controversial documentary film of the 1934 Nuremberg rally stage by the National Socialist German Workers' Party or Nazis as they are more commonly known.

ⁱⁱⁱ Knut Hamsun, a writer, supported Germany both during First and the Second World War. During World War II he also supported Vidkun Quisling's National Socialist government.

^{iv} For instance, popular design competitions include those hosted by publications *Graphis*, *Print* and *Communication Arts*. Others (to name but a few) include: European Logo Design Annual 2007, Institute of Design Montréal Awards 2007, Prix Arts Electronica 2007, Hong Kong International Poster Triennial 2007 and the HOW International Design Awards.

^v Popular press communication design publications include: *Communication Arts*, *Graphis*, *How*, *Print*, *I.D. Magazine*, *Eye*, and *Graphics International*.

^{vi} Founded in 1959, *Communication Arts* is a showcase for the top work in graphic design, advertising, illustration, photography and interactive design, and in 1995 the first major design magazine to launch a web site, according to its publisher. It currently has over 70,000 subscribers.

^{vii} Started in 1940, *Print* bills itself as “a bimonthly magazine about visual culture and design. Covering a field as broad as communication itself, *Print* documents and critiques commercial, social, and environmental design from every angle.”

^{viii} According to its website, “*Graphis*, The International Journal of Visual Communication, was first published in 1944 and in visually driven articles presents the best work produced internationally in graphic design, advertising, illustration, and photography.”

^{ix} <http://www.commart.com/CA/>. (Accessed 23 May 2007).

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^{xi} Rick Poynor founded *Eye* magazine in London in 1990. Since then, Poynor has written about design, media and visual culture for *Blueprint*, *Icon*, *Frieze*, *Domus*, *I.D.*, *Metropolis*, *Harvard Design Magazine*, *Adbusters*, *The Guardian*, and *The Financial Times*. Books written by him include: Poynor is also the author of two collections of essays, *Design Without Boundaries* (1998) and *Obey the Giant: Life in the Image World* (2001).

^{xii} <http://designobserver.com/index.html>. (Accessed 25 May 2007).

^{xiii} <http://www.underconsideration.com/speakup/>. (Accessed 25 May 2007).

^{xiv} Armin Vit works for the international design consultancy Pentagram in their New York office. In addition to Speak Up! Vit also runs Brand New, Quipsologies and The Design Encyclopedia under the UnderConsideration umbrella of sites.

^{xv} <http://www.underconsideration.com/speakup/>. (Accessed 26 May 2007).

^{xvi} For instance see what some designers say about their aspirations for and perspectives on professional standing at the web site for the American Institute for Graphic Arts (AIGA), the largest professional design organization in the United States. <http://www.aiga.org/content.cfm/about-aiga>. (Accessed 2 June, 2007).

The lightning flash of hope - aesthetics and absurdity in the racetrack poetry of Charles Bukowski

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Poetry is, arguably, the most aesthetic of literary forms. To a greater degree than the prose writer, the poet engages with and manipulates the aesthetic and linguistic possibilities associated with syntagmatic and paradigmatic axes - that is, the way in which words are structured on the page and the selection of words from a set of all its inflected forms. The poet's utilisation of literary devices such as metre, rhythm, assonance, alliteration, onomatopoeia, enjambement, personification, pathetic fallacy, metaphor, metonymy and synecdoche is aimed at producing a specifically aesthetic composition in relation to both content and structure. Another difference between the writer of prose and the poet, is highlighted by Alexander who suggests that 'the poet places himself within the subject itself and works from within outwards, while the prosaist describes relatively, from without.'¹

In terms of the relationship between poetry and the visual arts, it can be argued that words, particularly when presented in a poetic form, hold a privileged position over the visual image in relation to the expression of feelings, for, as Lyotard argues, they can 'evoke matters of the soul without having to consider whether they are visible.'² Paraphrasing Burke, he goes on to suggest that poetry occupies a privileged position over painting because 'painting is doomed to imitate models, and to figurative representations of them' and that this figuration by means of images is 'a limiting constraint on the power of emotive expression since it works by recognition.'³ In poetry, he argues, 'the power to move is free from the verisimilitudes of figuration.' It is thus in the poet's power to 'effect with word combinations what would be impossible by any other means.'⁴ Burke himself highlights this difference thus:

What does one do when one wants to represent an angel in painting? One paints a beautiful young man with wings: but will painting ever provide anything as great as the addition of this one word - the Angel of the *Lord*? And how does one go about

¹ Quoted in W. Hotby, *Virginia Woolf* (London: Wishart & Company, 1932), p. 186.

² J. F. Lyotard, 'The Sublime and the Avant-Garde' in C. Cazeaux (ed.) *The Continental Aesthetics Reader* (Routledge: London, 2000) p. 460.

³ *Ibid.* 459.

⁴ *Ibid.* 460.

painting, with equal strength of feeling, the words 'A universe of death' where ends the journey of the fallen angels in Milton's *Paradise Lost*?⁵

Having made a case for poetry as a particularly aesthetic medium, I am now going to discuss a poet whose work shuns the aesthetic in terms of form, but which, in the racetrack poems discussed below, takes a turn to aesthetics in relation to subject matter. In terms of sensibility, Charles Bukowski has more in common with The Sex Pistols and Eminem than with Keats, Shelley or Wordsworth. He is the Johnny Rotten of poetry, a literary punk, writing anarchistic portrayals of despair and betrayal with an ironic twist. He was Born in Germany in 1920, and moved to Los Angeles in 1923. He wrote more than 45 books of published poetry and prose which were translated into 14 languages. After struggling to make a living in dead-end jobs for much of his life, he became a rich man in his later years living comfortably in California on the royalties from sales of his books. He died in 1994.

After initially gaining little attention from both critics and readers, Charles Bukowski's fiction and poetry now attracts a large, world-wide readership, mainly consisting of two demographic types; young working-class males who relate to his tales of low-life culture, and older middle-class males who, from the safety of their suburban armchairs, can view what might be termed the exotic ordinary as depicted in Bukowski's seedy urban landscapes, landscapes populated by the unemployed, by drunks and by prostitutes. His work falls into the category of what has become known as 'dirty realism', a sub-genre hardly known for the subtlety of its aesthetic palette. He concentrates on realist subject matter and employs the language of the street in his poetry and prose works. His work presents a logical relationship between cause and effect; he focuses on materialist, rather than supernatural or fantastical subject matter, and strives for verisimilitude and mimesis, in other words, to represent 'real life' through the medium of the written word. In terms of content, most of his poetry focuses on the un-poetic aesthetically challenged aspects of existence.

Bukowski specialised in attacking society which he believed, condemned the individual to accept humiliation and failure as the norm. He saw society as an ugly creature, as a complex system of lies and coercion that inevitably beats the individual into submission. He found an antidote to his depression in the excitement he found on the racetrack. He immersed himself in the world of the track, a world in which he was able to shut out what he saw as the absurdist existence experienced in the outside 'real' world. Bukowski saw the entire spectacle associated with racing as aesthetically sublime. Like the artists Stubbs, Munnings and Degas he saw the thoroughbred racehorse as the epitome of elegance and gracefulness, as a fitting subject for artistic representation. Bukowski's concept of escape through the aesthetics of nature is echoed by Adorno in his suggestion that, 'Happiness in the presence of works of art is a feeling of having made an abrupt escape.'⁶

⁵ Ibid. 460.

⁶ See Theodore Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory* (London: Routledge, 1972) p. 22. Hereafter cited as Adorno (1972).

For Bukowski, that ‘abrupt escape’ operated as ‘a trick to dull [his] bleeding.’ What he found on the racetrack, which is essentially a fantasy world, a Disneyland offering a rollercoaster of emotional highs and lows for grown ups, was a form of truth which he felt was somehow absent in his everyday existence outside of the world of horseracing, a form of truth recognised by Adorno in his claim that, ‘Art may be the only remaining medium of truth in an age of incomprehensible terror and suffering’,⁷ and more specifically in relation to the poetic form by the Buddhist scholar Rabindranath Tagore in his claim that:

Clothed in fact
truth feels oppressed
In the garb of poetry
It moves easy and free.⁸

Bukowski’s auto-biographical and semi-autobiographical poems, novels, and short stories foreground and celebrate what Smith terms an ‘ethical, psychological and economic estrangement from the goals of mainstream society.’⁹ For Bukowski, the everyday world was anathema, a place populated by conformist zombies governed by restricting life-dulling rules, a physically unpleasant place with which he failed to develop any aesthetic alignment, a place to be avoided whenever possible. Not surprisingly then, he spent a great deal of energy in attempting to detach himself from it. It is thus paradoxical that it was amidst the crowded racetrack grandstands that Bukowski seems to have been most at ease. Surrounded by a multitude of people, he utilised racecourse therapy as an antidote to the loneliness of existential existence, ‘To get your horse to come in first’ he wrote, ‘is much like controlling the pain of the universe.’¹⁰ Like many of his characters, Bukowski habitually frequented racetracks near his home in Los Angeles where, throughout the last thirty years of his life, he regularly attended up to three meetings a week.¹¹ Again a paradox is clear; the man who consistently railed against routine appears to have been attracted by the rhythmic, regimented patterns of behaviour associated with playing the horses. How then, can Bukowski’s consistently expressed dislike of crowds, and his disdain for regularity and uniformity, be reconciled with this seemingly gregarious and highly ritualised habit? In essence the answer lies in aesthetics rather than with the Tote Machine.

Bukowski had been introduced to the world of horseracing by a girlfriend, Jane Cooney Baker, and he was, initially, far from impressed ‘It sounds kind of stupid to me.’ he railed, ‘All these people, mindless masses of people, hovering together,

⁷ Ibid. 27.

⁸ Quoted in Lama Anagarika Govinda. *The Way of the White Clouds* (Rider: London, 1988). P. 3.

⁹ J. Smith, *Art, Survival and So Forth: The Poetry of Charles Bukowski* (Wrecking Ball Press: North Cave, East Yorkshire, 2000) p.31.

¹⁰ See C. Bukowski, *Reach for the Sun: Selected Letters 1978-1994*, Vol. 3 (Black Sparrow Press: Santa Rosa, 1999) p.81. Hereafter cited as Bukowski (1999).

¹¹ His favourite track was Del Mar, Hollywood Park.

watching these animals go round the track. I don't quite get it.'¹² Soon, however, Bukowski became obsessed with the world of the racetrack, with its rituals, its tribalism and its idiosyncratic aesthetic. His attitude toward his fellow race-goers remained, however, condescending. He figured that their opinions were invariably both predictable and misguided, and concluded that if he watched the odds changing on the tote board in the final minutes before the race, by opposing the consensus view he might pick the winner at reasonable odds. He liked to bet on long shots because he felt it separated him from the rest of the herd. He regularly bet 10-40 dollars on each race and by 1982 estimated he had lost 10,000 dollars. Bukowski claimed to hate the thirty-minute intervals between races because they necessitated passing amongst his fellow gamblers, 'the lowest of the breed'¹³, and he would often put cotton-wool in his ears to drown out the inane babblings of the crowd. In essence he saw the crowd as an ugly creature, bound to the wheel of conformity. For Bukowski, the representatives of humanity he encountered on the racecourse were both physically and behaviourally aesthetically repugnant.

Bukowski's love affair with the racetrack was a masochistic relationship. By his own admission, losing his money at the track was a form of self-flagellation: 'I lose the money I have and am further nailed to the cross.'¹⁴ 'I go to the track' he wrote, 'because it's like getting in the ring and slugging it out with some son of a bitch.'¹⁵ When a winner did come, however, it was a beautiful, sublime, if transient moment of exultation, 'like a magic trip.'¹⁶ Like most punters he harboured the dream of the big win which would make him financially independent, and thus free from the daily drudge of mind-numbing work in slaughterhouses, in post offices, and in factories. His poems and short stories, however, betray the fact that, deep-down he knew that like the rest of 'the poor', he would ultimately be disappointed, 'the racetracks' he wrote in 'horse and fist':

are where the guts are extracted and
rubbed into the cement
into the substance and stink of
being.¹⁷

hardly the most aesthetically attractive descriptions. While inhaling the 'stink of being', Bukowski witnessed day after day 'the faces of greed' before each race, and those same 'faces later when the...nightmare returns.'¹⁸ This inevitable defeat at the hands of the ruthless tote machine was also the subject of his poem 'the beggars':

¹² Quoted in N. Cherkovski, *Charles Bukowski: A Life* (Steerforth Press: Vermont, 1997) p. 92.

¹³ Quoted in H. Sounes, *Charles Bukowski: Locked in the Arms of a Crazy Life* (Rebel Inc.: Edinburgh, 1998) p. 202. Hereafter cited as Sounes (1998).

¹⁴ Quoted in P. Long (ed.) *Bukowski in the Bathtub* (Raven: Venice CA, 1997) p. 85

¹⁵ Bukowski (1999, 28).

¹⁶ Quoted in F. Pivano, *Charles Bukowski: Laughing with the Gods* (Sun Dog Press: Michigan, 2000) p. 46.

¹⁷ Published in *Play the Piano Drunk Like A Percussion Instrument Until The Fingers Begin To Bleed A Bit* (Black Sparrow Press: Santa Rosa, 1979) p. p. 108-9.

¹⁸ Quoted in Sounes (1998: 34).

the poor
in the grandstand section
playing the
daily doubles
the exactas
the pick-6's
the pick-9's

they have horrible
jobs
or
no jobs

they come in
beaten
to take another
beating...

and as race after race
unfolds
they are routinely
sucked of
money and
hope
then
the last race is
over

and for a few
there's the
liquor
store

a bit to drink
and a
lottery ticket.

for the
others:
nothing...
thanks to the
Days of the Living
Dead.

well,
the horses are
beautiful
anyhow.¹⁹

¹⁹ Published in C. Bukowski, *The Last Night Of The Earth Poems* (Black Sparrow Press: Santa Rosa, 1992), pp 254-5.

Here Bukowski depicts the ritualistic pattern of hope and loss, of optimism and disappointment which constitutes the life of the small-time punter. The 'poor', the 'Living Dead', those unemployed or trapped in dead-end jobs cannot risk the big hit on a short-priced runner like the big-time players, and so they gravitate towards the dollar-stake high-accumulator bets which have little chance of paying off. The compensation for Bukowski is an aesthetic one. For Edgar Allen Poe, the appreciation of art was indelibly linked to the appreciation of nature; for Poe Art constituted 'the reproduction of what the senses perceive in Nature through the veil of the soul.'²⁰ For Bukowski, the equine athletes, the products of hundreds of years of selective breeding, their coats, as in a degas painting, radiant in the afternoon sun, are 'beautiful' works of art, displayed within the galleries of the racecourses of Los Angeles. What he describes as 'The flash of lightning of hope', relates to the aesthetic spectacle of the racehorse in motion, a spectacle centred on grace and elegance, a stark binary opposition to the ugly vulgarity of the outside world.

In many ways Bukowski's pessimistic philosophy of life outside the comforting confines of the racetrack mirrored that of Absurdist dramatist Samuel Beckett. Both, for example, consistently sought to foreground the pointlessness of everyday human existence and the way in which humanity attempts to disguise and/or repress the idea of inevitable physical degeneration, of 'dancing in the face of Mrs Death.'²¹ This Sophoclean acceptance of the connection between living and suffering is succinctly highlighted in this exchange between Hamm and Clov in Beckett's *Endgame*:

Hamm: What's he doing?

Clov: He's crying.

Hamm: Then he's living.²²

Many of Bukowski's poems echo Beckett's sense of life as a pointless, habitual, cyclical trial; in 'the way' for example, Bukowski laments:

Well, I suppose the days were made
To be wasted
The years and the loves were made
To be wasted

We can't cry, and it helps to laugh-
It's like letting out
Dreams, ideals,
Poisons
Don't ask us to sing,
Laughing is singing to us, you see, it was a terrible joke²³

²⁰ E. A. Poe, *The Fall of the House of Usher and Other Writings* (Penguin: Santa Rosa, 1967) p. 498.

²¹ See C. Bukowski, *The Last Night of the Earth Poems* (Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press, 1992) p. 204.

²² S. Beckett, 'Endgame' in *The Complete Dramatic Works* (Faber and Faber, London, 1986, p.107. Hereafter cited as Becket (1996).

A philosophy which is reminiscent of a scene in Beckett's *Endgame* where Clov and Hamm consistently try to articulate the absurdity of their lives:

Clov: 'Why this farce, day after day?'²⁴

And:

Hamm: 'What in God's name do you think you are doing?'

Clov: 'I'm doing my best to create a little order.'²⁵

This craving to make sense, to discover some 'truth', whether in relation to the absurdity of life as ritual, or to the nature of aesthetics underpins Bukowski's poem '12 minutes to post'

as we stand here before the purple mountains
in our stupid clothing, we pause, look
about; nothing changes, it only solidifies,
our lives crawl slowly, our wives deprecate
us.
then
we awaken a moment –
the animals are entering the track:
Quick's Sister, Perfect Raj, Vive le Torch,
Miss Leuschner, Keepin' Peace, True to Be,
Lou's Good Morning.
now it's good for us: the lightning flash
of hope, the laughter of the hidden gods.
we were never meant to be what we are or where
we are, we are looking for an out, some music
from the sun, the girl we never found.
we are betting on the miracle again
there before the purple mountains
as the horses parade past
so much more beautiful than
our lives.

And again in 'the horseplayer'²⁶:

sitting in your undershirt,
sucking on a cold beer,
going over it all once again,
getting ready for next time
when everything you bet on
comes in,
just to put life straight...
this endless search for the

²³ C. Bukowski, *Burning in Water Drowning in Flame* (Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press, 1963) p. 165.

²⁴ Beckett (1996: 122-3).

²⁵ Beckett (1986: 120).

²⁶ Published in *Bone Palace Ballet* (Black Sparrow Press: Santa Rosa, 1997) p. 155-6.

ultimate
truth that
still can't be
stopped.

Here we find the same absurdist ideas which had been articulated by Beckett, the same sense of life as something to be endured. However, unlike Hamm and Clov, for Bukowski's persona the darkness is periodically illuminated by the perfect form and idealised beauty of the thoroughbred racehorse. In '12 minutes to post', Bukowski is also dealing with an idea similar to one expounded by Wordsworth in *The Prelude*.²⁷ Bukowski may have in mind the Wordsworthian concept of heightened aesthetic experience, intensive moments of being which Wordsworth termed 'spots of time.' Bukowski's narrator experiences a 'spot of time', a fleeting aesthetically-stimulated awakening from his crawling life. This momentary enlightenment operates as a binary opposite to what Bukowski describes as the 'Days of the Living/Dead' habitually experienced by the narrator in 'the beggar.' In '12 minutes to post' normality is depicted as 'stupid', a state in which 'nothing changes' but merely 'solidifies', as 'lives crawl slowly' towards the inevitable abyss. The equine embodiments of the sublime provide an ephemeral 'out', a chance to engage with the 'miracle again.' Although the narrator awakens momentarily to 'the laughter of the hidden gods' when the horses enter the track, he instinctively understands that this is an ephemeral aesthetic escape, the sun only fleetingly provides the desired 'music', the beautiful idealised girl will continue to remain elusive, but, like a narcotics or alcohol addict, there will always be the need for another fix, a fix transiently provided by the horses who will forever be 'so much more beautiful than our lives.' The fact that this beauty is understood to be fleeting and that reality is waiting to pounce makes it even more desirable, a fact acknowledged by Virginia Woolf who argued that 'Beauty must be broken daily to remain beautiful.'²⁸ Bukowski's narrator must inevitably acknowledge and live with the 'ultimate truth' of human existence – 'to live is to suffer', a condition highlighted in 'a last shot on two good horses',²⁹ where, after a losing run, he realises that once the aesthetic anaesthesia wears off he is once more left exposed to the pain of living:

I only had a dime left and coffee was then 15c.
I went into the crapper and I wanted to flush myself away,
they had me...

Similarly in 'the condition book',³⁰ like a narcotics addict coming down from a trip, after the euphoria of the spectacle of the race, his character is worn down and devoured by the mechanics of the track:

²⁷ W. Wordsworth, *The Prelude* in Abrams, M. H. (ed.) *The Norton Anthology of English Literature Vol. 2* (Norton & Co: London, 2000) p.p. 303-383.

²⁸ V. Woolf, *The Waves* (Penguin: London, 1992) p. 132.

²⁹ Published in *The Days Run away Like Wild Horses Over The Hills* (Black Sparrow Press: Santa Rosa, 1969) p.p. 116-7.

³⁰ Published in *The Night Torn Mad With Footsteps* (Black Sparrow Press: Santa Rosa, 2001) p. 289.

the long days at the track have
swallowed and consumed
me...
I am decades and decades
of races run and won and lost and run again...
I am the racetrack, my ribs are the wooden rails, my
eyes are the flashes of the tote-board, my feet are
hooves and there is something riding on my back, I am
the last turn, I am the home stretch, I am the long-shot
and the favourite...
I am humanly destroyed, I am the horseplayer who
became the
race and the
track.

In the racetrack poems discussed above, Bukowski clearly identifies absurdity as a central part of the human condition. Like Beckett, he illustrates the way in which such a philosophy grows naturally out of the clash between an individual's imagined sense of centrality within the world order, and the meaninglessness of human existence which, he argues, constitutes reality. Within these poems the exquisite form and beauty of the thoroughbred racehorse provide Bukowski's characters with a respite from the torment of everyday existence. Unfortunately, yet inevitably, the aesthetic fix proves to be ephemeral, 'the lightening flash of hope' quickly disappears with the setting sun and the bleeding resumes once more.

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Aesthetics of war: the artistic representation of war in Lee Miller's WWII photographs.

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Lee Miller's photographs of the liberation of the concentration camps taken at Dachau and Buchenwald in April 1945 not only stand as historical records of the Holocaust, documenting the horrors and atrocities of the Second World War, they also contain a sense of aestheticism that makes them comparable to the war art of artists such as Pablo Picasso, Max Beckmann, and George Grosz. Indeed, many of Miller's photographs of Dachau and Buchenwald can be equated to the war art produced during and after the First World War, including the work of the Dadaists and Surrealists, thus demonstrating that images of war may be interpreted as aesthetically significant as well as historically informative.

In this essay, I aim to illustrate how Miller is able to transform the most horrific scenes of war into combinations of reportage and art by documenting the war through an artistic eye, and in many instances, a surrealist eye. Miller was greatly influenced by the Surrealists, working with Man Ray in the early 1930s; and, in particular, her work can be analysed within the context of Andre Breton's theory of 'convulsive beauty', his idea that anything can be interpreted as beautiful, even the most disturbing or horrific of subject. A scene of death and destruction can, therefore, be represented or interpreted as something beautiful by convulsing it into its apparent opposite. So, by using her in-depth knowledge and experience of art and her awareness of Bretonian Surrealism, Miller is able to carefully compose the horrors of war into aesthetic portraits of war.

Susan Sontag in her book *Regarding the Pain of Others* writes, "To find beauty in war seems heartless. But the landscape of devastation is still a landscape. There is a beauty in ruins" (Sontag, 2003:67). For example, let us consider a photograph taken by Magnum photographer Susan Meiselas in 1978. At first glance what we see is a lush green landscape with rolling hills to the left leading out into the far distance and down towards the mouth of a river estuary. This could be a stereotypical image appropriate to an advertisement for tourism. But this is a war photograph. It is only after our eye has been cast around this apparently idyllic natural landscape that our eye is then ambushed as we are forced to focus on the subject in the foreground—a headless corpse lying in blood-stained grass which seems to blend into the landscape itself—reminding us that this is not a traditional landscape photograph but an image of war. The 'discovery' of the human remains makes them rightfully the centre of the photograph. This is "Cuesta del Plomo", a well-known site of many assassinations carried out by the National Guard during the Nicaraguan revolutionary war. It still

contains the aesthetic quality of a landscape photograph, it is essentially a landscape photograph; but as with Miller's war photographs, it contains a hybrid-aesthetic, a combination of the aesthetic and the documentary, of art and war. But what is the purpose of using aesthetics within this context? Does an artistic approach seem to lessen the blow somehow or remove the initial element of shock for the viewer? Or is evidence of an artistic eye the natural response from a photographer with an artistic background?

In a completely different type of war photograph, this time a portrait taken by Lee Miller in 1945, Richard Calvocoressi compares Miller's gruesome portrait of a dead S.S. Guard who has committed suicide at Dachau to German artist Matthias Grünewald's "Detail of Isenheim Altarpiece" which shows the head of the crucified Christ. He writes, "[Miller's] photograph of the S.S. guard who has hanged himself from a radiator recalls, even more shockingly [resembles], the head of Grünewald's crucified Christ, lending weight to the view that [Miller] perceived things in visual or cultural terms before thinking of their moral implications (of which she was nevertheless aware)" (Calvocoressi, 2002:14). The head of Grünewald's Christ is itself a fragment of a much larger artistic work. In comparison, the head of the S.S. Guard is a fragment of an even larger horror, a photographic representation of death, of the concentration camps and indeed of war itself. However, there is also a sense of irony, irony being a common factor within the Surrealist movement, in comparing the head of the Messiah and the head of a Nazi, thus suggesting a juxtaposition of good and evil as well as art and war reportage. Miller's photograph of the hanging guard can also be compared to another artistic work, this time an engraving entitled "Guerre" by Georges Rouault from 1926. This engraving again depicts the head of Christ looking down over the bowed head of a dead soldier. Yet, in her photograph, Miller has assumed the role of the Messiah by seeing and capturing the dead S.S. Guard with her camera. However, while the soldier in Rouault's engraving is inevitably a victim of war, being observed by the protective figure of Christ, the S.S. Guard is the enemy and is judged so through Miller's documenting of his suicide.

There is evidence throughout Miller's photo-essays, which she produced for *Vogue* magazine during the latter years of World War Two, of her extensive knowledge of art and its influence on her photography. For example, in her writing there are often direct references to art and specific art works, probably stemming from her research in Florence in 1929 and her studies of Renaissance art in particular. For example, in one of her photo-essays "Unarmed Warriors" Miller describes how the "clench-faced men" were treating three patients with broken-limbs. She writes, "In the chiaroscuro of khaki and white I was reminded of Hieronymus Bosch's painting, 'The Carrying of the Cross'" (Miller, 1944:36). In the same photo-essay, she compares the sunny morning at the 44th Evac Hospital in France to "a landscape painter's morning", and refers to "the doctor with the Raphael-like face" (Miller, 1944:82, 85). In her photo-essay "St Malo", Miller comments, "I had thought that watching a battle from a hillside had gone out with the glamorous paintings of Napoleon" and describes two little girls as "pixie twins, exactly like the little imps at the bottom of the Cistine Madonna" (Miller, 1944:51, 80).

Miller's use of the surrealist principle of fragmentation in her composition is commonplace throughout her Dachau and Buchenwald photographs. One photograph

simply entitled “Buchenwald, Germany, April 1945” effectively shows how Miller’s eye for composition and form was apparent even in the most horrific of environments. The photograph can be divided diagonally, or fragmented into two halves, to symbolise the thin line between life and death. The bottom left half of the image consists of a large pile of charred remains, small pieces of bone, fragments of human bodies. In contrast, the top right half of the photograph contains the legs of four men—survivors—three still wearing the striped trousers of their prison uniforms, standing over the remains. The four men stand silently, hands behind their backs, observing the sight before them, a sight which has been replicated via Miller’s camera lens. Although only their legs and the bottom half of their torsos are present within the frame, it is easy to imagine the reflective expressions on their faces, the awareness that the fragments of bones could so easily have included their own.

A very similar photograph captioned by Antony Penrose as “Newly dead bodies piled outside the huts awaiting disposal” also uses this diagonal composition as well as an effective use of light and shadow again to symbolise the close relationship between life and death. In this photograph the bottom left half of the image, which has been thrown into shadow, contains a row of corpses, some covered in army blankets indicating that death only occurred after liberation, while some remain exposed. Miller cleverly uses the shadow to symbolise death by allowing the corpses to become submerged in the darkness. The top right half of the image, however, shows a line of prisoners, some of whom are facing towards the shadow, observing the dead. Others wait, perhaps for food or possibly for their inevitable release, moving in a steady stream out of the right-hand side of the frame to freedom. This scene of death and rebirth might be compared to Max Beckmann’s 1918 painting “Auferstehung (Resurrection)” produced during the aftermath of World War One and depicting anguished, twisted figures in a disjointed landscape. The fact that Miller has photographed the living prisoners bathed in light is symbolic of life, rebirth, freedom and survival. Miller has also used the Dada principle of polarisation by including the polar opposites of life and death, and indicating a relationship between the negative and the positive, the past and the future, despair and hope—all demonstrated through her creative use of composition, light and an artistic eye.

In another untitled Buchenwald photograph, Miller has used composition to create a kind of abstract form by filling the frame with the random, merging shapes of body parts to ensure that the viewer takes in the entirety of the horror of the scene through the confrontation of detail. The photograph creates a feeling of entrapment because there is no escape for the eye just as there was no escape for the subjects in the image. The viewer’s eye is at first drawn to the face in the centre of the scene. The viewer is then forced to look around that face at the jumble of body parts, in particular the hanging skeletal limbs. In this photograph, as with many of her other concentration camp photographs, Miller is effectively capturing just one small fragment of a much larger atrocity but doing so by using carefully organised composition to allow, even manipulate, the viewer’s eye to interpret the image in a particular way, to see what the photographer or even the prisoners would have seen.

Besides Miller’s use of creative composition and aesthetic form, her knowledge of Surrealism is always very apparent in her photographs of the concentration camps.

For example, in “Murdered Prison Guard, Dachau, 1945” Miller has photographed the body of an S.S. Guard killed and thrown into a nearby canal by his own prisoners following the camp’s liberation. Carolyn Burke writes:

Miller uses light, shadow and the properties of water to suggest that the guard’s death is justified, yet redemptive. The mysterious beauty of the image, which seems to dissolve the man’s features as he sinks beneath the surface, implies the larger issues – [of] responsibility, memory, grief (Penrose, 2001:132).

This medium close-up of the guard floating towards a watery grave shows how Miller has not only recorded the scene but has transformed a grim episode into a portrait of convulsive beauty. In other words, by interpreting Miller’s photograph as an example of Bretonian Surrealism, one can see how the guard has been transformed—or convulsed—from a figure of hatred into an intriguing image of aestheticism. Miller has used diagonal composition, which helps to create the artistic feel of the image. As Mark Haworth-Booth writes, Miller’s well-lit, perfectly composed photographs “remind us of Lee’s first-hand knowledge of Surrealism, and the idea of ‘convulsive beauty’ and its many images of effigies...” (Haworth-Booth, 2007:194).

While many of her peers such as Margaret Bourke-White tended to take a photograph and then quickly depart from the war scene, Miller preferred to stay and work on her images’ composition and form, often taking photographs from positions that were difficult and challenging both physically and mentally. For example, for a photograph taken in Dachau showing two United States medics from the Rainbow Company observing a dead prisoner, Miller had climbed into the partially-cleared Dachau “death train” with the corpses to compose a photograph which forces the viewer to adopt a stance next to the dead man. In another *Vogue* photo-essay entitled “Germans Are Like This” from June 1945, Miller gave a detailed description of what she had witnessed at Dachau:

Dachau had everything you’ll ever hear or close your ears to about a concentration camp. The great dusty spaces that had been trampled by so many thousands of condemned feet—feet which ached and shuffled and stamped away the cold and shifted to relieve the pain and finally became useless except to walk them to the death chamber (Penrose, 1992:188).

A photograph taken at Buchenwald entitled “Released Prisoner, Buchenwald, Germany” (1945) captures those “condemned feet”. The recognisable striped legs of the prisoner lead down towards the feet posed in what resembles ballet shoes as if preparing for what Katherine Slusher describes as a “ballet of death” in the layers of mended socks worn to prevent freezing during the bitterly cold German winter. As Slusher writes, like many of Miller’s concentration camp pictures there is “an excruciating and almost lyrical beauty” such as in the artistic comparison between a prisoner who has been confined to a death camp and now released and a dancer who is able to encapsulate freedom through the movement of body (Slusher, 2007:65). Therefore, rather than a “ballet of death”, perhaps it is more accurate to describe it as a “ballet of freedom” with the prisoner/dancer preparing for a “dance of joy and liberation”.

It is also true that Miller's war photographs inspired other artists, arguably due to their aesthetic quality as much as for their documentary content. For example, in 1955 the Italian artist Rico Lebrun began his "Buchenwald Series", a collection of paintings produced as a reaction to World War Two and all inspired by news photographs depicting dead prisoners in the concentration camp. One painting entitled "Floor of Buchenwald No.1" (1957), painted in casein and ink, was based on a photograph taken by Miller in 1945. However, after comparing the photograph and the painting, the philosopher Raymond Durnat describes Lebrun's failure to grasp the problem of transcribing this scene. Durnat writes:

Lebrun, a sincere and intelligent painter, has missed over and over again telling the details recorded by the camera's 'passive' eye and substituted conventions of form, of anatomy, of composition. Almost involuntarily he has brought compositional order into a heap of bodies whose horrid eloquence lay precisely in the 'asymmetrical' clutter of thrown-back heads (Coke, 1972:111-112).

In contrast, Miller's photograph records how the "thighs have become thinner than calves, shows the clumsiness of home-made wrappings, stresses the hard pebbles on which the bodies lie" (Coke, 1972:111-112). The painter, therefore, has been able to manipulate the scene for the purpose of the painting. However, with Miller's photograph, the bodies appear to "bleed off one corner of the frame, so that we sense that this is only part of a huger, and infinite horror" (Coke, 1972:111-112). While it is true that Lebrun does 'beautify' the scene by giving the subjects within the painting an unnatural grace and tidiness unlike the somewhat chaotic abstract form within Miller's photograph, it might, however, be argued that as with other photographs such as "Buchenwald, Germany, April 1945" and her photograph of the dead prisoners awaiting removal, Miller is able to create the same "compositional order" by seeking out the natural form within the scene and capturing it to aesthetic effect. At the same time, Miller produces a more immediate representation of the scene as opposed to Lebrun's second-hand interpretation of Miller's photographic representation. As a war artist, it is true that Lebrun would have had more control over the composition of his painting than Miller who, as a war photographer, strived to capture what Henri Cartier-Bresson referred to as "the decisive moment". The painter does not have time against him and can choose to make the thighs flatter or the pattern of the bodies tidier. In this respect, his interpretation of the scene is a manipulated, reordered vision of reality, unlike Miller's raw depiction of the scene. The age of digital manipulation and Photoshop, available to today's photojournalists, was still some fifty years in the future. Therefore, there is inevitably an element of honesty or truth that seems to be lacking in Lebrun's painting. With Miller's photograph we are compelled to believe the horror as a true representation of the scene, and as Plato wrote in *The Republic*, both truth and knowledge can be deemed beautiful.

In comparison to Lebrun's painted interpretation of the concentration camps, George Grosz's ink drawing entitled "Pandemonium" (1914) also provides a similar painted scene of wonder and horror to that depicted by Miller in her Buchenwald photograph. Barbara McCloskey describes the Grosz painting as a "claustrophobic tangle of men and women whose flailing limbs thrust beyond the drawing's margins", a description

which could easily have been applied to Miller's photograph (McCloskey, 1997:14). Picasso, a good friend of Miller, painted another similar scene in 1945 entitled "The Charnel House", which may also have been inspired by Miller's Buchenwald photograph. Mark Stevens claims that Picasso was inspired by "the flickering black and white palettes of the newsreels" and similar newspaper images (Stevens, 1999). But although both Lebrun and Picasso were able to draw upon Miller's photograph for inspiration for their art, it is Miller who has been able to combine historical record and a natural artistic approach to create this hybrid of documentation and aestheticism.

It seems that the main argument posed by Miller's use of this hybrid-aesthetic is whether war photographs should be considered as 'artistic' and what purpose an aestheticised approach serves. In her photographs, however raw the subject, Miller succeeds in capturing an image which combines aesthetic quality, through her awareness of Surrealism and her creative use of composition and form, with documentary evidence. As in war painting, Miller is able to produce visual representations of horror that are not only reportage but at the same time artistically *seen*. However, what we see with Miller's war photography is an artistic knowledge which has been drawn upon to create a hybrid image of aestheticism and documentation. Evidence of the photographs' aesthetic worth is also demonstrated by their influence on painters including Picasso, who were not only inspired by the atrocities captured in the photographs but also by the artistic vision of the photographer who was able to record those scenes with a great sensitivity, a need to inform, technical excellence and the presence of a surrealist eye.

Theorists such as Julia Kristeva have written about death and the representation of death within the context of the 'abject'. The abject is her reference to "the human reaction to a threatened breakdown in meaning caused by the loss of the distinction between subject and object or between self and other, the primary example for what causes such a reaction being the corpse (which traumatically reminds us of our own materiality)" (Felluga, 2002). However, Miller's images of Dachau and Buchwald can be more closely analysed by applying Breton's theory of 'convulsive beauty'. In this respect, Miller's concentration camp photographs are considered 'aesthetic' rather than 'repulsive'. Surely one of the most reproduced examples of convulsive beauty is the artistic representation of the Crucifixion – the depiction of Christ dying on the cross. This image of torture, sacrifice and death, has been interpreted in all art forms and is displayed and adorned in a variety of formats from the traditional (painting, sculpture, jewellery) to the modern (film, photography). Arguably, it is unlikely that this mass-produced scene of death would be considered as an example of the abject, and perhaps describing the event as an example of convulsive beauty would be deemed sacrilegious. Nonetheless, the Crucifixion complies with both theories. In comparison, the dead or dying in Miller's photographs have also made a great sacrifice whether it be for their family, home, country, religious, political or artistic beliefs. Therefore, as an example of convulsive beauty, the subject of Miller's photographs, and indeed the images themselves, might be compared to and analysed in the same way as art historians have interpreted historical or biblical scenes of war and death, for example, Calvocoressi's comparison of Miller's hanging SS Guard to Grünewald's crucified Christ. So, to conclude with a quote from Jane Livingston:

It is not easy to deal with these Holocaust images, taken in circumstances unlooked for, unprepared for, unimaginable, in stylistically analytical terms. But a few observations may clarify the distinction between these photographs and others depicting the same subjects. In these pictures, whether of murdered human remains, the scenes of their making, or the terrified objects of uninhabited revenge, we are presented with a nightmarish reality made somehow *fully present*. The perceptual chaos that the artist must have been experiencing in confronting this pageant of atrocities, somehow resolves itself in the camera's eye into a group of images that are legible, [and] unforgettable in the sense of classic art (Livingston, 1989: 82).

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In search of a conversation between aesthetics and theology: an approach to a poem by Edmund Cusick

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Introduction

The most interesting part of this paper falls at the close where I have set down a poem written by Edmund Cusick. Until his untimely death in January of this year, Edmund taught ‘imaginative writing’ at John Moores University in Liverpool, so he was a Liverpudlian of a kind. My aim in this paper is to provide a context in terms of which we can read this poem – and I hope that the paper will constitute, in this small way, a memorial of him and what he stood for.

This conference has been inspired by the thought that in recent times aesthetic considerations have assumed a new importance in a range of academic disciplines, and this development holds in theology as elsewhere. I want to begin, however, perhaps rather perversely, by setting out some difficulties for the idea that theologians and aestheticians might have much to say to one another. I shall then argue that the poem of Edmund Cusick which I recite at the close of the paper offers one response to these difficulties. I shall develop this argument by proposing i. that knowledge of God is akin to knowledge of place, and ii. knowledge of place has an aesthetic dimension – so establishing a presumption that knowledge of God will also have an aesthetic dimension. (Throughout the paper I shall speak of ‘knowledge’ of God – but the reader may prefer to substitute some other epistemic success term for ‘knowledge’ and this can be done I think without disturbing the drift of the argument.) I shall take Edmund’s poem to exemplify concretely the possibility that is identified abstractly in the earlier part of the paper – that is, the possibility that in knowing a particular place, where this knowledge has an irreducibly aesthetic dimension, we may thereby have knowledge of God.

Some problems for the possibility of a conversation between theology and aesthetics

It is easy to imagine theologians and aestheticians alike resisting the thought that their disciplines may have much to say to one another. On their side, aestheticians might suppose that aesthetic value is after all distinct from moral or religious value. This is a theme which has been explored a number of papers at this conference. As Heather Höpfl notes, the fact that a speaker’s performance is aesthetically pleasing is no guarantee that the content of what she or he says will be ethically appropriate. And Keith Owens has given us several telling examples of how designers may prioritise aesthetic over ethical concerns. So if there is no necessary coincidence of aesthetic,

ethical and religious value, then aestheticians would appear to have reason to insist on the proper autonomy of their discipline, and to ask theologians and ethicists, very respectfully of course, to keep out. For their part, theologians may also have doubts about the relevance of aesthetic concerns to their reflections. After all, if God is incorporeal, then we might suppose that an appreciation of the sensuous appearances of things can constitute at most a step along the way to the vision of God – one which is left behind in the further reaches of that journey. As Thomas Merton says, speaking of poetry in particular (here echoing the work of John of the Cross of course): ‘these human and symbolic helps to prayer lose their usefulness in the higher forms of contemplative union with God’ (Burch Brown, 2003: 224) . (Compare the problem that Patrick Sherry poses for the idea that the beauty of creation reflects that of God: ‘how can a corporeal being be like God, who has no body or matter?’ (1992: 141).) Let’s label these two difficulties for the possibility of a constructive encounter between theology and aesthetics i. the problem of the autonomy of aesthetic value, and ii. the problem of divine incorporeality.

I shall now try to meet these difficulties by exploring abstractly the possibility of a kind of knowledge that is both of God and yet irreducibly aesthetic. I am going to try to set out this possibility more fully at the close of paper, using a poem of Edmund Cusick. But first I would like to sketch a theoretical context which will help us to see the poem’s significance in these terms.

The relationship between knowledge of God and knowledge of place

I am going to argue first that knowledge of place is akin to knowledge of God, and I shall do this by identifying three respects in which the concept of place is akin to the concept of God.

It is a commonplace of philosophical theology that God’s reality has a supra-individual character. On this perspective, God is not to be understood fundamentally as another individual thing, but as the context by reference to which we can make sense of individual things. John Paul II remarks for example that: ‘In the incarnation of the Son of God ... the Whole lies hidden in the part’ (1998: Section 12). And Rowan Williams observes similarly that talk of God ‘is structurally more like talking about some “grid” for the understanding of particular objects than talking about particular objects in themselves’ (1984: 15). Evidently, these authors can speak authoritatively for two central strands of the Christian tradition – and both appear to agree that God is not best conceived by analogy with individual creatures, but rather by analogy with ‘the whole’ or the sum of reality, or by analogy with a frame of reference in light of which individual things can be assigned a sense. (Compare Aquinas’s comment that ‘the whole universe shares and expresses [God’s] goodness better than any individual creature’ (1989: 1, 47)

It is striking that places too have a supra-individual character. After all, to speak of a place in normal usage is to pick out not an individual thing, nor simply an arbitrarily demarcated conglomeration of things, but a region of space which is characterised by some genuine unity. As Edward Casey comments, place ‘is situated between the Charybdis of sheer singularity and the Scylla of contingent commonality’ (1996: 32) – in other words, places are neither mere individual things (sheerly singular) nor just

collections of things (displaying a contingent commonality). In this sense then, we can talk of places as supra-individual. And this kind of supra-individuality seems analogous to the supra-individuality that John Paul II and Rowan Williams associate with God – a place is after all best imaged not by reference to the individual things of which it is composed but by reference to the sum of its parts considered as an integrated whole (compare John Paul's idea that God in some sense corresponds to 'the whole'); and similarly, places provide an overarching context in terms of which we can make sense of their parts (a theme to which I shall return).

Here then is a first point of analogy between the concepts of God and of place. The two concepts also seem alike in so far as divine agency and placial agency are both narratively mediated. A Christian ethicist, for example, if handling their sources with a degree of sophistication, is likely to seek to adjudicate a practical ethical problem not so much by reference to isolated biblical verses (taking these verses as a kind of 'proof text' for the issue) but rather by reference to the broader weep of the biblical narrative (concerning what God has done in creation, reconciliation and redemption). This wider story creates a context in the light of which we can reach a judgement about whether particular behaviours count as fitting, or as appropriately sensitive to context. (For an attempt to construct a Christian sexual ethics along these lines, see Banner, 1999: 21-26.) And places might seem to present a localised, story-bound example of this same sort of relationship. Consider for example the debate which has taken place recently in the United States concerning what kind of building for what kind of purpose it would be appropriate to erect on the site of the 9/11 attacks. This debate only makes sense on the understanding that the history of the site, or the stories with which it is associated, set a constraint on how the site is to be used in the present. We recognise a similar connection on a smaller scale when we lay flowers at the site of a roadside accident. And Christian ethicists seem to suppose that the same sort of connection applies on a larger scale, in relation to the place which is the world, when we consider the question of what sort of conduct will constitute a fitting response to the narrative context which has been established by virtue God's deeds in relation to the created order as a whole, in creation and redemption.

Finally, a third connection between the concepts of God and of place obtains in so far as both concepts are integrally tied to that of human identity. In the everyday sense of 'identity', the sense which has been presupposed at this conference when we have introduced ourselves to other delegates, we suppose that specifying who we are requires the telling of some parts of our story. And in turn to tell my story, I will normally have to make reference to at least some of the places in which that story has unfolded. This is not fundamentally because places provide as it were the 'container' for various stretches of my behaviour, but rather because the meaning of what I do, or of what befalls me, cannot be given, in many cases anyway, without describing the placial context for what I have done. To take a crude example, the behaviour of applying paint to a wall will carry one kind of meaning, will count as one kind of action, when I am at home and decorating, and another kind of significance when I am at a public building which I am defacing: one and the same bodily movement in these two cases constitutes two different kinds of action, by virtue of the difference of placial context. So in telling you who I am, in giving my life story, I will standardly need to make reference not just to various stretches of behaviour, of my own or of

others' causing, but also to the placial context of that behaviour – in order to specify the meaning of what I have done or what has befallen me by virtue of what others have done.

Similarly, theologians have thought that my life story only acquires a determinate sense when it is set in relation to the ultimate context which is God. Saint Augustine remarks:

You are my eternal Father, but I am scattered in times whose order I do not understand. The storms of incoherent events tear to pieces my thoughts, the inmost entrails of my soul, until that day when, purified and molten by the fire of your love, I flow together to merge into you. (1991: XI, xxix, 39)

Of course Augustine's comments have a rather specific Neoplatonic context, but in general terms he seems to be supposing that his life is narratively confused (it is a 'storm of incoherent events') until he finds himself in proper relationship to God.

So here are three respects in which, we might suppose, the concepts of God and place prove to be alike. Both are concepts of a context – a narratively structured and (therefore) action-guiding and identity-constituting context. And if this much is true, then we might suppose that knowledge of place will provide us with some intimation of the nature of knowledge of God. More exactly, we may prefer to say that knowledge of the place which is the world is partly constitutive of knowledge of God – since deep knowledge of the place which is the world implies knowledge of creation and redemption, and an appreciation therefore of the sort of life that befits a human being within this particular narratively and otherwise structured context. And rather than saying simply that in knowing God we have knowledge of the place which is the world (a formulation which might seem to invite pantheism), we may prefer to say that in knowing God we have knowledge of the genius of the place which is the world – where the notion of a 'genius' is used in its traditional sense, to signify a personification of the human meaning borne by a place, where this meaning is supra-individual, story-constituted, agency-eliciting, and identity-conferring.

This proposal points to a rather different religious epistemology from those which have dominated recent discussion in analytic philosophy of religion. That discussion has been concerned to draw out analogies between religious knowledge, on the one side, and scientific and perceptual knowledge on the other (to take two of the more prominent examples). In the first case, it is supposed that just as it is reasonable to explain the data of observation by reference to some entity which is not itself observed, providing that this explanation satisfies criteria such as simplicity and explanatory power, so it can be reasonable to postulate the existence of God, although God is not directly observed, in so far as reference to God provides a simple, powerful explanation of data such as the law-like regularity of the natural world. (For a carefully worked out example of this sort of strategy, see Swinburne, 2004.) Others have preferred to emphasise the ways in which religious experience proves to meet similar epistemic standards to those which apply in relation to ordinary sensory experience. William Alston for example has argued that the difficulties which are standardly posed for religious experience (understood as a kind of nonsensory

encounter with God) would if applied consistently also discredit sense experience considered as a source of knowledge of the material world (1991). Obviously both these strategies seek to trade on the prestige enjoyed by contemporary science and by everyday beliefs grounded in sensory experience, and to argue that religious belief ought to enjoy an epistemic status which is in some respects comparable. But whatever their merits as apologetic strategies, these approaches have a tendency to throw into further doubt the idea that aesthetics and theology might have much to say to one another: in the first case, religious knowledge is assimilated to a kind of inference (one which actually carries the mind away from the data of observation), while in the second, religious knowledge simply bypasses the material world in so far as it rests on a nonsensory intuition – and in neither case does such knowledge seem to have much connection to the kind of knowledge which is achieved in the aesthetic contemplation of material forms.

The idea that religious knowledge is to be assimilated to knowledge of place may seem to be more hospitable to the thought that such knowledge has an aesthetic dimension. This is the possibility I would like to explore now – by considering the question of whether knowledge of place has an aesthetic dimension.

Knowledge of place

I am going to reflect upon the nature of knowledge of place by rehearsing some themes taken from three French philosophers. In his somewhat quirky text The Poetics of Space, Gaston Bachelard considers the nature of our knowledge of the places of childhood (1969: 12). He is especially interested in the question of how we are able to recall the childhood home, and he argues that this kind of knowledge is best vouchsafed in what he calls ‘poetry’ and not available in the language of prose. He cites three considerations in support of this distinction.

First of all, he comments that:

... the real houses of memory, the houses to which we return in dreams [or ‘daydreams’ – which is his more characteristic emphasis] ... do not readily lend themselves to description. To describe them would be like showing them to visitors. ... The first, the oneirically definitive house, must retain its shadows. For it belongs to the literature of depth, that is, to poetry, and not to the fluent type of literature that ... needs other people’s stories. ... All we communicate to others is an orientation towards what is secret without ever being able to tell the secret objectively. ... What would be the use, for instance, in giving the plan of the room that was really my room... (1969: 13)

To show a house to visitors is, on this view, to give a relatively superficial introduction to it – an introduction which may record its physical dimensions, but does not convey the meaning of the house to the child. That meaning is ‘dream’-infused – in other words, it is bound up with the desires and aspirations of the child, and for this reason not readily communicable simply by means of some description of the physical qualities of the place. A further, related reason for acknowledging the limits of prosaic description is that the recollection of these childhood places needs to evoke their singular sensory character. Bachelard continues:

I alone ... can open the deep cupboard that still retains for me alone that unique odor, the odor of raisins drying on a wicker tray. The odor of raisins! It is an odor that is beyond description, one that it takes a lot of imagination to smell. (1969: 13)

So prosaic description proves inadequate to the character of these childhood places not only because it cannot record their affective resonance, but also because it cannot give us access to their phenomenology from a purely sensory point of view. We might prefer to see these points as connected: the affective response to the scene enters into its sensory phenomenology, rather than simply constituting a separate tier of awareness. (This is a theme familiar from recent philosophical writing on emotional experience – see for example Goldie, 2000: 59-60.) Given this connection, we might suppose that it is not enough for the poet simply to recall the phenomenology, for human beings in general, of say the smell of raisins: what matters is the larger affective-phenomenological complex of this particular child. (Compare Bachelard's comment that even if the poet could communicate the particular sensory quality of various childhood scenes, this would not serve his purpose, which is to provoke in the reader a recollection off the 'unique smell, which is the signature of intimacy' in their own lives (1969: 14).)

Developing these thoughts, Bachelard supposes that our knowledge of the places of childhood is not so much verbal as 'physically inscribed in us'. This sort of memory is, he suggests, 'a group of organic habits':

In short, the house we were born in has engraved within us the hierarchy of various functions of inhabiting. We are the diagram of the functions of inhabiting that particular house, and all the other houses are but variations on a fundamental theme. The word habit is too worn a word to express this passionate liaison of our bodies, which do not forget, with an unforgettable house. (1969: 15)

So my recollection of the childhood home is then not so much verbal as a knowledge of appropriate bodily movement, rather as my knowledge of a computer keyboard (if I can touch-type) is we might suppose not so much visual or verbalisable, but rather a knowledge in my fingers. Compare Merleau-Ponty's observation that: 'Our bodily experience of movement is not a particular case of [intellectual or conceptual] knowledge; it provides us with a way of access to the world and the object ... which has to be recognised as original and perhaps as primary ... [To know how to type] is knowledge in the hands, which is forthcoming only when bodily effort is made, and cannot be formulated in detachment from that effort' (Haldane, 2002: 57).

The embodied character of our knowledge of place is a recurring theme in more recent French literature. Henri Lefebvre, for instance, distinguishes between representations of space (here he includes space as conceptualised by means of maps, or as described prosaically) and representational spaces. The latter is 'space as directly lived, through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of "inhabitants" and "users"...' (1991: 39). (Compare his comment that: 'Representational space is alive: it speaks. It has an affective kernel or centre... It embraces the loci of passion, of action, and of lived situations...' (1991: 42).)

Rather like Bachelard, Lefebvre insists on the embodied and enacted (or ‘inhabited’ and ‘used’) character of our understanding of representational space. He remarks for instance upon how: ‘Architectural volumes ensure a correlation between the rhythms that they entertain (gaits, ritual gestures, processions, parades, etc.,) and their musical resonance. It is in this way, and at this level, in the non-visible, that bodies find one another’ (1991: 225). So we could take Lefebvre’s representational space to provide a generalisation of the space of Bachelard’s childhood home: in each case, we are concerned with humanly meaningful space, where the relevant meanings are made known in our kinaesthetic and other embodied responses, rather than in the language of prosaic or ‘cartographical’ description.

In general, Bachelard’s text maintains i. that our sense of the significance of things (our dream-infused appropriation of the world) is rooted in early childhood experience, ii. that our memory of such experiences is spatially organised and mediated above all by our recollection of the childhood home, and iii. in so far as these recollections are communicated verbally, we should have recourse to ‘poetry’. So to this extent, Bachelard is supposing that the childhood home presents a kind of feeling for the world as a whole. As he puts it: ‘the house’s situation in the world ... gives us, quite concretely, a variation of the metaphysically summarized situation of man in the world’ (1969: 27-28). Lefebvre is also interested in the ways in which spatial representations can communicate non-discursively some larger cosmological or metaphysical sense of things. He comments: ‘When a gestural space [or what we might call following Lefebvre’s usage a representational space] comes into conjunction with a conception of the world [a representation of space] possessed of its own symbolic system, a grand creation may result. Cloisters are a case in point. What has happened here is that, happily, a gestural space has succeeded in mooring a mental space ... to the earth, thus allowing itself to express itself symbolically and to become part of a practice, the practice of a well-defined group within a well-defined society’ (1991: 217). So participation in a place- (or to take this particular case, a cloister-) based religious practice can involve an embodied rather than verbal acknowledgement of, and participation in, a correlative metaphysical scheme.

Turning to more recent work, Pierre Bourdieu’s notion of the habitus can be read as another way into the idea that there is a knowledge of the human meaning of space that is embodied rather than explicitly articulated, and that can be extended in the direction of a verbally tacit metaphysic. The habitus is roughly a set of dispositions to behave which exhibits its own kind of intelligence or appropriate practical responsiveness independently of discursive thought (comparable for example to having a ‘feel’ for a game) (1980: 53, 66). Bourdieu comments:

Practical belief [which will include the kind of practical sense that is implied when we orient ourselves appropriately in a given place] is not a ‘state of mind’, still less a kind of arbitrary adherence to a set of instituted dogmas and doctrines (‘beliefs’), but rather a state of the body. Doxa is the relationship of immediate adherence that is established in practice between a habitus and the field to which it is attuned, the pre-verbal taking-for-granted of the world that flows from the practical sense. (1980: 68)

This kind of embodied, non-discursive knowledge of place involves once more, potentially, a sense of the human significance not just of individual places but of the place which is the world. (Although there is no space to explore the point here, the language of ‘doxa’ is of course for other reasons too immediately reminiscent of ‘belief’ in the religious context.) As Bourdieu remarks: ‘One could endlessly enumerate the values given body, made body, by the hidden persuasion of an implicit pedagogy which can instil a whole cosmology, through injunctions as insignificant as “sit up straight” or “don’t hold your knife in your left hand”, and inscribe the most fundamental principles of the arbitrary content of a culture in seemingly innocuous details of bearing or physical and verbal manners, so putting them beyond the reach of consciousness and explicit statement’ (1980: 69).

So following Bachelard, and drawing upon Lefebvre and Bourdieu, we might suppose that there is a knowledge of space that is not readily communicated in the language of discursive prose – on account of its affective resonance, its phenomenological distinctiveness, and its practical, embodied rather than theoretical character. And following these authors again, we might suppose that this sort of knowledge can extend to an understanding of the humanly intelligible meaning of the place which is the world. And if we agree with Bachelard, we will add that this kind of knowledge, so far as it can be cast in verbal form, is best communicated by means of what he terms ‘poetry’.

The aesthetic dimension of religious knowledge

It is time to put the main theses of this paper together. I have argued first that knowledge of God is akin to knowledge of place, and more exactly that knowledge of God is, at least in part, a knowledge of the genius of the place which is the world. And secondly I have suggested that there is a kind of knowledge of place that is not straightforwardly communicable in geometric or quantitative or other terms which lack affective resonance or fail to engage with our specifically human mode of sensory experience, or our specifically human embodied and practical appropriation of, or reckoning with, space. Putting these two claims together, we might wonder whether there is a knowledge of the place which is the world (and hence a knowledge of God) which is not communicable in straightforwardly prosaic terms because it concerns the human significance of this place, rather than, say, its character from a scientific point of view; and if there is such knowledge, we might wonder whether it has an aesthetic dimension, and whether (following Bachelard) it can find particularly apt expression in the language of poetry.

Of course, the drift of my paper is that these questions can be answered affirmatively: the kind of embodied knowledge of place that we have been considering can extend to a knowledge of the place which is the world; such knowledge will count as knowledge of God, for the reasons we have been considering, but will not be scientific in character, or dependent upon some nonsensory intuition; and so far as this kind of knowledge can be cast in words, we might suppose that these words will need to incarnate for us the correlative practical and affectively resonant engagement with the world. In the words Frank Burch Brown, we will need words that can offer ‘something like a resemblance of lived experience, or the world imagined freshly and

uniquely by means of fictions and sensuously embodied ideas: organic wholes whose meanings are felt more than thought' (2003: 83).

If this knowledge of place is to count as Christian, then we might suppose that it will need to recognise, as Nicholas Wolterstorff puts it, that this world:

... represents a success on the part of God – God who is love – not a failure. In contemplation of what he had made God found delight. But also God knew that what He had made would serve well his human creatures. So God pronounced His 'Yes' upon it all, a 'Yes' of delight and of love. You and I must do no less. (1980: 69)

In other words, a properly Christian appreciation of the place which is the world will imply a correlative set of affective responses (broadly affirmative in character) and a correlative phenomenology (one which is open to taking delight in the world and recognising its intrinsic goodness). And perhaps such an appreciation of place will also imply, or at any rate will prove to be especially consonant with, certain gestural and other embodied responses.

A more persuasive account of these matters would no doubt require close examination of particular poems or other art works – to show how these works body forth the kind of knowledge whose possibility we have identified only abstractly. As a step in that direction, I am going to close with a poem of Edmund Cusick (2006). In the poem I have chosen, he is talking about a region of Wales, near his home in the Berwyns. As I read, I'll allude to (rather than attempt to expound) some of the ways in which the poem exemplifies the themes we have been examining. In general terms my suggestion is that the poem constitutes one line of response to the problem of the possibility of a theological aesthetic with which we began.

To see the poem's sense, we have to contemplate it as a poem: while it certainly has reference to a world beyond the poem, and offers indeed a perspective on a particular place, what the poem communicates about that place is, arguably, not fully paraphrasable in prosaic or in any other terms. To this extent, the poem conforms to the ideal of aesthetic autonomy. At the same time, the poem is able to speak religiously – and it does this not by speaking of God abstractly, but by reference to a particular place, whose meaning or genius is taken to provide a clue to the meaning embodied in creation as a whole. So, putting these thoughts together, the poem does not depend upon any denial of the doctrine of divine incorporeality (the poem does not after all affirm or in some way presuppose pantheism), and yet its religious import is communicated in terms which are irreducibly aesthetic. Hence the poem constitutes one response – a place-based response – to the question of how a theological aesthetic is possible, notwithstanding the autonomy of aesthetic values and the incorporeality of God. It is also true of course that the poem implies a different epistemology from the one which has dominated recent discussion in philosophy of religion – here God is known not by way of scientific inference, nor by means of some supra-sensory encounter with a non-material entity, but in the embodied apprehension and enacted appropriation of a particular place.

Coed y Farden

I

Coed y Farden: three square miles where no one comes
by foot, or land-rover, for days on end:
bounded by crumbling dykes and rusting wire,
the river choked with flashflood branches;
lines of pines and spruce broken, thinned
by fifty years of storm, their fallen trunks
opening ragged glades to ash and rowan
seedlings of oak and holly: no longer
forestry plantation, not yet wild wood.

[To this point we have been given a ‘cartographical’ account of the place, or in Lefebvre’s terms a representation of the space – although the account is already of course ‘poetic’ in its idiom. But the poem moves now to offer another kind of appreciation of this place.]

A place where silence holds
within it the surf-surge of the spruce, the mutter of water,

yet rests unbroken, its stillness
not absence of sound
but strands of quiet through which the place itself listens:

the soft pad
as drifts of needles yield under my boots;

the changing in the river’s voice
as I cross its current, the way it closes back again;

the flat chime of barbed wire springing back
vibrating from post to post into the soil.

[Here the place is personified, and treated as itself a kind of subject of experience, which ‘listens’ – which is to say that the poem is taking the place to have a genius. And this genius is made known via a description of the phenomenology of the author’s embodied, engaged encounter with the place: a particular enacted appropriation of the place is being described, and a correlative set of affective responses is implied.]

II

It’s only here I know
this cleanness of the air, of pine and peat

Here under the rain, a cold stone at my back,
there whispers at the edge of thought a sense

Mark Wynn

of subtle territories of blood and scent
a cigarette smoked half a mile away,

the taint of diesel and exhaust
lingering on the track for hours
after the foresters have gone

a stillness that has me turning, sometimes
to the crow's flight before I hear it
sometimes to see nothing visible.

Lives which compass mine
the way the buzzard's circles hold
the lesser worlds of rook and heron;

which intersect with mine only the way
the mud at dawn unites the tracks
of fox and polecat, their hunger hours apart.

[Here again we are given a picture of the author's bodily stance in relation to the place, when he stands with the stone at his back – in Lefebvre's terms, it is as though the author is describing a gestural space, which carries within it a larger but verbally tacit sense of the nature of things. (The idea that there is a non-theoretical, non-'rational', embodied understanding of the natural world that is humanly more authentic and more revealing of its true character than are more abstractly cerebral kinds of response is a recurring theme in twentieth century British and Irish landscape poetry – see Picot, 1997.) In this passage the author's attention also begins to broaden out – away from what lies within the immediate reach of his senses, and towards 'lives which compass mine'. This paves the way for the closing section of the poem, where the sense of place that has been described so far is taken as a clue to the character of the genius of the locus which is the world.]

III

It's only here that I acknowledge
that this is my religion,
underpinning everything, this bond
I've made with you and never spoken,
that you understand runs deeper
than any marriage, a kind of parenthood,

in which your spirit finds no rest
but still a place to venture from
and to return. A faith
whose confirmations are all ambiguous:
voices in the wind;
an empty bed: mud on the stairs;
the grit your tongue discovers
between your teeth.

The Turn to Aesthetics

It's here, in Coed y Farden, that I believe
this love, patient, unforeseen, may redeem
all that is merely human, its proof
absolute discretion; the tenderness
of ordinary things: to wait
in the tired dawn and watch

for your eyes opening; to dress
the scratches on your limbs;

return you to your name.

Here the poet speaks of trust and faith, and so in Bachelard's terms he is using the language of 'dream' or of desire and aspiration. And the genius of this particular place is seen here to fix the sense of the poet's activities – since its love offers redemption in the midst of 'ordinary things'. And casting himself in the role of a lover of this place, the poet imagines being able to name the place – so discovering its identity and at the same time his own. The precise feeling for the world which this poem communicates is we might suppose not otherwise expressible. But it gives particular shape, I suggest, to the possibility which is recorded in these words of Teilhard de Chardin:

Now, Lord, through the consecration of the world the luminosity and fragrance which suffuse the universe take on for me the lineaments of a body and a face – in you. (Burch Brown, 2003: 224)]

In the earlier parts of this paper, we sketched out a certain possibility rather abstractly – namely, the possibility that in knowing a particular place, through embodied appropriation of the place and sensitivity to its human meaning, we might thereby have knowledge of God. This poem incarnates this possibility. And as a poem it stands for the truth that this sort of knowledge will have in some cases anyway an irreducibly aesthetic content. If that is so, then we have found one way in which theology and aesthetics can sustain a conversation that is mutually enriching, while respectful of disciplinary boundaries.

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Shaping the darkness: Virginia Woolf and the apophatic moment

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Introduction

It is my intention in this paper to present a point of theological conversation with the literature of Virginia Woolf, yet one which, significantly, is enacted through, is made *possible* through, a shared sense of the *aesthetic* dimension of human experience; our desire to interpret and create meaning for the world we live in, and our awareness of the possibilities and limitations which shape our interpretations of, and responses to, what seems to us most 'real'. I will begin, more generally, by surveying the landscape of aesthetic and theological relations emerging from conversation between the dialectics of 'negative' theological discourse and the modernist-becoming-postmodernist aesthetics of Virginia Woolf. I will then present a specific study, by way of expounding my argument, of the apophatic dimension of Lily Briscoe's abstract painting in *To the Lighthouse*.

1. Surveying the landscape of aesthetic and theological relations (with specific reference to Virginia Woolf)

In the last twenty to thirty years, the postmodernist determination to counteract our traditional essentialisms, to break up our Western philosophical confidences in idolatries of presence, has had a huge effect on a wide spectrum of disciplines, both practical and academic. Specific criticisms of theological concepts, such as those against notions of 'Super-essential Being', or 'absolute presence' or 'transcendence', have reflected the *kind* of changes also happening elsewhere. For example, in aesthetics, a characteristically modernist confidence in the retrieval of notions of beauty and formal unity in art has been succeeded by an intense *suspicion* that such as 'unity', 'beauty', 'formal integrity', or 'symmetry', might somehow be 'purely' present in art. These criticisms have reflected the tone of those anti-metaphysical gestures made against the traditional theological-philosophical worldview and its accompanying conceptual and political architectures.

However, it seems to me that postmodernist critiques have a tendency to be 'unfair'. I am sure that I am not alone among theologians who consider the wholesale rejection of theistic belief, on the grounds of postmodernist argumentation, to be more than a little hasty. Conversations have already taken place between theologians of the negative mystical tradition and Derridean scholars in an attempt to course the grounds of engagement between the postmodernist sense of non-metaphysical 'otherness' and the way to God encountered in the seemingly deconstructive contemplative mode of

the *via negativa* (I will say more about this in a moment).¹ But, more basically still, there has been a tendency, as some have noticed, to 'make ultimate' the postmodernist moment of *suspension*. The postmodernist, having brought us to a point of critical awareness about our positivist metaphysical assumptions (a necessary process given the oppressive effect of such assumptions in history), then often makes an illegitimate, inconsistent (and often invisible) move from the embracing of this process as *instrument* to the enthroning of the instrument as absolute theory. The result of this move is a heritage of estrangement from others, a pervading sense of purposelessness, of meaninglessness in our lives. So much in postmodernism gestures towards death, towards nihilism. There is a tendency to 'fetishize' uncertainty, aporia and absence in a way which makes of them a kind of negative mirror-image of that positive ultimacy which was apparently opposed. But there is an alternative to this making ultimate of the negative, and it lies in managing to embrace the genuine openness to otherness which our experience of our selves and others requires. Moreover, in its occupation with questions of relationship between the self and the world, with its striving to discover and cultivate expressive instruments for the making, exploration and description of such relationships, it is the discipline of *aesthetics* which seems particularly able to navigate this experiential territory.

One whom we may call 'the practicing aesthetician', that is, the artist, is particularly exposed to these questions, in her consideration of the potential and limitations of her medium. In her own efforts to create meaningful aesthetic relationships with her world, Virginia Woolf encounters the 'openness to otherness' (my own phrase) which characterises both the specifically *artistic*, and more *generally human* quality of experience. Moreover, this 'openness to otherness' is present in her work in the powerful sense of the *inexhaustibility* of her literary object; of life. But the inexhaustibility of the creative relationships integral to life, being so very clear to the consciousness of the artist, emerge, in Woolf's writing, from within the opposition of the two alternatives just described above for a limited postmodernist perspective. That is, Woolf does not simply shuttle between two views of reality as being either inherently unified or ultimately fragmented (two equally 'ultimate' opposites): on the contrary, the ceaseless alternating of these two perspectives reflects another, perhaps more truly postmodernist, activity, in the constant making and re-making of relationships, those which take place 'beyond the page', and which are of the essence of life. It is these relationships which are fundamental and yet inexhaustible, for their basic ingredient is unceasing openness.

What I am suggesting here, then, is that two different responses to life's inexhaustibility (when encountered by the artist) may be identified as emerging from Woolf's writing (emerging through her considerations of the artist's relationship with her world); but, moreover, that these two alternatives of perspective locate equivalent possibilities for postmodernism. Faced with life's inexhaustibility, with an aesthetic vision embracing the 'beyond the page', Woolf's literature not only appears, on occasion, to move *between* opposing senses of the ultimacy of unity or fragmentation, but also, crucially, reaches *beyond* this dichotomy, in possessing an 'aesthetics of openness' to the genuine emergence of the 'other' in experience. These two possibilities seem equally to epitomize alternatives for the postmodernist: one may either (unfortunately) enthrone absence in the vacated place of presence; or one may

recognise, in the disintegration of the old metaphysics, or, rather, in the viewing of new possibilities for metaphysics, an openness to the 'other' which owns the spirit of revival, which embraces the hospitable 'openness' demanded by our encounter with the world and our neighbours as 'other'. And here I get to the subject of my paper: for this 'aesthetics of openness', discernable, I believe, in Woolf's writing, is a positive *aesthetic* response to our heightened awareness of the other which shapes the distinctly aesthetic dimension of our *ethical* encounter with the world. I hope I am not too hasty in suggesting some of these points above, and that this paper will now illuminate the precise contours of my argument.

The subject of 'aesthetics' does not only invite conversation with Virginia Woolf on account of her being a writer. Woolf also wrote much on the *nature* of her art, as indicated in numerous essays on reading and writing, poetry and prose; in her critical contributions to *The Times*' reviews, and in her diaries. But she also wrote about art actually *in* her fiction. In her 1927 novel, *To The Lighthouse*, the struggle of the fine artist to capture her vision is explored in the character of Lily Briscoe; the yearnings, strivings and defeats of the writer are considered in the character (or voice of) 'Bernard' in Woolf's 1931 novel, *The Waves*; and, in her final novel *Between the Acts* (published posthumously in 1941), Woolf powerfully recreates the creative agonies of the playwright, Miss La Trobe, whose failed attempt to pull the audience into self-conscious awareness of their own participation in her work of art gives a very powerful account of the role of the artist: as one who sees the relationship between life and art, their mutual creativity; as one who testifies to others about their own participative role in this relationship. Now, of course, none of these characters, on their own, provides an exhaustive account of Woolf's aesthetic attitudes, and we must certainly refrain from mistaking the views of the characters for those of the author. But it would be equally incorrect to assume that the artistic and aesthetic concerns encountered in Woolf's novels are absolutely unlike her own. That this is true, can be deduced from considering her own comments on the nature of her literary art, and art in general, in her diaries.

Virginia Woolf on her art (from the diaries)

The qualities of *aesthetic* encounter with the world are integral to *human* encounter with the world. From very early in her literary career, Woolf recognises, in her writing, an attempt to make a whole of what she calls 'life'. But this does not invite us merely to interpret Woolf's work as the organisational effort to unify disparate elements of experience: for, simultaneously, her writings offer the opposing observation, that the efforts of the artist break apart what is first experienced as being 'complete'. On 4th January 1929, she writes that she is 'haunted by...two contradictions', asking, 'Now is life very solid or very shifting?...This has gone on forever; will last for ever; goes down to the bottom of the world – this moment I stand on. Also, it is transitory, flying, diaphanous. I shall pass like a cloud on the waves'(Woolf, 1954:138). She continues, 'perhaps it may be that though we change, one flying after another...yet we are somehow successive and continuous we human beings, and show the light through. But what is the light?'

This comment in 1929 indicates the development of an aesthetic response to an encounter with the world recorded earlier in 1927. 'Odd', Woolf writes, 'how the

creative power at once brings the whole universe to order. I can see the day whole, proportioned.’ Again, though, this perhaps characteristically modernist confidence in the salvific properties of art does not secure, in Woolf’s thinking, the setting up of a simple and consistent dichotomy between a chaotic life and an ordering work of art: on the contrary, Woolf seems often to recognise *beyond the page*, beyond the capacities of art, an overwhelming sense of life’s inexhaustibility and ineffability, which both inspires the artist into *recreative* action and, yet, most importantly, indicates to the artist that her efforts simply succeed in fracturing, splintering, dividing up what was more perfect and more deeply saturated in life.ⁱⁱ

In other words, the art of writing, for Woolf, is the art of envisioning an emerging shape for reality: and yet, juxtaposing this sense of its being the artist’s purpose to bring form, is the equally prevalent intuition that the form is actually discovered in, is emerging *from*, that which she is attempting to unify. The dialectic at work here, one which is shaped around the question of whether art or life is the source of the inspiration to create form, comes to gesture, more and more strongly, to an emerging otherness beyond the expressive capacities of language in the aesthetics of Virginia Woolf. This ‘aesthetics of openness’ is generated through a genuinely non-restive, non-ultimate postmodernist perspective of ‘openness to otherness’.

Pseudo-dionysius: the cataphatic and apophatic dialectics

If we are to examine Woolf’s aesthetics, it is most appropriate, in her case, to consider her attitude to *language*, which is, after all, her artistic medium. In doing so, we are examining both how Woolf, as author, uses language to create her novels, and also the way in which language is understood *within* these novels by the characters attempting an aesthetic vision of the world. In other words, we can consider Woolf’s treatment of language both as the mediating subject of her artistic activity, and as the object of her aesthetic enquiry. Emerging from both these angles of enquiry is an *apophatic* dimension of language as a mode of expression in her work.

On first acquaintance, Virginia Woolf and the apophatic tradition seem very unlikely conversation partners. But what they share in their aesthetic reflections on a basic relationship with reality as ‘openness-to-otherness’ is well worth exploring. For both Woolf and the negative mystics, *relationship* shapes the heart of experience and genuine encounter with the world, while the inexhaustible properties of the logic of relationship with an emergent ‘other’, enact, for both, a powerful effect upon the function of language: of aesthetic expression. Equally, for both, this effect is testimony to the distinctly aesthetic quality of human experience and relationship with the world.

In Christian mystical literature, the term ‘apophatic’ designates the quality of radical disruption which effects language when we attempt to speak about God. As Denys Turner has noted, the phrase ‘apophatic theology’ translates to mean something like ‘that speech about God which is the failure of speech’ (Turner, 1995:20). In other words, the term ‘apophatic’, or the phenomenon of ‘apophaticism’, refers to the area of theology which recognises, in our attempt to speak about the divine, the way in which language must necessarily ‘fall short’, given the ontological gap, the radical distance, between the Creator and created being. Language will break up, will

fracture, as it approaches the divine. This *negative* dimension of human expressive potential also characterises that quality of human experience which feels overshadowed, overawed by the presence (which is precisely *non*-presence) of the transcendent. But, crucially, the apophatic dimension of mystical language exists in relation to an opposing *positive* dimension of accurate description and acquaintance (in relationship) with God. Language is both capable and incapable of describing the divine, of gesturing the transcendent, in virtue of the simultaneous presence and absence of the transcendent in the created life, in virtue of the radical saturation which is both immanent dwelling and inexhaustible over-flowing. It is with this negative theology that Derrida's own philosophical perspective has been compared, insofar as classical exponents of negative theology have appeared, although anachronistically, to attempt something like a systematic deconstruction of traditional metaphysical categories when evoking the negative dimension of religious experience.

One such theologian is the fifth of sixth century writer Pseudo-Dionysius, whose *Mystical Theology* has been widely recognised as presenting the foundational logical dynamics of Christian mystical linguistics. In this text (as in his *Divine Names*), he contrasts the 'cataphatic' dimension of successful speech concerning God (and the constructive linguistic this entails), with the 'apophatic' mode of negativity, in which language breaks down on approaching the divine. What matters for this discussion *particularly* is that Dionysius' *Mystical Theology* gestures towards the breaking down of language on the threshold of that which is '*beyond the page*': that which emerges, which is inexhaustible, which is transcendent: which is, precisely, and most importantly, beyond both the cataphatic *and* the apophatic. Dionysius invokes the Trinity:

'Lead us up beyond unknowing and light,
up to the farthest, highest peak
of mystic scripture,
where the mysteries of God's Word
lie simple, absolute and unchangeable
in the brilliant darkness of a hidden silence.
Amid the deepest shadow
They pour overwhelming light
On what is most manifest.
Amid the wholly unsensed and unseen
They completely fill our sightless minds
With treasures beyond all beauty'.
(Pseudo-Dionysius, 1987:135 [997A-997B]).

For the mystical vision lies *beyond* the dialectical opposition of these two modes. In the simultaneity of the positive and negative dimensions of language and experience, the visionary is launched into a place, a non-place, *beyond both* (beyond the dichotomy of presence and absence). The cataphatic gives birth to the apophatic (we move from what *can* be said to what *cannot* be said regarding the divine) through the exhaustion of our capacities for expression; and yet, consistent with this exhaustion, and the acknowledgement of the limitation constitutive of this exhaustion, the visionary cannot express the resulting vision which is *beyond both*. The 'apophatic' moment captures the cessation of language altogether, the dissolution described in a

rich history of mystical literature as an intellectual and spiritual plunge into darkness: and yet, a 'plunge' occurring on the threshold of a necessarily present 'otherness', the crashing ocean-swell beneath the force of which the cliff-edge of language cracks.ⁱⁱⁱ In this way, the darkness is also an inexhaustible excess of light.

This dialectic of the simultaneous success and defeat of language in its attempt to capture and present 'the real' is also a defining characteristic of Woolf's aesthetic encounter with the world. The very cataphatic and apophatic moments distinctive of mystical vision can be recognised in isolatable moments of the Woolfian aesthetic: the artist is inspired to vision, cannot even 'see' this vision, she tells us, 'without a brush in her hand'^{iv} (cataphatic), and yet this mysteriously arising creative inspiration is self-subverting in its inability to actually render, in concrete form, the essence of the vision possessed (the cataphatic has gestured, but not captured, the apophatic). That the cataphatic both contains and gestures the apophatic is reflected in Woolf's consciousness, *through* expression, of having fallen short *of* expression, an event of which she is painfully aware throughout her literary career, and presents with poignancy in the creative efforts of her fictional 'artists'. But here we can consider again the two responses, present in Woolf's work, to the inexhaustibility of her artistic object, *life*.

The nihilistic moments of existentialist crisis present in her work have received considerable attention in critical circles. And yet, there is also, crucially, the contrasting sense of a *generative* impulse as characterising her response to the ineffable in life, a response which is also characteristic of the *apophatic* dimension of her literary aesthetic. For, in the moment of expressive failure, in the intimation of the emergence of that 'beyond-the-page', that inexhaustible 'other', precisely in the presence of which language has fallen short, this generative nothingness which suggests an aesthetics of transcendence in Woolf's work is equally deserving of attention. In spite of postmodernist critiques of 'transcendence' (not all of which have understood the concept), the cataphatic and apophatic languages of mystical discourse have been recognised as possessing lines of sight *consonant* with key postmodernist texts; particularly in their shared sense of an aesthetic which makes neither sound nor silence ultimate. Consequently, the literature of one such as Virginia Woolf, whose works have often received a style of postmodernist attention which presumes hostility to theological worldviews, may be recognised as encountering, through an aesthetic mode of vision, the aesthetic dimensions also perceptible to a theological ethical perspective. The sense of an ineffable and irreducible content to which her aesthetic vision apophatically gestures suggests, in Woolf's writing, significant possibilities for the acquaintance of aesthetic and theological perspectives, and, in this case, for 'atheistic' and 'theistic' encounters. Here, this happens through the sharing of a concern, by both the artist and the theologian, to understand our *relationship* to the world: in this sense, the aesthetic mode of vision reveals its ethical dimensions. Adjusting our presuppositions, from the perspectives of our own disciplines, about the exclusivity of certain postmodernist and theological vantage-points, goes a long way towards re-inspiring conversation between recently estranged partners.

2. Exploring the apophatic dimension of Virginia Woolf's literature

A case study: To the lighthouse, 1927 Lily Briscoe as artist

In the second part of this paper, I would like to consider one specific portrayal of the artistic process in Woolf's novels; that epitomized by the character of fine artist, Lily Briscoe, in Woolf's 1927 novel *To The Lighthouse*. While Woolf is a *writer* and Lily here a *painter*, it is nevertheless possible to recognise in Lily's abstract aesthetics the shape of the particular struggle for vision and expression encountered in Woolf's diaries: and, from this point of resemblance, we can recognise the richness of scope with which Woolf addresses distinctly aesthetic questions and perspectives when desiring to render the 'real'. It is my intention now to focus particularly on the way in which an *apophatic* dimension emerges in Lily's aesthetic encounter with reality. For there is to be found in the negative moments of Lily's treatment of paint an analogue for corresponding apophatic moments in Woolf's language-orientated exploration of the path from vision to expression.

In *To the Lighthouse*, we first encounter Lily, her canvas propped on the lawn, agonising over how to capture the object of her vision, the matron of the house, Mrs Ramsay. However, Lily both exalts within, and suffers beneath, the grip of a powerful and demanding inspiration. Considering her subject, she asks:

'Could loving, as people called it, make her and Mrs. Ramsay one? for it was not knowledge but unity that she desired, not inscriptions on tablets, nothing that could be written in any language known to men, but intimacy itself, which is knowledge, she had thought, leaning her head on Mrs Ramsay's knee.' (Woolf, 2004:63).

Earlier, she had asked, wishing again 'to fling herself' at Mrs Ramsay's knee:

'-but what could one say to her? 'I'm in love with you'? No, that was not true. 'I'm in love with this all,' waving her hand at the hedge, at the house, at the children? It was absurd, it was impossible. One could not say what one meant.' (Woolf, 2004:27).

In this novel, Woolf places the *artistic* instinct to create unity within the context of attempting *relationship* (that between Lily and Mrs Ramsay), and, in doing so, conveys the artist's attempt to envision and communicate reality in terms of relational encounter, of personal out-reaching.^v But there is, simultaneous with the shaping of Lily's endeavour, a recognition of the extra-linguistic, non-descriptive properties of this aesthetic 'reaching'. For Lily, standing at a distance from her object, from life, desires 'unity', she tells us: 'not descriptions on tablets, nothing that could be written in any language known to men, but *intimacy itself, which is knowledge*. The sentiments of this passage are distinctly apophatic as Lily's aesthetic desire to convey *relationship* struggles to resolve the desire for a uniting vision with the incommunicability of this impulse, which nevertheless demands representation.^{vi} Moreover, (here we see the *practical* dimension of her artistic activity) it is Lily's desire for 'intimacy itself, which is knowledge', which is both thwarting, yet being informed by, her attempt to express this relationship adequately. Here is the

apophatic again: the development of Lily's aesthetic vision of the shape of life before her does not entail the accumulation of images upon her canvas, but rather their (hypothetical) dispersal. In the manner of mystical negativity, the more concentrated the vision, the more rarefied the air of symbols, of language, to which recourse can be made. Language falls away before an inexpressible relationship.

In the painter's striving to reach and render what is 'real', lasting, essential, Woolf gives the shape of the *writer's* relationship with words. Communicating, through Lily, a deep scepticism of representational theories of language and knowledge, the artist desires an 'intimacy' with her object which refuses the binds of propositional expression.^{vii} What Lily yearns for, by contrast, is 'unity' with the object of contemplation, to possess an intimate vision of the essence of the object which is working as her window in a philosophical-aesthetic approach to the real. Lily gestures, for both painter and writer – for the *artist* - a deepening relationship between the questing visionary and her object, that is, the 'other', the 'beyond-the-page', experienced *relationally*, as life irreducible. The possibility for overcoming artistic estrangement is glimpsed here, in Lily's intuition that the consummative vision lies beyond language, beyond 'inscriptions on tablets.' This vision of unity exists in distinction from that which can be written, or named, because language splinters, distorts and fractures. Again, a paradox: the artistic impulse to expression, which promises to create unity (this perspective assuming the disorder of the world before the art-work), is a simultaneously self-subverting movement; for this attempted expression is the very 'making many' of that reality which, being 'one thing', is first *intuited as such*. This aesthetic predicament – the self-subverting nature of the artistic effort which is incessantly re-emerging as inspiration- is present both in Woolf's writing and apophatic mystical literature. The tension, in Woolf's literature, between the discovery or imposition of unity is maintained by an intuition of a reality which is *beyond* the contrast of unity and fracture, which is the emergence of the inexhaustible 'other', and the equally inexhaustible relationship it brings. But if this reality beyond unity or fracture lies *beyond* the dichotomy, escaping the two 'alternative perspectives' which merely make an ultimate of one or the other (of the positive or the negative), then equally the going beyond words must always *return* to words, to the attempt to express, if only to break free again. The beyond which is both beyond and not beyond words is genuinely beyond both the cataphatic and the apophatic conceived as opposites: this is what sources the constant inspiration to attempt expression for the artist.^{viii} Now, we have not simply found here, in this 'beyondness', the re-instantiation of the metaphysics of presence in hyper-presence. Rather, in that which is mystically beyond both presence and absence, we have the possibility of locating a 'beyond unity and fragmentation' in the writing of Woolf; a mystical aesthetics in the literature of an artist whose critical heritage has tended to resist such interpretation.

An *aesthetic* response to this mystical landscape of consciousness is evident in *To the Lighthouse*. Lily's abstract painting of Mrs Ramsay enacts a carefully deliberated, though highly constrained, organisation of tones and shapes attempting to 'relate the masses' of her canvas. Again, *relation* and *relationship* matter most: but it is *this* which is most inexhaustible, most uncapturable. Lily recognises, as the *essence* of reality, the elusive compositional forces constructive and destructive of life, within which she includes, and explicitly explores, our intuitions to unity and disunity, our

love and our despair. As the novel progresses, she resolves to, as she puts it, 'avoid that awkward space,' that central void which makes of art, of the cataphatic, a set of 'curves and arabesques flourishing round a centre of complete emptiness,' (Woolf, 2004:206). She attempts to deal with this 'emptiness' aesthetically by placing an object in 'the middle' of her canvas. And yet, we feel, this central gravity which organises, which orientates, her picture of life, must exist alongside the openness surrounding it.^{ix} Reflecting Woolf's aesthetic perspective, Lily finds this absent central space 'awkward' just because, while she cannot frame it, it nevertheless constitutes the most honest aspect of her attempted representation (albeit abstract) of the real; that is, in its stating the limitations of successful expression. The artist's aesthetic encounter with reality, then, occurs not only *on* and *through* canvas and paper, but also in the passionate intellectual and intuitional struggles which cannot be rendered exhaustively, but shape a distinctly contemplative mode of *vision*. Lily, in common with characteristically mystical instincts, is constantly attempting to purify, to refine, this mode of *relational* vision, and dares to name it 'love'.^x

The 'empty space' which occupies the centre of Lily's canvas gestures wordlessly to a positive beyondness which is simultaneously darkness (in its elusive wordlessness). To this the final 'line' of her abstract painting can gesture, but never grasp. And yet, Lily's 'line' is a cataphatic gesture with integrated apophatic dimensions, apophatic dimensions both gesturing beyond, yet launched from within, the effort of expressive affirmation:

She looked at her picture...nothing stays; all changes; but not words, not paint...One might say, *even of this scrawl, not of that actual picture, perhaps, but of what it attempted*, that it 'remained for ever,' she was going to say...' (Woolf, 2004:207), my italics.

Consistent with the artist's attempting relationship with an object which is 'other', free, emergent, genuinely beyond; language, expression, *cannot* and yet *must* fail for the achievement of vision:^{xi} it must both successfully attempt and yet fall short of deliverance. Such are the mystical dialectics surrounding an aesthetic vision which, according to Dionysius, 'falls neither within the predicate of non-being nor of being...There is no speaking of it, nor name nor knowledge of it,' (Pseudo-Dionysius, 1987:141[1048A]). This indefinable vision is, for both Woolf and Dionysius, the vision of *relationship* to an other, the dimensions of which are inexhaustible to attempted expression. Both Woolf and Dionysius, then, experience a 'transcendent': and, for both, this transcendence witnesses to the fullness of life and the mysterious inexplicable presence of the other and our relationship to her: towards the vision of which the aesthetic mode of experience is elemental. It is perhaps, as Lily herself suggests it to be, 'love' which is the gesture beyond the apophatic and cataphatic towards something more complete which inspires the artist; a relationship more immediate, and yet dynamic, elusive, and itself indescribable before the inexhaustible freedom of 'the other' encountered, aesthetically, as such. For Woolf, as for negative mysticism, language, just because it is limited in its capacity to express experience, shows itself (as the cataphatic declares the apophatic) to be not exhaustive of *reality*: *its* limits are not the limits of the possible, of the emergent.^{xii} Concerning Woolf's sense of the limitations of language in relation to aesthetic vision, to the vision of

relationship, the final passages of *To The Lighthouse* are significant. For, with Lily's final brush-stroke, evocative of 'the lighthouse', she betokens that form of compositional unity, the relatedness of all to the centre, which expresses her broader aesthetic and metaphysical efforts to unify several perspectives on reality: such also is the scope of Virginia Woolf's aesthetic vision.

It is what art 'attempts' that eventually remains, as the vision is placed, cataphatically, within the 'one-making' activity of art, but then simultaneously beyond the medium in a cataphatically-dependent apophatic movement toward a deeper kind of knowing. The final impossibility of locating the uniting vision in either cataphatic or apophatic, is the enactment of the logic on account of which the mystics will call this non-place a 'brilliant darkness': for, resisting artificial resolution by suggesting the primacy of either state, both Woolf and Dionysius can illustrate the interdependency of the cataphatic and apophatic realms of discourse, as signalling two simultaneously present dimensions of one approach to reality.

The 'mystical' in Woolf's aesthetics is found in the inexpressible and inexhaustible 'being in love' which characterises Lily's rapturous search for consummative vision, and which, moreover, characterises Woolf's *own* attitude towards life and the accurate envisioning of reality. Love is at the heart of life, a powerful contender to those who would enthrone nothingness. This all suggests that the aesthetic response to our world involves a *practical* concern with our relationships, both with other people and with the natural world. Perhaps we can find, through exploring the aesthetic dimensions of our relational encounters with the world, a language capable of crossing the distance between theological and non-theological worldviews.

Conclusion

This paper has outlined a promising route of enquiry, one which brings writing from very different worldviews into conversation. Common to both Woolf and the tradition of negative theology is their sense of the instructive way in which the frailties (and potentialities) of *language* can speak about something fundamental to human experience: about the need for openness to relationship with what is 'other', and about the creative and informative landscapes both of language and of *artistic effort* which contribute to navigating the relational dimensions of human experience. If a 'mystical aesthetic' embraces our attempts to talk about what is beyond the cataphatic and apophatic, then a 'mystical aesthetic' can also contribute to an understanding of the way in which images, for Woolf, are both inadequate and yet nevertheless have aesthetic value. Here we bring back into dialogue apparently estranged disciplines and world-views, the means of this constructive movement being the exploration of the *aesthetic* territories integral to both. This shared recognition of the *aesthetic* dimension of our experience of the world as 'other', as coming from 'beyond' in the nature of a 'gift', creates the hermeneutical space for such renewed conversation to take place.

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Endnotes

ⁱ See, for example, the collection by H. Coward and C. Foshay, *Derrida and Negative Theology* (Albany, State University of New York Press: 1992).

ⁱⁱ 10th September, 1928: ‘...I [got] then a consciousness of what I call “reality: a thing I see before me: something abstract; but residing in the downs or sky; besides which nothing matters; in which I shall rest and continue to exist. Reality I call it. And I fancy sometimes this is the most necessary thing to me: that which I seek. But who knows – once one takes a pen and writes? How difficult not to go on making “reality” this and that, whereas it is one thing...I think it may be rare to have so acute a sense of something like that...I would like to express it too.’ (Woolf, 1954:129-130).

ⁱⁱⁱ Dionysius says of the divine: ‘It is beyond assertion and denial. We make assertions and denials of what is next to it, but never of it, for it is both beyond every assertion...[and]...beyond every denial. (Pseudo-Dionysius, 1987:141[1048B]).

^{iv} ‘[she] could not see it even herself, *without a brush in her hand*...becoming, once more - under the power of that vision which she had seen clearly once and must now grope for among hedges and houses and mother and children- her picture.’ (Woolf, 2004:65), my italics.

^v This is consistent with the autobiographical elements of this novel, which so vividly reflect the personal aesthetic concerns which Woolf recorded in her diaries.

^{vi} ‘-but what could one say to her? ‘I’m in love with you’? No, that was not true. ‘I’m in love with all this,’ waving her hand at the hedge, at the house, at the children? It was absurd, it was impossible. One could not say what one meant,’ (Woolf, 2004:27).

^{vii} This aesthetic philosophy sharply contrasts the reductive, analytic methods of philosophy which emerged, contemporary with Woolf’s writing, in the early twentieth century. While Woolf is aware that dimensions of reality may fall beyond the linguistically communicable, her philosophical perspective seems directly opposed to the ‘anti-metaphysical’ philosophical temperament which culminated in the arid formulation of the logical-positivistic dictum that the ‘meaningful’ is (exhaustively) that which can be analytically or empirically verified. The consequence of this reductive method was a radical contraction of the concept of ‘reality’, a splinter-thin sense of ‘meaning’, and, correspondingly, a scaling-down of visions for human creative potential. In the character of Mr Ramsay, and his preoccupation with reality conceived, reductively, as a succession of ‘letters’ or logical symbols to be conquered, Woolf conveys her own suspicions of the egotistical forces underwriting this (as she conceived it) characteristically ‘masculine’ approach to the world.

^{viii} ‘...we should not conclude that the negations are simply the opposites of the affirmations, but rather that the cause of all is considerably prior to this, beyond privations, beyond every denial, beyond every assertion.’ (Pseudo-Dionysius, 1987:136[1000B]).

^{ix} This central object (Lily considers a tree) is to break up the central vacancy of the canvas, and Lily situates a salt cellar to remind her of this moment of vision. But the central object is equally her painting, Mrs Ramsay, and the lighthouse. In seeking (a vision of) each, and of each through the others, Lily creates, in her aesthetic activity, a point of central radiance for the unification of the novel’s many ‘beams’.

^x The purgative elements of Lily’s vision (and their association with ‘visual’ clarification and ecstatic possession) are also characteristically ‘mystical’.

^{xi} There is an ethic of ‘non-violence’ inherent to this aesthetic predicament. The failure of language to ‘conclusively’ grasp objects in the world (note, again, the contrast between this acknowledgement and Mr Ramsay’s philosophical ambitions) preserves the genuineness of otherness. Moreover, in the sense (articulated through Lily’s aesthetic endeavours) that objects of experience can exceed description (representation) yet be *knowable*, Woolf is in sympathy with a mystical epistemology: as Jantzen has noted, ‘the mystics’ use of language is a feature of their experience that provides the tool for our rejection of Kantian epistemology and stimulates a more adequate understanding of human personhood in community,’ (Jantzen, 1989:315).

^{xii} (See note 11 above).

How the form of Byzantine icons relates to the Christian worldview

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In this essay we are talking about the style of Christian visual art that is commonly called iconographic. This is a living tradition. It has been strongly preserved in the Eastern tradition of the Church of which there are a number of different, authentic styles, still produced today and all of which correspond essentially to what might be broadly referred to as the 'Byzantine' prototype, named after the Eastern Roman Empire that became closely identified with its first development and use. It should be stated that the Byzantine church was not the only one to use icons. Examples of authentic national variations that we see today are, for example, from the various Slav, Greek, Russian and Coptic. I write from the point of view of a practising Catholic and an icon painter, passing on what has been handed on to me, for the most part orally, as part of a living tradition dating back to the early centuries of the Church.

The development of the iconographic style

The development of a unique style of Christian art really began after Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire under the Emperor Constantine in the 4th century AD. For the first time, artists were able to paint works for public viewing on a large scale. At first, they used the styles that were used for all art in the Roman Empire. For example there is Christian art in Ravenna in Italy that dates from AD428 and this is indistinguishable in style from that of the Late Antique Hellenistic art that existed in the Roman world at that time. The figures are highly naturalistic, there is a landscape around the figure that creates an illusion of depth using a basic perspective. There are other mosaics in Ravenna, that date from only 120 years later that are quite different in style. Though clearly derived from the earlier form, figures are stiff and formal. All are portrayed full face, none in profile. The negative 'space' around the figures is not devoted to the depiction of the illusion of depth. There is a flatness to it so that the figures almost give the appearance of cut-outs pasted onto a flat surface. All this, and other features we shall discuss later, contribute to a deliberate stylization and can be accounted for in terms of the Christian understanding of the human person and our place in Creation. For example, the flat negative space is a visual representation of heaven or the fullness of God, the eternal sphere where there is no time and no space.

As a Catholic Christian, I believe that the destiny of mankind is to be united with God in heaven in perfect bliss. To the degree that we choose to follow the guidelines given to us by God, every single one of us will have the chance of seeing Him face-to-face

and partaking in the Divine nature. The stylistic features of the iconographic tradition are all portraying the heavenly ideal of mankind. They show what saints look like in heaven and the aim is to reveal to us who look at them, therefore, our destiny. A saint is, quite simply, someone other than God who is in heaven. So this includes the people and angels. Once the new style of iconography had been developed it spread throughout the whole Christian world. It was not local to Italy. For example, we have seen icons painted around the same period in Mt Sinai in modern day Egypt. The 'Byzantine' icon became the prototype for Christian art that has remained in the Eastern Church to this day and in the West up to the end of the Romanesque period (about 1200AD).

While conforming to the iconographic prototype, there have always been identifiable local variations in style usually through a fusion with other traditional forms. Even when various parts of the West became relatively isolated due to the subsequent disintegration of the Western Roman Empire, contact with other Christian communities never stopped altogether. There was a continuous line of contact through warfare, trade and monastic religious communities throughout the Christian world. This meant all art in the first 1200 years of the Christian religion corresponded to the essential elements of the iconographic prototype. The monasteries especially preserved culture and learning in the West and even those on the Celtic fringe, in Ireland, were in touch with their Eastern monastic brethren. This is known because of the discovery of Byzantine artefacts in the West. We see Celtic art, Carolingian art (named after Charlemagne) or Ottonian art (named after Otto 1, the Holy Roman Emperor crowned 962) all conforming to the iconographic prototype. These Western art forms incorporated the swirls and flowing lines of their abstract decorative art into a highly stylized figurative art form.

After 1000AD there was an increase in communication between East and West, much of it through warfare. The crusades and the conquest of Eastern territory reinvigorated Western art. Romanesque art used the greater degree of naturalism of the Eastern icons. This period is called Romanesque from a description coined in the 19th century meaning 'debased Roman' that referred to architecture retaining columns and rounded arches, before the adoption of pointed gothic arches.

The rejection of the iconographic prototype in the West

The same forces that renewed contact with the Christian East also established contact with the Islamic East and West (in Spain). This contact sowed the seeds for the rejection of the iconographic prototype in the West. It is ironic that the society whose art was epitomised by patterned abstraction, Islam, should, through allowing the 'rediscovery' of the philosophy of Aristotle, provide a great impetus for a greater naturalism in Western art. In contrast to the other great figure of Greek philosophy known to Christians, Plato, Aristotle considered the information we gain from our senses reliable and consistent enough to contribute to our understanding of the world. Christians had always seen the Greek philosophers who predated Christ as anticipating Christian revelation through reason. Therefore those elements that did not contradict Tradition and scripture could happily be incorporated into Christian thought, providing the reason upon which it was based was sound.

Through the incorporation of Aristotle into Western Christian thought by theologians such as St Thomas Aquinas, people started to look at the world around us in a new way. The force that moved this change in outlook from the scholarly circles into a more widespread change in outlook was spiritual. St Francis of Assisi, who loved the beauty of nature, was a hugely popular and influential saint. Franciscan spirituality created an enthusiasm and love for the natural world that had not existed before to the same degree. The Franciscan order especially was instrumental in the application of these new ideas. Franciscan friars in Oxford, for example Roger Bacon, were at the forefront of the development of scientific method as it exists today and Franciscan order fostered a greater naturalism in art (Giotto, for example, was a third order Franciscan). Gothic art and architecture reflects this and is the beginning of a shift towards a greater consideration of man's place in the fallen world that has its culmination in the High Renaissance and Baroque. Rather than portraying the heavenly ideal, Gothic art seeks to recognize man's place here on earth, while portraying the hope that is present and transcending all suffering in Christ. The naturalism that we see in Gothic art may not seem great to modern Western eye, but it is greater than that of the Romanesque period and this combined with its rejection of many of the other stylistic features that characterize the icon made it a non-iconic art form. The Romanesque, therefore, is the last Western artistic period whose aim is more or less identical with the eastern icon in the desire to portray the heavenly reality.

The theology of icons

As stated, the 'ideal' of man that an icon painter follows, is mankind in heaven where all are purified without trace of sin and in the state of final unification with God. In trying to ascertain what mankind looks like in heaven, theologians and artists looked primarily to their bibles. Man in heaven is seen as described in the book of Revelation. A glimpse of the divine appearance of the body was also seen in Christ himself at the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-8, Luke 9:28-36, 2 Peter 1:16-18). In this passage Christ, and the apostles Peter, James and John went up 'on a high mountain where they were alone'. Christ is described in Luke's gospel: 'the fashion of his face was altered, and his garments became white and dazzling'; Matthew says that his face was 'shining like the sun, and his garments became white as snow'; Peter described a 'splendour that dazzles human eyes'. In John's vision of heaven, described in Revelation (sometimes also called the Book of the Apocalypse), he says that the saints 'will see the Lord face to face, and his name will be written on their foreheads. It will never be night again and they will not need lamplight or sunlight, because the Lord God will be shining on them.' (Revelation 22:4-5).

The Eastern Christian theological account of the Transfiguration is central to the stylistic look of these works of art. This is that when the apostles saw Christ transfigured, the change was not in Christ but in the apostles. They saw for those few moments as those who are pure see when they are in heaven. The ascent of the mountain is a metaphor for the ascent of their souls towards heaven. The light that was seen is referred to as 'uncreated' in the sense that it is the divine light that exists in all time. This is to be contrasted with the 'created' light that we normally see in the material universe, such as that from the sun or electric light bulbs.

We know saints other than Christ change also as they became purer or holier. In the book of Exodus we read that the skin of Moses' face shone with an unearthly radiance after he had conversed with God on Mount Sinai; for a time he had to wear a veil because the Israelites could not bear to look to look on this brightness (Exodus, 34:29-35). St Paul refers to this in the second letter to the Corinthians and says explicitly that this transfiguration is open to all of us: 'It is given to us, all alike, to catch the glory of the Lord as in a mirror, with faces unveiled; and so we become transfigured into the same likeness, borrowing glory from that glory, as the Spirit of the Lord enables us.' (II Corinthians 3:18).

After the Fall, a level of disorder was introduced into the world. A tension was created in mankind's relationship with visible creation, which has become alien and hostile and like man, is now subject to decay. The icon provides a contrast with the fallen world we see around us and portrays creation as 'redeemed', that is, in harmony with mankind and without decay. As the purpose of icons is to give us a glimpse of how things will seem when we are in heaven and man in heaven appears different to man on earth, there is no interest in portraying man naturalistically. This is not to say that man in heaven bears no relation to man on earth. The final resurrection at the end of time will be a resurrection of the body and in the age to come we will be complete in our nature, with both body and soul. We will have bodies with arms and legs and so on that are recognisable as such.

Eastern iconography is also liturgical. It is linked to the Eastern liturgy, that is, the formal prayer and worship of the Church. The Eastern churches are divided into those that acknowledge the authority of the Pope - the Uniate churches (such as Ukrainian Catholics) - and those that don't, the Orthodox churches. Both Uniate and Orthodox Eastern churches incorporate icons into their church services. If one goes into a Russian Orthodox church, for example, iconography adorns it from floor to ceiling. This doesn't stop icons being used for private devotional prayer as well. Indeed Orthodox Christians will have icons in each room of a house and have a concentration of icons in the 'icon corner' where images of saints who are special to those who live there are placed and candles are lit as a focus for prayer and meditation. It is the fact that the use of art is incorporated into the church services of the East, that has allowed it to survive as a tradition. The Eastern Church has laid down strict guidelines for the subject matter and the styles that are appropriate for their services. If an image strays beyond the limits set out by the church then it might be considered a beautiful painting, but it is not a holy icon.

When painting icons, individual style is never sought as an end in itself. Quite the contrary, the artist seeks to conform to the accepted standards. This does not prevent individual styles emerging quite naturally however. The work of well known iconographers is instantly recognisable and given a previously unseen icon, anyone who knows icons well will be able to identify at least the geographical region that it came from and the time that it was painted, perhaps to within 50 years. The appearance of characteristic styles occurs in a different way from that of modern art, in which individualism deliberately sought. The distinctive style of an icon is never sought but occurs through the humble desire of the individual to conform to the will

of God. It is a true 'self-expression', a reflection of the person God intends us to be; and a realization of the maxim that in self-forgetfulness we find our true selves.

The stylistic elements of icons

The style of the icon reflects our knowledge of the ideal it is portraying. First, some features of the saints are exaggerated. The organs that receive information are slightly enlarged: the eyes, the ears and the nose is lengthened. Those parts of the body that are expressive are slightly reduced in size: the mouth, the hands (the fingers on the hand however are given a gracefulness by being made slightly tapered and lengthened, however). This is to emphasise the saintly qualities of temperance and humility, so the saint always listens and considers information received before acting with wisdom. They are not shown displaying great emotion, but with a controlled and calm demeanour.



Because the saint is a source of light there is no deep shadow, as in Western naturalistic art. A shadow is only cast when there is a light source that is distinct from the object that is casting it. For the same reason, the eyes never have the glint of reflected light on them. If you go into any art gallery that has traditional Western portraits, the chances are that every single one will have a reflective glint painted on the eyes. Egg tempera, the medium used, has a higher visual register than, for example, oil paint. One might characterise it as looking like morning light, while oil looks like evening light (and acrylic looks as though it is illuminated by fluorescent strip lighting!). Gold is often used to represent the glow of uncreated light around the saint. The disc of gold around the head is the halo. (The icon to the left is a modern icon of the Archangel Gabriel, and in this the golden background, indicating the presence of God, is differentiated from the light emanating from the angel's head by a read circular line.) It is interesting to note, therefore, that the halo is not a symbol, as such, of sainthood. It is a direct representation of uncreated light that emanates from

saints. (When the halo is depicted as a yellow hoop floating above the crown of the saint, as some Western art does, it is a distortion that appears to show a lack of understanding of what is actually being shown, and which reduces its impact to that of an almost arbitrary symbol unrelated in appearance to the reality it portrays.)

Saints, such as the Archangel Gabriel, shown left, are depicted full face to three-quarters turned towards us, never in profile, so that we have a sense of seeing them 'face to face'. This gives them a characteristic look that interacts with those looking at the icon and pulls their attention towards it. Usually the sense in icons is that there is no foreground portrayed; figures always appear in the middle ground. There is always a sense of distance between them and us. So, as fast as their gaze pulls us in, they keep receding into the middle ground. This should be contrasted with Western naturalistic art, which generally places the protagonists in the foreground. In Caravaggio's *Supper at Emmaus* for example, (painted at the beginning of the 17th century) which is in the National Gallery in London, the viewer is almost made to feel as though he is sitting at the empty space of the table with Christ and the apostles. He brings the saints right to us.

In iconography, everything is deliberately painted to be two-dimensional; there is very little sense of depth behind the plane of the panel (we will explain why this is undesirable in a moment in the section, *Windows to Heaven*). This is achieved by the lack of deep shadow, as mentioned before, and by the use of the medium egg tempera, which always appears flat. Oil paint was rejected as a medium because it creates imagery that is too 3-dimensional. When oil paint is used in dark glazes, the painting sinks into the depths beyond the plane of the painting. In contrast, when tempera uses black, for instance, it just sits like soot on the surface. Also, because egg tempera dries in just a few minutes (if it is the first application to the gesso surface, it dries even quicker, in a matter of seconds) blending of tones and colours is difficult and there is little scope for expressive brushwork. Oil, in contrast takes days to dry and so can be blended easily and seamlessly and is a good medium for subtle modelling. These properties mean that oil paint helps the artist to enhance the sense of naturalism, while tempera inhibits the naturalism of the painting and heightens the sense of symbolism in the image, which is desirable in an icon.

There is very little landscape detail or buildings shown in icons; only what is necessary to the events being depicted. These are shown idealised as well, as seen through the eyes of purity. Orthodox theology says that Eden still exists as it did before the Fall and the world we live in is Eden. However, mankind cannot see it as such because of his impurity, that is his sinful nature. So the expulsion from Eden is not seen as a geographical displacement, but a radical change in the relationship with the rest of nature. This is not to deny that the decay of matter, a consequence of the Fall, does not exist. The decay is an objective fact. However, once matter is redeemed as it will be at the final end of all time, it enters into the heavenly realm that is outside time. Although it is a future event when considering things in the temporal sense, those things outside time are in a state of perpetual being so one could almost say that if it will happen, it already has happened. Just as the liturgy of the Church is a temporal participation in the eternal heavenly liturgy – the uncreated light painted emanating from saints while they were still alive, is revealing a temporal participation

in their eternal redeemed state. The icon is the eternal momentarily bursting through into the temporal. When the icon shows redeemed matter other than people, i.e. plants etc, they are shown redeemed and without decay. Also, nature is portrayed so as to emphasize its place in the natural hierarchy and order, with man at the pinnacle, and Christ foremost among mankind, followed by Mary, the Mother of God. Therefore, trees and rocks might be depicted as bowing or bending towards a saint.

Where landscape details or buildings are depicted, it is usual to avoid conventional Western perspective. In fact, there are many types of perspective used in icons help us to emerge from our egocentric worldview and see as God sees, with the eyes of purity. For example: *Multi-view perspective*, where the front and back of an object is portrayed at once, encourages us to see the world immersed in the omnipresent God. It suggests that when we look at something with purity we can are not restricted in the knowledge of it by our position in relation to it, we can in a sense know it fully. *Inverse perspective* makes us the vanishing point rather than a fictitious place within the image. By moving through the real space between the icon, and ourselves the lines of this perspective convey grace to the area before us. Inverse perspective also gives the sense that the saints are looking at us, that we are the object of the icon's contemplation. *Isometric perspective*, where planes and lines remain parallel and undistorted by distance, affirms the integrity of each thing in itself, regardless of how it appears to the physical senses. The general *flatness* of icons helps us to pass through the image to meet the holy person who is its subject. The related *tipped perspective*, where for example, a horizontal surface is portrayed at an angle tipped toward us, so the all things on it are clearly visible, allows things to be arranged more freely on the vertical plane than does depth perspective. This permits greater use of traditional, 'sacred' geometry (see below) as an abstract system of order so as to lend harmony to the image. It also allows the iconographer to use *hieratical perspective*, where things are arranged according to their spiritual importance – the more important figures are made more prominent in the composition through variation in size and placement.

In addition, in design terms the lines of the inverse perspective bring the eye towards the saint from all parts of the icon as they radiate out from it. Second, it enhances the sense of that everything is taking place in the plane of the painting. If a building is depicted for example, reason tells us that it should occupy a large space beyond the icon plane and our minds will tend to create that space for it to occupy. In the icon, however, every time our minds try to take our attention to occupy a space beyond the icon plane, these perspective systems ensure that we are pushed back; it deliberately works to destroy the illusion of space.

As mentioned above, composition of icons is arranged in accordance with sacred geometry. Sacred geometry is the use of ratio, proportion and harmony in accordance with the traditional ideas of the order that pervades nature and ultimately standard of order and beauty, which is the Creator in heaven. It is common to all traditional cultures, East and West, Christian and non-Christian. In the Western Christian tradition it can be traced back to the ancient Greek philosophers Pythagoras and Plato. A Roman textbook on architecture accredited to Vitruvius, describes how these principles were used in building. This book was periodically rediscovered so that

these governed the principles of harmonious design in architecture in the West right up to around 1900. So for example, Palladian architecture was a particular application of these principles in 16th century Italy. Just to illustrate one simple principle: following on from Pythagoras, if you pluck a string and it produces a note, you get harmonious intervals of an octave, a perfect fourth and a perfect fifth for pieces of string that are in the ratio of lengths of 1:2, 3:4 and 2:3. It was assumed therefore, that if these lengths produced an aural harmony, their use in design would produce a visual harmony. If one looks at Raphael's great fresco in the Vatican, *The School of Athens*, completed in 1511, one sees representations of the great Greek philosophers who through reason were seen as anticipating what was revealed fully in Christ and which is recorded in the Holy Scripture and the Tradition of the Church. So we see Plato, looking upwards to the idealized world of heaven, Aristotle looking downwards at the fallen world and, less often noted by commentators, Pythagoras holding a diagrammatic illustration of a musical scale, revealing the underlying harmony of all that is created by God.

Windows to Heaven: how icons affect prayer

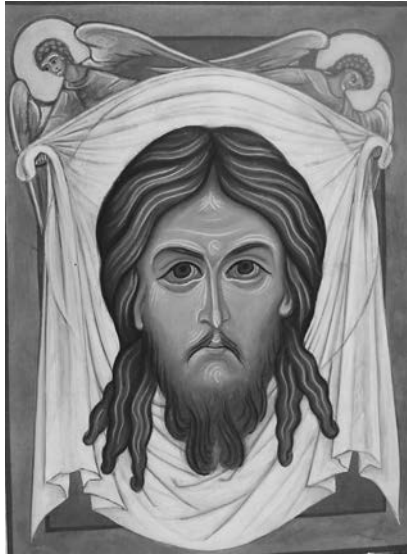
All the elements described combine to create a dynamic process that first pulls the viewer into the icon and then sends the attention beyond the icon itself to heaven. The full-faced gaze of the saint arrests our attention, pulls us in and holds us on itself. Icons are meant to be seen close at hand and the abundance of detail in the painting encourages us to scrutinize and contemplate what is revealed, as we get closer. As our eyes scan the painting, the design of it allows us to contemplate each detail, but then pushes us back to the central figures: the two-dimensionality of the icon ensures that we are kept firmly in the plane of the painting, which is occupied by these central figures. Within this plane, the other elements described, such as the radial inverse-perspective lines guide our eyes towards its centre.

Just as there are forces at work that push our gaze back to the central figure or figures, our thoughts and attention are deliberately given one escape route, up to heaven. While our gaze is always happiest on the icon itself, there are devices that build in a dissatisfaction and desire to get closer still. First, because the icon is generally painted in the middle ground – it always appears physically distant. No matter how close we get to the icon, the figure depicted will always recede into the middle ground. Second, the sober and calm expression of the icon (called the 'bright sadness') gives an emotional distance. We don't feel emotionally involved with the figures depicted. The divide between us, the viewers, and the figures in the icon is one that we want to get close but can't. Even if our noses are pressed up against the icon the figure always seems distant. Also, the lack of naturalism always jars to a degree. We can never feel contented that we are with the saint depicted; the inbuilt symbolic qualities always remind us that this is an image.

The only way for us to get closer is to turn our attention to the real saint who is at that very moment in heaven. So while our gazes are fixed on the icon of the Mother of God, our thoughts go beyond the image to the real Mother of God who is looking at us from heaven.

Further Reading

1. Hugh Honour and John Fleming (first published 1984, latest edition 2007), *A World History of Art, Introduction*, Chapters 7,9, 10, 11, 13, Lawrence King Publishing: for the historical context of the development of iconography and for the development of Western form after Romanesque art.
2. Tradigo, A (2006) *Icons and Saints of the Eastern Orthodox Church*, Getty Publications (Los Angeles): for a description of the symbolism of the content of most of the standard iconographic images.
3. Archimandrite Zaccheus Wood (ed) (2002) *A History of Icon Painting*, Grand-Holding, Moscow: for the theology, techniques and variations in form of icons through the centuries.
4. Wittkower, R (1988) *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism*, Appendix IV, Academy Editions, London: for a summary of the traditional principles of proportion in Western art and architecture.



This icon is often called the face of Christ. The source of this image is, by tradition, a cloth placed against His face during the passion. The cloth is depicted supported by two holy angels. This particular version is consistent with the form often seen in the Eastern Church. The Western variant is often called the Veronica cloth. Veronica, again by tradition, is the name of one of the woman who attended to Christ at the passion. Her name comes from a mixture of Latin and Greek – *verus*, true, and *ikon*, image i.e. true image. The features of Christ show the traditional iconographic form, with large eyes, narrow nose (giving the sense of elongation, and a small mouth. There is no reflected glint on the eyes. This was painted in England in 2006.

The Aesthetics of Participation

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Playing with aesthetics

This paper will propose that Theatre for Development (TfD) needs a radical overhaul of its aesthetics of participation if it is to make an effective, resistant response to the world of neoliberal instrumentalism in which it currently operates. It is further contended that the required change of direction must be guided by a playful spirit that defies the external demands of mission statement, learning outcome, creative industry or knowledge economy. The dominant contemporary paradigm reduces imagination, creativity and play to commodities to be traded in the search for increased profit. But a transactional, business model of artistic practice is incapable of being used in the exploration of the utopian possible without which our survival is severely compromised.

Lost playgrounds

There has been a marked decline in communal, public spaces for play in the Western world over the last fifty years and with this decline has come a profound change to the way in which human beings participate in the cultural life of their societies. Aesthetic forms associated with collective, at times subversive, identities appear to have had their turn. Increasingly the experience of childhood is isolated and fragmented, characterised for many by the passivity of gazing or interacting with electronic images from television, computer or video game. The visual replaces the aural and programmed responses occupy the space once held by the imagination. The television and computer in the bedroom are the contemporary tools with which the 'developed' world's children respond in passivity and isolation to the external, social sphere; now virtual where once it was real. The claim that the increasing trend towards interactivity is an antidote to the notion of passive consumption of images needs to be treated cautiously for the terms on which interactive responses are permitted are predetermined by the creators of the images: programmed participation rather than a stimulus to free-flowing imagination.

In her study of play among pre-school children attending a day-care centre in Finland, Marjatta Kalliala notes that 'children's play culture does not just happen naturally. Play needs time and space. It needs mental and material stimulation to be offered in abundance'. She adds the further important distinction between space organised on behalf of children by institutions and those which children create for themselves as part of the process of their self-actualisation:

For these children, the playground at the day-care centre is the only place where they can learn and play competitive games of their own making. Despite offering enough space, time and friends to play with, the institutional playground does not compensate for the lack of playing in the backyard at home (Kalliala, 2006: 139).

Patterns of contemporary living have conspired to shrink these spaces almost to extinction. Homes lack backyards; working parents use organisations to arrange activities; outdoors is all too often synonymous with danger, violence and the environment of children who are not properly cared for. Even when the opportunity for safe play may be presented the modern child may eschew it as Kalliala notes: ‘... commercial and stereotypical television programmes with supplementary products have driven children out of the garden, so that children’s play culture pulsates with rhythms defined by television’ (Kalliala, 2006: 133). There is another vital element missing from child’s play that is organised on their behalf: the licence to lose control, to experience a moment of madness without social consequence. Kalliala has noted this propensity for wildness in the children she studied, relating it to a primal instinct for seeing the world from different angles:

Children all over the world seem to enjoy swivelling and the feeling of dizziness that comes with it. A momentary need to turn the world upside down and fool about together seems a universal phenomenon (Kalliala, 2006: 94).

This function of turning the world upside down used to be performed by carnival; those days set aside for time off from normal behaviour; the excesses of Mardi Gras and Midsummer madness. Now we have only the diluted vestiges in commercial fun fair rides and Bank Holidays – the appropriate way to experience freedom in a society dominated by neoliberal economics. Carnival, the playground of the trickster, offered collective, public spaces for the performance of disguise and madness. Whether subversive or domesticating in its effect, at least the carnival allowed for moments and places where other modes of experiencing, other ways of being were tried out.

Ever since the rise of capitalism, we have become used to the way that human relations in the economic sphere are defined in terms of markets; buyers and sellers. Business is predicated upon a transactional model; an extended marketplace that might be any place where a business transaction can be accomplished. However, what we are seeing today, fuelled by globalisation and accelerated by satellite and digital technologies, is the progressive penetration of the neoliberal economic model into every aspect of human relations and all the activities conducted by human beings. Those areas where elements of play formerly existed are now in thrall to this model: education, the arts, the emotions and the imagination. Where once there was learning and understanding, there is now something called a knowledge economy. Where once there was theatre, music, dance and art, there is now something called the creative industries. Once creativity is subjected to an industrial model, what hope is there for the arts to be experienced as joy and liberation? In writing of the influence of the Disney phenomenon upon the service industries throughout developed economies, Alan Bryman highlights the role of emotional labour in promoting the experience and thereby increasing the profits:

What could be described as new in relation to the Disney theme parks and to the other modern examples of the diffusion of emotional labour is the prominence it is given, particularly in relation to commercial service delivery. Therefore, it is the formally prescriptive nature of the experience of emotions as part of the work role that is novel, even though emotional labour itself is not new (Bryman, 2004: 110).

The sphere of the emotions was formally experienced as part of the personal, intimate domain that marked out each person with an individual identity; but now it is only an aspect of the wider labour market: emotions at the service of business, and one particular model of business at that. Bryman goes on to demonstrate in an example drawn from airlines, how deeply this ethos of emotional labour has permeated the discourses of commercial rivalry:

Some airlines feel a need to enhance the emotional labour component of their service delivery. It was announced in 1998 that British Airways cabin crews were to be trained so that they were less reserved, less inclined to exhibit the British stiff upper lip. They were to become more tactile and less aloof. According to a *Times* reporter: 'Cabin staff will be encouraged to crouch alongside passengers, offer the occasional consoling pat on the arm and maintain plenty of eye contact'. The article also hints that the pressure to exhibit such behaviour was in large part motivated by the fact that the cabin crews on one of its main competitors on trans-Atlantic routes – Virgin -- are much more inclined to employ the kinds of behaviour that BA is described as being keen to encourage (Bryman, 2004: 112-13).

The crew are actors in a corporate scenario, trained in performance to elicit a specific response in its audience. The theatre has been turned into a transaction between employees and customers where once it was a communication between actors and audience. In the Disney theme parks the process is explicit in the terms of their training manuals where employees are referred to as the cast of this Disney production and the customers are guests. One such paying 'guest', Jerry Mander, describes his visit to the EPCOT Centre, having reminded readers that the initials stand for Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow:

And so it went throughout EPCOT. The corporations and the new technologies are there to make our lives better. The future will be a lot better than the present. We don't need to maintain our charming but hindering bonds to such anomalies as land, family farms (or any farms), or community, or the natural world. All we need do now is relax, float in our little cars, and be awed with the skill, thoughtfulness, imagination, and devotion of these can-do visionary corporations and their astounding new tools. We can all look forward to a future of very little work, total comfort, and complete technological control of the environment, the weather, nature, and *us*. Our role? To trust their leadership and vision. To enjoy it, to live in it, and to watch it like a movie (Mander, 1992: 154-55).

Mander wrote these impressions over fifteen years ago, since when the spread of the theme park phenomenon has been exponential. The experience economy now sells complete worlds as visions of the future or as living museums where our history is transformed through the alchemy of heritage into an experience devoid of pain, lack, contradiction. The corporation offers us past, present and future in its image so long

as we have the price of the entrance ticket. Mander's description of EPCOT has since been replicated or imitated the world over:

The whole place is a visionary, futuristic projection of a utopian, computerized, technologized police state, where human behaviour is as predefined as the perfect grass lawns. It is a logical extension of the corporate vision that has been steadily evolving for decades. We were shown a future where every blade of grass was in place, and the bird population is idealized to pink flamingos, all as part of an ideal future that includes every human being's emotions, genes, and experience. Brave New World. You either follow the lines or you are shipped out. The purpose? Efficiency, production, expansion, and a kind, measured, commodity-oriented, mesmerized, programmed, fictional, Disneyesque "happiness" (Mander, 1992: 156).

Unlike story-telling or radio, the medium of television deprives the viewers of the possibility of making their own pictures. Without that autonomy they are placed in a position of passivity, absorbing what the screen gives out rather than employing their own visual experience to contest the global satellite discourse. Dario Fo is one who has vigorously refuted the claim that television has dispensed with the need for theatre:

In other words, ever since the advent of television, civil theatre can be consigned to the rubbish bin. Allow me to state that in my view this mode of thought coincides perfectly with the interests of established authorities and achieves the great ambitions of those who hold power, be it of the economic, political, institutional, multinational or religious variety. Power bends over backwards to ensure that people's native imagination atrophies, that they eschew the effort involved in developing alternative ideas on what is occurring around them from those purveyed by the mass media, that they cease to experience the thrill of opposition, abandon the vicious habit of searching a reasoned detachment from immediate things, forswear the tendency to sum them up, reconsider them and above all to portray the essence of them in styles that are different (Fo, 1991: 118).

Unlike play, television exacerbates the gap between knowledge and information by swamping the receiver with the latter in quantities and at speeds which do not allow the brain to process the new input in ways that can extend the mind's capacity. The result is a kind of cultural indigestion, where alien gobbets offer random stereotypes and caricatures of understanding, misleading us into thinking we have a part in someone else's world. Jerry Mander has explored the consequences of the invasion of television into a previously virgin, oral culture: that of the Dene Indians of the Canadian northwest:

The stories also embodied a teaching system. The old transmit to the young their knowledge of how things are, in such a loving way that the children absorb it whole and request more. The death of the storytelling process will leave an absence of knowledge of Indian ways and thought, and a sense of worth in Indian culture.

Another important factor is that the images woven by the storyteller are actually realized in the listeners' minds. The children create pictures in their heads, pictures that go far beyond the words of the storyteller, into the more elaborate, more fabulous world of the imagination. So the child is in some ways as creative as the teller of the

tale, or put another way, the storyteller is only a stimulus for the imagination of the child. If the stories were conveyed by video, not only would the intimacy, love, and respect between young and old be lost, but the child's creative contributions would be lost as well. Finally, I said, video versions of the stories would be necessarily limited by the abilities and budget of the video makers. Even the most talented video makers would find it impossible to equal what the imagination does with a story told orally. So the net result of translating stories to television would be to confine, and actually lessen, their power, meaning, and beauty. Audio tape or radio would be far better (Mander, 1992: 112-13).

What the residential schools managed only partially, in their attempts to eradicate native cultures, satellite television is highly likely to complete and with it, radically reduce the once myriad ways of being human. The subsequent cultural impoverishment of the species has as many implications for survival as the loss of biodiversity.

The play's the thing

Applied theatre will struggle to rediscover the intimate connection between 'play' and 'the play' if it sees itself as part of a mission to save society; to apply a bandage to the wounds of dysfunctional lives. The theatre of doing good, consciously or unconsciously, usually finds itself co-opted to a definition of goodness supplied by the powers that be; social inclusion on terms provided by those who have already generated the exclusion of those they now seek to save. By adopting the missionary position applied theatre aligns itself with all the other colonial interventions that presume to speak on behalf of others; to know what is best for them. On offer is a participatory aesthetic whose subtext is 'participate or else'. But moral zeal is far from the spirit of play, the carnivalesque 'jouissance' that unlocks new worlds where fact and fiction merge and mingle in ever-changing, promiscuous configurations. This is the element that Philip Taylor's definition of applied theatre entirely misses:

The applied theatre operates from a central transformative principle; to raise awareness on a particular issue (safe-sex practices), to teach a particular concept (literacy and numeracy), to interrogate human actions (hate crimes, race relations), to prevent life-threatening behaviours (domestic violence, youth suicide), to heal fractured identities (sexual abuse, body image), to change states of oppression (personal victimization, political disenfranchisement) (Taylor, 2003: 1).

Such a list emphasises the instrumental nature of applied theatre and, whilst I would not wish to deny that, in certain circumstances, an applied theatre process might help in addressing all the issues in this list, it does not envisage its primary purpose as the creation of community itself; as the re-establishment of long-severed patterns of social relations; as playful interactions that remind us what we might hold in common. These agendas are about how the 'unfortunate', the 'disadvantaged' can be helped to stop doing bad things to themselves and, in the current jargon, adopt 'pro-social behaviour'. They are not about an historical analysis of what has caused these behaviours; still less a defiant assertion of identity in a world structurally adjusted to disadvantage them. Furthermore these agendas are typically set from outside the group, accompanied by the lure of participation; that is, participation in the agenda of another. If the facilitator approaches a community and asks what its issues are, she

will get a list of issues where the community tries to second guess the agency's agenda in order to secure whatever benefit may be on offer. David Kerr has articulated the problem in terms of the role of the NGO:

The main sponsors for Theater for Development projects are NGOs with specific missions of their own. They are part of a global aid industry, which is subject to some of the same disciplines of accountability as global corporations. The project directors can only guarantee continued budgets from their donors if they provide fairly concrete indicators of success, normally within a system of annual audits. In such a system, success can only be easily audited through concrete achievements – wells surrounded by cement protective guards, or condoms distributed, and so on. Attitudes are notoriously difficult to measure, and there is no managerial incentive to engage with complex, global relationships underlying the development problems of different sectors. Nor is there any incentive to analyze historical causes of problems; the “developmentalist present” proves just as restrictive as the rightly maligned “ethnographic present” (Kerr, 2002: 254).

However, applying theatre to human situations is an unpredictable, volatile process which can produce profound effects that reach far beyond the remit of any prescribed agenda. Notwithstanding the instrumentalist prescription of Taylor, and Kerr's warnings about NGO priorities, at times and in places applied theatre or theatre for development has achieved genuinely transformative outcomes. Writing of his experience of facilitating rights-based theatre for children in Sierra Leone, Paul Moclair draws attention to the importance of the playful element in the local culture that paved the way for children to acquire the confidence to find their own voices in an adult world:

Not all adult story-telling is unhelpful. In our attempts to increase children's participation at Ben Hirsch we found an apt cultural totem within Mende folklore, in the figure of Musa Wo. Musa Wo is a classic West African trickster in the tradition of Ananse the spider. A mischievous boy constantly getting into trouble, his adventures form a sort of oral tradition soap opera. Any temporary victory that Musa Wo accomplishes only results in a fresh quandary. The stories have no proper ending, they are never fully resolved (Moclair, 2006: 133).

By reconnecting the young people with play elements rooted deeply in the cultural soil of West Africa, Moclair was able to instigate a transformative movement that could not have occurred within the declared orthodoxies of an NGO agenda.

This is the kind of experience recorded by Diane Conrad of the Department of Secondary Education, University of Alberta when working with young people who have been labelled ‘at risk’ by the formal education system. By engaging with the youthful defectors from the constraints of ‘banking’ education, Professor Conrad discovered that the term ‘at risk’ needed to be stood on its head. Although from the institutional perspective the young people were at risk of falling out of the school system, from their own perspective they constituted a risk to the system itself by highlighting its irrelevance, rigidity and absence of creativity. Once again the dominant decrees that people fail the system rather than the system failing people. However, when the pedagogic transaction is grounded in the lived experience of the

learners, they respond with imagination, wit and energy. Because the agenda for participation is controlled by the previously powerless, the process is indeed 'risky' in the sense that all worthwhile art runs the risk of challenging preconceptions and causing disturbance to both participants and audience. Professor Conrad concludes:

Ultimately then, whether risky or resistant youth behaviour proves detrimental to the school experiences and lives of youth, whether it presents a risk or not has as much to do with how we view youth behaviour as the behaviour itself. Popular theatre offers a means for youth to express, explore and evaluate their own and each other's perceptions and understandings of the world. In such performance there is the potential for change. By actively creating drama, youth learn that like drama our social reality is constructed and can be reconstructed. By creating roles for themselves through drama, youth can create new roles for themselves in life, beyond those prescribed by society, such as the roles defined by the label 'at-risk' (Conrad, 2005: 38-39).

This refusal to wear the designated label and accept the category in this instance offers an example in practice of Freire's notion of 'naming the world'. Much popular or community theatre is concerned with this function: to enable communities that do not normally have access to the organs of power to express their reality in their own languages, unmediated by the usual gatekeepers from the corporations, the government, the churches or the school boards.

In *Performing Communities* Robert Leonard and Ann Kilkelly present eight case studies of grassroots, ensemble theatres across the U.S.A. The title announces the simultaneous process of putting the experience of a community on stage and of creating a community through the process of performance. This is the double action that is always present in this art form and which accounts for the way in which the process brings art, community and education together, crossing the boundaries between fact and fiction in order that a new, changed social reality can emerge which may, in turn, enable participants and audience to cross the boundaries of self-censorship or social fragmentation. One of the groups presented in the book, Carpetbag Theater Company from Knoxville, Tennessee, provide the following company statement:

To give artistic voice to the undeserved – address the issues and dreams of people who have historically been silenced by racism, classism, sexism and ageism; tell the stories of empowerment; celebrate our culture; and reveal hidden stories (Leonard & Kilkelly, 2006: 51).

The emphasis upon story is significant for in reshaping our daily experience as a story we declare ourselves as artists, ordering the chaos of that experience artfully to strengthen the impact of the communication. This accords closely with Bertolt Brecht's notion of Epic Theatre, the form which he evolved in order to show social reality as capable of transformation through the actions of people. The dialectical relationship between performers and community that Carpetbag's artistic director, Linda Parris-Bailey articulates echoes Brecht's own praxis in his *Lehrstücke*:

There is a difference between a storyteller and a liar. So, we're trying to be storytellers, not liars. The importance of that relationship is key. It reshapes the story. If we are not getting the truth, ...there is feedback from the community. Now, the community sometimes is challenged and needs to be challenged, and sometimes they don't like that. But that's all a part of how we all grow. So, it's not that we have to constantly please, what we constantly are working for is to strike the familiar in terms of what the community has told us and return it to the community (Leonard and Kilkelly, 2006: 60).

This confrontation with truth, with the contradictions which the consumerist message of the dominant strives constantly to elide but which the art of the community constantly sharpens, is closely allied to the action of *Verfremdung*, the counter-hegemonic process of rendering the familiar strange in order that it may be subjected to a curious and critical analysis from which change may grow. The native company, WagonBurner Theater Troop operates in this way as their very name indicates; at once an ironic reference back to the Hollywood savages and a very present reminder of the company's potential for starting a fire in the comfort zones of their audiences, both native and white. As Kilkelly suggests, there is plenty of scope for risk in this work:

They do court the edge, deliberately. As hilarious as the image of the Bingo Lady handing out Salvation Army clothes as "prizes" actually is, it is a painful reiteration of experience for reservation audiences. White audiences may recognize the insult in their own "charity." Indians may laugh in recognition of a behaviour that has demeaned them. The hilarity of satire, in time-honoured fashion, exposes, in an ostensibly "palatable" way (thinking of Jonathan Swift) the viciousness of human behaviour. Laughter, in this case, at Princess Wannabuck or the Bingo Lady, involves an acknowledgement of what satire reveals. Such edgy comedy has a feeling of payback and analysis. The act of acknowledgement, of saying, or feeling "Yes, I understand," while splitting a gut laughing, seems like an incredible balancing act, or, a trickster's magic that has power to sustain curiosity and satisfy anger (Leonard and Kilkelly, 2006: 202-203).

The analogy with the trickster gives a valuable insight into the function of community theatre today. The performers, like tricksters of olden times, invite the audience to inhabit two worlds simultaneously: their own daily existence, grained to greyness by habit and another which, though almost familiar, shape changes into a fictional world of possibility and transformation. It is a reminder to audiences that our material world is in a continual state of flux and that 'the whirligig of Time brings in his revenges'.

At its best community theatre, popular theatre, theatre for development – call it what you will – closes the gap between the participants' and audiences' lived experience and the aesthetic processes involved in the recasting of that experience in a fictional form which reveals its possibilities for change. Writing of contemporary township theatre in South Africa, Gay Morris captures the essence of this symbiosis:

Township living contributes not only to the content but also to the method of playmaking. Winding alleyways, tiny homes, bursting at the seams with extended families and dependents, hair cuts, puncture repairs and furniture retailing happening on the same roadside verge in close proximity, cooking and washing undertaken

outdoors: these everyday experiences, along with communal dance, song and storytelling, validate and reinforce communicative sociality and the notion that perceptions and lived experiences are not as much individually, as jointly, owned. Possibilities and problems of daily living – the essential stuff of theatre – can be digested and refashioned in a discursive, collective social process rather than cogitated upon in isolation from everyday social interaction (Morris, 2007).

This emphasis upon the collective nature of experience draws attention, by contrast, to the challenge involved in trying to create theatre in ‘developed’ societies characterised by isolation, fragmentation and the increasing erosion of public space. In such societies the very act of making theatre, a fundamentally collective process, can result in the (re)creating of the participants as a community. The process itself reawakens our social instincts as humans, reminds us of what we have been missing and directs that species memory towards a creative analysis of our predicament. This is the type of application of a community theatre making process to the underlying social movements that destroy and remake that same community which Richard Andrews describes in his case study of Teatro Povero in Monticchiello, Tuscany, Italy:

The message was that the generation of *ex-mezzadri* might soon be coming to an end, but that in Monticchiello at least they had used the theatre to come to terms with their lives, past and present, and were not going to abandon their identity or their self-knowledge. The other Tuscans who formed the majority of their audience had clearly seen their own history articulated by this one small village over the years, and had experienced indeed a level of empowerment. The danger of sterile nostalgia always threatens, perhaps; but communities, like individuals, must ultimately be allowed to use their own past for whatever purpose they choose. It is, after all, the only one they have. To dramatise it, ruefully and ironically as well as nostalgically, is more productive than to forget it (Andrews, 2004: 54).

What these varied examples express in common is the desire of the community to use a theatre process to articulate a history and to offer a social analysis which runs counter to the master-narrative of neoliberalism. The collective energy emanating from the concentration upon an agreed goal results in a crossing and recrossing of epistemological boundaries that prove, in the event, to be no more than the redundant guard-posts of the dominant.

In another example, Dave Pammenter discovered that the transformation could extend from participants to audiences as a result of embarking upon a play-based process designed to enable sex workers in Zambia to explore and express all dimensions of their humanity beyond the categories into which they were customarily set. Again it was the playful application of their lived experience of HIV/AIDS within the form of a theatrical communication, that set up the moment where their lives transcended the material hopelessness of existence:

When, after the performance of the play in a public space, which was in effect the final product of their devising, they became indistinguishable from their audience, this reflected not only changes in themselves but also a transformation in their

audience who had come to patronize them as types of sex workers but stayed to recognize them as fellow human beings (Pammenter, 2006: 196).

The innate creativity and imagination of despised groups on the margins of the margin demonstrate once more the possibilities for real social transformation when spaces are opened up for playful interventions on terms of their own making. Perhaps the habitual agenda setters who have brought the planet to its present state, could acquire the humility to listen to these voices and to act upon what they hear. This is the conclusion that Michael Etherton draws to his own experiences of adopting the process in a range of African contexts:

What constantly amazes us adults is the quality of the drama the young people create in the process of defining the infringement of their rights. In country after country, in culture after culture, children and young people have a beautiful sense of dramatic improvisation. Young people's art in all kinds of creative media, coupled with their struggle for their rights in an unfair world, stands a good chance of changing the future in ways we adults cannot now imagine (Etherton, 2006: 118).

Close of play

There is an urgent need that we change our relationships to each other and to the environment in which we exist from the ground up. At present the cruise ship *Mankind* is set firmly on its course for its appointment with the ice-berg, released by human-induced climate change. The deck-chair attendants of neoliberalism will still be shuffling the reformist pack as 'abandon ship' is sounded. Our aesthetic choices will be confined to selecting the colour of the life-jacket, complete with sponsor's logo, and to confirming that we have paid for the life-boat supplement that comes as part of a private health care package. An alternative course is to set sail in another direction, arrived at via consensus through the agenda-setting of those who operate by a different set of priorities. That would be a turn to the aesthetic.

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Design for the ancient drama

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Introduction

The paper attempts to discuss cultural education and aesthetic production using technologies that do not limit or over-influence them. It is part of the collaborative activities of Technological Educational Institute of Greece with European Schools of Design through Socrates/Erasmus programmes. The unique feature of this project and the case study is that it provided the opportunity for multicultural and multi-lingua European students to explore common multidisciplinary co-designing issues and discuss innovative aesthetic approaches. The involved professors and design students have benefited from the research work, the exchange of insights, research tools and methods that support research, and the sharing of experience, ideas and information on education and on the application of multimedia.

The idea that *motivated* the present research collaboration derived from the fact that during the last five, or more, years, many local stage-design production companies have produced poor design, resulting in an ineffective presentation of the drama, with subsequent lack of attracting audience. Different factors contribute to success or failure, but often they can be traced back to the designers' designing ability or inability of real aesthetics and of innovative human-centred design approaches. Stage designers are asked to bring aesthetic quality, innovation and human consideration to their design products if they wish to be competitive in our highly demanding era. Design aesthetics are always closely related to critical reflection, while design innovation is linked to experimentation and practical delivery. Innovation and design go hand in hand as any new design is effectively an innovation in itself, especially if new approaches or new concepts have been incorporated, eminently transferable, as what one designer does could benefit another. Innovation does not have to be product related, as happened in the present experiment. It can encompass new media/material in a traditional application or the use of a known component somewhere where it has not been adapted.

The approach as discussed in this paper has been applied and educated within the framework of the European funded programs. Educators, qualified designers, artists, stage designers and representatives from technology composed the research team. Designing for an ancient drama performance was identified as a theme with common interest, due to its qualities and relevance to partners' curricula. It was an interdisciplinary and well-known subject, part of European culture and addressed in all languages. The partners with this work were *targeting* to improve the present

situation of the local theatrical business that are of the greatest cultural and aesthetic value for all countries and cultures. *The objectives* of the project were to promote interdisciplinary inter-cultural applied research in the university environment and to facilitate a dialogue on the aesthetic powers and limitations of contemporary technological developments. *The aims* of the case study are to create new opportunities, visions, skills, directions and aesthetics for design students and practitioners.

Aesthetics and performances

The term *Aesthetics* or *Esthetics* comes from the Greek word *αισθητική* "aisthetiki"; it is part of Hellenic philosophy, closely associated with art. The philosopher Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten coined it in 1735 to mean "the science of how things are known via the senses", according to the meaning of the Greek word *αίσθησις* "esthisi" - sense. Aesthetics examines what makes something beautiful, sublime, disgusting, fun, cute, silly, entertaining, pretentious, harmonious, humorous, or tragic. Judgments of aesthetic value often involve many kinds of issues, go beyond sensory discrimination, are linked to emotions, and can be culturally conditioned to some extent. Thus aesthetic judgments might be seen based on the senses, emotions, intellectual opinions, will, desires, culture, preferences, values, subconscious behaviour, conscious decision, training, instinct, or on a complex combination of these.

Greece influenced greatly the development of Western aesthetics. Greek philosophers initially felt that aesthetically appealing objects were beautiful in and of themselves. Plato felt that beautiful objects incorporated proportion, harmony, and unity among their parts. Similarly, in the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle found that the universal elements of beauty were order, symmetry and definiteness. From the late 17th to the early 20th century Western aesthetics underwent a slow revolution into what is called modernism. Until the early 20th century it was normal in the West to assume that all art aims at beauty, and thus that anything that wasn't trying to be beautiful couldn't count as art. Beauty was the key component of art and of the aesthetic experience, and art was necessarily aiming at beauty. Early twentieth century artists, poets and composers challenged the assumption that beauty was central to art and aesthetics. Since then, various attempts have been made to define a Post-modern aesthetics, but without a defined result.

Drama performances combine many diverse disciplines, each of which may have their own rules of aesthetics. The aesthetics of performances are closely related to photography, colours, lighting, sounds and music, art direction, costume design and makeup. All of these disciplines are closely inter-twined and must be brought together by the aesthetic sensibilities of the director. Costume designers use a variety of techniques to create the personalities of the drama, implementing fabric, colour, scale, references to the past, texture, harmony, transparency, accessories and embroidery. Performing arts appeal to our aesthetics of storytelling, grace, balance, class, timing, strength, shock, humour, costume, irony, beauty, drama, suspense, and sensuality. Whereas live stage performance is usually constrained by the physical reality at hand, film performance can further add the aesthetic elements of large-scale action, fantasy, and a complex interwoven musical score. Aesthetic considerations are also associated with the sense of vision. Performance art has adapted the digital culture of new

technology, while often and consciously mixes the aesthetics of several media. Digital culture has a distinct aesthetic that produces visual and aural art. Role-playing games are often seen as a performing art with an aesthetic structure of their own. Aesthetics in new technology mainly focus upon the study of human-computer interaction, creating user-friendly devices and software applications.

Ancient drama

Ancient Drama is fundamental diachronic part of Hellenic Culture and has its roots in the ancient Hellenic religious worships. The transition, from religious worship to drama, occurred around sixth century BC in Athens, according to the legend, by Thespis, who first had the idea to add speaking actors to the religious performances of choral song and dance, which took place throughout Greece. Masked actors held these wordless performances outdoors, in daylight, during religious festivals, from the Minoan era, long before the Dorian invasion. The research team addressed the issue whether there is any relation between modern theatre and classical drama. Comedy and tragedy are the types of drama, which were developed and flourished in ancient Athens the fifth century BC. They have influenced nearly all the subsequent Western drama, starting with that of the Romans, with their extravagant public performances and spectacles that included everything from pantomime to mock naval battles. Opera owes its existence to an attempt to return from the Roman to the Greek type of theatre. Both French classical tragedy and 19th and 20th century Irish drama feature Greek themes. Even Brecht wrote an Antigone, and Jules Dassin's film 'A Dream of Passion' is based on Euripides 'Media'. Commedia dell' arte bears a strong resemblance to Roman comedy. In modern times, many television programs echo the topical humor of Aristophanes. The contemporary proscenium theatre evolved from a modern misinterpretation of the descriptions of theatrical buildings by the Roman architect Vitruvius. Greek and Roman plays remain among the most powerful, moving, provocative, funny, biting, witty, and pertinent dramas with a lasting influence. They are part of European culture, flourishing on stages around the world, moving beyond their traditional Western sphere of influence, as directors explore their structural and thematic links with the performing arts of India, Korea, Indonesia, Africa, and Japan - to name only a few.

Ancient drama and ancient cultures have greatly contributed to human-aesthetics development. Reconsidering culture from a new viewpoint is a real work of art, because during the process the artist views things without preconception. If one is unfamiliar with the real culture, the attempt to recreate it can destroy both the form and the artist's intention. It is vital to understand old things, to have a renewed appreciation of culture, to develop cultural originality and distinctiveness. Modern aesthetics, culture, design and the art/design education system have become integrated by technology, but are they also influenced – or even over-influenced by it? The case study attempts an equilibrium approach between ancient cultures, design aesthetics and technology. Education is a very important factor in forming aesthetics-consciousness and the increasing opportunities offered by multimedia and the Internet can help approach the aesthetic values of ancient cultures.

Stage design

Design, according to Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus, 1992, means, "to invent and bring into being", thus defining that design deals with creating something new not existing in nature. Designing can be generally defined as an activity. The activities a research community considers appropriate are its methods and techniques. Design is the language that we use to bridge disciplines. Design Aesthetics focuses on design appearance and the way people perceive design products, studied mainly in terms of social and cultural factors. Design research by definition changes the state-of-the-world through the introduction of novel artefacts. Design Aesthetics research is the perception aspects and the appreciation of product aesthetics, the role of emotion in product design, the study of the incorporated symbolism and its cultural and social meaning. A world without design would have been a very unpleasant one. It is what makes our world conform to our needs and desires, problem solving, changing existing situations into preferred ones. Design is also an interdisciplinary and integrative process and a professional field of practice and applied research. Traditionally, design of all disciplines has been viewed as a service within an organization—not as a strategic resource of success. This traditional view has changed and design has become a feature of marketing, economic competitiveness and the creative discipline that coordinates data to produce positive innovation. A new appreciation of the importance of design in both aesthetic and functional terms is the focus of 21st century design process.

Stage design is the aesthetic composition of a dramatic production as created by such aspects of stagecraft as lighting, set, costume, sound, and stage. Stage designers are responsible for designing stage settings for productions, from single scene dramas, where the action takes place in one room, to complex scenery and scene changes. They may also become involved in costume design and to identify suitable outside locations for productions. Considerable research is necessary before design work. They produce models that are used to demonstrate the setting of stage or location, and they are often skilled in modelling. The traditional medium for conceptualisation of stage design was pencil and paper sketching that facilitated the rapid development of design ideas in a short period of time. Recently, for the conceptualisation phase of the design process, computer aided design and model making are increasingly used in theatre, film and television design work.

Stage and costume design is not a static art with fixed rules, but in antiquity neither stage-architecture nor costume/fashion design changed as rapidly as they do now. Was there an ancient equivalent of a stage/costume designer? Theatre is ephemeral by nature, but scholars have managed to make intelligent and convincing inferences about costumes and costume makers, masks, properties, wooden stage buildings, and even stage business and acting techniques. Indirect evidence has been found in vase-paintings and sculptures. Concerning costume design and since the material had to be produced in the same way and the available raw materials and dyes remained the same, changes in clothing style were likely to be variations on an old theme. It is a fact that the Ancient Theatrical Costume has received very little attention in the study of stagecraft. One reason for this is the lack of direct evidence, due to the perishability of the cloth from which those costumes were made.

Textiles and drama performances co-existence vanishes in time, since textiles have contributed to the glory of a performance, mainly for costumes of religious worships/performances, thousands of years before Christ. The use of fabrics in stage design, as draped coverings of the stage and as painted scenery, is old too. Cloths have light transparency and long lasting quality. They are flexible, light-weighted, colourful, easy to transport and transform them, inexpensive; in one word a perfect solution for low-cost performances, for moving theatres and companies that are still existing, and are culturally very important in many parts of the world. Textiles and fibres can be used in many different performances, indoor and outdoor, in antique amphitheatres and modern stages, creating with their pleads and folds the amphitheatrical environmental feeling.

Stage design can be considered as a human-centred design, in its very broad meaning, and this is how has been addressed from antiquity. Human-centred product development is the process of product development that focuses on users and their needs rather than on technology; needs meaning here physical, mental, cultural, and aesthetical. The human centred approach of the present work applies to the design of the entire project, considering cultural, social, emotional, physical and aesthetical factors of participants/designers and receivers/participants.

Research methodology

The working group was an interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary team. The task started with research, continued through didactic strategy definition, requirements and application, concluded with the design teaching process and technology adoption and finished with performance/presentation and evaluation. The research activities and the interaction between partners were studied in order to build a successful research methodology. Teamwork is an area that requires delicate handling, as power relationships can begin to emerge. If clumsily handled this can lead at best to hurt feelings, and at worst, a failed project. In order to identify the designing paths, the research team studied selected parts and scenes of well-known classical dramas, international stage and costume design productions and presentations, ancient statues and fragments of fifth-century pottery representing drama, stage, actors and chorus wearing everyday clothing, boots, masks and richly pleated chitons in purple and gold. The participating students selected a single scene of their choice from the ancient drama, focusing on costume and stage design. The archaic way of religious performances offered the idea to replace the actors' words with the international language of design, of textiles and textures, of shades and colours, thus expressing feelings and emotions. The participants academic background of design/interior design was more that adequate, since all were familiar with interior and basic costume design, basic art applications, modelling, history of architecture, design and furniture, and application of modern technology.

The adapted *design research methodology* had the following structure:

- Awareness of Project/Problem: The output of this phase is a proposal.- Suggestion: This phase follows immediately behind the proposal, intimately connected with it. - Development: Designing is implemented in this phase. - Evaluation: Designed and constructed, the artefact is evaluated according to criteria that are always implicit and frequently made explicit in the phase of proposal. Deviations from expectations, both

quantitative and qualitative are noted and must be tentatively explained. - Conclusion: This phase is the finale of a specific research effort and the result of satisfying. The knowledge gained in the effort has facts that have been learned and can be repeatable and successfully applied, or may well serve as the subject of further research.

The case study

In the present case study six educators, professors and tutors collaborated with forty design students. All students had general and interior design education, and basic knowledge of modern technological applications. The experiment was arranged in two major groups and in small ones of one, two or three participants, according to their personal wish, their level of education, and their semester of attendance. They were asked to design for live performances and to deliver one with the assistance of new technology. All had to follow a similar work procedure that lasted the same time period. The experiment was repeated twice, in two different periods, with the two different groups of students. The case study included processes and resources that assisted the multicultural, multilingual participating students to undertake research in an effective way. It was decided that the didactic approach should employ two actions. The first included a data selection method, by asking all participating students to photograph or sketch all forms of designs and items that inspire them and helps them to visualize the assigned performance. An important issue of the teaching methodology was the involvement of all the participants in activities that allowed them to get close to information and gain access to data. They were assigned to inquire libraries, theatres, cinemas, museums, archaeological sites, and select information photos and slides on drama, theatre and theatrical performances; to attend performances and presentations in different theatre and places; to see videos and DVDs with international performances. A rapid virtual access to the places and people of their choice was offered to all of them, through a combination of activities and visits, as a part of their education programme.

Within introductory sessions they discussed the technical and design aspects, the organization and implementation of technology, of designing, of techniques and technologies and to solve technical/computer problems. The second action was the designing process that resulted to live performance. The design sessions were expanded with lectures on construction, style and composition and also with a discussion of aesthetics. They included short video, slide and image presentations on performances. The students were supported both in content and in process by direct support by supervisors, by methods and application of research during the first part of their assignment, and by techniques that would assess their levels of creativity and innovation during the designing part of the assignment. The adapted teaching/learning strategy was concentrating on the learning side of the teaching-learning equation.

Various elements and constraints were considered including the design production cost. The final design proposals were selected among hundred of sketches that were created during the project. A self-imposed restriction was necessary to participating students' enthusiasm, efforts and untiring energy, if chaos was to be avoided: to restrain from the total spectrum of designs and to focus on those distinctively related to the character of the research. The educational parameters, as defined by the research team, were:

-Emphasis on teaching/learning inputs/outcomes, -Emphasis on attitudinally based "deep" learning, -Wide variety of learning tools and assessment instruments, -Lecturer/student relationships, -Individual and examination-based assessments.

After one semester's work the participating groups proposed and presented for evaluation designs, inspirations (Figure 1), and research on the possible ways, means and media for the application of their design ideas in performances with the implementation of new technology. The research team evaluated the works, and then they were turned back accompanied with written remarks and statements, thus helping the participants to work on their proposals completion with the best possible results. Finally, the participating students presented a live performance in front of their colleagues, educators and the research team (Figure 2).



1



2

Figure 1. Example of the students collected data, during their field and desk research work, are the two terra-cotta statuettes, 4th century BC, from the Athens National Museum. The costumes and the overall structure of the female bodies inspired costumes, actors' positions/movements and stage design of the drama performances.

Figure 2. Statuettes of image 1, inspired costumes and scenery, "designed" by projected overlapping images, created and developed by computer work.

Two performances took place at the auditorium of the Technological Educational Institute that had none of the characteristics of a traditional stage performance. The scenery was created by two to four overlapping designs that were parallel projected by slide/video/overhead projectors. Costumes were "designed" by projected overlapping images too, created and developed by computer work. Costumes, from white veil cotton fabrics, combined the aesthetics of the ancient hiton with a "touch" of contemporary fashion. The participants created all the projected designs during the design sessions. There were no actors, only silent figures in the archaic manner. Colour was applied via the projectors and unusual to extreme colour combinations resulted. Selected electronic sounds and music accompanied and completed the emotional atmosphere and the aesthetics of the performance (Figure 3, A, B).



A



B

Figure 3. Volumes, colours and shades were applied via the projectors and unusual/extreme colour and forms resulted, A, expressing feelings and emotions, creating new aesthetics, B.

The participants were free to select any media or computer program they preferred in order to design and present the performance. The final, in many cases abstract, design/colour decisions and combinations, were presented together with the prototype inspirations in layers with the multiple parallel use of video/slide/overhead projectors, and with the assistance of selected electronic lighting systems. Craft paper, fibers and fabrics were also used in order to “build” scenery and form figures. All these elements were substituting words, costumes and scenery, embodying everything and everybody, creating a magical and altogether mythical atmosphere for the participants and the audience. Eyes became the gates for all kind of words, forms, feelings and emotions. Drama was expressed and evolves by continues design projections, connecting and presenting the myth, and by colours and sounds that were magnetizing the audience. Images and sounds were the speaking elements, giving the general idea of the myth, the time and place, as well as the meaning of the performance. Lighting and shadow contributed to the general atmosphere. Linguistic differences/difficulties/disabilities were minimized. A new aesthetic approach to ancient Hellenic drama was presented (Figures 4, 5, 6, 7).



Figure 4. Example of the participating students’ stage design work with multiple projected images, presenting the myth and the era. The international language of designs and colours was the medium of the drama event. The total scenery was constructed from craft paper and cotton veil fabrics.

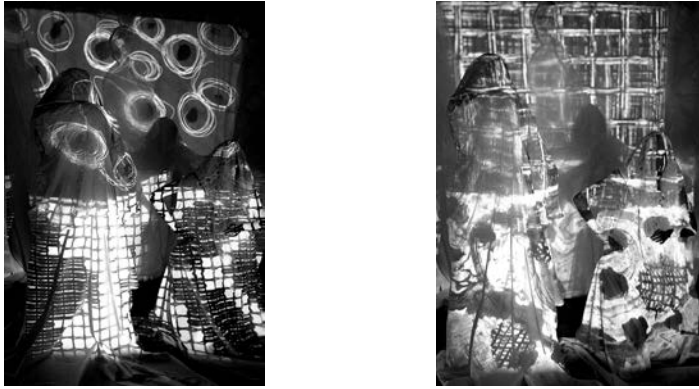


Figure 5. Examples of the participating students costume design work with multiple projected images. The students experimented on the same scene repeatedly with different design projection, colour combinations and lighting systems' implication before their final decision.

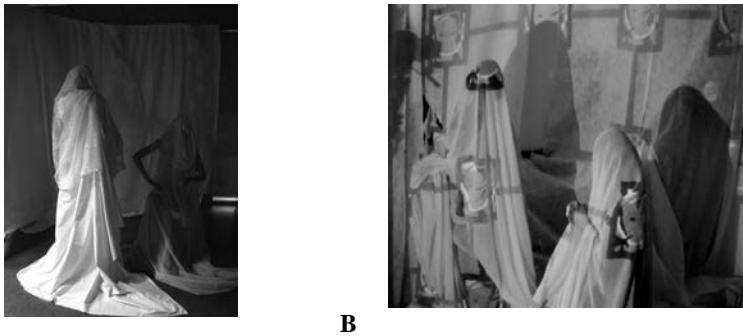


Figure 6. Costume design was a very important factor of the aesthetic quality of each performance. A: Costume structure was first tested on mannequins in order to identify materials and textures. Costumes many times had a diachronic or/and global identity. B: Multiple projected images, presenting the myth and the epoch completed the costumes' designing, homogenised with the scenery.



Figure 7. Ancient Textile Arts and Crafts were employed for the designing and construction of scenery and costumes. Many cloths were first treated with tie-dye, block printing and batik work, used also for the video projections. Lighting was fundamental part of the final design.

Conclusions

The case study offered many important outcomes for both the research team and the participating students. The successful educational synergy proved that players from distant cultures and production systems could create innovative aesthetics that bear the hallmark of sensibility. Initiative, imagination and the application of technology make possible the production of technological oriented aesthetic qualities, implicating students and educators of different cultures and languages. The application of technological achievements can successfully create new aesthetic approaches on the ancient and modern drama performances. Design research is successful when interaction, multidisciplinary knowledge, and technological transfer are creatively coordinated.

Modern technology is a valuable tool that does not only acts for sharing knowledge; it also provides new aesthetics, innovative designs, improving sensibility and expressing emotions. Language differences are not barriers in the design society; the language of design can equally and powerfully communicate ideas and emotions, with technology acting as a positive medium. Research and practice cannot be seen as separated parts, as well as design education and technological improvements. They are partners of conversation and they should be equally balanced. To make students aware of this, instructors should trigger them to be more interested, by enjoying the research part and the creation that results, and by showing them that the project will embody their visions, emotions and aesthetic approaches/preferences.

The present case study could provide a working model for developing future projects though design education and technological applications, which will involve Universities, professors and students that share the same extensive design sensibility and aesthetics, feelings and vision. This exploration hopes to stimulate further research on the processes in which modern technology plays an important, vital role in creating and sharing aesthetics. The recently growing and enduring emphasis for technological applications in design and design education could open new horizons to students with sensibility and spirit for innovation, if the human dimension of designing is not lost in the process. Design knowledge and design thinking, society and people should move towards the Design most unquestionable quality: innovative aesthetics for a more “human-dimensioned” design.

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Acts of Aesthetic Confession in Saul Bellow's *Ravelstein*

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There is an expression in Persian culture saying that “truth is bitter” and by truth in this expression they mean the underlying reality before it is modified by effects of anticipation, pretence, or politeness. Due to its bitter taste, one can imagine that truth can hardly be described as beautiful. In addition, the concept of beauty is commonly associated with visible forms of knowledge such as architecture, painting, photography, sculpture, and the like. However, from John Keats (1795-1821) the famous English Romantic poet, we learn that sayable forms of knowledge such as truth can also be regarded as beautiful. In his famous poem, “Ode on a Grecian Urn” (1820), Keats writes:

Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

But the discourse that most commonly communicates the truth is the discourse of confession which is traditionally associated with elements of asymmetry in the power positions of the two subjects in conversation and inequality in their relationship as the confessor and the confessant. Now the question that arises here is how can the discourse of truth-telling with its bitter content and asymmetrical form be endowed with the features of aesthetic such as harmony, symmetry, and beauty? To answer this question, one needs to consider reality within a dynamic rather than static context and also think of the existence of a reciprocal rather than one-sided intersubjective relationship between the speaker and the receiver of confession within that evolving context. It is very likely that creative and critical confession as such emerges in the context of art rather than a social and cultural background.

The American-Jewish novelist Saul Bellow (1915-2005) presents a movement in his works wherein the novelistic confessional discourse develops from an earlier social hierarchical, monophonic and static experience of narrative confession in his earlier novels *Dangling Man* (1944), *The Victim* (1947), and *Seize the Day* (1951) and moves towards a more artistic, engaging, polyphonic, and aesthetic style in his later fiction. Therefore, whereas his earlier works show disintegration between the hero's public and private realities, his later fiction illustrates more communication between the two. In the presence of serious and authorial social confessors, the heroes' speech is recognized with more impulsive confession-related speech acts such as pretence, lie, and submissiveness in their public performances, whereas in their private journal writings and meditations they openly express their reactionary transgressive truth and

angry intonations towards their unfeeling materialistic culture. As Bellow introduces a more polyphonic context for confession and narrows the intersubjective gap in his later works, he eventually develops a distinctive context for the emergence of innovative and aesthetic mode of confession in his last novel, *Ravelstein* (2000).

Bellow's early short novels anticipate Bellow's future style of interactive confession as well as the theme of American excessiveness in creating discontinuity between public and private realities. In *Dangling Man*, Bellow illustrates that the private truth of Joseph cannot be discussed publicly as he is caught between two extremely dissociated worlds: the unfeeling and controlling world of the war and the eccentrically chaotic and formless world of personal freedom. What Joseph requires in order to be his genuine self in public, is a more proportionate amount of regulation and autonomy. *The Victim* is, however, concerned with a different polaristic issue in relation to the production of reality: the problems of one-sided evaluations and inflexibility in character definitions. In his "Forward" to *The Closing of American Mind*, Bellow summarizes the teachings of the civilized world and the determining effects it has on the individual's reality: "Tell me where you come from and I will tell you what you are" (Bellow, 1987: 13). Bellow's statement explains the ways of the communities run by the orders of war, Anti-Semitism, and American materialism presented in the three early novels, respectively. In addition to the above-mentioned theme, *Seize the Day* justifies confession-related themes such as truth-management and public pretence in connection with the individual's approach towards responsibility for one's guilt and mistakes.

Bellow's early novels anticipate the construction of balance, harmony and moderation in his future novels, the ideal condition in which people can communicate more openly with themselves, if not with their society, through a return to the discourse of mutual confession and reciprocal acts of forgiveness. True friendship between the individual and society is suggestively the ideal condition to articulate private truth publicly. Bellow understands "true friendship" as Allan Bloom has found between Plato and Aristotle:

The real community of man, in the midst of all the self-contradictory simulacra of community, is the community of those who seek the truth, of the potential knowers . . . of all men to the extent they desire to know. But in fact, this includes only a few, the true friends, as Plato was to Aristotle at the very moment they were disagreeing about the nature of the good ... They were absolutely one soul as they looked at the problem. This according to Plato, is the only real friendship, the only real common good. It is here that the contact people so desperately seek is to be formed (Bellow, 1987: 11-12).

Bellow progressively approaches this ideal model of friendship in his later novels. From the earlier presentation of the spiritual, magical, and fictional versions of this ideal mode of friendship presented in *Dangling Man*, *The Victim*, and *Seize the Day*, correspondingly, Bellow moves towards the creation of a more realistic model of true friendship in his later works, particularly in *Humboldt's Gift* and *Ravelstein*. In *Herzog*, however, Bellow contextualizes the modern confusing condition of truth within an intellectual war context. Yet, the ideal model of friendship in *Herzog*, as in

Seize the Day, is fictional: in the close relationship between the narrative voice and the protagonist. However, *Ravelstein* illustrates Bellow's most interactive and dialogic model for confessional communication.

Ravelstein illustrates the interactive mode of confession mainly because the novel presents Chick and Professor Abe Ravelstein, two intellectual and close friends, over the period when they actively participate in and contribute to writing Ravelstein's biography. Ravelstein appoints Chick to be his biographer; he provides the biographical model for his writing, and supervises his sample writing, advising him on his style, diction, and theme. During this period, Chick is carefully observing Ravelstein and tries to reconsider his private reality from the point of view of a friend-biographer. However, Chick's biographical writing borders on autobiography and confession as Chick starts to write about himself while writing about Ravelstein. In like manner, in writing about Chick and Ravelstein, Bellow, as documented by his biographer, James Atlas, writes about his friendship with Allan Bloom: "like Bloom, who became a significant force among American conservatives after he published *The Closing of the American Mind*, Ravelstein is an ideological power broker" (Atlas, 2000: 594). Therefore, in revealing facts about Ravelstein, Bellow is communicating the truth about Bloom's life and death.

Chick initially epitomizes Ravelstein as worshiped not only by his students and friends but also by his contemporary politicians. He then creates balance in his writing by pointing out Ravelstein's contradictions and weaknesses. He begins his aesthetic writing by keeping his distance from Ravelstein: "But the fact that we were laughing together did not mean that we were laughing for the same reason" (Bellow, 2001: 14), and that "I was too old to become Ravelstein's disciple" (Bellow, 2001: 15). He also emphasizes that the fact that they were close friends and intellectuals did not imply that they share tastes in their perception of beauty and truth. In fact, Chick notes that they had two distinct personal conceptions of the "odd" and the "beautiful". Chick sees oddity in the fact that Ravelstein goes so public with people's private lives, whereas Chick's private life looks extremely odd from Ravelstein's point of view (Bellow, 2001: 12).

Chick presents contradictions in what Ravelstein has publicly theorized and confessed in his book and the ways of his private life, presenting Ravelstein as one of "mankind benefactors" that he had debunked in his book. Chick compares Ravelstein to politicians such as Lincoln, the intellectuals such as those in the Bloomsbury group, and celebrities such as Michael Jackson who govern the public by entertaining them. The novel opens with: "Odd that mankind's benefactors should be amusing people. In America at least this is often the case. Anyone who wants to govern the country has to entertain it" (Bellow, 2001: 1). Ravelstein believes that "writers are supposed to make you laugh and cry. That's what mankind is looking for" (Bellow, 2001: 13). In his piecemeal approach towards Ravelstein, Chick introduces erotic gossip, movie nights, pizza parties, as well as his distinct taste in clothing fashion and music as Ravelstein's personal techniques of entertainment in controlling his students' lives.

In a certain amusing serio-comic intonation, the novel presents political truth in the ways it works with the exchange of knowledge and power. In his book, Ravelstein

popularizes himself as an advocate of democracy, liberal education, and art. Ravelstein's book asserts that "no real education was possible in American universities except for aeronautical engineers, computerists, and the like. The universities were excellent in biology and the physical sciences, but the liberal arts were a failure" (Bellow, 2001: 47). Chick criticises Ravelstein as being ironically the one who makes excessive use of modern technology—despite his assertive argument against them in his book—in order to be in touch with his students, have access to their private information, and control their lives. Chick explains: "Ravelstein was the man at the private command post of telephones with complex keyboards and flashing lights and state-of-the-art stereo playing Palestrina on the original instruments" (Bellow, 2001: 30). Chick humorously connects Ravelstein's gross actions to his strong intellectual capacity: "but since Ravelstein had a large-scale mental life—and I say this without irony, his interests really were big—he needed to know everything there was to know about his friends and his students, just as a physician pursuing a diagnosis has to see you stripped naked" (Bellow, 2001: 115). When he was at home, Ravelstein "spent hours on the telephone with his disciples. After a fashion, he kept their secrets. At least he didn't quote them by name" (Bellow, 2001: 10). Ravelstein loved gossip (Bellow, 2001: 8). The possession of his student's personal information puts Ravelstein in an authoritative position so that he could govern their intimate lives. Chick states: "it was wonderful to be so public about the private" (Bellow, 2001: 31). Chick criticizes Ravelstein:

Abe's 'people' in Washington kept his telephone line so busy that I said he must be masterminding a shadow government. He accepted this, smiling as though the oddity were not his but mine. He said, "All these students I've trained in the last thirty years still turn to me, and in a way the telephone makes possible an ongoing seminar in which the policy questions they deal with in day-to-day Washington are aligned with the Plato they studied two or three decades ago, or Lock, or Rousseau, or even Nietzsche (Bellow, 2001: 12).

As such, it seems that political discussions become a means for Ravelstein to take control of his students. Criticising materialist impulses, Chick asserts: "that Ravelstein's most serious ideas, put into his book, should have made him a millionaire certainly was funny. It took the genius of capitalism to make a valuable commodity out of thoughts, opinions, *teachings*" (Bellow, 2001: 14). It is not only Ravelstein's writing that functions as an act of politics; Chick's writing is also political in that he exercises his power over Ravelstein by revealing his innermost truth.

Political confession, as presented in Bellow's novel, is not so much the discourse about politics as it is the discourse of confession which employs certain techniques of domination. For instance, Bellow's novel shows the ways in which the truth about sex works within the capitalist culture and is productive of wealth as well as positions of power. Ravelstein's relationship with his students, his public management of their private and public truth and his gradual turn to religion towards the end of his life are among his major acts of political confession in the novel. Like his contemporary American politicians, Ravelstein employs various technique of amusement in order to attract his student-disciples: from fashions in clothes, to music, philosophy, art and

politics. He generously educates his students in Greek philosophy and politics and charges them in return by gaining access to their innermost personal desires. His trade of knowledge for power resembles the ways of his materialist culture. Ravelstein reasons: "I'm not a free commodity or public giveaway, *am I*" (Bellow, 2001: 44)! Ravelstein's older pupils now "held positions of importance on national newspapers" (Bellow, 2001: 10).

Perhaps following the materialistic impulse, Ravelstein sees beauty in luxurious objects, while Chick seeks beauty in the external nature and in human soul. Chick's conception of the beautiful is reminiscent of Foucault's argument, especially with regard to his particular conception of the "aesthetic judgment" and "the art of existence". Foucault problematises the common judgment of beauty: "Why should the lamp or the house be an art object, but not our life?" (Foucault, 1984: 350) He subsequently argues that one can make a work of art out of one's life. Proposing the concept of the aesthetics of existence, Foucault reasons that art cannot be exclusively related to objects; it can also be related to individuals and their lives (Foucault, 1984: 350).

Foucault's conception of the aesthetics of existence, that is, the creation of one's life as a work of art, is Nietzschean in origin (Simons, 1995: 21). He adopts Nietzsche's "valorisation of creative action rather than Kant's contemplation of what is beautiful or sublime" (Simons, 1995: 21). In Bellow's novel, through his biographical writings, Chick seems to be creating a work of art out of Ravelstein's eccentric life. In support of the valorisation of human actions, Foucault turns to Baudelaire's argument that modern man "is not the man who goes off to discover himself, his secrets and his hidden truth; he is the man who tries to invent himself" (Foucault, 1986: 42). The modern artist, for Baudelaire, is, therefore, the one who "just when the whole world is falling asleep, he begins to work, and he transfigures the world" (Foucault, 1986: 41). And this is exactly what Chick's artistic writing is doing in presenting Ravelstein's public and private contradictions. Whereas all Ravelstein's people blindly idolize his public personality and mythologize his philosophical ideas, Chick sees his inner weaknesses, pretensions, and grotesque behaviour as well. Therefore, Chick's writing creates a more comprehensive and symmetrical image of Ravelstein.

The artistic value of Chick's creative writing lies in the fact that he endows Ravelstein's grotesque features with liberating values. He distorts Ravelstein's image only to restore order, symmetry, and beauty into it. He brings together Ravelstein's public and private image without merging the two. Unlike most Ravelstein's students and friends, Chick fails to ignore, censor or silence Ravelstein's private weaknesses. Aesthetic confession is a mature, intellectual, and value-productive mode of truth-telling which is based on reciprocal respect and understanding and leads to the creation of new versions of reality. Rather than blaming Ravelstein for his eccentricities or condemning him for what he is, Chick depicts him as he sees him in his writing, forgives him for his wrongdoings, and does him aesthetic justice, rather than judgment. Furthermore, when other people are unable to see and acknowledge the confinements of their social structure, Chick problematises them in his writing, exaggerating their seemingly ordinary presence.

Foucault explains that “transfiguration does not entail an annulling of reality, but a difficult interplay between the truth of what is real and the exercise of freedom” (Foucault, 1986: 41). For Foucault, as Jon Simons explains, “the relation to oneself as a work of art is a practice of freedom. But whereas Nietzsche practiced freedom primarily in relation to himself, creating himself as literature, Foucault practised freedom personally and politically” (Foucault, 1986: 21). Foucault argues that “for the attitude of modernity, the high value of the present is indissociable from a desperate eagerness to imagine it, to imagine it otherwise than it is, and to transform it not by destroying it but by grasping it in what it is” (Foucault, 1986: 41). In his seriocomic sketch of Ravelstein, Chick rescues Ravelstein from the solidity of the image that his followers have made for him—from their idolized, mythologize, and monologic icon of Ravelstein.

In order to create the art of existence, one needs to develop certain techniques of the self that help to eliminate eccentricities and develop harmony in one’s life. The concept of the techniques of the self, as Foucault explains, originates in the Greco-Roman mode of the “technology of the self” which did not conform to any universal rule of subjectification. Aesthetic confession is the creative discourse in which the speakers perform voluntary actions whereby they “not only set themselves rules of conduct, but also seek to transform themselves, to change themselves in their singular being, and to make their life into an *oeuvre* that carries certain aesthetic values and meets certain stylistic criteria” (Foucault, 1992: 10-11). In his biographical writing, Chick sets up new techniques for dealing with the reality of Ravelstein and improving the society’s norms of conduct, an act which progressively leads to the artistic creation of Ravelstein’s existence.

Aesthetic activity is an act of politics in that it functions as the strategy for taking care of oneself. Taking care of oneself seems to be working in close connection with taking care of one’s public as well as private truths of which secrets seem to have an integral role in aesthetic confession. Simons explains that “arts of the self are non-mimetic, in that they do not imitate true notions of subjectivity. One thus escapes the tutelage of authorities who define one” (Simons, 1995: 21). Foucault, accordingly, notes that to be modern “is not to accept oneself as one is in flux of the passing moments; it is to take oneself as object of a complex and difficult elaboration” (Foucault, 1986: 41). Therefore, in his philosophical accounts, Foucault cannot agree with Jean-Paul Sartre’s emphasis on authenticity. He, on the other hand, relates Sartre’s “theoretical insight to the practice of creativity—and not of authenticity” (Foucault, 1984: 351). Foucault explains that “Sartre avoids the idea of the self as something which is given to us, but through the moral notion of authenticity, he turns back to the idea that we have to be ourselves—to be truly our true self” (Foucault, 1984: 351). It is at this point that one’s secrets are endowed with creative values, mainly because the incommunicable truth can create the tension which is essential for the creative activity.

Chick’s caring attitude towards Ravelstein is reflected in his serio-comic intonation in remembering him. He contrasts himself with Ravelstein in terms of their eating habits: “I was a neater eater. Ravelstein when he was feeding and speaking made you

feel that something biological was going on, that he was stoking his system and nourishing his ideas” (Bellow, 2001: 5). Ravelstein had unpleasant eating habits:

Faculty wives knew that when Ravelstein came to dinner they would face a big cleaning job afterwards—the spilling, splashing, crumbling, the nastiness of his napkin after he had used it; the pieces of cooked meat scattered under the table, the wine sprayed out when he laughed at a wisecrack; courses rejected after one bite and pawed to the floor. An experienced hostess would have spread newspapers under his chair. He wouldn’t have minded. . . . Objecting to Abe’s table manners would be a confession of pettiness (Bellow, 2001: 38).

What Chick here notes about Ravelstein’s eating habits ironically applies to his governance of information as well: “Abe *knew*— he knew what to bring to full consciousness and what to brush aside” (Bellow, 2001: 38). On Ravelstein’s grotesque drinking habits, Chick comments: “Ravelstein’s big, unskilful hand gripped the little cup as he carried it to his mouth. . . . Brown stains appeared on the lapel of his new coat. It was unpreventable—a fatality” (41). Chick writes: “the coffee spill was pure Ravelstein. He himself had just said so” (Bellow, 2001: 41). As the image of Ravelstein stands for Allan Bloom and since Bloom’s philosophical and political views represent American society, it can arguably be said that Ravelstein’s table manners indicate the American excessiveness, abundance, and waste. In addition, Chick’s humorous presentation of this amount of waste is a criticism on American life style of misuse.

In presenting the grotesque mage of Ravelstein, Chick establishes a mode of transgressive relationship with his society and an aesthetic relationship with Ravelstein, a combined aesthetic-transgressive act of confession which indicates the interrelationship among truth, power and ethics. Foucault criticizes the constraints of traditional conception of ethics which require obedience to universal codes, and proposes the concept of aesthetic-ethic which allows for flexibility and inventiveness in modifying certain ethical rules. He argues that the problem with traditional ethics is that,

... for centuries we have been convinced that between our ethics, our personal ethics, our everyday life, and the great political and social and economic structures, there were analytical relations, and that we couldn’t change anything, for instance, in our sex life or our family life, without ruining our economy, our democracy, and so on. I think we have to get rid of this idea of an analytical or necessary link between ethics and other social or economic or political structures (Foucault, 1984: 350).

Bellow’s novel shows the loosening of the link between the truth of social and cultural ethics, on the one hand, and personal preferences, particularly manifested in Ravelstein’s personal erotic preferences, on the other. Chick’s aesthetic act becomes political in that his grotesque image of Ravelstein exposes the frailties of his society more than it addresses the ugliness of Ravelstein himself. In acknowledging and respecting the boundaries of social truth within the social context and at the same time violating it within the realms of Chick-Ravelstein’s private intersubjective space as

well as in Chick's aesthetic writing, the novel creates a liberal and secure intersubjective space wherein the truth of Ravelstein is publicly addressed.

Throughout his life, Ravelstein appears as a voluminous self in excessively permeating people's life, providing structure to their thoughts, feelings, and actions whereas his physical awkwardness is unformed. Chick declares his awareness of the massive influence of Ravelstein on his life: "His severity did me good. I didn't have it in me at my time of life to change, but it was an excellent thing, I thought to have my faults and failings pointed out by someone who cared about me" (Bellow, 2001: 98). Here, Chick singles out the key principle of aesthetic confession. To provide an external point of view to see what a friend is unable to see for himself with the intention to reform was what Ravelstein has been doing for Chick throughout his life. Ravelstein's death transforms Chick's negative conception of borderline. After Ravelstein's death, Chick undergoes a near-death experience. He acknowledges: "it was obvious that I was out of order" (Bellow, 2001: 204). Rosamund takes Chick to a bay so that he can recover his peace. There, Chick notes: "I was grateful for the bay. It gave us an enclosure. I am thankful for boundaries. I am fond of having the lines drawn around me" (Bellow, 2001: 185). Living without the boundaries of Ravelstein, Chick starts to imagine what Ravelstein would have expressed if he were there with him. These creative thoughts are also reflected in his dreams. Even though Chick could not stand Ravelstein's eccentric orders, he could not stand living without one either. He understands that with Ravelstein what he required was to be able to be flexible with the borders but not to lose them altogether—as the bay image.

The act of writing Ravelstein's biography has a dual and ironic function for Chick. Like the bay, his writing stands as a barrier as well as a connection between Chick's life and death: it is a threat to Chick's life on its completion (*Ravelstein* 14) and a protection from his death as an unfinished responsibility (221-222). Therefore, it takes Chick about six years to start writing Ravelstein's biography. It is in his deathbed in the hospital that Chick realizes that if it weren't for the idea of writing, he would never have survived the fatal infection:

I wouldn't die because I had things to do. Ravelstein expected me to make good on my promise to write the memoir he had commissioned. To keep my word, I'd have to live. Of course there was an obvious corollary: once the memoir was written, I lost my protection, and I became as expendable as anybody else (Bellow, 2001: 221-222).

Writing Ravelstein's biography endows Chick, in one sense, with the freedom from death. During his semi-conscious state, Chick dreams of Ravelstein and his mission to complete the biography, a dream which he believes was what brought him back to life. Michael Zuckert argues that the theme of commission is the dominant theme of the novel. Zuckert believes that the novel is not so much the biography of Ravelstein as it is the story of writing it—the ethical dilemmas that Chick has to confront and which he resolves in his writing.

The central theme of the novel is freedom. Bellow's novel employs humour in the presentation of the reality of freedom in relation to the discourse of confession. The novel presents confession as a discourse, capable of rescuing the individual from the

confinements of the inflexible cultural definitions of borders—providing the chance for the hero to think the unthinkable. Humour is presented in the way Chick reservedly and rather ambiguously accounts for and at times excludes details concerning Ravelstein's transgression from the social and cultural conceptions of morality.

Ravelstein presents Chick as the most dialogic of Bellow's heroes. Chick makes connections between his monologic and polyphonic truth as well as personality in his aesthetic writing. It is through the employment of humour that Chick conflates the public and the private modes of confession. Moreover, the movement from *Humboldt's Gift* to *Ravelstein* signifies the departure from the private and meditational style of confession to the written and public mode of truth-telling. In contrast to Charlie's freely associative, straightforward, and transgressive language in describing Humboldt, Chick exposes and at the same time modifies the reality of Ravelstein, by using delicate sense of humour. Furthermore, the bringing together of the public and the private truth makes it possible for the aesthetic relationship to link isolation, freedom, and grotesque creation in modern cultures. On this theme Ravelstein notes: "the challenge of modern freedom, or the combination of isolation and freedom which confronts you, is to make yourself up. The danger is that you may emerge from the process as a not-entirely-human creature" (Bellow, 2001: 132). Chick concludes the novel and the biography by doing Ravelstein the final justice: "You don't easily give up a creature like Ravelstein to death" (Bellow, 2001: 233).

Chick exposes and at the same time aesthetically modifies the reality of Ravelstein. The fact that the novel blends the public with the personal conception of truth and beauty is representative of the integration of aesthetic and ethical modes of reality as well as social and private values. Combining Ravelstein's political truth with Chick's aesthetic truth, the novel presents a more harmonious and comprehensive understanding of truth and beauty.

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Spiritual exercises and the aesthetic refinement of the moral self

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Introduction

Spiritual exercises which have been explicitly linked to philosophy have played a role in the formation of Western selves since early Greek culture. ‘Spiritual’ here denotes a concern with the entirety of one’s existence rather than a specifically religious concept, and this is not philosophy understood as confined to ‘academic’ purposes in a narrow sense, as much of our current philosophy is, but as, in the phrase of Pierre Hadot, the French historian of Hellenistic and Roman thought, ‘a way of life’¹. The aim of Greek philosophy was to transform the self, to orient the self and perception in a more accurate way towards what is real and of real value, and to develop character traits, the virtues, which enabled one to live accordingly. Whilst such a transformation required the acquisition of knowledge, it was recognised that the capacity of knowledge to effect deep change of character is only built up gradually and maintained through the regular *performance* of practices which rendered the prescribed way of seeing the world *habitual* for the philosopher. Just as repeated physical exercises transform the body, the regular practice of ‘spiritual’ exercises was intended as the means by which, as Hadot puts it, “the philosopher develops his strength of soul, modifies his inner climate, transforms his vision of the world, and, finally, his entire being.”²

Such exercises were not limited to the exercise of detached reason; Hadot comments that:

What’s interesting about the idea of spiritual exercises is precisely that it is not a matter of a purely rational consideration, but the putting in action of all kinds of means, intended to act upon one’s self. Imagination and affectivity play a capital role here: we must represent to ourselves in vivid colours the dangers of such-and-such a passion, and use striking formulations of ideas in order to exhort ourselves. We must also create habits, and fortify ourselves by preparing ourselves against hardships in advance.³

¹ See Pierre Hadot, ‘Philosophy as a Way of Life’, in *Philosophy as a Way of Life. Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, ed. by Arnold I. Davidson, trans. Michael Chase (Oxford and Cambridge MA: Blackwell, 1995), pp. 264-276.

² Pierre Hadot, ‘Spiritual Exercises’, in *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, pp. 81-125; ref. on p.102

³ From an interview with Michael Chase, ‘Postscript: An Interview with Pierre Hadot’, in *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, pp. 277-286; ref. on p. 284.

This form of what Hadot calls ‘psychagogy’⁴ affirms that imagination and emotion must go hand in hand with reason if we are to achieve wisdom. Emotion is recognized as a powerful motivating factor for action. Yet it is also understood that emotion is *reasonable*: emotion is a response to the world rooted in an understanding of the world, and therefore revisable.⁵ If our understanding of the world changes, so too, claimed classical philosophers, could our habitual emotional response to it. By using the imagination to present emotionally-charged situations to ourselves, we learn about how we understand the world. If this should be revised in order that we align ourselves better with the real order of things, as judged according to philosophical theory, we can work to instil more appropriate emotional habits by repeated imaginative exercises in which particular attachments or aversions are consciously viewed through the lens of the correct judgment.

These classical conceptions of the close relation between reason, imagination and emotion, and the spiritual exercises which embodied them – such as reading, meditation on particular themes, and the examination of conscience⁶ – extended to Roman and Christian culture. In contrast, much in the modern tradition of ethics has sidelined the role of imagination and emotion in forming the self. Emotion, particularly in the Kantian tradition, has often been seen as being beyond the reach of reason, a partial, unreliable guide to moral decision-making which must be suppressed in favour of impartial reason; imagination has had to play only a limited role, insofar as it is employed in judging whether a rational maxim can be universally applied.⁷ Furthermore, the role of performance and habit has also been downplayed in modern ethics: emphasis has been placed on the capacity of the will, in the moment of decision, to determine action, rather than on antecedent perception, gradually trained in cognitive habits, which informs that will.⁸

These various emphases in modern philosophy have sidelined the role of spiritual exercises in ethical formation. However, two contemporary philosophical perspectives, pragmatism and neo-Aristotelianism, allow us to see emotion and habit as part of reason, meaningful, and capable of being informed and corrected. In this paper, I want to suggest that two contemporary philosophers’ work, that of pragmatist philosopher of religion, Michael Raposa, on meditative disciplines, and that of neo-Aristotelian Martha C. Nussbaum on the role of emotions in moral life, can be fruitfully drawn together to gain a greater understanding of how spiritual disciplines might *effect* the transformation of the practitioner from a philosophical perspective,

⁴ Pierre Hadot, cited in ‘Introduction: Pierre Hadot and the Spiritual Phenomenon of Ancient Philosophy’, Arnold I. Davidson, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, pp. 1-45, ref. on p.21.

⁵ See also Martha C. Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994).

⁶ See Pierre Hadot, ‘Spiritual Exercises’ and ‘Ancient Spiritual Exercises and “Christian Philosophy”’, in *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, pp. 81-125; 126-144.

⁷ See Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, trans. H.J. Paton (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), especially pp. 89-91, Akad. pp. 421-423.

⁸ See Lawrence A. Blum, *Friendship, Altruism and Morality* (London, Boston and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), pp. 169-207.

and how performative and aesthetic disciplines might make a contribution to a contemporary, philosophically articulated vision of the moral life.

'Ritual Inquiry': Raposa's account of spiritual exercises

First, I want to outline Raposa's pragmatist analysis of ritual and spiritual exercises. Raposa argues that religious ritual in general, and spiritual exercises in particular, and, can be understood as providing a strategy for paying attention, one within which judgments are repeatedly tested and, if confirmed, strengthened to become habits and dispositions of thought which guide further inquiry.

Raposa's point of departure is the pragmatist conception of thought as a programme for action, and in particular Charles S. Peirce's theory of inquiry. In contrast to the sharp mind-body dualism of much modern philosophy, in which knowledge is mental representation of an external object, Pragmatism holds that our state of embodiment means that knowledge is constantly in process; our beliefs cannot be said to correspond to external objects *as such*, but instead are inductively-formed *habits* of thought, gained through the practice of inquiry, which generate possibilities of further inquiry and knowledge. Such beliefs, or cognitive habits, guide our inquiries into those aspects of the world that we do not yet know; they form the background according to which we judge what we encounter in the world. As Raposa summarises, "A // belief about X will function as a habit generating all sorts of expectations about how X will behave under certain circumstances, what qualities it will tend to display, what relationships it will be likely to establish, and so on".¹⁰

A further consequence of Pragmatism's linking of embodiment and thought so closely is that a belief is a "'rule' for action", a "'habit' of conduct", and its meaning is "displayed in tendencies to feel and act in certain ways, in general patterns of conduct".¹¹ This means that our most deeply-held, conduct-influencing beliefs are not shown through isolated actions or events, but in patterns of behaviour that are established over time. Conversely, this also means that by engaging in particular actions over time, we impress upon ourselves a certain belief or set of beliefs; as we will see, even if those beliefs are not held, or only loosely held to begin with, this can, to a greater or lesser extent, lead us ultimately to adopt those beliefs.

In order to develop such belief-habits, we must focus our attention on an element or elements of our world, abstracting them from the totality of events and objects in our environment. Repeated attention to these elements has two effects. By attending to the reasons that we hold a belief, we reinforce our perceptual habits – unless we have good reason to alter our view. At the same time, as those habits become entrenched by repeated engagement, and this evidence becomes redundant, these habits form a framework which, whilst no longer the focus of attention, allows thought to inquire

⁹ Michael Raposa, 'Ritual inquiry : the pragmatic logic of religious practice' in *Thinking Through Rituals : Philosophical Perspectives* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 113-127.

¹⁰ Michael Raposa, *Boredom and the Religious Imagination* (Charlottesville and London : University Press of Virginia, 1999), p. 145.

¹¹ Michael Raposa, 'Ritual inquiry', p. 114.

into other possible ramifications of these beliefs, and their connection with other aspects of the agent's world. Thus, as Raposa notes, these habits do not restrict us, but allow us greater scope for creative thought.¹²

Peirce sees the process of relating established inductive beliefs to other aspects of the world as involving abductive inference, the generation of hypotheses concerning an effect's cause. When we hypothesize that *X* is an entity belonging to a broader class of things *Y*, we reason abductively; we may then choose to confirm such a belief inductively. When we are engaged in abduction, we are engaged in a species of aesthetic contemplation. Our inductive inferences are, in Raposa's words, brought "into play";¹³ they function as rules of thought that frame our thinking about particulars, as we try out different possible relations between inductive rules and particulars. However, whilst such rules may guide thought in certain directions, they cannot determine exactly how particulars will relate to the rules. Indeed, if a particular object of thought is judged not to fit into the schema presented by an inductive rule, the inquirer may be brought to revise the rule in favour of a more consistent one. However, if the inductive belief-habit is capable of being successfully related to the particular, the general rule will be strengthened, having been shown to be consistent with a broader range experience. Once again, repeated association of a particular with a general rule results in an extension of the general inference; the particular's relation with the general rule becomes itself part of our habitual cognitive framework, which will guide further inquiry into the relations of particulars to general rules.

Now this process is not a purely rational one, if rationality is understood narrowly. Raposa stresses the fact that for Peirce, abduction is the logical form of emotion. For Peirce, emotions are intentional and cognitive: they are beliefs, albeit complex constellations of beliefs, *about* things; as Peirce writes, an emotion is "a sign or predicate of a thing".¹⁴ Peirce identifies the making of connections between particulars and general beliefs with the experience of emotion. This means that, in the on-going process of inquiry, the judgments which form particular emotions can also become habitual. Rather than being at the mercy of our emotions, we in fact can make certain emotional reactions part of our way of seeing the world through a deliberate process of attention and judgment.

Raposa identifies this interplay of inductive beliefs and abductive hypotheses, proposed by Peirce as the logic of scientific inquiry, with religious rituals, of which meditative spiritual disciplines might be seen to be a form. Rituals often use repeated incantations, prayers, or formulae to focus their practitioners' attention. At one level, this apparent redundancy can be seen to produce a calming effect, clearing mental 'space', perhaps stimulating little in the way of thought (indeed, this is the aim of some meditative disciplines). However, many ritual and spiritual disciplines do not simply aim to still the mind, but highlight a particular set of beliefs, which are intended to become habitual for the practitioner and to guide subsequent active

¹² Michael Raposa, *Boredom and the Religious Imagination*, p. 145.

¹³ Michael Raposa, 'Ritual Inquiry', p. 116.

¹⁴ Charles S. Peirce, cited in 'Ritual Inquiry', p. 120.

thought. Such beliefs are repeatedly imaginatively explored and tested, insofar as the practitioner is encouraged to relate accepted beliefs regarding religiously significant principles or figures and their actions to the practitioner's own life. The aim of such meditation is the gradual aligning of the practitioner's thoughts and feelings with those prescribed by the religious tradition; as Raposa argues, "The act of choosing deliberately the objects and the quality of one's attention in the present moment has a gentle but powerful influence (by means of a process of habit formation) over future versions of the self, gradually transforming beliefs and inclinations".¹⁵

A moral quality is very often tied to the religious significance of the emotions evoked here. Whilst Raposa does not explore this dimension to spiritual disciplines, such an analysis can be undertaken using an understanding of emotion as cognitive – of being integrally linked to judgment and knowledge – developed by Martha Nussbaum in the field of moral philosophy. Nussbaum's analysis also helps us to see how emotion, performatively trained, is of significance to contemporary moral theory.

'The intelligence of emotions'¹⁶: Nussbaum's account of emotion's role in moral life

Until relatively recently, moral philosophy has been dominated by a Kantian conception of emotions as unthinking forces, more associable with the body than the mind, unanswerable to reason, for which we cannot be held responsible. However, several contemporary philosophers, among them Martha Nussbaum, have argued that emotions must be viewed as evaluative judgments rather than physiological forces that assail us.¹⁷ Emotions are, for Nussbaum as for Peirce, intentional – they are *about* their objects, they are dependent on our seeing those objects in particular ways, and having usually complex beliefs about them.¹⁸ Our perception may be inaccurate – we may be afraid of spiders – but it, and the emotion that is embodied by it, potentially give us information about the world. Furthermore, that information is evaluative: emotions tell us of the value to the agent of something, of significance of that entity's role in the agent's life, or what Nussbaum terms the agent's 'eudaimonistic scheme', a characteristic which gives emotions their urgency.

This is of significance because, in the Kantian schema, which makes duty and obligation based on universally-applicable principles the sole determinants of moral action, it is difficult to see how we are to judge what principles to adopt, and when to

¹⁵ Michael Raposa, *Boredom and the Religious Imagination*, p. 119.

¹⁶ See Martha C. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought. The Intelligence of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

¹⁷ See also, for example, Lawrence A. Blum, *Friendship, Altruism and Morality*; Arne Johan Vetlesen, *Perception, Empathy and Judgment. An inquiry into the Preconditions of Moral Performance* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994); Justin Oakley, *Morality and the Emotions* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992).

¹⁸ My account of Nussbaum's position is taken predominantly from Martha Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, esp. Chapter One, pp. 19-88. For related arguments, see also her *Love's Knowledge. Essays on Philosophy and Literature* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

apply them. Kant's conception of the Categorical Imperative is not accompanied by a detailed conception of the goods that ought to be protected by such principles.¹⁹ Nussbaum argues for a developmental account of our emotional engagement with the world, one that provides a conception of these goods and our motivation for protecting and sustaining them.

Nussbaum's account maintains that the world is open to us to be valued and cared for because from our earliest infant experience, we form attachments to other human beings which lead us to acknowledge the independent existence of others as other selves. Out of this acknowledgment springs empathy, bound up with a recognition that others' weal and woe is similar to the agent's own. The judgment that a valued other is suffering in some way leads to the emotional reaction of concern, or compassion. Once we have established firm emotional frameworks and empathic relationships and with particular others, initially our care-givers in infancy (what Nussbaum calls 'background emotions',²⁰ and in Peircean terms, inductive belief-habits about these others' value to us and their own capacity for experience), we are capable of perceiving that further others, beyond our immediate sphere of attachment, are also susceptible to similar forms of weal and woe (an abductive inference which is embodied in what Nussbaum terms a 'situational emotion'²¹), and can judge that it may be consistent to extend our empathy and care.

As we develop, we also learn that concern, or compassion, is also more appropriate, in varying degrees, in some situations than others – if the other person is not responsible for their suffering, and if their suffering is not trivial, for example. Our judgment of particular cases again involves inductive and abductive inferences. Whilst our empathy and compassion may be blocked, by damaged early relationships which distort our attachments, or by a conviction, for some reason, that someone's suffering *is* deserved or trivial, this capacity for emotional response gives us an understanding of common human goods. Even if we are still to impose, with Kant, a demand for the universalizability of our moral maxims, such an understanding helps us to see what content these should have, and provides us with a less formal account of why we respect the other as a so-called 'end', and how we can fulfil this. Without it, we are only capable of perceiving situations as morally significant in the most formal of terms.

Nussbaum argues that the knowledge with which emotions provide us should be understood as having narrative form.²² Our attachments to others, and our judgments as to their condition, involve not simply perceptions of them in the abstract, as fellow

¹⁹ A common criticism of Kantian moral theory is that it does not attend closely enough to the role of perception in knowing which principles to apply, how and when, assuming that an agent motivated by duty alone is capable of perceiving this. See Martha Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, pp. 378-383, and for an extended account, Lawrence Blum, *Friendship, Altruism and Morality*, pp. 117-139.

²⁰ Martha Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, pp. 67-79.

²¹ *Ibid.* pp. 67-79.

²² See Martha Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, esp. pp. 238-248; See also Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge*.

rational selves, but a complex assessment of our relations with them, and of their circumstances, which cannot be understood without a temporal dimension. We need to imagine what events have led up to a situation in order to determine what the nature of another's condition and his or her responsibility for it is, and ultimately what our response to that condition should be. The more completely we can determine these factors (and of course, we can never do so entirely), the more accurate our judgment is likely to be. As we become more experienced in making moral judgments, some of our judgments will become established beliefs; persons in *X* particular situation are deserving of my concern, to some degree or other. Further reflection may help us to refine our judgment as to that degree, helping us, over time, to develop increasingly acute cognitive skills in moral deliberation. However, such reflection is unlikely to occur unless the first set of beliefs is relatively well-established; unless, in Peirce and Raposa's terms, the beliefs have become habits.

At this point, we can bring together the implications of Raposa's and Nussbaum's accounts. On Raposa's account, Peirce's understanding of inquiry shows us why repeated mental performance, in as disciplined a fashion as possible, plays a significant role in forming durable, character-defining beliefs. Emotions, generated by judgments, are constellations of such beliefs. This means that we are able to systematically develop and extend the scope of our emotions over time, through aesthetic play of judging particulars in the light of more general rules derived from experience; this performative experience is characteristic of spiritual exercises. Nussbaum's account of emotion shows us the importance of emotions in motivating us to act and care for others, and the ways that this can be done concretely. Her account emphasizes that the judgments which form emotions are narrative in character. I would argue that the repeated exploration of particular narratives, corresponds to Peirce's play of particulars and general rules.

I now offer a brief analysis of an aspect of some of the best known spiritual exercises in the Western tradition, those of St. Ignatius of Loyola, from the 16th century, to illustrate how these accounts might combined to identify historical resources for the cultivation of Nussbaum's compassionate concern for others.

The aesthetic formation of virtue: ignatian spiritual exercises

Moral formation is not the prime purpose of St. Ignatius's spiritual exercises; rather, the exercises' aim is to systematically prepare the practitioner, over a period of around thirty days, to serve God as faithfully as possible. Nonetheless, to achieve this, the retreatant is exhorted to 'overcome the self' and orient his or her life 'on the basis of a decision made in freedom from any ill-ordered attachment'.²³ The training of the emotions and their attachments is the object of Ignatius' disciplines, in order that one might order the "disposition of one's life"²⁴ appropriately, a process that involves the development of compassion, among other virtues.

²³ Ignatius of Loyola, *Personal Writings: Reminiscences, Spiritual Diary, Select Letters* including the text of *The Spiritual Exercises*, transl. Joseph A. Munitz and Philip Endean (London: Penguin, 1996), p. 283.

²⁴ *Ibid.* p. 283.

Preparatory prayers which invoke key aspects of Christian belief, and which remain constant throughout the diverse range of meditations, frame the exercises, reminding the retreatant of already inductively-established beliefs regarding the meaning and emotional significance of the retreatants' relationship with God, which then guide the retreatants' subsequent reflections. In the course of the meditations themselves, retreatants abduct in two ways. Firstly, they are asked to imagine narrative episodes from Christ's life, including those episodes in which Christ treats others compassionately. Firstly, in focusing the imagination on Christ's actions, retreatants come to appreciate more closely the loving nature of Christ, reaffirming the belief-habits already held regarding the value of Christ in their lives. However, the exercises may also challenge retreatants existing beliefs and emotional responses, or how these are applied. For example, Ignatius asks retreatants to meditate upon Christ's compassionate treatment of Mary Magdalene (Luke 7:36-50). Yet Mary Magdalene, as the story makes clear, is not an obvious candidate for compassion; the Pharisee criticizes Mary for her sinful behaviour. In meditating upon this passage, retreatants may become aware of their ambivalence with regard to the figure of Mary. They may be aware of beliefs that they themselves hold which would be likely to condemn Mary. However, knowing the Christ's compassion should guide their own responses, through following the Biblical narrative, and imagining *why* Christ makes the gesture He does, previously unthought-of possibilities for judging Mary with greater compassion may become apparent to retreatants.

A further dimension of morally-significant imaginative play may also occur to retreatants. Insofar as they intend to live out Christ's vocation of service to others as far as they are able, retreatants must not only meditate on what Christ did, but also in what ways they encounter similar situations in their own lives. Retreatants might reflect on those known to them in their own lives, and who they think are relatively undeserving of compassion. On reflecting on the reasons why Christ might have acted in the way He did towards one who apparently did not merit compassion according to common belief, they realise that in fact, other possible judgments, other ways of applying their inductively-held, moral beliefs, may be possible, and that it may be correct to show these persons a greater degree of compassion than previously thought appropriate.

By using these narratives to imagine different possibilities, different relations of particulars to general beliefs, retreatants systematically develop, extend, and refine the scope of their care and concern for others. Furthermore, these abductions are encouraged to become themselves inductively-held beliefs, as Ignatius directs retreatants to repeat the meditations numerous times, at different times in the day. What is established tentatively in a single meditation may form the basis of future imaginative work, developing the insight of retreatants through successive meditations.

Conclusion

I have argued that disciplined meditative practices, or spiritual exercises as they have generally been called in the West, have a role to play in forming moral capacities in individuals *if* we see habit-creating performance, and the imaginative play of reason and emotion as contributing to that process of formation. In general, these elements

have *not* been valued in the modern Western ethical tradition. Whilst my example of Ignatian spiritual exercises is clearly embedded in a religious tradition, the philosophical resources I have used to show the potential value of such exercises are not, nor do they hold the metaphysical commitments of classical exercises. Whether it is possible to draw out moral resources from other traditions without doing violence to them is not an issue I can address here. However, I hope to have shown that the processes involved in traditional exercises may well be understood in non-traditional terms, and may well have contemporary application. Whether spiritual exercises appropriate to a secular, detraditionalised culture can be devised, and what form they might take, remains an open question.

Artistic value: Its scope and limits (and a little something about sport).

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To avoid misunderstandings, I will begin (by way of preface) with three notes, commenting briefly on two topics — central to the key concepts of this conference — on which this presentation *does not* bear. First, I recognise the importance of (broadly) *aesthetic* consideration in many areas *outside* art (and perhaps outside the scope of philosophical aesthetics). For instance, I think we can understand how an appeal to considerations of elegance and simplicity might explain some physicists invoking *aesthetic* considerations in the selection of such-and-such, rather than so-and-so, as the number of *elementary particles* in one's theoryⁱ. Second, I recognise — and applaud — the number of places where instrumental or causal assessments are either tempered or (in the extreme case) replaced by aesthetic ones: where we see that grace, line, and such like, are important. But, amid my applause, a note of caution. For we should not lose sight of the moral from, say, football's 'Goal of the Month' competitions: namely, that one comes to a consideration of the *aesthetic* qualities of, in this instance, a purposive sport like footballⁱⁱ *only* once the purposive dimension is put aside. Less cryptically, that all we see in such competitions are *goals* — that aspect is granted before one comes to their aesthetic merits. And otherwise supremely elegant shots would — if deflected — not count. So one is never here *replacing* some purposive commentary with an aesthetic one. That point also reminds me (*third*) to acknowledge, up front, the crucial distinction (for the study of sport) between:

- (a) purposive sports like football, where the *manner* in which the (local) aim is achieved is not crucial, as long as it is within the rules (roughly). So that all goals count as one — goal-mouth scrambles as well as elegant volleys; and
- (b) aesthetic sports like gymnastic vaulting, where *what* one does cannot be separated from *how* one does it: the aim cannot be divorced from the specific manner of achieving it.

In both cases, these accounts of the nature of sports activities are reflected in the scoring (and hence in winning) in the respective sports. Now, I shall return to sport briefly (not *that* briefly) towards the end of this presentation: my point here, though, is to warn you that *neither* of these categories of sport would sustain a productive comparison between sport and art.

Putting these matters aside allows me to come to the first (of two) ‘theses’ (better, *slogans*ⁱⁱⁱ) of my presentation: it is to insist (as I’ve done elsewhere: McFee, 2005^{iv}) on a distinction between *the artistic* and *the aesthetic* — such that judgements and appreciations of *artworks* have a character *fundamentally* different from the judgements and appreciations of other (non-art) objects in which we take an aesthetic interest. And they do so even when those judgements and appreciations are made using the same forms of words (for instance, remarking on grace or beauty — or their opposites). To put my point bluntly: the so-called “artistic appreciation” of ice-dance or gymnastic vaulting is, at best, fundamentally different in kind from the appreciation of genuine artworks; where this means that we will mislead ourselves if we try to use the one to help us understand the other.

If we had a magic wand, one strategy would be to use the term “art” for one side of this contrast, and the term “aesthetic” for the other. And that *is* my general practice. But there are no such magic wands in English: either term is used on both sides of the distinction. So I am *drawing* this distinction in an artificial way, by using a different *word* on each side of it. That will help us to *see* the distinction. And — I claim — this distinction is fundamental to *my* understanding of the nature of art. Put another way, those who do not understand or who reject this distinction do not *really* understand art: if they were right, there *could be* no such thing as art, since art-objects would not be relevantly distinct from other aesthetic objects.

To see this, consider (again: McFee, 2005 p. 368) our appreciation of a great painting and of the wallpaper on the wall on which it hangs. We value (in a non-monetary way) *both* of them. But *if* we treat the artwork as just another cultural artefact — that is, if we explain our interest in it in whatever terms we use to explain our interest in the wallpaper — the idea of *art* has disappeared from our conceptual map. To bring out this point, consider two examples. First, example A, consider some art-object which is the result of multiple hands: in such a context, Peter Fuller (1980 p. 236: see also UD pp. 294-297) discussed the Parthenon frieze, and I shall follow him (bracketing any questions about its art-status). Now, suppose we explain cultural artefacts in economic terms: then we will say the same things about sculptor *Alpha* and about sculptor *Gamma* (they’d be “A” and “B”, but these are Greeks). For both *Alpha* and *Gamma* live, we can assume, in similar ideological and material conditions — they get the same wages, have broadly the same out-goings, broadly the same responsibilities, and so on. But even a full account of this kind *here* cannot explain why:

[s]ome [sculptors] ... depicted folds in robes or drapery through rigid slots, dug into the marble like someone furrowing cheese with a tea-spoon. [By contrast, others] ... worked their material in such a way that their representations seemed to have lightness, movement and translucence: the stone breathes and floats for them (Fuller, 1980 p. 236; UD p. 295).

Yet clearly what leads to contrasting one group of such sculptors with the other are just the sorts of thing that would crucial to the treating of the frieze *as an artwork*. My point is that an “art-shaped hole” (Fuller’s expression: 1980 p. 13) results from treating the sculptors — and, by implication, their products — in this ‘cultural

artefact' way: one can say everything about the products *except* (roughly) why one is, the other is not, *art*. So that is our first example (example A).

One comes to the same point — as a second case (example B) — when one recognises *literature* as inflected by preoccupations with (say) gender and identity: for that discussion can by-pass concerns with the works as *literature*. I recently heard such a case argued for the writings of C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien. The particular context of debate took them as authors of *children's fiction*; and that can be a revealing category here for us. For that indicates a *use* or a *target* for the fiction, even though it is extremely unclear what boundaries one would deploy to articulate *children's* fiction. Thus, for instance, *Treasure Island* is (or, anyway, was) widely read by the young — at least, it was widely given to them: but I cannot imagine Stevenson thought of it primarily in terms of that audience. In the same way, Lawrence Durrell's novel *White Eagles Over Serbia*^v — which Durrell imagined as one of a series of pot-boilers in the James Bond mold^{vi} — was treated by its publishers as 'for young persons'^{vii}. So the contours of *children's fiction* are unclear. But, dealing with the category, it seems helpful to contrast children's *fiction* with children's *literature*. Putting aside poems and plays, I take it that children's literature is (roughly) the *good* children's fiction. Then, one topic for both sub-categories would be *appropriateness* — if we concluded that (say) salacious sex-scenes or radically racist or sexist behaviour or language should not be the literary diet of the young, we would have these bases for sorting out *putative* works of children's fiction from those which succeeded as *children's* fiction. And no doubt similar contrasts based on age, and such like. Of course, there might be no such restrictions necessary — it was certainly because it lacked any kind of sexual edge that *White Eagles Over Serbia* was taken as appropriate for children. And that decision no doubt reflected the contemporary state of the pot-boiler. Further, any restriction would, of course, have to be justified. Yet children do offer a clear case where — in principle — paternalism is justifiable!

Moreover, what was under consideration here might — in a more sophisticated period — extend well beyond simple matters of content or characterisation. (Pretty quickly, for Lewis or Tolkien, we might come to their intrusive religious concerns: I see those of Lewis as *unacceptably* intrusive, those of Tolkien not — but, whether I am right or wrong, this is a discussion that *has a place* in the articulation of an [appropriate] *children's* fiction.)

These points show us, then, that *one* basis for commenting here would be a *literary* basis: that we need to regard these works as *other than* those love poems that (in *Mrs Dalloway*) Septimus Warren Smith sends to his beloved, the English teacher, "... which, ignoring the subject, she corrected in red ink ..." (Woolf [1925] 1964 p. 95). For such a concern to correct, say, the grammar does not recognise that *transfiguration* of the words and phrases which generates *artistic value*; and thereby literary merit. Thus *one* consideration here — although not necessarily an over-riding one — would be the *literary merit* of the books: and *literary merit* in this sense is an *artistic* category (in terms of the earlier comment).

Moreover, this context of such (in this case) *literary* concern is crucial to making sense of artworks *as art*. Thus, as Roger Scruton (1998/2000 p. 21) writes:

... in the nature of things, the arguments of a critic are only addressed to those who have sufficient reverence for literature; for only they will see the point of detailed study and moral investigation.

So there is a connection here to those who care about literary works and their values. Such a connection operates through the works themselves; through their meanings *as embodied*^{viii}.

But that connection is not always sustained. Thus, suppose the Harry Potter books of J. K. Rowling are badly written — as they are. That might be one reason why they could never count as children's *literature* (properly understood) and might even offer a reason to down-play their successes. For such a flaw (once granted) would be central to the novels *as novels*. Suppose, indeed, it were *guaranteed* that reading Rowling would render a high proportion of those readers unable to comprehend Jane Austen, or Tolstoi, or Flaubert, or Proust, or Durrell: in that case, would one encourage (or even permit^x) such reading? The answer is not clear^x. And that unclarity results from our need to do justice to the *artistic value* of the works thereby excluded. So a failure to give due weight to the category of *literature* here — in effect, to fail to distinguish the *artistic* in the novel from other cases^{xi} — leaves one with a strong likelihood of *mis-valuing* such works. And that is example B.

The discussion of these cases is designed to recognise both the importance and the pervasiveness of the artistic/aesthetic contrast (fits 'thesis' of the presentation). It also leads neatly into the presentation's second 'thesis': namely, one concerning the nature of artistic value. For one distinctive feature of the artistic — not in general shareable with the merely aesthetic — is (non-monetary) value. Again, I will proceed swiftly, by urging that artworks have a connection to what David Best^{xii} has called, provocatively, *life-issues* or *life situations*. And on my version, while this is a connection for *all* artworks, it operates *defeasibly*, granting that there may be *explicable* exceptions, but putting the burden of proof onto the objector. (I will exemplify these points shortly.)

Best (1978 p. 115) elaborates talk of "life issues" in terms of "... contemporary moral, social, political and emotional issues". But, as I shall suggest, there is a good *reason* why one cannot be more explicit here. Still, one point is fundamental — that these are values *for humans*, or for *human life*^{xiii}. In fact, this sort of broad connection to human valuing is to be found in other contexts: again, education is an example. Thus, discussing the schooldays of his son Tom, Squire Brown says:

Shall I tell him ... he's sent to school to make him a good scholar? Well, but he isn't sent to school for that — at any rate, not for that mainly. I don't care a straw for Greek participles, or the digamma, no more does his mother. What is he sent to school for? ... If he'll only turn out a brave, helpful, truth-telling Englishman, and a gentleman, and a Christian, that's all I want (Hughes [1857] 1971 pp. 85-86).

A *modernised* (that is, gender-free, secular and non-chauvinistic) version of this might still reflect an ideal of education. And rightly so, since it emphasises how the *intrinsic* value of education might make one a better person — but nothing in it concerns what is actually learned (that is, the *content*) nor transferable skills from education. As this case suggests, there are other life-issues contexts; consider, for instance, Orwell's story, from the Second World War, of the reaction of a German-hating journalist to a dead German soldier by the road, where someone had placed a bunch of lilacs on his chest — his feelings change. As Orwell puts it, “[i]t had brought home to him the meaning of war” (see UD p. 188). But this too is not brought about through an artwork. So something more is required to characterise *art's* life-issues connection. For an artwork must not merely *have* such a value or *make* such a connection (as a traffic report might): rather, as we saw, it must *embody* that connection. In fact, the combination of a *life-issues connection* and *embodiment* is crucial for art^{xiv}.

My views contrast with Best's at this point. For him:

... it is intrinsic to an artform that there should be the possibility of the expression of a conception of life issues (Best, 1985 p. 159; Best, 1992 p. 173).

That is, he takes this life-issues connection to be a “possibility” relating to “art forms” — as I said before, I take the connection of art to life-issues, defeasibly, to be an *actuality* applied to *artworks* (UD pp. 179-181). Thus my view is more powerful, in seeming to face more opportunities for refutation. Then I am obliged to explain apparent cases where the artwork has no such explicit or obvious connection to life-issues.

So, is such a thesis as mine (concerning the life-issues connection for all artworks) *defensible*? Clearly, we are considering *typical* cases. As Cavell (1979 p. 26) recognises, morality is not designed “... to evaluate the behaviour of monsters”. Yet how does the mere fact of a (vague) *connection* to life-issues manifest itself? Consonant with my claims, I cannot offer an exceptionless answer, only show the way by considering some cases in certain circumstances, to exemplify my general point.

So my thought is that, within my picture, I have all the intellectual resources to respond satisfactorily to any cases offered as counter-examples. Let us look to some: first, there are cases readily treated in my preferred way, since (in them) the life-issues connection is explicit (say, Picasso's *Guernica*; the war poems of Wilfred Owen); second, there are cases where — although no connection to life-issues is *explicit* — such a connection is in fact easily argued (for example, the Grand Canyon paintings of David Hockney which, with their variable viewpoints, might reflect the inter-relation of human and natural^{xv}); third, there are objects apparently lacking any such connection where, nonetheless, something in that direction can be said (for instance treating the Tracy Emin unmade bed as a *representation* of a bed, and then seeing the life and personality both portrayed and commented upon); fourth, and in the opposite direction, there are cases of art so (apparently) *abstract* that no life-issues

connection seems plausible (here I'd cite the painting of a personal favourite, Rothko). But then, as Wollheim's discussion of him shows, Rothko's work *can* be understood in terms of "... a form of suffering and sorrow, and somehow barely or fragilely contained" (Wollheim, 1973 p. 128) — and that suggests a life-issue connection^{xvi}; finally, some cases are understood as *in explicit contradiction* to such a life-issues connection — and here we recognize *either* (or both) the way that revolutionary ideas are understood by contrast with those against which they rebel (and hence in terms of them) *or* the force of recognized heads of exception, central to defeasibility^{xvii}.

Thus, my answer concerning the *nature of art* — in terms of the embodiment of life-issues (or life situations) — can *sound* lame because its critics assume something more specific (and more detailed) should be forthcoming. But, instead, I shall simply be explaining to them why that is impossible — because to search for such a resolution is to employ (or assume) the *metaphysical* uses of terms (compare PI §106^{xviii}) — and then using my methodological insights to elaborate that reply in the face of apparent counter-cases. And, since I recognise that the account will not be exceptionless, my defence of it assumes that fact.

So my two 'theses' are:

1. the pervasiveness of the distinction between the artistic and the aesthetic; and
2. that one distinctive feature of the artistic is its (non-monetary) value.

Taken together, these 'theses' emphasise the *importance*, for any discussion of the aesthetic (such as the one this conference provokes), of clearly recognising the distinctiveness of artistic value: that it is important and different.

My saying this *now* is motivated partly by two or three cases where that point *is* — or might be — missed. And so we return to *sport*. Further, making these points will allow me to restate *my* commitment to a set of ideas that David Best concluded clearly years ago (Best, 1974 in BJA = Best, 1978): namely, that *sport* (and similar) was not, and could not be, *art*. His reason, of course, was that sport could not have *artistic value* as I have spoken of it today. Elsewhere (McFee, 1998), I wrote of this both as a *genuine* topic in the philosophy of sport — an area I thought (then as now) to have few topics of its own — and as one resolved by Best's intervention. So, although I promised initially that this presentation would not be *about* sport as such, sport none-the-less provides some revealing cases.

By way of introduction, let me illustrate how an account of sport which (anyway) *purports* to come from philosophy might miss the emphasis I am offering. I take my example from Hayden Ramsey's recent (and terrible) book *Reclaiming Leisure: Art, Sport, Philosophy* (Ramsey, 2005). When Ramsey turns to sport — with philosophy (he says), "our major legacies from ancient Greece" (Ramsey, 2005 p. 147) — the conclusion is pessimistic: "[m]odern sport appears shabby: its primary values are those of assertiveness, acquisitiveness, reward, and status" (Ramsey, 2005 p. 148)^{xix}.

One positive force here, Ramsey says, is *art*. But he is concerned lest readers subscribe to the "rather snobbish view" (Ramsey, 2005 p. 191) that art should be *contrasted* with leisure, such that our spare time cannot be spent on both. In one way

he is right: my attending dance concerts can indeed be a leisure activity, despite (or as well as) being an engagement with artworks. But there is a deeper problem here, one our earlier discussion identified. For more than merely my *attendance* at the dance concert is required for engagement with the dances *as art* — in particular, there are demands on my understanding (to some degree) of dance in that style, since (without it) I will miss much that is crucial to the work *as dance*. But missing out *there* need not interfere with my pleasurable evening's leisure. For the (by now) familiar contrast between artistic and aesthetic will be crucial here. Ramsey must ask himself whether the relevant experience must be of (say) the dance *as art* — for clearly we can have enjoyable experiences (“fun”) even when this is not so. And neither answer can suit Ramsey. Either the difference between art and non-art objects (even primarily aesthetic ones, such as wallpaper) makes a difference to the *nature* of the experience, or only to its *quantity*: so am I getting something *different* from seeing the dance as art or only a stronger form of what I'd have got by not so regarding it? Unless the *nature* of the experience is different — that is, unless artworks offer experiences of a different nature (as I've been urging) — the argument for the importance of the arts will always be weak. For the arts cannot be *essential* if they are only one route (among many) to an end. But recreation and fun *are* reachable by other means. If we take these as art's primary outcomes, we can have no argument here.

On this point, then, Ramsey must either account for the value of art outside of his standard view, in “reflective leisure”, or concede that the arts have no special place. But either strategy will be damning to his position. For the second version undermines Ramsey's claim for the importance of art, while the first concedes that he has no *explanation* of that importance.

To return home, and clarify these points about the impossibility of artistic judgement of sport, let us glance again at three familiar cases here. And one of our lenses will be the contrast between purposive and aesthetic sports (as articulated previously). So, first, this emphasis on the distinctiveness of artistic value will explain the difference in our concern with dance as opposed to our concern with (say) gymnastics — that dance is an artform; that dance works and dance performances are artworks while gymnastic performances are not. Indeed, once we understand the artistic/aesthetic contrast as I have framed it, this point simply follows: even aesthetic sports, like gymnastic vaulting, necessarily lack artistic value.

Moreover, second, the concern with purposive sports is more obviously distinct from a concern with art, even when we take an aesthetic interest in those sporting events. For such an interest will always be peripheral to them. As I said earlier, elsewhere (McFee, 1986) I brought out this point by reminding us that the classic *aesthetification* of a purposive sport like football would be the ‘Goal of the Month’ competition: *there* the purposive element has disappeared completely, since these were all goals, and we did not *care* (even when we knew) whether the team won or lost. There, our concern was simply with grace, line, economy and such like: that is, with aesthetic qualities of the event. But, equally, this is a long way from a football match. Notice too that aesthetic appreciation here is always of the positive: noting the *ugliness* of a pass or the *clumsiness* of a save is not typically regarded as aesthetic consideration^{xx}.

Then, third, one might — as Best’s own interests led him to do — compare and contrast the performer in sport (the player) with the performer in art (say, the actor in a play). Again, *our* discussion must contrast performers in those areas where artistic judgement is *possible* with the other cases. For here too art-status is transformative. Roughly, the properties of *players* are properties of real people, those of *characters* are not — certainly not properties of the actors who play them (or not necessarily). Thus we mislead ourselves if we expect an actor from a television hospital drama to remove an appendix. Of course, someone might urge that, when the character’s face is slapped, it is the actor’s face that is smarting as he/she leaves the stage — so that the blow is a real blow. But that misses the point exactly. Jane Smith can say to Joe Bloggs, “You slapped me too hard”, but Desdemona cannot say that to Othello — not least because she is dead! If you do not see what is subsumed under a ‘suspension of disbelief’ idea, you do not understand drama: the case of WWW wrestling makes just that point, since it has no (real) players, and no (real) competition. Indeed, we might make the point by calling such wrestlers *actors* rather than *athletes*.

Dick Beardsmore^{xxi} makes a broadly similar point eloquently, applied to opera: he begins from Tolstoi’s description of an opera, which Tolstoi (1930 p. 78) reduces to “the greatest absurdity” by stressing:

... that people do not converse in such a manner as recitative, and do not place themselves at fixed distances in a quartet, waving their arms to express their emotions; ... with tin halberds and in slippers ... — all this is beyond the possibility of doubt.

But, in this, Tolstoi confuses the conventional features of the opera with the sorts of irrelevancies that a ‘willing suspension of disbelief’ should handle: the tin halberds and the slippers are really irrelevant — we cannot require steel halberds, for instance. But not all the features are like this. As Beardsmore (1972 p. 42) continues:

To complain that it is only in a theatre that “people converse in such a way as recitative” is as absurd as complaining that only in a chess game do people try to check-mate one another. For just as it is only given the traditions of chess that check-mating is even conceivable, so it is only given certain operatic and theatrical traditions that recitative can have the significance it does.

Tolstoi makes all the proceedings on the stage seem equally arbitrary. But this is not right. For, given the traditions of opera, the conversing in recitative in a certain opera could be *explained* — one could have *reasons* for artistic judgements in respect of it. And the playing of roles in theatrical works would be treated in a similar way.

Now perhaps there are places in sport — for instance, ‘sledging’ in cricket — where one does ‘play a role’ in sport: perhaps I think better of the percentage of the opposing batsman than I say. But this case is too arcane to offer much support: when we meet in the bar afterwards, I may say I was playing a role — but the role was *me* saying such-and-such although I did not believe it; so that the speaker was *me*. And what breaks the opponent’s leg is not, say, the “adversarial role” adopted: rather, it is the (genuine but sport-only) adversary; or, anyway, his leg. At the least, there will usually

be a clear distinction between actor and player^{xxii}, even if some players ‘put it on’, and some actors play themselves!

This outcome seems, though, partially a result of thinking from the perspective of the player or participant. After all, spectating is (and always was) the leisure activity for many, in relation to sport: only some played (say) cricket on the village green. Perhaps that suggests a discussion of the place, within (especially) elite sport, of spectators: what exactly is their role? Certainly such sport seems to *assume* spectators. Hence it might be urged that there is a point here, visible from the spectator’s perspective: that the shaping of sport, through its rules and rule changes, is frequently aimed at making a better spectacle — suppose this is true. To make this relevant at the level of sporting events themselves (rather than just our consumption of them) — that is, to make this goal for sport have the powerful effect required of it — one would need an account that made this change *fundamental*, one to the *nature* of the sport at issue. But what reason have we to believe *that*? To change the rules so as to facilitate spectator interest is one thing: to see that as revealing about the sport itself is another. It would clearly be football (soccer) with or without the audience: hence the audience cannot be a fundamental requirement in this way. Or, if it is, a lot more needs saying. Furthermore, the implied restriction to elite sport seems misplaced. For that is not the only arena for *the real* sport (say, football). Of course, there may be variation in the precise way in which the rules apply to football in the park with one’s friends (say, a modified handball rule, to prevent long chases) or in the *degree* of physical challenge (the mother may not be physically challenged in the game in which her young daughters are; or the reverse). But these are still football^{xxiii}. To imagine the elite sport as somehow different *in kind* is just a Platonising idealisation.

To conclude, I will mention four of five misplaced claims that might be offered in defence of an art-sport connection (roughly, urging sport is art because it is *like* art in these [important] ways); I will treat each briefly:

1. A claim to the *significance* of sport (usually, of this or that match/game): its cultural importance as in this place, or at this time, or between these participants.
One reply is that a parallel case for art (say, Picasso’s *Guernica*) has *that* significance too; but that leaves untouched the question of its *artistic* value.
2. Basically versions of 1. (above): ‘Art has an author’ — well, so does this sporting contest/event — say, Pele. Or, on another version, ‘art has a subject matter’ — well, so does sport: it is ‘about’ national (or town) pride.
But these initial claims are both *literally* true of at least some artworks (and the one about authorship is true of almost all); at best, the corresponding ones are only *metaphorically* true of *some* sport. For instance, the sporting event itself does not depend on that pride. So there is no argument here, but only an equivocation^{xxiv}.

3. 'Sport, like art, has a structure'. But this is a trivial claim — at one level almost anything/everything has a structure of some sort! What sport has, importantly, is *rules*: on some occasions (the rules in the constitutive uses), they explain what *action* sportsplayers perform; on other occasions (the rules in their regulative uses), they show what is permissible or 'legal' within sport. For art, there is no 'legal' in this sense (although that has been denied)^{xxv}.
4. 'Sport, like art, is a subject of aesthetic appreciation'.
Seen one way, this is false — "like" is mistaken, since one is (and the other is not) *artistic* appreciation. And it is misleading even about sport: purposive sports are subjects of aesthetic appreciation in ways different (and less important) than the ways in which aesthetic sports are.

So none of these offers a reasonable basis for aligning sport with art (or vice versa). And that is explained partly by their failures to grant the transformative effect of art-status, and hence to deliver *artistic value*.

Finally, my points in this presentation concern the nature and importance of artistic value: by showing how these features are not available, even in principle, in another culturally-valued form — namely, sport — I have both elaborated that conception of the artistic and explored one feature of the appreciation of (some) sport.

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Endnotes

ⁱ Indeed, such a thought might be enshrined in Thomas Kuhn’s account of theory-choice in science: see Kuhn, 1977 pp. 323-325.

ⁱⁱ See Best, 1978 pp. 104-105; McFee, 2004 pp. 87-92 (cited as “SRV”).

ⁱⁱⁱ These are better thought of as *slogans* — as Wittgenstein recognised: see McFee, 2001 pp. 111-113.

^{iv} I have insisted on this distinction in a number of places, including McFee, 1992 pp. 42-44 (cited as “UD” with page numbers). But its clearest articulation is McFee, 2005.

^v Durrell, 1957 (“for young readers” — ‘blurb’ on inside cover).

^{vi} See McNiven, 1998 p. 406. (also p. 445: “Larry was considering writing a series of twelve thrillers”)

^{vii} McNiven, 1998 p. 441: the publisher’s suggestion to revise it as “an adventure story for older boys (and girls)”.

^{viii} Thus Danto has it (roughly) right: not just the value, but the embodiment of the value in the work. (In part, this will explain why, say, a treatise necessarily lacks this kind of value.)

^{ix} Suppose that — if the Harry Potter books get more children of a certain age *reading* — they do so in ways that will make problematic those children’s mastery of the language of literature, as manifest in (say) Jane Austen. The big difficulty is whether to prefer children voluntarily reading poorly written texts — such as Rowling’s works — to their not reading at all. It is not *obvious* that the first is to be preferred, since some bad habits from youth can never (or hardly ever) be broken.

^x And reading is fundamental to the ability to write one’s own sentences.

^{xi} And the choice is not, ‘Booker Prize or bonkbuster?’.

^{xii} The one version of the slogan is quoted before (from Best, 1985 p. 159; Best, 1992 p. 173): on another: It is distinctive of any art form that its conventions allow for the possibility of the expression of a conception of life situations. (Best, 1978 p. 115)

^{xiii} Not all of them will be moral, of course, although some might. Certainly we can sometimes use the case of a *moral* implication of an artwork as an example.

^{xiv} Thus Danto (1997 p. 195) writes: To be a work of art is to be (i) *about* something and (ii) to *embody its meaning*.

^{xv} By contrast, viewing the Grand Canyon itself may make me aware of the small scale of human history. But this is an *inference* I might draw, not one the landscape *prescribes* for me (see Gaut, 1998 p. 192). For the lack of intentionality for the *real* landscape here precludes its having *direction* of this sort. In comparison, (say) the *landscape painting* is more than merely a (literal) ‘window on to the world’: rather, the transformative effect of art-status is recognised. Since such things as *these* count as ‘life-issues’, the ‘threat’ posed to the integrity of art by the necessity of a ‘life-issues’ connection is lessened.

^{xvi} To see how similar claims might be urged for (some) musical works, compare McFee, 1997.

^{xvii} UD pp. 61-63; SRV pp. 124; Baker, 1977.

^{xviii} Throughout, standard abbreviations for the works of Wittgenstein are used: PI — Wittgenstein, 1953.

^{xix} In fact, Ramsey’s topics in this book seem more like a catalogue of ‘some issues philosophy might address’ (although without taking seriously the rule-governed character of sport): a discussion of sport and ‘religion’ concludes (obviously) that there is no connection although sport may “... still be a stimulus to ethical thought, behaviour and rhetoric for many people” (Ramsey, 2005 p. 154), and the discussion of doping reflects Ramsey’s prejudice against, and ignorance of, modern music — aiming to show, by analogy, that drug-fuelled sport is bad sport, he comments, “[s]ynthesisers and electric guitars do make music: just not very good or original music” (Ramsey, 2005 p. 155). He both has again forgotten that most music made at any time is ‘not very good’, and also cannot see that fingering of electric guitars is like that of, say, the mandolin. And there is a discussion of the relation of sport to character development, which begins “[i]t is a commonplace that sport builds character” (Ramsey, 2005 p. 162). Yet such a view is obviously false, if this is demonstrated by counter-examples: the successful sportsperson who lacks such character (supply your own examples). So, once again, we have a peculiar diet of examples, with contrasts not drawn between different cases.

^{xx} For a classic ugly event: the damage to Joe Theismann’s leg, in 1985. For some more detail, see *LA Times Book Review*, October 8th, 2006 p. R8.

^{xxi} In Beardsmore, 1972 pp. 41-42: UD pp. 68-69.

^{xxii} NB “he’s a character”, said of some sports-player — this too is *he himself* being that way: it may be ‘put on’, but the case of someone with a ‘public face’ different from his/her private one is quite different from that of an actor playing a part, typically with a name, in a drama, etc. And we recognise that when we *don’t* ask the TV doctor to remove our appendix!

^{xxiii} At least, this is the right answer for *most* purposes, or on *most* circumstances: SRV pp. 4-5; pp. 41-42.

^{xxiv} The considerations here return us, in part, to Best’s claim that art, unlike sport, can have a subject matter — and Best illustrates it with cases where *sport* is the subject matter in, say, some sculpture. But this specificity is missing if one is struck by the idea that ‘meaning is sometimes to be found at a high level of abstraction and generality’. Quite: but “meaning” in this loose sense is not the topic. Some artworks, such as plays and novels, have a subject-matter in the sense of something depicted or something discussed. Neither of these ideas makes any sense for sport. (Of course, since the ideas also have no unproblematic use for some artworks, the point here is not strong — nor does Best suppose it is!)

^{xxv} Clearly, we need very much more than *likened* to get some philosophical conclusion: the rules of sport do indeed ‘set confines’, but the sense in which these are really ‘similar to those of a script’ needs a lot more elaboration. For instance, the leeway a script provides is radically different than the constraint within a sport, where the rules determine what I may do (legally). For in the play, there is no ‘legally’.

Art, sport and aesthetics.

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Sport has been a subject for visual artists from the representation of athletes on Greek vases to contemporary public sculpture. For example, with regard to the latter, The Spirit of Sport is a recently completed piece of public art dedicated to the sporting community of the northern UK town of Bolton. A 30 meters high stainless steel structure, it is covered with the images of 900 people who have contributed to the sporting life of the town, from high profile internationally known professionals to local players, organisers and enthusiasts. Other aspects of sport that are perhaps of more direct aesthetic interest to artists than sporting narrative alone, include the exploration of the visual dynamics of human movement, sport's multi-sensory presence as a constructed spectacle, the imposing scale of its many environments and also the visual rhetoric and stylization of its equipment and apparel. Photography as an art form has also played an important role in the aesthetic imagery of sport, from today's sports advertising to those earlier examples highlighted by Kühnst (2004), which with their aestheticisation of the naked sporting physique can be problematic with their invitation to the gendered gaze and their political sub texts.

The relationship between visual art and sport is well documented, for example by Kühnst's cultural history of sport (Kühnst,1996), while the sporting concerns of modern art are exemplified in Art et Sport, the catalogue and book of an international exhibition held in 1984 at the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Mons in Belgium (Becker, Kupélian, Lachowsky et al.,1984). Masterson (1974) provides several examples of the particular sporting interests of some of the well known modern artists of the impressionist and post-impressionist era, for example Pissarro and cricket, Vlaminck and cycling, and Rousseau and football. Commenting on his painting, The Football Players, Masterson (*ibid*: 76) highlights Rousseau's expressive and aesthetic perception in his depiction of rugby football:

Painted in 1908, his interpretation of the game is attractively naïve as his technique. His players leap like dancers. But footballers can also be aggressive and, to a man of Rousseau's timidity, their ferocity might have been reminiscent of the tiger in whose stripes the players are clad. They move in an atmosphere of stillness. As they float in the air their well-lit bodies cast no shadows and, by having no firm location on the ground, a kind of abstraction, or purity of prolonged stillness, is achieved in the picture.

Masterson also notes that the Neo-Impressionists had particular interests in cycle races, running, and tennis and that these sports became such popular subjects during the last two decades of the 19th century that in Paris 'an exhibition entitled Sport in

Art was mounted in the Georges Petit Gallery in 1885, just one year before the eighth, and last Impressionist exhibition' (*ibid*: 72).

Art exhibitions featuring sporting themes have often been held in association with major sporting events and festivals, particularly during the latter half of the 20th century, and Masterson notes some key examples such as the 1963 exhibition, Physical Culture and Sport in the Fine Arts, which featured 600 works and ran concurrently with the Sparakiade sports festival in Moscow. More recent examples of exhibitions that have explored the relationship between contemporary art and sport include Fair Game: Art and Sport, held in 2003 at the National Gallery Melbourne Australia, and Sportivement Votre, held in Chamarande, France in 2004. Interest in contemporary art and its relationship to sport is particularly strong in Germany and towards the end of 2005 the German department of culture promoted Rundlederwelten: Fussball Kunst, an exhibition of art related to football held in Berlin, as a cultural contribution to the 2006 World Cup. Major contemporary art exhibitions related to sport were also held during 2006 in Nuremberg , (Das Grosse Rasenstück Zeittgenossische Kunst im Offenlichen Raum) and also in Berlin, (Heimspiel: Stadort-Sport-Spektakel). All three exhibitions were featured and reviewed in editions of the art magazine, Kunstsforum International, which during recent years has contained many features on art and sport, including a special edition in 2004. The art magazine ART: das Kunstmagazin, also reviewed the 2005 world football cup exhibition, while the magazine Kunste und Kirche has also featured articles on contemporary artists whose practice have included works on sport related themes.

The Olympic Games itself has an historical association with the arts, which were enthusiastically promoted by De Coubertin in the founding of the modern Olympic movement. Durry (1986) reviews De Coubertin's interest in the arts and his views on aesthetics, in which he regarded sport as producing beauty as 'living sculpture'. The arts generally continue to be a feature of the Olympic program, and for example Britain's plans for 2012 include a major arts and cultural festival, which has been heralded by Tessa Jowell (2007), the Government's cultural minister, 'as one that would be led by artists and communities and cultural organisations, but engaging with and inspired by the Olympic ideal as expressed by Courbertin and by the Ancient Greeks'.

Many sporting clubs and teams have also embraced the arts, a notable example being Barcelona FC, whose stadium environment contains several modernist sculptures on football, while the works of artists, including such as Miro, are featured in artefacts, illustrations and posters within the club's extensive museum and gallery. Two UK examples of recent involvement in the arts include the cultural programme of the Great North Run in the North East of England and the beginnings of an arts programme for Leeds Rugby. Recent commissions within the GNR cultural programme include The Running Line a photographic work composed of 139, 000 donated photographs of the 2006 BUPA Great North Run,(which at 13.1 miles long is the same length of the race itself), an animated film of runner's silhouettes with a soundtrack based on interviews of participants created by media artist Suki Best, and a piece of music, 50,000 Pairs of Feet Can't Be Wrong, composed by Michael

Nyman, whose music includes the soundtrack to the Oscar winning film, The Piano. At Leeds, a piece of orchestral music, Hold On, by the composer Carl Davis was commissioned by Leeds City Council's music officer in 2005 and sponsored by Leeds Metropolitan University to celebrate the Leeds Rhinos team winning the world rugby league championship. The commission was part of a developing arts strategy for the Leeds Rugby Foundation (Sandle 2005), the educational and community charity of Leeds Rugby, a sports organisation that uniquely concerns both rugby codes. (Scowcroft (2001) documents several notable examples of musical works related to sport, while within popular culture Tour de France, by the influential German band Kraftwerk, utilised their distinctive electronic sound in homage to Europe's premier cycle race). However, while sport has featured in many other art forms, including film, dance and drama, our present concern is to identify some aesthetic issues from a consideration of the Carl Davis musical work and of visual art.

Davis' seven minute anthem to Leeds Rhinos contains musical phrases and passages that can be described in terms that emphasise their formal temporal, spatial and auditory qualities, in much the same way that formal qualities of line, form, spatial configuration, scale and colour can be discriminated and perceived within a visual work of art. Such sensory discriminations can be further categorised within aesthetic perception in terms of their expressive qualities. For present purposes it is not necessary to explore the mechanisms of such perceptual processes, nor the extent to which they may be influenced by cultural and contextual variables, but notwithstanding such, it can be suggested that within Davis' music there are examples of expressive qualities that can be related to our perceptual experience of a sporting event such as rugby. For example, early on in Hold On there is a loud strong and imposing drum beat and forceful brass phrases, while elsewhere there are notes that move quickly dashing though temporal space that seem to clash or confront each other. Towards the end of the music there is a build up to a climactic finish within ascension and the striving of musical phrases that eventually come together with a fulsome and harmonious melodic unity. Some parts of the music can be perceived expressively as powerful, strong, assertive and resistant, while other phases as energetic, darting, light-footed, and acrobatic. The composition's climax can be perceived as triumphant, uplifting and joyful. Throughout the music Davis also repeatedly uses in various forms a short musical motif, based on the Rhino fans' musical chant of 'We're Leeds Rhinos; we're Leeds Rhinos', which locates the music within its sporting context.

This is not to suggest that listening to Hold On without any contextual clues, a listener will instantly identify it as depicting and expressing the experience of perceiving a rugby league match involving the Leeds Rhinos, but clearly Davis has tried to capture something of his response to the physical and movement qualities of a competitive team sport, and one that for the supporters ends in a victorious and a joyous climax. For example in his sleeve notes to the CD of Hold On, Davis (2005) refers to sections of the music as 'an energetic opening (the advancing [opposing] lines); a dissonant aggressive section (the five tackles);a lyric theme (the 'try') and a further reprise of the opening hymn (the 'conversion')'. His concern is not just to recreate the formal sensory qualities that can be perceived in a rugby game (such as tempo and intensity) but also their expressive qualities (such as fastness and strength) and their interactions

and changing patterns. Just as these can be intrinsically part of our aesthetic experience of music, clearly for Davis they are also part of an aesthetic response to encountering, experiencing and internalising such a sporting event. It could be argued that the expressive aspects of Hold On are not simply located in the aesthetic qualities of the music as such, but in the aesthetic qualities of the experience it is intended to celebrate.

That sport can be the subject of art does not necessarily give sport the status of art, a relationship that has been the subject of much previous academic debate, for example Arnold (1990), Best (1978, 1980, 1982) and Reid (1970, 1980). However, artists' concerns for not only *depicting* sport, but *expressing* sporting subjects as qualities of perceptual engagement (experienced as presence and / or as reminiscence) is pertinent to a consideration of the ways in which sport, at least, might be considered as an aesthetic experience. As Lowe (1971:15) states:

Whether there is a difference between the "aesthetic" experienced in response to the art-form representing sport and the "aesthetic" experienced in response to the sport performance raises the kind of question that directs attention to the aesthetics of sport.

Elsewhere, in an early contribution to both the psychology of, and the aesthetics of human movement, I made a distinction among three types of movement, categorised as *instrumental*, *quantitative* and *qualitative*, and suggested that it was within the perceptual processes of the latter, which included subcategories such as expressive movement, that the aesthetic was located (Sandle,1972). That some aspects of sport can be perceived qualitatively and expressively within a psychological process of both sensory and cognitive discrimination is exemplified by Curl (1980) in his description of the performance of Ludmilla Tourisheva's gold medal floor exercise in the 1972 Munich Olympics. Cited by Arnold (1990:167) as an instance of the possibility of aesthetic perception in gymnastics, Curl, while highlighting Tourisheva's technical skill states that it was also possible to describe Tourisheva's performance 'qualitatively', which he does as follows:

Of qualities of form, she displayed poise, controlled balance, cleanness of line, and each in turn- an arched, curled, twisted and extended torso;..... Her footwork had a precision at times forceful and firm and yet again dainty with impeccably shaped and patterned placing. Of sensory qualities there were combined in this sequence a softness of movement, a sharp crispness, and again a great delicacy together with smoothness, flowing continuity, resilience and elasticity. Of intensity qualities there were evidenced: a disguised power or else an effortlessness in flight ... Her sequence was above all expressive with a medley of qualities from nonchalance, playful arrogance and pride to coyness, piquancy and at times cool dignity.

Curl's description, which in its fuller form might be regarded as problematically indicative of sensuous consumption, nonetheless clearly indicates discriminations of both formal visual qualities and also of their sensory and expressive characteristics within his perception of this particular sporting act. He also refers to 'dramatic' qualities within Tourisheva's performance, which 'emerged with tension, climax and resolution'.

Clearly there are also such dramatic qualities in Davis' Hold On, which I have suggested ends on an uplifting, joyous and unifying climax. In this respect it could be argued that the very competitive purpose of sports, including those 'purposive' sports not traditionally designated as aesthetic, (see below), provides for a source of aesthetic experience by means of such dramatic qualities. Kaelin (1979:24-25) maintains that 'controlled violence in which the opponent, is not destroyed, but only defeated, and yet somehow morally edified – is the essence of competitive sport', and goes on to state that;

It reaches its aesthetic heights when the victor narrowly surpasses a worthy opponent. The game itself considered as an aesthetic object is perceived as a tense experience in which pressure is built up from moment to moment, sustained through continuous opposition, until the climax of victory or defeat. The closer this climax occurs to the end of the game, the stronger is our feeling of its qualitative uniqueness. Sudden death play-offs – and perhaps extra inning games – are as close as a sport may come to achieving this aesthetic ideal.

In these respects the dramatic climax at the finish of a game, as expressed by Davis in Hold On, is an aesthetic end in itself inextricably linked to the 'competitive' purpose of sport, (which can also apply not only for teams but also for an individual striving to better a previous performance). While for Davis such is expressed triumphantly, defeat as Kaelin implies is also the outcome of a climactic process. That negation might contribute to the game as an aesthetic experience is suggested by Kupfer in his analysis of acts of negation in sport, which he characterises as follows (Kupfer, 2001: 28):

Acts of negation give the appearance of having little of the intricacy, interaction, or incremental quality of the rest of the play. This is why aesthetic terms such as stark, pure, unequivocal, absolute, and overwhelming come so readily to mind to describe the ace, home run, clean spike and knockout.

(To which we might reasonably add the decisiveness of the final whistle, especially where a resolution of defeat is achieved by a last minute or extra time score). However, while Kupfer identifies acts of negation as the location for particular expressive and aesthetically experienced qualities within a game or sporting event as appearing to be self-referential ends in themselves, nonetheless it might be expected that such would be further internalised and mediated by their contribution to the final outcome within the game's overall climactic resolution. Both victory (affirmation) and defeat (negation) as aesthetic phenomena are dependent on the same processes of tension and climactic resolution, and as Kaelin suggests the closer to a game's resolution the more keenly felt such events might be experienced aesthetically (as a 'beautiful' triumph for some and as 'abject' defeat for others).

The concept of the aesthetic as used by Kaelin and Kupfer goes beyond considerations of beauty, and is broader than that which has traditionally concerned discourse around sport, its aesthetic and its relationship to art, - for example Best's seminal work on the subject. Best was highly critical of those who claimed that because certain human activities could be characterised as objects of aesthetic appreciation, they could be regarded as artistic, and in making the distinction between

aesthetics and art, Best (1980: 69) is quite adamant that while some sports can be in part aesthetic, 'no sport is an art form'. Central to his view was the way he categorised sports as 'purposive' or aesthetic, i.e. 'non-purposive'. In Best's terms, purposive sports are those enacted in order to achieve a demonstrable end, such as scoring goals, running faster and so on. In such sports the manner or means to that end would not normally be considered as the main purpose of the sport. As Best states (*ibid*: 70):

The great majority of sports are what I call purposive, and in these aesthetic considerations are normally incidental. This category would include all codes of football, hockey, track and field events, baseball, and tennis. The distinguishing characteristic of each of these sports is that its purpose can be specified independently of the manner of achieving it, as long as it conforms to the rules or norms – for example scoring a goal and clearing the bar.

The distinction he argued was a logical one and that the activity of hockey, for example, would still be hockey even if 'there were *never* a concern for the aesthetic', while on the other hand such an activity 'would not count as hockey if no one ever tried to score a goal'. In such sports, it is such an independently specifiable purpose, which he argues '*defines* its character'. On the other hand, Best accepted that there were sports or sporting activities that were not essentially purposive in this sense, and these (non-purposive) sports he regarded as aesthetic 'in which the aim cannot intelligibly be specified independently of the manner of achieving it', and indeed that the purpose of such activity, could be 'specified *only* in terms of the aesthetic manner of achieving it' (*ibid*: 71). Such aesthetic sports are a minority and Best exemplified these as including such as gymnastics, diving, skating, synchronized swimming, trampolining and surfing. Within such sports, 'the manner of achieving' as an end in itself is fundamental to assessments of their success, where the aesthetic and stylistic qualities of their execution are often formally scored, as in ice skating and diving.

Best's ideas and his defining characteristics of two kinds of sporting activity as purposive and aesthetic have been enduringly influential. However, while Best does not deny that aesthetic aspects can also happen in purposive sports, he regards their presence in such as incidental, as they are not a defining characteristic for the experience of such. However, their status as 'incidental' becomes problematic if the categorical nature of the purposive - aesthetic distinction is regarded as the polarisation of a continuum, with some sports being more or less purposive, or more or less aesthetic than others (compare cricket to football, for example). Further, the definition of what constitutes the aesthetic nature of non-purposive sports, in Best's formulation, tends to narrow the aesthetic possibilities for sport within both categories. In aesthetic sports it privileges style and technique as the location for the aesthetic, and within the purposive sports the aesthetic is restricted to such as the occasional graceful or pleasing movement within such as a pass, stroke or a moment of team play. Best's uncompromising formulation it can be argued, restricts, or even denies, the opportunity for other considerations of aesthetic experience and engagement within sports, such as its presence as aesthetic spectacle or those pertaining to a more phenomenological discourse. Wright (2003: 87 - 88), for

example, sees an inevitable link between ‘the manner of achieving’ and technical efficiency and argues that:

The importance of the aesthetic experience...cuts across the non-purposive and purposive distinction. In fact, it may be misleading to pay such close attention to the so-called non purposive and “aesthetic sports”..... Focusing on those kinds of sports may make it look as if, providing those criteria are fulfilled; the performance will necessarily have aesthetic value. However, these “aesthetic criteria” could be easily re-described in purely technical language..... In gymnastics, what counts is how well the movements are performed, and these could be explained without reference to aesthetic goodness but rather in terms of how close the movement comes to technical perfection. The movements are mostly pre-set. Even where the move is new, it is still assessed on gymnastic criteria. However, appreciating the aesthetic is not simply a question of knowing and judging that certain criteria have been fulfilled. It is the experience that counts over and above what these criteria might be....Technical criteria are indeed relevant to our aesthetic appreciation, but they do not in any sense guarantee it.

Hyland (1990:103-114) reviews some of the key issues in the debates that centred around Best’s conception of the relationship between sport and art, and which still resonate in more contemporary aesthetic discourse. Platchias (2003), for example, confronts a number of Best’s arguments and challenges his distinction between purposive and aesthetic sports, particularly with regard to the relationship between means and ends. He argues that the aesthetic can reside within all sports, even, and in some respects particularly so, within the purposive sports. Platchias concludes his analysis by identifying what he conceives as bringing about aesthetic experience and aesthetic pleasure to sporting spectators and performers, a process that centres upon those actions of the latter that lead to a desirable successful end or outcome. This successful outcome is not necessarily such as scoring a goal but is also regarded by Platchias as moments of achievements within play, such as a successfully side-stepping an opponent. Such moments, he argues, are achieved by a process of artistic expression when the ‘athlete’ perceives a desirable end and instantiates a ‘winning pattern’ (i.e. the employment of a winning strategy or a way of moving on the play field or a particular sequence of related actions), and one, which Platchias (*ibid*: 13) argues ‘the athlete’s aesthetic considerations “dictate” him to employ in getting to this end’.

What enables him to “discern” and employ the “pattern” might be called “aesthetic ideas” in Kant’s terminology. These aesthetic ideas consist in the “free play of cognitive faculties” – that is, imagination and understanding. Thus the instantiation of a “pattern” that the “free play of the powers of cognition” enable him to discern, in terms of the aesthetic experience itself, is what arouses the aesthetic contemplation or what gives aesthetic pleasure (and therefore without thereby being, or needed, any intention of the athlete to give this pleasure).

Platchias thus considers the aesthetic considerations that enable athletes to discern the ‘winning pattern’ as ‘pure artistic creation’ and instances of ‘artistic expression’ (*ibid*: 14). This aesthetic process, he asserts, can take place within sports normally classified in Best’s terms as purposive or non-aesthetic, and even more so as the aesthetics lies in the instantiation of the “winning pattern”, central to their very purpose.

Another contemporary discussion, in part both drawing upon and critiquing Best, is provided by Inglis and Hughson (2000) in a paper entitled, The Beautiful Game and the Proto-Aesthetics of the Everyday. While their paper has a broader concern to critique the postmodern notion that there has been a conflation of the aesthetic and the practical world of the everyday, they also confront Best's argument that purposive sports, such as soccer, can not in their total sense be intrinsically aesthetic. The authors point out that Best's argument in this respect focuses on *forms* of play, particularly those that are momentarily concise and fluent, and in developing their argument that soccer is not just potentially aesthetic, but intrinsically so, they initially focus on the aesthetic qualities that reside within the star players. Such are players whose 'economy and fluidity of movement can make them exceptional, and indeed an artist who 'creates by calling upon a palette of playing skills, which are utilised by a body that weaves lightly around the canvas of the pitch' (*ibid*: 283), a skill which they identify within soccer parlance as the 'silky touch'. This is exemplified by a quote, attributed to a former star player Eric Cantona, which they cite from Blacker and Donaldson (1997:155):

To create the moment. To step out of time. To create space from nothing. To be truly spontaneous. This is the fate of the [great] footballer. He must be surrealist and realist, a magician and a scientist.

However, their argument goes beyond descriptive metaphor and is developed by application of Merleau Ponty's phenomenology and also by drawing upon Schiller's concept of 'Spieltrieb', or play principle. Inglis and Hughson identify the artist players' skills as integrally bound up with the players' perception of and relation to the space of the football pitch as a phenomenal visual field and its changing dynamic in response to the player's experience as a player-body-subject constituted by bodily practice. As the phenomenologically experienced spaces of the field generate practices, which in turn re-orientate its perceived spatial contours, they argue that the player, as a body-subject occupies through practical knowledge a virtual space, not an Archimedean geometric or physical space, but space that is experienced within the dynamic flow of practical activities, and one which is felt rather than decided upon by a reflective consciousness. (This would appear to have some similarity with what the phenomenologist Strauss (1966) refers to as 'acoustic' space, which although he sees as especially pertaining to dance is nonetheless the location for aesthetic experience with regard to physical human movement generally, and is a space that he distinguished from Euclidian space). Inglis and Hughson (*ibid*: 289) articulate the phenomenological characteristics of the players' relationship with the space of the football field as follows:

...the player 'feels' the direction towards the goal area as much as he or she feels the dispositions of his or her own body. This is because, for the player-body-subject, both the spatial elements of the field, such as the goal and penalty areas, are in a sense, of the *same substance*. The spatial contours of the field and the dispositions of the player are mutually implicated elements of an indivisible whole. One may even go so far as to say that after a fashion, the player and the field are literally *the same thing*.

For those most gifted artistic players such enables the players to occupy not the physical space of the field, but a particular dynamic virtual space, which, the authors in referring to Coghlan (1999, 1990) identify as zone 14. This is the space both accessed by and the conditional location of the possibility of the 'silky touch', and is the space of embodied movements and of bodily practice. They state (*ibid*: 290) that zone 14 'is the condition which allows the embodied practice of aesthetic play, and aesthetic play is the embodied practice which constitutes and reconstitutes zone 14'.

As Platchias draws upon Kant to locate the aesthetic nature of the instantiation of the winning pattern, Inglis and Hughson draw upon Schiller's play principle *Spieltrieb* to further locate the aesthetic in their analysis of soccer. They argue that *Spieltrieb*, and particularly the capacity for 'untrammelled self expression' is the principle that underpins all aesthetic activity and which makes it possible, i.e. the proto-aesthetic, (characteristics of which they argue remain present in sports such as soccer even with, and in contrast to, their increasing commercial commodification). It is argued that Schiller's concept of the play-principle identifies the capacity to play as a fundamental constituent of human being. As such aesthetic production does not rely on the individual subjectivity of the individual artist but on its ontological nature. They argue that this is the case with reference to their Merleau-Pontian analysis of practical consciousness as constituted by the practically orientated body-subject and its dynamic interrelationship to particular phenomenally experienced fields, such as zone 14.

...specifically *aesthetic* practices must be seen as the outcomes of the practical consciousness of the creating subject, rather than the rational decision – making ego of the 'artist'. As practical consciousness is constituted by (and constitutes) the field in which it operates, then it is ultimately the field which is 'responsible' for the generation of particular sets of aesthetic practices, in the sense that without the field there would be no practical consciousness to generate these practices (*ibid* : 292).

Thus the conditions for aesthetic play reside within the very nature of the game and its proto-aesthetic so that the player-artist is 'the product of a field which allows him or her to practically deploy knowledge characterised by the silky touch in order to play aesthetic play' (*ibid*: 293). While Inglis and Hughson's analysis does not address the issue of why and how some players achieve the silky touch and others not, nor the extent to which such might be relative (e.g. would it be more or less achieved on the park pitch or by some emerging or non-professional players), they conclude this section of their analysis by asserting that football has 'fundamental proto-aesthetic qualities which in turn are the conditions of possibility for its intrinsically aesthetic aspects'.

The two examples referred to above are part of a more contemporary analytical discourse in locating the aesthetic in sport within particular philosophical paradigms. The issue whether sport is or can be art also has to be considered or even defined within shifting socio-cultural and historical contexts, and as well as a being a theoretical issue, the wider institutional structures and practices that at any given time impact on both sport and art should be acknowledged. Such a contextual consideration is demonstrated by a particular example as to whether a form of

activity, traditionally regarded as more art than sport, might be institutionally recognised as being a sport. This particular issue is not just academic, but has practical consequences for those who want to relocate the status of ballroom dancing and have it recognised as an Olympic sport.

Caroline Picart (2006), who is both a professional dance performer and a cultural critic, sets out in her book, From Ballroom to DanceSport, to examine the politics and socio cultural subtexts around the movement to have ballroom dancing accepted as an Olympic sport -a process, for example, that has led to ballroom dancing being renamed as DanceSport. Picart sees this change as problematic, suggesting that the aesthetic aspect of ballroom dancing is implicit within the activity - and quotes a remark by world championship dancers Hawkins and Newberry (2004) that it is hardly likely that as an Olympic sport, in accordance with the Olympic motto, *Citius, Altius, Fortius*, gold medals will be awarded to the fastest quickstep, highest hop or to those that hold each other stronger. For Picart (*ibid* :36) the beauty and the power of ballroom dancing are implicit and integral to it being an art form as is 'its ability to span the difference between thought and feeling, the actual and the imagined, reality and artifice into a complex continuum'. As a construction of the aesthetic, and in examining the relationship between sport and art through ballroom dancing and its transition to DanceSport, Picart's approach is an example of postmodern aesthetics in which the canon of sport as a self contained activity can no longer suffice. New discourses have developed that relate the identity of aesthetic experience in sport, both as subject and method, to a wider cultural and socio-political context and within newer paradigms. For Picart such include issues of femininity and masculinity as subjects of the aesthetic gaze, the nature of freedom and constraint within dance, and also post colonial and queer discourses in relation to the geographical, cultural and sexual subtexts contained within ballroom dance history and its conventions. That is not to say the earlier discourse is wholly irrelevant, Picart (*ibid*: 30) uses it herself when she writes, 'To me dance is an art form that draws its breath from the vitality of its character as an animate composition in space and time, underlining and defying that spatiality and temporality'. However her work, drawing upon personal narrative, cultural history, the stylistic and content analysis of dance performances and on representations of dance in film and advertising, locates the aesthetics of Dancesport within processes in which movement, physicality and the body are constructed in space and time within parameters of gender, class, sexuality and ethnicity.

Contemporary artists are also engaging in new agendas, both in terms of the range of media deployed and the nature of their practice, where often forms and narrative are used for analysis and critique rather than for just depiction and expression. For example, the body, its physicality and our psychological and cultural responses to such are explored using both traditional methodologies of art practice and also installation, performance, and conceptual and digital media in ways that relocate and challenge conventional aesthetic assumptions. The work of artists such as Jenny Saville, Alison Lapper and Kirsten Justesen critique accepted notions of aesthetic beauty, physical presence and the body, and by implication challenge their continuing dominance in sport and physical culture. More directly and explicitly, contemporary

art is engaging with many aspects of our experience of sport, including its aesthetic commodification, sensory impact as spectacle and its narrative signification. The artist Brian Jungen for example, restructures and reuses the omnipresent Nike running shoe. Using the trademark colours and materials of the legendary Air Jordan and drawing upon his own Canadian Aboriginal ancestry, he creates masks and mask-like objects, often with a direct sporting reference, such as a protective helmet. While these are aesthetically engaging and playful in their colourful forms and ambiguity, as the authors of a press release to his 2006 exhibition in Montreal remarked, his works 'prompts us to question the economic, social and cultural values of the Western world and draw us into a dialogue between traditional and world cultures' (Legentil and Riley, 2006). Jungen locates this dialogue not only around issues of identity, but also within a critique of the commodification and globalisation of sport.

Paul Pfeiffer, born in Honolulu and based in New York uses photography and digital imagery to explore the nature of sports spectacle and our engagement with and responses to 'iconic' sporting moments. His technique often involves manipulating digital imagery to isolate a single sportsman from an event to emphasise the dramatic and aesthetically powerful nature of human effort, skill and physical movement. Art writer, Cedar Lewisohn (2006:59) sees Pfeiffer's work as an exploration in which the artist is 'searching for those extraordinary occasions when the players transcend themselves and become for a split second deities of banal revelation'. For example in the photographic series, The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse he removes all but one of the players from a basketball court to emphasise the awesome moment of the remaining player's jump for a 'slam-dunk'. During autumn, 2007, Pfeiffer's first major UK based work was a sound and video installation on the subject of football. Installed in an empty warehouse close to Wembley Stadium, his installation entitled The Saints used the 1966 World Cup Final to both celebrate sporting experience and to explore the emotional, sensory and cultural impacts of sporting spectacle.

The many expressive associations, nuances and symbolic associations evoked by sports pitches and the venues themselves form one of the themes on the work of German installation artist Stefan Banz. His multi media installation, Hitzfeld, and his evocation of the sports dressing room and its allegorical associations provide for a strong sense of presence through absence, and while the sports players may not be there except by way of their 'waiting' kit and in the media representations of an 'unwatched' video monitor, both the imagined and represented drama of their expectations create a dressing room space that is both hyper-real and imaginary, and which aesthetically has elements of both the beautiful and the sublime.

While sport for some contemporary artists is not their central subject as such, formal and visual aspects of sport are used not just for their perceptual and aesthetic features, but also for their semiotic, allegorical or narrative means to explore and critique particular cultural and social phenomena. The Austrian artist, Ruth Kaaserer for example focuses her work on the social structures and processes as present in particular sporting practices. Teenagers in London and Vienna playing an 'informal' game of soccer are featured in her work The Professionals, Part 1 & Part 2, and other film subjects have included teenage girls playing basketball. Since 2002, she has been working on a project on women's amateur boxing in US cities involving video,

photography, audio and installation. As Kaaserer (2007) states: 'This sport has so much to do with performance, a very important aspect of this project. Also there's a strong feminist interest and social analysis of women's position within society'.

Other notable contemporary artists who have used sport in various media for its sensory impact and for its allegorical associations, and as both formal object and discursive subject include Gustavo Artigas, Marie Denis, Dario Escobar, Daria Martin and Mark Wallinger. That many more could be cited highlights the interest contemporary art has in sport, one which undoubtedly contributes to the identification and understanding of our aesthetic engagement with it. Again, this is not to imply that sport is art, but that the identification of aesthetic elements in sport as exemplified and expressed by artists is appropriate to contemporary aesthetics. If sport is not art, the work of many artists nonetheless demonstrates that it has implicit aesthetic elements that are fundamental to our aesthetic experience of sport generally.

If you sideline the goal in football what would you see? A beautiful game. Forget about the objective, and you're left with football's aesthetic qualities: the corporeal drama of athletes in action, the appreciation of physical style and the emotional dynamics of motion. And it's all arrayed in a spontaneous choreography of solo flights and combative duets set against a constantly shifting ensemble (Roy, 2004:32).

In this case the aesthetic qualities are cited in relation to dance as an art form, while Roy nonetheless makes the point that there are several differences between sport and dance and that for example, 'sport generally has a defined set of regulations and standards against which performance is measured, whereas dance is constantly shifting and making up its rules'. While, the nature of rules in sport and their philosophical implications are however more complex and problematic, (for example, the seminal work by McFee, 2004), interestingly Jason Minsky (2007), who is currently artist-in residence for Leeds Rugby, cites this aspect of sport as particularly relevant to his practice:

As an artist I am interested in sport because I like the fact it has a set of rules associated with it. That people accept these rules however bizarre they may sound, re ; language, dress codes, equipment etc. The reason I use sport often as part of my art work is because I consider it to be an easily accessible language for the viewer/public to begin to engage with the work, i.e. most people may recognise the pattern/line layout of a tennis court, so if the work begins there and you start to subvert it / break the rules to express something else – the chances are the public/ viewer is engaged and on board with your journey.

Given the particular physical aspect of Rugby, its association with art could be regarded as challenging popular stereotypical attitudes to both, and it is with Rugby that this paper concludes. One of the most well known visual art works associated with sport is Robert Delauney's The Cardiff Team of 1912, which depicted Rugby Union players jumping in a lineout – a subject that was worked on more than once by the artist. The cubist artist André L'hote was also fascinated by the dynamics of changing forms and colour as present in rugby, and his painting of 1917, simply entitled Rugby, is another example of a sport themed painting. L'hote's painting was

currently featured in an exhibition of art and rugby held in various locations in Toulouse during the 2007 Rugby World Cup. The exhibition also featured contemporary artists' work, including that of two artists, Edouard Levé and Franck Scurti, whose work is situated within the newer concerns and methods of contemporary art practice. The French artist Levé recreates rugby action photographs from the sporting press using ordinarily dressed models within a stark monochrome background, a device that on the one hand attenuates the physical dimensions of the action to reveal its underlying compositional dynamics, and which on the other, magnifies the narrative references of human interaction to resonate ambiguously with other social and cultural contexts. Scurti, another French artist, was represented by his seminal three screen video installation, *Couleurs*, which re-uses extracts from a televised rugby match between Ireland and France, in which rain dilutes the paint of the company logos painted on the turf so that the colours stain the players' shirts, faces and bodies. This sensory transformation of the game into a literally colourful event is manipulated by Scurti to express his concerns for the intricate relationships among sports events, corporate advertising and the media.

Carwyn James (1972), former coach of the successful British Lions team of 1971 remarked that, 'Rugby football is first and foremost about attitudes. Unless the approach is right, the basics and the skills will suffer and no values of any dimension, least of all aesthetic, will be achieved.....May we soon have the day when aesthetic values matter'. Cited by Aspin (1974:117), James' fulsome acknowledgment of the practical importance of aesthetics, along with the continuing and developing interest in sport by contemporary artists, confirms the enduring relationship that exists among art, sport and the aesthetic.

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The re-orientation of aesthetics and its significance for aesthetic education

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Loss and rediscovery

More and more these days it is asked whether aesthetics is still possible. A question that, given the context and phrasing, seems to direct us towards its answer. Conferences and meetings, books and journal specials examine the issue of aesthetics, talk about rediscovery or return of aesthetics. Well known philosophers and aestheticians underscore the need to reconsider the foundations of aesthetics and set new directions for aesthetics today (Berleant, 2004) or attempt to expand aesthetics beyond aesthetics – like Welsch, for example who tries to extend aesthetics beyond art to society and the life-world (Welsch, 1997). Others underline the need to revisit the aesthetic experience (Shusterman, 1999; Iseminger, 2002, Fenner, 1996) and examine the relevance or irrelevance of the aesthetic with art (Carroll, 2001). It seems that it is strongly recommended to turn to aesthetics on the condition however to carefully re-approach the meaning and import of the term in the present situation.

The aesthetic that Passmore condemned as “dreary” (Passmore, 1954), the one Sparshott considered a formless conception, vague and loose in application (Sparshott, 1982), the same that Danto emphatically argues that has nothing to do with the definition of art or arts in general (Danto, 1981) returns to claim its rightful place in the fields of philosophy and critical theory (Levine, 1994, Michaud, 1999), as well as artistic creation. And one cannot but wonder: what does this return mean? What was the degree of aesthetics decline that we need to discuss about recovery or for new implementations of aesthetics? Furthermore, how is this recovery possible amidst all those disputes and proclamations of art’s end or of art’s exit from its own history as well as of the corresponding elimination of the aesthetic experience with which our experience of art had been associated?

It was during the 60s when a strong wave of doubt began to question aesthetics (both in the Anglo-Saxon world, where research was directed towards issues dealing with the definition of art, as well as in continental philosophy where it developed into a confrontation with traditional aesthetic theories, meanings and categories). The concept of aesthetics was disputed, although this dispute was set within a wider context of heated arguments about arts, their status, their role and their place in contemporary conditions etc. Aesthetics was called a myth, an invention of modernity that we very well could do without favouring a more precise description and analysis of the elements distinguishing arts from other fields of human endeavour. It was argued that when we talk about art we shouldn’t do it in terms of aesthetic perception

and experience. Characteristic example is the case of George Dickie who talks about the phantom of aesthetic experience and the myth of aesthetic attitude, expressing, in a rather explicit manner, the wider scepticism regarding the relevance of “aesthetics” in understanding and forming comprehensive definitions on art (Dickie, 1965; Dickie, 1974). Philosophical aesthetics could finally become de-aestheticised. Now one could, or better yet ought to, develop theories on art with non aesthetic or beyond aesthetic terms, in other words theories that examine art outside the aspect of aesthetic responses and experiences that art is capable to produce. Aesthetic theories were criticised as not competent to form substantial arguments or to comprehend issues relative to artistic pursuits and art concerns. The criticism exercised upon these theories by Noël Carroll is indicative of that trend (Carroll, 2001). He stated that “aesthetic theories” dominated the area of aesthetic philosophy because of a misunderstanding; theories about beauty (such as those from Hutcheson or Kant) were erroneously perceived as theories on art, resulting in a reduced perception of what should be expected by our contact with art. This contact was thus assumed to be a disinterested contact with the formal qualities of a work of art. Of course, when Kant analysed the principles used to formulate judgments on beauty wasn’t trying to produce a theory on art (it is common knowledge that Kant’s theory on beauty transcends pure art to cover the beauty of nature, which he exemplifies) and in any case it’s not at all certain that his analysis on beauty leads to a formalistic aesthetic approach. This approach was probably the result of a rather selective and possibly constrained interpretation of Kantian theory on beauty by Clive Bell. Clive Bell transferred Kant’s perceptions on form and disinterestedness into a theory on art, thus introducing a strict aesthetic formalism which was subsequently connected to artistic modernism. Key-concepts from the theory on beauty (form and disinterested pleasure) were transferred into art theory and directed philosophical aesthetics towards an “aesthetic” orientation. This led to the systematic reduction of art theory into aesthetic theory, which, as Carroll argues, leads to a de facto reduction into a theory on beauty (Carroll, 2001: 32-33), as it was expressed during the 18th century. Rejection of aesthetic theory thus (that theory which was developed under the prism of aesthetical=beautiful) was considered –within the context of that criticism– as a positive departure from a fallacy. It was considered as liberation from, as some thought, the tyranny of modern aesthetics’ claim for universality, from its hermetic seclusion and persistence for its field purity as well as its ensuing refusal to mingle with other forms of culture.

Aesthetics emerged in the context of modernity and within this context it has been formed as an autonomous area of experience amongst the other fields of experience constituting the differentiated realm of Reason. In the context of criticism towards modernity this claim for aesthetics autonomy has been questioned as well and the possibility of formulating a distinctive aesthetic reason was strongly contested: Many argue that there is no such a thing as an autonomous reason of aesthetic experience, one that can clearly make the distinction from non aesthetic experiences. It was also assumed that defending this kind of reason leads to an isolation of the aesthetic experience, to a nostalgic devotion to the romantic and post-romantic ideal of aesthetic autonomy. This ideal however –being always in conflict with artistic practice– has been irrevocably surpassed by avant-garde –at least by some of its forms – (Bürger, 1984), post-modern and contemporary art.

In this case too the contestation of aesthetic experience autonomy is based on a misconception or, rather, misinterpretation of the third Kantian Critique. While it is beyond any doubt that Kant defines aesthetic as a distinct category of human experience, he didn't isolate it from theoretical reason and he certainly associated it with moral reason. Nevertheless, most Kant researchers including those who used Kant as a basis to form theories for modern art (headed by Clive Bell), focused on his arguments on the distinctiveness of aesthetic experience – exhibiting a selective preference on his analysis of the beautiful and grounded upon it a theory for absolute aesthetic purity. They were based on Kant's notion of purposiveness without purpose to develop a theory for the purity and independence of the art world and the aesthetic experience, which, as they argue, bears no relation with everyday interests and common experience. In the words of Clive Bell: "Art transports us from the world of man's activity to a world of aesthetic exaltation. For a moment we are shut off from human interests; our anticipations and memories are arrested; we are lifted above the stream of life" (Bell, 1958: 25). Obviously, these types of arguments raised a lot of objections and strong criticism. A characteristic such example is the critical approach of Terry Eagleton who, adopting a socio-political perspective, shows that the autonomy claimed for the aesthetic serves political goals, constituting a model of bourgeois individualism, i.e. of its own claims to autonomy. Aesthetic, in this view, appears attached to a political purpose and thus evidently non autonomous. Aesthetic autonomy is therefore completely rejected as specious (Eagleton, 1990).

In the last decades of the 20th century, criticism on aesthetics becomes more radical. Viewed from the area of cultural studies as well as from various forms of post-modern thought, aesthetics is approached as an ideology, deemed as retrograde and oppressive, accused of being discriminatory –since it allegedly concerns only those few who are capable of identifying aesthetic quality. It is repudiated as fetishist and confusing since it mystifies, as some argue, the value of art, imposing art as a preferential area for the emergence of higher values, thus isolating art from its historical, social or political dimension. The distinction principle instituted via aesthetic criteria is declared a negative value, a principle used to discriminate, one that shows conceit and failure to recognize something that is not similar to us. Thus the retreat or even the removal of aesthetic takes, from that point of view, a positive character. It relates with a movement of universal democratization, in other words, equal acceptance of all individual judgments as well as of all locally produced cultural or art like products (Michaud, 1997). Yet, at the same time it creates the risk for a less democratic acceptance even of the indifferent and the undifferentiated and succumbs to the false charm of relativism. This is something to be taken into serious thought in any attempt for critical re-consideration of aesthetics.

Strong doubts were also voiced from the side of artistic production, both on aesthetic purity as well as aesthetic autonomy. These doubts were expressed in a most radical way via some avant-garde and post-avant-garde movements of the 20th century, which advocated concurrence of art and life, removing art's integral capacity for form distinction, and thus denying aesthetic autonomy. As for contemporary art production, or at least a great part of it, it adopts a change in attitude, regarding previous art and the aesthetics of modernism, asking for maximum proximity to current aesthetics of production, transmission and reproduction of (constantly) changing images (in mass

media, advertising, video, cyber-media, interactive television etc). It appears that we moved from the modernistic defense of aesthetic autonomy to a state where art vies for its own assimilation in this new environment, the one imposed by pulsating, wobbling electronic image.

Is aesthetics something more?

After all these reservations and disputes, one cannot but wonder: Is there any room left to formulate an aesthetics which manages to rise above the mounting waves of criticism at theoretical level and able to confront the multiplicity of all available forms of artistic expression? An aesthetics, i.e., that needs to assume the duty to describe and comprehend this extremely mobile world, which is ours, this contemporary world of digital imagery and developing arts within virtual reality? If there is a chance then it has to be associated with the need to understand that *aesthetics is something more than what is conventionally acknowledged that it is.*

This can be achieved only if we identify the blank spots and errors that marked the development of modern aesthetics and restore the central categories of aesthetic and autonomy, purged from the weight of all those misconceptions associated with it during the modernistic period as well as the more recent period of doubt and criticism. In other words, on condition that aesthetic thought turns to itself in reflection and strives to clarify the nature of the aesthetic.

The problem with critical approaches of “aesthetic” philosophical aesthetics is that they remain restrained by the same misconception they bring to light: they continue to identify aesthetics with beauty while at the same time they go to emphasize how restrictive was this narrow focus of aesthetics in the idea of beauty, i.e. the identification of almost all aesthetic qualities with beautiful. Furthermore, they appear to overlook the other dimension of the “aesthetic”, the one undermined by the erroneous insistence to equate “aesthetic” with a narrow formalistic orientation. Danto –this ardent critic of aesthetics– says that the very notion of aesthetic undervaluates art, presenting art as something that is strictly related to pleasure, not with meaning and truth (Danto, 1986: 13). This is the reason why Danto questions every attempt to define art via aesthetic qualities. In *The Transfiguration of the Common Place* (Danto, 1981) Danto supports the view to cut the umbilical cord connecting art and aesthetics. Beauty, he argues, is not a parameter to define art, anything that possesses aesthetic qualities is not necessarily a work of art and subsequently a work of art is not identified as such by some inherent aesthetic qualities. Identifying an object as a work of art can’t be made in perceptual – aesthetic terms, it is necessary to resort to something else, thought and philosophy. We don’t “perceive” something as work of art; we interpret it as such within the frame of an “atmosphere of art theory”.

The cognitive dimension of the aesthetic is thus summarily dismissed resulting in one more misconception with serious repercussions on aesthetics, taking a place next to – and in relation to– the views equating aesthetic with beauty. Yet, the meaning of aesthetics is relative to the cognitive from the start, with Baumgarten as well as Kant. Initially Baumgarten didn’t develop his aesthetics as philosophy of art. Creating and understanding works of arts had served in his programme as an example – albeit preferentially – for the application of his philosophy. He exemplified cognitio

sensitiva as ars (art with its ancient Greek meaning): art is not passive acceptance of mimicry but action and expression. What Baumgarten tried to do was to propose an alternative philosophy on knowledge that moves beyond purely rationalistic, empirical or perceptual approaches, as noted by Stephen Gross (Gross, 2002: 403-414.) In reference to beauty, it's not connected with a sense of beauty, it's an intellectual category closely related to his theory of cognition and knowledge.

It is therefore the duty of philosophical aesthetics (which assumes also the duty to be a philosophical approach to art even within the complexity of the modern world of art) to: - Show how a simplistic interpretation of past theories of beauty, Kant's especially, separated rational from aesthetic judgment, and led to the view that aesthetic experience is connected exclusively with the immediacy of pleasure (disinterested pleasure of form, disassociated from any cognitive content). - Revisit Kant's theory of art –which ironically art philosophers and theoreticians sidestep in formulating their own theories on art– and discover there that the notion of the aesthetic may be far wider than is considered to be.

Kant, bringing the aesthetic under the authority of reflective judgements, shows how aesthetic experience should be conceived as a grasp of *meanings* through the senses. He claims that the notion of aesthetic experience is based not only on sensation but on reflection as well:

“The universal communicability of a pleasure already includes in its concept that this must not be a pleasure of enjoyment, from mere sensation, but one of reflection; and thus aesthetic art, as beautiful art, is one that has the reflecting power of judgment and not mere sensation as its standard” [Kant, 2000:185 - §44 (5: 306)].

Response to the form then, means to comprehend a meaning presented aesthetically, i.e., via images which do not represent what lies in concepts but *something else* [Kant, 2000:193 - §49 (5: 315)]; via representations of the imagination which allow the addition to a concept of much that is *unnamable* and the *feeling* of which animate the cognitive faculties [Kant, 2000:194 - §49 (5: 316)].

Aesthetic images tell us more than determinate linguistic expression can tell, permit us to think more than we can express in a concept determined by words. It is that *something else*, that *feeling of the unnamable*, that *more* which ascribes uniqueness to aesthetic experience.

Aesthetic experience is revealed as that rich, multidimensional experience (sensuous, emotive as well as cognitive), which constitutes the field of *aesthetics as that something more than what is conventionally acknowledged that it is*.

Clarify that aesthetic autonomy is not isolation but rather the necessary condition for aesthetic experience to freely unfold its potential. Aesthetic experience, as that meaningful experience described above, suspends familiarity with the world, upsets convictions and conventional ways of perception and leads to a critical approach of established meanings and representations of reality. And this not despite but rather because of its autonomy –of its necessary distance from other modes of experience– permitting it to apply its critical impact. It means aesthetic experience is not

immediately implicated in a critique of other forms of Reason; it can provide such a critique as an *effect* of the autonomy of its enactment (Menke, 1999).

It is therefore necessary for contemporary philosophical aesthetics to re-examine aesthetic as a value, one that we can apply to signify and re-signify our relation with the world. This value is connected, at the level of artistic creation, with opening new ways of expression and, at the level of experience, with advancing possibilities to surpass the narrow confines of individuality allowing participation in ever changing ways of perception or even transforming aspects of our relation with the world. From this point of view it is a measure of freedom exercised mainly due to this transformational influence of art or rather of our experience of art.

Aesthetics and aesthetic education

As such, aesthetics can have an essential role to play in the foundation of aesthetic education as a consistent, important and distinctive educational field. Aesthetics as conceived here, can orientate aesthetic education toward its self-understanding as an actual, living philosophy, putting in the centre of its own educational pursuits the creation of possibilities for the development of meaningful aesthetic experiences. Thus, aesthetic education assumes the duty to provide a practical answer to the question concerning the possibility of aesthetics. And it gives this answer by educating young people in grasping the meanings available from expressive forms, i.e. in understanding and responding to meaningful forms.

Potentially, everything in the world can be assumed to be producing these types of meanings, i.e., as a case of a meaningful form or in other words as something that can be aesthetically experienced. Art is precisely this intentional human endeavour to create forms revealing such kind of meanings and thus art “adds the crucial dimension of human engagement in the processes of generating, capturing, and sharing the cognitions available from this mode of representation” (Reimer, 1991: 202). Consequently, art –arts– teaching is the roadmap needed by aesthetic education to fulfil its purpose. The pursuit, mainly but not exclusively, with the kinds of artworks that emphatically project their meaning as art, in the sense and significance described above, can therefore bear the definition of “aesthetic education.” In this way aesthetic education becomes a route of initiation into processes of generating and conceiving meanings, derived by this particular way of engaging with the world and its various modes of articulation (or in other words, as an initiation into the aesthetic dimension of our contact with the world).

Thus, aesthetic education aims to create a comprehensive education field, the scope of which is to show that, through the interaction of young people with the conditions of creating and the ways of comprehending different arts, potential new ways of articulating certain aspects of their relation with the world can be developed. Via the various ways individual arts call upon them to understand their own particular aesthetic perceptions of how things are, the ability of young people for complete aesthetic responses should be enhanced, the complex (sensuous, emotive and cognitive) character of aesthetic experience promoted, and, what is most important, its critical impact exercised. Through its power to transport beyond daily routine, aesthetic experience (the complete aesthetic experience we mentioned above) can

exercise its “transformational” power on young people: it can make them appreciate the “benefits” they may gain if they open up to things and the world in ways different than usual, ways that do not convert things into utility or domination tools but help them “discover” the still invisible and unspoken dimensions of things, as bearers of mute meanings (Merleau-Ponty, 1964: 35; Merleau-Ponty, 1960; Johnson & Smith, 1993: 14-34, 35). Art objects have this impact, being vehicles of meaning themselves; of a meaning not always explicit, arriving as the result of an earlier transformational process and calling upon us to grasp it through the way they are structured, i.e. organised as form. The study of various art forms and the comparison of the ways they are relating to reality, the examination of the meaning of art objects, aid in distinguishing not only the multiplicity of meanings mediated through art but, mainly, the transformational process allowing this mediation. Any type of subject may take part in defining the meaning of art works, on the assumption that, in every case, they’re subjected to a kind of transformation allowing them to function as essential parts of aesthetic meaning. It can be said that art transcends its referential content via its form, producing meanings disparate from the contents it incorporates: i.e. meanings non-interpretable by common or discursive language, aesthetically grasped and providing a reminder that there are other ways of seeing the world and human activity, apart from the instrumental views and commerce (Bowie, 2003: 1-14).

Aesthetic education, thus, as we understand it here –enhancing i.e. people’s ability to respond to meanings integrated in artistic forms–, should reorient our thinking as well as educational practices, towards restoring aesthetic experience as a value: as a meaningful, living experience, stimulating sensuous perception and at the same time calling for thinking. Paraphrasing Kant, we would say that contact with art gives occasion to young people’s imagination to spread itself over a number of aesthetically presented ideas and understand them as embodied meanings that arouse more thought that can be expressed in a concept determined by words. In other words, aesthetically experiencing art presents young people with opportunities to develop and nurture forms of knowledge and understanding that “marry thought and emotion in the service of meaning”. Eisner, talking about visual arts, fittingly notes that “they help us learn to see and to feel what we see”. This means that it is imperative to include arts education in aesthetic education programs and the most profound reason for this is that contact with arts can “help students understand that there is another way to live, another way to think, another way to be in the world” (Eisner, 2001: 9). And this other way is an aesthetic way. For aesthetic education this means that it can continue to defend the core meaning of aesthetic experience – and through that the autonomy of its own field – drawing arguments from philosophic aesthetic theory while at the same time validating these arguments within educational praxis (deed).

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Thinking Heidegger's post aesthetics through the expanded field of painting

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At a certain point in the late 20th century the word “aesthetics” withdrew from active service in the theoretical vocabulary of art. It had become both too universal and too particular. Too universal in that everything had become aesthetic, sport, management, theology, and so nothing was more aesthetic than anything else, not even art. Too particular in that aesthetics was unable to confront the present situation of avant-garde art as it unfolded during modernism and postmodernism. Hence aesthetics was replaced by new disciplines for thinking about art: critical theory, art theory, cultural theory, the philosophy of art and so on. The struggle to find the proper name and form for thinking about art goes on.

Krzysztof Ziarek in his book *The Force of Art* (2004) suggests that art stands at a fiveways crossroad, with each direction leading to a different kind of finality in the history of art and aesthetics.

In one direction

1. *art is already dead*, a thing of the past.

In another there is a new dawn, an age of

2. *neo-aesthetics*, based on recent attempts to revive the beautiful and sublime to justify an aesthetic understanding of contemporary art.

In another, art has fused with and been completely supplanted by

3. *popular culture*. Popular cinema and video game culture become the site of contemporary artistic innovation.

In another direction there has been an irreversible fusion of

4. *art and technology*, art and new media, leaving digital media rather than art as the primary term.

On the fifth and last signpost is written

5. *'post aesthetics'* which is an attempt to think art beyond aesthetics, beyond subjective affects and beyond technological functionality.

So what can we make of the term 'post aesthetics'? Originally aesthetics comes from the greek word *aeisthesis*, meaning to feel, sense or perceive. Thus we can say very

generally that aesthetics is the way we feel the world through the things that surround us, from works of art through to things of everyday use.

This very broad notion of a living aesthetic field encompasses all our activities from relationships, to homes, to sport, to business management to systems of belief. All of it a way of 'feeling our feelings' about the world, to find a way to articulate whether it be good and proper, correct and beautiful. It is this very saturation of 'sheer aesthetic mindedness' in modern living that confronted Martin Heidegger when he turned his attention to art in the 1930s. It inspired him to reactively develop a thinking about art that sought out those parts of art and art making that aesthetics had not been able to reach or articulate.

It begins with a declaration about the primacy of art, "...the question concerning art leads us directly to the one that is preliminary to all questions" (Heidegger, 1991:142), namely, the question of being. Both traditional aesthetics and Heidegger's thinking beyond aesthetics, develop a definition of being. Traditional aesthetics from the time of Baumgarten through Kant and Hegel thinks being in terms of subjects and objects. Subjects produce objects as works of art, and objects produce in subjects affective states. The project of aesthetics was to define which objects were works of art and which affective states were aesthetic. Aesthetics becomes a social construction in which all human feelings are subject to reason and judgement and forms of production are justified as producing objects for interpretative matrices. Aesthetics as a discipline, art as a category of practice and the independence of the human subject all come into being at the same time since each reflects and co-defines the other.

The world view thus created is of a subject who experiences the world, and objects that make up a world. The object stands opposed to the subject and becomes a kind of enemy to be subdued by will, by systems of representation, and by the knowing dissection of science.

Picturing worlds

In *The Age of the World Picture* (1977: 115-154), Heidegger argues that the rise of the modern subject coincides with an objectification of the world brought on by the new disciplines of modern science and aesthetics. He argues that one of the key phenomena of the modern period is

"... the event of art's moving into the purview of aesthetics. That means that the artwork becomes the object of mere subjective experience" (1977: 116).

Representations of the world established by scientific experimentation and visual art systems become a way of grasping the world as something certifiably present and rationally explicable, in short, object like. Modern man becomes the relational centre and from that vantage point a picture of the world is established, not as a representation of the world, but as a system out of which everything can be prepared for representation, visually, conceptually, scientifically. Thus, "To be is to be represented" (Inwood, 2004:185). For the sake of representation, for the sake of knowledge and stable subjectivity, the world is brought to a standstill; it is made static and constant so that things can be grasped as producible and explainable.

Heidegger opposes modern ‘representing’ with pre-modern ‘apprehending’. Modern man looks upon the things of the world and represents them as way of understanding them. By contrast, pre-modern man stood in the exact reverse situation, he was looked upon by the things of the world and he *apprehended* that very experience.

“That which is, does not come into being at all through the fact that man first looks upon it, in the sense of a representing that has the character of subjective perception. Rather man is the one who is looked at by that which is, he is the one who is – in company with itself – gathered towards presencing, by that which opens itself. To be beheld by what is, to be included and maintained within its openness and in that way to be borne along by it, (is) to be driven about by its oppositions and marked by its discord” (Heidegger, 1977:131).

Representing establishes a system for measuring and guiding, calculating everything that is,

“Man as representing subject ... pictures forth, whatever is, as the objective, into the world as picture” (Heidegger, 1977:147).

In contrast, ‘apprehending’ makes the manner of coming to presence of both subject and object problematic. Subjects rather than moulding objects into aesthetic shape or dissecting them for scientific certitude are raw material themselves constituted by the primary opening of being itself. Rather than mapping a world according to a predetermined structure, apprehending is finite and indeterminate since it driven by ‘oppositions and discord’.

Falls the shadow

Aesthetics is a mode of thinking that presupposes certain types of objects that appear to subjects as fully available and present for affective delectation. Aesthetics produces subjects, objects and the experience of presence. However, Heidegger alerts us that any thing that stands out in presence also casts a shadow of absence, of non presence. Ultimately that absence is the very ground on which presence subsists.

“Being and nothing both being wholly indeterminate pass into each other and thus give rise to becoming and determinacy” (Inwood, 2004:144).

Presence is the appearance of something oriented towards us, while absence withdraws into the unsaid and unseen. The task in this kind of thinking of presence and absence is to see the riddlesome relationship and not be blinded by the sheer overtness of presence. Even in the age of the world picture a certain shadow of indeterminacy comes to haunt the certainty of calculative power found in science and representational systems. The shadow that falls into the system is the incalculable.

“This becoming incalculable remains the invisible shadow that is cast around all things, everywhere man has been transformed into subject and the world into picture” (Heidegger, 1977:135).

In the infinitely large and infinitely small, calculation and representation break down forcing a kind of quantum abstraction both in science and art.

“By means of the shadow the modern world extends itself out into a space withdrawn from representation” (Heidegger, 1977:136).

To think into the shadow and the process of absencing is to think beyond aesthetics, is to invoke a post aesthetic questioning; to ask what is art doing if it is not guaranteeing my subjectivity, not pleasing me with beautiful affects, not presenting a presence?

Revelation

The short answer is revelation. As Heidegger puts it, “... could it be that revealing lays claim to the arts most primally?” (1977:136). Revelation is the revealing that occurs through the act of making something. Many things are made, sometimes by hand, sometimes by industrial manufacturing. All things that are made, that pass over from non-being into being, are revealed. In ‘being made’ there is a movement from non-existence to existence, from hiddenness to openness. Any journey from the hidden to the open has the character of a revelation. What is revealed is what happens to materials in the process of making, when a block of stone becomes a sculpture or a quantity of paint becomes a painting. Revelation continues after production of the artwork is complete, since revelation is a process, a kind of dynamo established by the work that keeps on sending its revelation. The ongoing revelation guarantees the artwork as something more than a mere product simply completed by the act of manual production.

“The notion of production customarily assumes a determinate end, which it is the purpose of art to refuse or defeat.” (Cascardi, 1998:44)

What is revealed, according to Heidegger, can be discussed in terms of two ontological dimensions, earth and world. He presents these two terms together for the first time in his 1935 essay “The Origin of the Work of Art” (2002:139–212), where they appear to operate as a substitute for the traditional aesthetic division of form and content. They are also reminiscent of the phenomenological dyad of ground and horizon.

Yet both terms are entirely new. Even though ‘world’, was a major focus in Heidegger’s opus *Being in Time* (1927), it is developed here specifically in relation to the work of art. Heidegger indicates that world is not to be considered a thing or collection of things.

“World is more a cultural dynamic that determines what is significant in anything that can be said and done. It is a process, a way of being meaningful, rather than any meaningful thing or things. As such world is an already established sense of coherence and ordering, it is the web of ‘paths and relations’ within which individuals already find themselves” (Sinclair, 2007:172).

Most surprising is the term ‘earth’ since it has not appeared in any of Heidegger’s previous texts. Just as world is not a collection of things neither is earth simply matter, or dirt or the globe we stand on. Earth is that which allows material presence, that which provides a ground on which the world can stand. Earth is inherently a

duality since it is an emerging flowering and a withdrawing decaying, that is both a presencing and absencing.

“Earth is an emerging that hides itself that maintains its own absence.” (Sinclair, 2007:145)

Pres-absential

Through the term ‘earth’ Heidegger conceptualises the riddle of how something can be present and absent at the same time, how something might advance and withdraw simultaneously. In the artwork we catch sight of earth through paint but at the same time paint withdraws into the image or the finished nature of the artwork. When looking at a painting we can notice paint as a material for the first time, particularly in representational painting when a lick of red paint can suddenly refuse to disappear into the image of a red ribbon. In such a situation the materiality of the thing, the very matter of the paint, can seem strange and worthy of a double take. If I persist with treating paint as a thing and I try to penetrate it by examining it as a hardened object, it simply lets itself be destroyed and falls into smaller pieces without revealing its secrets. If I try to analyse paint techno-scientifically and discover it to be made of atoms and wavelengths I have understood nothing of the way of matter or the liveliness of colour.

Through the dynamic of earth there is a rethinking of what it means to make an artwork. In the making of a sculpture or painting, stone or paint, is not to be thought of as inert passive matter. Rather each has a particular quality, there is something that paint can do that stone cant and vice versa. The process of making is a drawing from the earth in its material form, drawing out of the earth into the cultural domain provided by world. Consequently making an artwork is less defined by the sovereign worldly power of the creator, than it is by the revelatory function of earth. In making an artwork there is a revealing of what stone or paint will allow. The act of making is a relationship or a conversation between maker and material.

“The block of stone constitutes the possibility of the statue and yet it is the work of art alone that makes manifest what the stone is capable of.” (Sinclair, 2007:147)

The material relationship between maker and medium is nothing new. It has always been the work of artists and artisans, to get to know the truth of materials, to understand how stone cleaves and paint flows. However ‘earth thinking’ involves something more, a recognition of a type of creativity on the side of nature, that matter is not an inert substance to be simply tamed and mastered. Earth suggests something further, it indicates the humid creativity of matter, partially waiting and partially driving forward from in itself. The artist harnesses some of the creative power of the material of earth to bring something into appearance, into presence, into form, to bring it out of itself, to disclose it. It is a double disclosure of the earth coming out of itself yet at the same time withdrawing so that there is some space for the revelation of world as well.

Thus the making of an artwork is more than a means to an end, more than the operation of an efficient causality, more than simply transforming raw matter into

something it was not. Making is a revelation, a creative discourse with matter such that both matter and artfulness are revealed. Something of the being of matter and the being of art are revealed at the same time. Both the nature of making as a particular kind of production and the nature of the made thing as a particular kind of presencing are brought into view. In this view the presencing of an art work is 'pres-absential', it makes certain things present, discloses that there is material that has been worked and at the same time there is an absence, an absencing of the material in favour of form, image, meaning, content.

Genres of production

Making art is one kind of production while technology in the form of industrial manufacturing is another. Like art, technological products reveal the world in a certain light. Technology reveals the world through medical imaging, space travel, digital communications, mobile telephony, computing, internet connectivity, home entertainment systems and so on. In doing so technology reveals the earth as a quarry and resource for the production of material devices and attendant lifestyles. Technology soothes and distracts the beast of labour as he methodically devastates the earth. Technology drives a world of rational economics based on the efficient storage and manipulation of power and energy, reducing all things to availability for this process, including humans themselves. Yet technology is no mere dark force to be struggled against and rejected. When we open ourselves to technology, we go right into it, and first come to notice its objectifying nature. Technology is an essential part of our everyday lives and devices such as mobile phones and computers generate the possibility for both isolation and real connection, for new kinds of focal practices and social action. To recognise both the dark and light sides of technology is to notice technology for the first time and appreciate the possibility of something beyond it.

Both art and technology are modes of production and modes of revelation that compete for the most appropriate instantiation of the world. All works reveal, however the nature of revelation is subtly yet fundamentally different in each case. It could be summarised by saying:

- (i) Technological works reveal pure functionality,
- (ii) Aesthetic works reveal affect and representation, and,
- (iii) Post aesthetic works reveal earth and world, that there is revealing and concealing.

Power in the middle voice

If art is in competition with information technology and industrial manufacturing for the right to reveal the world, it would seem a non contest between a david and goliath, between the almost powerless and the totally powerful. As Krystzof Ziarek puts it,

“Artworks when compared with social, political or even physical forces lack any effectiveness in changing reality” (2004:3).

The powerlessness of art to effect change outside of its own limited domain appears conclusive. However, arts power to reveal is neither powerful nor powerless, but operates in a middle voice, powerfree.

“Art discloses an alternative to the paradigms of production, mobilisation and technical manipulation.... The ‘less’ in the adjective ‘powerless’ when attached to art does not necessarily mean lack of power but instead indicates an alternative economy of forces” (Ziarek, 2004:3-4).

Ziarek’s term for this kind of power is ‘aphetic forcework’, indicating a subtle transformative power.

“Art can have a transformative effect only in a specific kind of reception, when the artwork is encountered non aesthetically, which means that, beyond its aesthetic commodity form art is allowed to work. ... Art’s transformation works not on the level of objects, people or things but in terms of the modality of relations, which in the forms of perception, knowledge, acting or valuing, determines the connective tissue of what we experience as reality” (Ziarek, 2004:28)

Producing expanded painting

Art production is a singular kind of production that reveals the uncanniness of things as opposed to the levelling of difference that takes place under the global dominion of technological production. The production process of painting has developed through a series of historical evolutions from the time of Lascaux to our own age dominated by the convergences of digital media. Some of those developments in painting have occurred at the level of style and some at the level of paradigmatic form.

Expanded Painting is the most recent paradigm shift and is as significant as the moments when painting evolved from the cave wall to the church wall and then to the portable easel painting. Expanded Painting is in the simplest of terms, the expansion of painting from a flat surface into a spatial domain. The drive towards this new discipline was signalled by the European avant garde of the early Twentieth Century. It commenced with Picasso’s cubist constructions, Tatlin’s corner reliefs, Malevich’s Volumetric Suprematism, Duchamp’s Readymades and Lissitzky’s Proun Rooms. All of these works pushed painting away from a flat surface towards elements of sculpture and architecture. In the 1960s artists such as Ian Burn, Donald Judd and Robert Smithson rejected their training as painters to develop the new disciplines of Conceptual Art, Minimal Art and Land Art. However in all their work some trace of painting remained. For Burn and Judd it was a fascination with colour and quadrilateral forms, for Smithson it was the ambiguous surface of illusion provided by mirrors. In the late-1980s, neo-conceptualism in the hands of painters resulted in the first tentative use of the term ‘installation art’. Artists as diverse as Jeff Koons, Jessica Stockholder and Hany Armanious developed out of painting into object-based practices that nevertheless carried much of the sensibility of painting, particularly a concern for colour, lighting, irregular surfaces, liquid dynamics, mixed messages between image and object and so on.

Expanded Painting shows the ghost, scent, smell, trace of painting, in short the absence of painting as a kind of presence. Painting in its shift from wall to canvas to environment demonstrates a propensity to continually test and redefine its own boundaries. Painting withdraws from what seems most essential to it and in doing so it brings forward its hidden conventions making them articulate again. Expanded

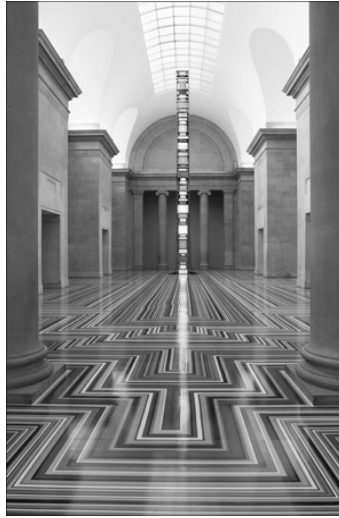
painting results in a certain self consciousness about art, a refusal to take artistic boundaries as absolute, a questioning in relation to the being of the artwork. Expanded Painting demonstrates a tension within itself, a tendency to be both this and that, to be painting and not painting, to generate thinking about the conditions of its own being.

Expanded Painting is no mere product. It is a process on display, an absence made present, a disappearance of the historical form of painting, a disappearance of the consolidated thing in favour of an amorphous process. Expanded Painting as a thing is a problematic thing since it is hardly there, where presence is almost outweighed by absence. The only presence of painting might be as a colouring, where colour is made present not by paint but by coloured things such as hand made or mass produced objects. Whether the object is a video screen, a photograph or coloured string is a matter of indifference since it merely serves the function of delivering colour, making colour present. The reversion of painting into a kind of formlessness, an environment of things, colours, events, is a reversion of painting into a latent informality, a painterliness-without-paint. It distorts painting, erases painting, refracts painting through a rear view mirror reflecting on what painting has been, while moving forward into what painting has never been, is yet to become, is in the process of becoming. At the edge of what history might allow to be called painting is a whole series of latent possibilities that sit in the background, generating the cultural and historical forms of painting. The surprise is that the forms of painting are not fixed, that this latency within painting keeps generating new forms of painting, culminating today in Expanded Painting, but ever ready to move off in other directions, other ways of questioning after painting.

Post aesthetics of expanded painting

From an art historical point of view we ask what can be said about painting today, how do we differentiate it from other contemporary practices such as sculpture and installation art, and furthermore, what different things might be appropriate to each medium? From an ontological perspective we question after the conditions of being of painting, the way a painting can be said to be a painting, how disciplines like aesthetics and art criticism can support or hinder what remains unthought in the tradition. While both aesthetic and post aesthetic works share *aeisthesis*, a certain sensuous experience, by virtue of revelation, the post aesthetic work involves something more. Namely a withdrawing, that which is non present, non applicable, that which cannot be used up in technical productivity, since it is an active absence, harboured and protected by the work of art.

The recent works of Jim Lambie and Katherina Grosse go to the heart of the matter.



Jim Lambie, “Touch Zobop” (2003), Duveen Galleries, Tate Britain.

Jim Lambie creates his “Zobop” installations by applying brightly coloured vinyl tape in geometric patterns on the floor. In doing so he transforms the neutral zone of the gallery floor into a visually activated space. The tape maps the floor so as to reveal the architectural shaping of space, reminding us of the relationship between a two dimensional floor plan and a completed building. The work also jams that space by overwriting it with hyperactive linework and maximal sensual intensities. The colour is so strong in brightness and contrast, and the linework so hypnotic in its rhythmic differentiation that it induces a kind of vertigo. This excess of sensuality disturbs the planiformity of the architectural environment and transposes the sober authority of a museological institution into a play pen or mosh pit.

While the work seems to deflect any generic description, the discipline of painting is invoked since the conventions of painting are both present and absent. Painting is conspicuously absent since there is no painted canvas hanging on the wall. Yet the colour of painting is all around us, unexpectedly under our feet, threatening to tip us headlong into an infinite visual sensuousness. The disappearance of painting in its traditional form is concealed by the sensationalism of colour itself. Colour is not carried by liquids exuded from a tube and applied by a brush, but by industrially manufactured vinyl strips cut into shape and affixed to the floor. Industrial colour is shown to be artificially intense, producing a chemical experience of colour not unlike that in an altered state of consciousness. Industrial colour in the form of vinyl strips is also infinitely extendable, making the creation of works of this enormous size quite feasible.

Lambie’s “Zobop” series, executed in various venues over several years, are all floor works. Floors are the cultural, architectural extension of the surface of the earth. As

we stand on the earth everyday, it withdraws into the background of our awareness, completely taken for granted. It is the ground on which we contemplate the action taking place at a thoughtful level somewhere at eye level. “Zobop” reveals the floor as the basis of an architectural space that presumes a vertical conceptual orientation. By refusing the verticality of the painted canvas, Lambie liberates colour and almost literally tips it at our feet. By colouring the floor, making it the surface of painting, the floor itself is invited out of its background presence, out of neutrality into an uncanny presence. Unexpectedly the work throws a light on how much work the floor does, how it holds me up, guides me through space, facilitates movement through a world.

On the basis of a post aesthetic reading we can say that by freeing the work from the current conventions of painting, paint is freed to *earth* and *world*, to reveal the chiaroscuro of that which grounds and that which appears. “Zobop” brings colour to the floor so that the floor can become part of a worldly presence, part of an ontology of floor-ness. The artwork reveals that the floor functions by its very withdrawal, by resting outside of everyday awareness. The work is a revelation of absencing and presenting in floor-ness, in architectural materiality, in aesthetic conventions and in painting itself.



Katherina Grosse, untitled, (2001) acrylic on wall, Y8 International Sivananda Yoga-Centre, Zürich

Katharina Grosse also makes work that could be described as expanded painting. Her work is made by spray painting onto the walls and architectural fittings of galleries, museums and public buildings. The works transform objective non-spaces such as the white wall, the corner where walls meet, all those spaces out of view, into the carriers of colour, into a unified place where nothing can escape the effervescence of colour. The works come forward as pure colour by receding into the discrete architectural zones hidden around sites of exhibition. In doing so the works reveal the spaces in between art and its environment, the subtle unspoken space that holds us inside, that

attaches us to a sense of place inside the museum and by extension outside into the ever evolving urban city.

By spraying paint directly onto the gallery edifice Grosse incorporates architectural form into the folds of her work. Consequently architecture becomes an environment to be deconstructed by the physical traces of painterly performance. The flow of paint does not stop at an edge but keeps going as far as an arm extended by a ladder will permit. The work often resembles an exterior urban environment such as the tagged spaces underneath a freeway. These exterior spaces come to occupy the gallery space and turn it into a space of fringe dwelling, liminal decay and institutional critique. Grosse often works high with her colours reaching into the ceiling and the places where lighting, electrical functionality and architectural keystones intersect in a hidden infrastructure. The works create a deconstructive situation totally dominated by the presence of colour in an uncontained state. As the colour escapes from the spray gun it threatens to envelop everything, not just surfaces but any sense of good form in painting and architecture. The spray paint can tail off into diaphanous dots or congeal into pools of colour that spill over in long dribbles. The colour can be deep and obscuring of the surface or be light and transparent lying across the shape of a room like a veil.

As in Lambie's work, painting in its traditional form has receded so that colour in an informal state can be loosed on the environment. As the form of painting recedes, the essence of contemporary synthetic colour advances. Similarly, as the usual form of exhibition display is rejected, so the conventions of exhibition etiquette are exposed and inverted. If Lambie's work reveals floor-ness then Grosse's reveals wall-ness. Usually a viewer is not interested in the wall itself, but rather what is hanging on the wall, what the wall can facilitate without making itself felt. The wall by its very nature withdraws in favour of a hanging. By spray painting directly on the wall, the wall is made to advance out of its background obscurity into an uncanny presence, standing there wounded, decorated and dramatised. By treating it so Grosse,

“...touches the wall not as a support, nor as an obstacle or something to lean on, but as a place, if one can touch a place.... The wall makes itself merely spacious: ... a spacing in which to let come – coming from nowhere and turned toward nowhere – all the presence of the world” (Nancy, 1996:75).

The wall now reveals a world by showing the hidden work it does. The wall works as a facilitator of the act of viewing in a gallery environment, it also performs the architectural labour of holding up a building and does the infrastructural work of delivering light, warmth and spaciousness. The wall has been earth-ed by spray painting it. For a moment wall-ness is revealed and becomes articulated visually and conceptually before withdrawing back into an integrated environment.

The expanded painting work of Lambie and Grosse is 'pres-absential', in that it consists of presences and absences, advancing and withdrawing, world and earth. What comes forward is enabled by that which withdraws and their dynamic interplay is the production of sensuousness and sense, a field of material and cultural possibilities. It is an unstable dynamic, historically volatile, constituted by an engine

of difference and differentiation between present and absent, world and earth. It is not a dialectic that offers synthetic resolution, it is an endless tension where presence attempts to overcome absence, and where absence reveals the secretive partiality of presence. The heat generated by the process is the cold fission of revelation itself.

Revelation as the ringing of presence and absence is fore grounded materially in the work and in the very thinking it takes to engage with the work. Thus the act of revelation as a productive encircling of revealing and concealing is both in the work and of the nature of the thinking that engages with it. The one demands the other and they co-produce each other in a widening gyre of thinking that leads inwards to the heart of contemporary art practice and outwards to the relationship of art and life.

Conclusion

The journey through post aesthetics and Expanded Painting comes down to one major factor, the privation of withdrawal. At all times that which is beyond technological calculation, beyond objective representation, beyond the dynamic of power, beyond worldly presence, beyond use, is that which withdraws. Withdrawal takes its cue from the earth, since earth is that which provides and that which takes away. Everything is of the earth, but earth is not to be used for anything and everything. It is only because of withdrawal, because of a limit to the production of the possible, that anything is possible at all. It is only because wood doesn't bend that there are chairs and houses, it is only because bronze does bend that there are sculptures and plumbing, and so on. Withdrawal gate crashes any discussion of art to remind us that aesthetics is more about what can't be done rather than what can. Consequently the ultimate challenge to those who would apply aesthetics to domains beyond art, to sport, business, education and theology is to identify *what can't be made present* rather than simply making pleasant that which is present.

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Aesthetics and the environment: repatriating humanity

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I. Repatriation and the environment

The notion of repatriation, which serves here as a metaphor for the general argument I wish to defend, is bound up with a few basic implications. First, there must be such a thing like a 'homeland'. In the present context, this homeland is obviously the environment as the sum of whatever surrounds us. This includes not only natural surroundings, but also human made structures, and indeed, in a sense, our body itself to the degree that we perceive it as something at least partly external. (Concerning this notion of 'proprioception', that is the aesthetic perception of one's own body, see Montero, 2006.) Repatriation also obviously implies a prior condition of separation or departure from the homeland. For repatriation as 'return to' the homeland means that we are no longer inhabitants of the environment, which we may perceive as our homeland. It follows that a relation of externality or distance seems to apply between what is perceived as surrounding (that is the environment) and what is being surrounded (that is the human observer). Crucially, however, it is finally implied that a return to the homeland is in itself something worth pursuing. Repatriation is about cancelling somehow the distance separating us from the externality of whatever surrounds us, because we wish to become again part of the real or imagined homeland.

At first glance, one would think that there are readily available methods for achieving this. Most notably, there is always the possibility of getting to *know* our environment better, the possibility of its cognitive appropriation. Observation, measurement, quantification, manipulation, prediction: these are all essential parts of the methodology of the natural sciences. Unfortunately, however, this sort of cognitive appropriation does not necessarily aim at cancelling the distance between the surrounded and its surroundings. In fact, it is perfectly consistent with maintaining and even increasing this distance. For the relation of externality separating us from our environment does not itself become part of our getting to know the environment. The scientific model does not primarily concern itself with how to relate to the object of knowledge (that is the environment). It studies this object already *within* its externality. The route of repatriation is completely hidden out of view, which means that the possibility of returning to the homeland can never be actualized.

Furthermore, repatriation is not again guaranteed by the impetus to familiarize oneself, in the ordinary sense, with as many different kinds of environments as possible. Narrowing the distance that separates us from what surrounds us is not about 'having been there', 'seen this', 'done that'. Plotinus, in his own context, puts it thus (1926: I 6. 8):

Let us flee then to the beloved Fatherland': this is the soundest counsel. But what is this flight? How are we to gain the open sea? [...] The Fatherland to us is There whence we have come, and There is The Father. What then is our course, what the manner of our flight? This is not a journey for the feet; the feet bring us only from land to land; nor need you think of coach or ship to carry you away; all this order of things you must set aside and refuse to see: you must close the eyes and call instead upon another vision which is to be waked within you, a vision, the birth-right of all, which few turn to use.

This is indeed an altogether different kind of vision. A kind of vision that, although perceiving the surroundings as distant, it also perceives this distance as having been already traversed. Namely, it is no longer the case that we are only surrounded by the environment, but that we are also part of that very environment. The route of repatriation does not lead away from us but defines the context of our intricate relation with what seemed to be around us at a distance. We are part of the environment and the environment is partly us. The homeland is not somewhere 'out there' because we are already part of it.

Far from belonging to an otherworldly state of affairs, this Plotinian imagery has already become entrenched (even if unconsciously so) in our dealings with nature and the environment. It coincides with the pervasive and global ecological debate that shapes our understanding of our surroundings, both in everyday and highly specialized professional contexts. And it is translatable into our newly found sense of being one with nature, of being shaped, in turn, by the shapes we impose on our surroundings, and of being dependant for our well-being in general on the well-being of the different specific environments we are part of. Neither science nor the tourist consciousness *alone* have proved adequate guides for the discovery that we inadvertently belong to the places and spaces we seem to inhabit. For science and the tourist consciousness, there is —and there will always be— 'some other place' to explore, not currently related to our present homeland. It is true that, as I pointed out at the beginning, this newly found homeland implies a prior condition of having been separate from it —but no matter; it is better late than never.

My central claim then is this: if we are to work for a meaningful philosophical understanding of the aesthetic aspect of nature and the environment, this understanding has to accommodate our deep and justified ecological concerns. Such concerns are perhaps more readily defensible on moral, political, economical, and other similar grounds. But they should also be defensible on aesthetic grounds, employing ideas like repatriation as the opposite of distance and of externality. This prospect is not only promising for the environment; it can also attest to the centrality of aesthetics as an active and profoundly relevant philosophical discipline.

II. Aesthetics of repatriation (1, 2, 3, 4)

In this perspective, Berleant's aesthetics of the environment can be accurately described as an aesthetics of repatriation (see, for instance, Berleant, 1991, 1992). It is an aesthetics that seeks to reconcile the perceivable world and its human inhabitant, and to cancel the distance that may be separating them. It concentrates on the multiple levels of experiencing the environment while being an integral part of it. Berleant calls this an aesthetics of engagement. What is engaged is our capacity to feel and sense our surroundings in a way that does not pose false barriers between the alleged subject and object of feeling and sensing. What is activated is all of our senses without exception: smell, touch, taste, sight, hearing, kinaesthesia, sense of balance, and so on. (Compare here the project of 'somaesthetics', or the aesthetics focusing on the living body; see more recently, e.g., Shusterman, 2006.) Our whole body becomes a place of meeting between the inside and the outside; it is no longer the case that we are concerned with how the inside and the outside may be, or may have been, different. The points that follow highlight briefly the particular ways in which Berleant's aesthetics is an aesthetics of repatriation in the above sense. (These points will subsequently be addressed from the converse perspective, the one that could be described as the aesthetics of separation.)

1. Perception and sensibility

The aesthetics of engagement is naturally an aesthetics of perceptual engagement. However, perceptions are never only bare facts. What is perceived through the senses is at the same time *understood* as being perceived through the senses. It is never a purely external event that happens to affect the mechanics of our bodies. It can never be stripped of all semantic significance, of all association with prior knowledge, memory, connotation, evocative content, intentional design, and so on. 'Being sensible' means 'being perceivable', but also 'making good sense'. Berleant is explicit in using the term 'sensibility' 'in its double significance, referring both to the senses and to meanings, for perception and import join in the integrity of our experience' (1992: 91). The process of repatriation can be now activated. What is perceived does not of course coincide with the perceiver; but it can only make sense for the perceiver to the degree that it becomes part of his or her web of related experiences. We do not receive signals from the environment that surrounds us without being conscious of the fact that we are contained in it, and that we *are* partly it.

2. Art and nature

An aesthetics of experiential engagement with the environment obviously relates to both natural and artificial environments; to landscapes and cityscapes; to cave-dwellings and building-dwellings; to flowers and machines; and so on. 'The entire sensible world is included within the purview of aesthetics', Berleant says (1992: 174). Art —the traditionally favoured subject matter of philosophical aesthetics— must also be included here. For art cannot but be part of our environment, just like everything else. There is no obvious reason for raising a barrier between experiencing artworks and experiencing our everyday surroundings in an engaged way. Berleant stresses precisely the relation of 'continuity between art and life' (1992: 60). Art deals with ways of experiencing the world no less than living itself does. We re-discover the world as our homeland, and art is part of this homeland.

3. *Disinterestedness, the contemplating subject, and the contemplated object*

Perception and nature thus widely conceived are perfectly consistent with the pervasive ecological concerns of our times, and in accordance with the repatriation model employed here. Berleant's further central objective is to safeguard the dynamic of this account by attacking disinterestedness as the dominant aesthetic category of traditional Western aesthetics. Disinterestedness is linked to the rise of the Fine Arts, to the idea of 'art for art's sake', and to certain versions of formalism. It is traceable back through Kant to some of the early modern British empiricists (like Shaftesbury, Addison, Hutcheson, Burke, Gerard, Alison; see Stolnitz, 1961–62). According to Budd's formulation (following Kant), 'a positive affective response to an item is disinterested only if it is not, or not just, pleasure in the satisfaction of a desire that the world should be a certain way' (Budd, 2003: 111). We are not supposed to take pleasure in aesthetically experiencing the world just because we may derive any truths from this experience, or just because we may realize what kinds of things could turn this world into a better place for us. The focus of our pleasure is supposed to be the experience itself. For the aesthetics of engagement, this very fact may not necessarily be a problem (as I am going to point out towards the end). However, there is indeed a fundamental sense in which the repatriation principle is blatantly flouted here. For, in talking about an 'affective response to an item', we have unwittingly separated the item from the response, the surroundings from the surrounded. Disinterested contemplation of the surroundings implies a state of mind and an observing subject distinct from, and apparently immune to, the state of affairs or objects that help shape the observing subject itself. This is more like moving firmly away from an aesthetics of repatriation. Therefore, in accordance with Berleant's point of view, traditional aesthetics arbitrarily and falsely fractures the actual continuity of the content of aesthetic experience.

4. *An experience that is aesthetic throughout*

In many ways, Berleant's project for an experientially engaged aesthetics echoes some of Dewey's early concerns in the first half of the twentieth century. Dewey (1980: 212) describes the basic condition for all experience—and, thus, the basic condition for any aesthetic experience—in terms of a,

...felt relationship between doing and undergoing as the organism and environment interact. Position expresses the poised readiness of the live creature to meet the impact of surrounding forces, to meet so as to endure and to persist, to extend or expand through undergoing the very forces that, apart from its response, are indifferent and hostile.

Berleant's engaged aesthetic response similarly consists in the dynamic and fluctuating rhythm that keeps the perceiver and what is perceived in a sort of harmonious and intertwined relationship of constant give and take (or take and give). Denying the reality of this relationship means denying the reality of the related parts (the organism and the environment). Since then this relationship is at its core an engaged one, and since experiential engagement is for Berleant the mark of the aesthetic, the implication is that *all* experience as such, that is all experience as engaged experience, is also aesthetically charged. 'The aesthetic becomes, then, a universal category, not *the* universal category but the omnipresent concept of a

pervasive feature of experience.’ (Berleant, 1992: 11.) Universally aesthetic experience is not of course the contemplative reception of objects; it is the making sense of reception, of objects, and of subjects alike. We do not suddenly discover that the whole world is beautiful; it is our engaged interrelation with the world that nurtures beauty. Beauty (or any other aesthetic category) resides in the bridges we built in engaging experientially with the world; it is neither ‘here’ on our side (accessed internally) nor ‘there’ on the other side (passively awaiting to be discovered). Furthermore, as far as this aesthetics is about engagement with the surrounding environments, it is also about engagement with other human beings that are part of these environments. In other words, it is a humanizing aesthetics, together with being an ecological aesthetics.

III. Aesthetics of separation (1, 2)

From a general perspective that appears to be opposing all this, the aesthetic nature of perception is often qualified in terms of different kinds of ontological distinctions, or different degrees of separation between those experiences that may be deemed as aesthetic and those that are allegedly not so. Various philosophies of art find it is legitimate to disregard the aesthetics of experiencing the environment, as opposed to the aesthetics of experiencing those segments of the environment that may qualify as art. This is, after all, one of the reasons why environmental aesthetics has had a relatively short history.

Hegel believed that beauty in art stands ontologically higher than any beauty in nature, because of the privileged relation holding between art and what he calls the Ideal (see Hegel, 1993: 3–5). The perception of beauty in art involves a coming into contact with a loftier universal consciousness, whereas nature lies at a lower level that is almost impenetrable by this consciousness. Nature is of course perceivable, but in a way that does not make it possible for our aesthetic sensibilities to be activated (at least not beyond a crucial point). This is then an aesthetics of separation and disengagement from certain aspects of experience. More recently, in his discussion about found objects as artworks, or about the distinction between art and non-art, Lamarque (2005: 27) notes that,

Warhol’s work [*Brillo Boxes*], as well as being made up of physical objects, is also an intentional object in this technical sense: it embodies a thought, it has a content, it expresses a meaning and it is embedded in art history, whereas the other objects [commercial Brillo boxes] have no meaning and do not stand for anything, even though they too are human artefacts, have a function and conform to a design.

Again, perceiving one’s environment (instantiated here by the commercial Brillo Boxes) is seen as devoid of thought, content, meaning, history. In other words, nature remains inert and not subject to experiential engagement. The fact of its artificiality, its function and design, the link to particular modes of our experience of the world (as commodification ‘automata’, for example) is meant to be meaningless (something that is indeed a contradiction in terms). Undoubtedly, such accounts of the aesthetic cannot be taken as refutations of Berleant’s aesthetics of engagement, since they seem at least to leave the possibility of aesthetic engagement with nature open in principle. However, they are clearly incongruent with the wider ecological (and thus also

humanistic) concerns addressed by the aesthetics of repatriation, and this is all I wish to defend here.

IV. Aesthetics of separation (3)

Against Berleant, to suppose that there are degrees of aesthetic separation as above amounts in effect to revert to the comforting situation of externality and objectification. It seems comforting because it allows us to avoid the trouble of engaging and cancelling the barriers that prevent aesthetic repatriation. (Remember Plotinus, above: 'Call instead upon another vision which is to be waked within you, a vision, the birth-right of all, which few turn to use.') But, remarkably, it is precisely this aesthetic duty, so to speak, that Carlson finds difficult to accept. Berleant's aesthetic experience is, for Carlson, much like a 'subjective flight of fancy' (Carlson, 2002: 7). There seem to be no 'objective' grounds on which to test the validity of this experience. The relation between the experiencing subject and the experienced object becomes one of many other 'subjective' relations such as love, relations that 'notoriously lack objectivity. It is a well-known fact that every child appears beautiful to his or her parents' (Carlson, 2006: 425).

Naturally, on the one hand, to say that what is taken to be subjective lacks objectivity does not explain either subjectivity or objectivity. On the other hand, to say that the love for one's children is somehow aesthetically biased shows that either one has never loved or that one refuses to see what love is about. The love for one's children is of course *all about being biased*. When I say I find my child beautiful I do not maintain that 'I am making a subjective aesthetic claim, which may turn out to be false on some external objective grounds'. Even if there were indeed any external objective grounds on which to test such a judgement, this judgement would no longer be about the relation between my child and myself; it would be about something entirely different. (The robustness perhaps of my child's bone structure? The symmetry of his or her facial features?)

Similarly, Budd swiftly dismisses the whole of Berleant's project on the basis that it does away with disinterested, 'objective' attention and the contemplative attitude, without providing anything to replace them with (Budd, 2003: 111–112). But how to replace something that was not even there in the first place? Where it not for the distorting lens of the aesthetics of separation, the perceived or contemplated, together with the one that perceives or contemplates would have always remained intertwined. Of course, it is always legitimate to turn to the aesthetics of repatriation itself and question the ways in which perceiver and perceived are thus distinct while remaining deeply engaged and involved with one another. However, neither Carlson nor Budd seem to be addressing this point. Therefore, I need not be concerned with it regarding my main argument here. (Perhaps Kant's notion of 'subjective universality' is relevant. See Kant, 1911: § 6.)

V. Aesthetics of separation (4)

Finally, the ubiquitous universality of Berleant's engaged aesthetics may be questioned as unable to distinguish between 'superficial' aesthetic experiences and 'serious' aesthetic experiences. If everything and anything can be experienced aesthetically from the engagement point of view, there may be a problem in evaluating different experiences. For Carlson again, this problem forces us to focus on

the ‘true character’ of nature, which is by and large the subject matter of our natural sciences. His natural environmental model is precisely intended as a model for the appreciation of the environment, an appreciation that becomes aesthetic as far as it is enriched by our knowledge about the inner workings of nature (Carlson, 2002: 315). His claim (2002: xix) is that,

Information about the object’s nature, about its genesis, type, and properties, is necessary for appropriate aesthetic appreciation. For example, in appreciating a natural environment such as an alpine meadow, it is important to know, for instance, that it survives under constraints imposed by the climate of high altitude. With such knowledge comes the understanding that diminutive size in flora is an adaptation to such constraints. [...]

That one needs to be aware of alpine biology in order to appreciate aesthetically the alpine meadow sounds bizarre, to say the least. Compare the account given by the haiku poet Noburo Fujiwara (from an interview in Stryk, 1981: 240):

Every place is full of poetry. All one has to do is go find the poems. That’s why we can write one hundred poems in a day about a place we visit. We select an interesting and beautiful place and, on the spot, compose *its* poetry.

The poet is simply immersed into the environment, without having to turn to the physicist’s laboratory. And not only does he experience nature aesthetically but he is also able to transform this into art, which seems to be enriching and extending the original experience. Needless to say, one may not be able to write a single poem about the most enticing of natural environments, but one may surely be engaged into some sort of aesthetic conversation with such an environment. That all engaged experience is aesthetic does not exclude the possibility of having degrees of engagement and of immersion in the experience. In other words, it is not the case that the aesthetics of repatriation makes us feel at a loss when in need to compare relevant experiences. Carlson again seems to think that this is not enough, that degrees of aesthetic appreciation are inadequate in accounting for qualitatively differing aesthetic experiences (2006: 426–427). But, if this is true (and I am not at all sure it is), Carlson’s own natural environmental model must find itself in exactly the same position. For, presumably, the more I know about the natural processes shaping a given environment the more my aesthetic appreciation of it becomes complete.

More importantly perhaps, Carlson’s reliance on information supplied by the natural sciences constitutes a kind of choice that is itself theoretically suspect. At best, it is a choice that may be flowing *from* a certain attitude towards the environment, rather than dictating that attitude. For it appears as the provider of an allegedly objective set of (scientific) criteria, after having subjectively endorsed these criteria. In other words, the aesthetics of separation falls here on its own sword. As Heyd puts it (2001: 135–136):

The ‘stories of science’ are also deeply cultural since they arise from very particular cultural conditions (as were given in Modern Europe) and serve very specific cultural goals (namely predictive and retrospective explanation). [...] The illusion that science

is not driven by values, though, can only be upheld by those so deeply involved in its world picture that they lack the capacity for critical scrutiny of what science is.

I did point out at the beginning that science may provide its own model for understanding the environment, but this model is hardly concerned with continuities linking the surrounded and its surroundings. It is now obvious that to use this scientific model in order to infer the untenability of such continuities is a lot like eating one's cake and having it, too.

VI. An aesthetics for the environment

In sum, I have not tried here so much to defend a particular version of what one may call the aesthetics of repatriation regarding the environment. With Berleant's project of aesthetic engagement in mind, I have tried to show that —apart from any other merits that may count in its favour— such an aesthetics is congruent with the ecological and humanitarian concerns of our age. *A fortiori*, the opponents of this aesthetics seem to be either oblivious to its true content or unable to make sense of its importance.

It has to be said, however, that Berleant is not content simply with articulating a new paradigm for aesthetic appreciation. One of his main concerns is to actively target, in turn, what he sees as the Kantian plague of disinterestedness, distance, and objectification in traditional philosophical aesthetics. But the version of aesthetic Kantianism he is attacking is not necessarily the only possible one. The aesthetics of repatriation may be compatible with a particular understanding of disinterestedness that is free from the sin of objectification. Indeed McGhee (1991) has indicated (among others) that such an understanding is not only possible but also closer perhaps to Kant's proper intentions. Disinterested pleasure in beauty is not necessarily a pleasure that polarizes the perceiver versus the perceived. The perceiver does not derive pleasure from the perceived but from the experience of perception *itself*, and from the fruitful intuitions the latter may evoke. In this respect, the activity of experiencing aesthetically *is* the pleasure; it presupposes subjects and objects but transcends them, repatriates them back to the common ground that enables them both to be what they are. Carlson again (2006: 422) writes:

I may be totally engaged in the sensory qualities of my toothache, indeed they may consume my whole being, and yet this may not, and typically would not, constitute an aesthetic experience. Again, it seems that only something like disinterestedness can make my pain somewhat aesthetically appreciable.

Indeed, let us say that I may aesthetically derive from my toothache intuitions about the fragility of my body, the transient character of delight, and the grim reality of suffering (my own suffering as well as that of others). If this aesthetic attitude towards my toothache is disinterested, how is it so? The disinterestedness of distance says, in effect, that I can take away the pain and keep the experience that was linked to the pain. Therefore, the disinterestedness of distance betrays an aesthetics of separation and hijacks one part of my experience in the name of the whole. On the contrary, what one could now call the disinterestedness of engagement would keep the pain and keep the intuitions it evoked in me. These intuitions *are* my regurgitated

pain; without the pain, the intuitions would have been different. Given the appropriate circumstances in various aesthetic contexts, I may have equally well experienced the fragility of my body, the transient character of delight, and the grim reality of suffering. But this alternative experience of mine would not have been an experience as having been *bound up* at some moment or other with my toothache. Only the latter experience, and thus only the disinterestedness of engagement, leads back again to that route of repatriation, the route of harmonious living within the homeland of my experienced world—from my teeth to the furthest reaches of all environments.

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Moving from the margins, creating space with digital technology: wonder, theory and action

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Introductory note

The themes of this keynote lecture were presented through a set of images, questions and commentary. This paper is therefore offered, not as an academic paper, but annotations on elements of the visual presentation. A reading list of texts which informed the lecture is included. The focus of the keynote lecture was my personal experiences as a teacher educator and researcher in drawing attention to the lack of space for creativity in the school-based curriculum, and how the initial sense of disquiet and disturbance was translated into thinking and action in our practice in the School of Education. The presentation followed the trail, from early days of wonder and questioning, supported by a small community of like-minded people; to a research project with student teachers working in schools. The common thread through these experiences was the focus on the affordances of digital technologies for creative processes and activity. The text and images are licensed with Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial-Share Alike 2.0 UK: England & Wales License (see <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.0/uk/>).

Greetings from Brighton!



Brighton has been described as a lively and creative city. It attracts a wide variety of creative people taking part in the creative and cultural industries – actors, musicians, artists, writers, designers in fashion, new media, architecture, to name a few. It also has a reputation for tolerance of diversity. Since the early 19th century when the Prince Regent built the Pavilion, Brighton has been a town where people came ‘to

party'. Brighton is also a place where many people live and act 'on the margins'. There are disparities in the degrees of economic wealth, many people work in the lower waged jobs servicing the leisure industries, there is evidence of homelessness and drug use, and there are many independent, small businesses offering alternatives to the standard high street chains and franchises. It is within this context of creative energies and contradictions that the School of Education in the University of Brighton engages with the project of teacher education.

Wonder

Wonder is expressed through response and questions: Why is that like it is? Why do I feel like this? What would happen if...? How do we make sense of...? How can I solve this difficult problem? Why are these patterns like this? How can I develop a discipline of noticing surface and deep patterns and relationships here? How might things look differently? What is an appropriate scale of response? How do I deal with disappointment? Who else shares these questions and longings? Where does all this fit in relationship with other people and places? In 2000, five people from different areas of education – teaching, teacher education, software development, journalism and the arts – met together to ask these kinds of questions and establish 'Creating Spaces', a network of education professionals who were concerned about the low priority given to creativity in education policy and practice at the time, and the potential of digital technologies to contribute to creativity, as well as more constrained applications in classrooms. They realised that they were a group who often met at conferences and events, yet spent their time together in the margins of the official sessions, talking about and sharing their concerns in the coffee stands and bar. They recognised that they had connections and affections in their contact with each other, and were able to bring together a range of experiences, abilities and access to wider networks. 'Creating Spaces' grew in the following years, welcoming people who shared similar experiences and working on projects to raise awareness in practitioners and policy makers. The images show activities at a 'Networking' conference, where the focus was on the activities which are often marginal at other conferences – discussion, sharing, drama and fun! All these activities encouraged the members to think and act creatively in their own working contexts.

Theory

Theory underpins and informs our thinking and action, and theories of creativity for education need to move beyond understandings that creativity is just having good ideas, making pretty things, having a good time, for building self-esteem, takes place on Friday afternoons, and is easy. There are many facets to our developing understandings of creativity in psychology and philosophy: as divine inspiration; individual cognition and personality; accessible to measurement; expressed in relation to other people; nurtured in physical and social niches; expressed in all subject domains; evident in different cultures; and presenting different levels of originality, from the creativity of those 'heroes and heroines' who change the way in which we look and act in the world, to the creativity of most who engage in a creative act which is original to themselves. We are now not only concerned with questions about 'who' is creative, but also those questions about 'where' creativity is nurtured and expressed, or stifled and unrecognized. Creativity can be described as a 'confluence model, in the interaction between people and communities, processes, knowledge domains, and the wider social and cultural context.



Theory also needs to describe and explain the role of digital technologies in such a view of creativity. Whilst we take careful note of our concerns about the implications of the digital divide, 'cyberkids', digital literacies, environments for learning, waste, design, corporate monopolies and the economic impact of globalization, there are many ways in which digital technologies can be tools for creative processes and outcomes. In the late 1990s, the distinctive features of digital technologies which supported learning and teaching were identified as provisionality, interactivity, capacity, range, speed and automatic functions. Such a view locates the power of these features in the technologies themselves, rather than acknowledging the interaction with human agency. A more useful approach might be to consider the

affordances - the opportunities and constraints - that digital technologies offer in interaction with people and contexts. We recently identified 'clusters' of affordances of digital technologies for teacher learning, which are also helpful in discussions of digital tools: *knowledge building* – adapting, modelling and developing ideas; *distributed cognition* – accessing resources, composing and presenting information and the mutual shaping of activities; *community and communication* - exchanging and sharing communication; extending the context of activity; extending the participating community at local and global levels; and *engagement* – exploring and playing; acknowledging risk and uncertainty; working with interactivity; responding to immediacy.

Futurelab commissioned literature reviews of research and policy which put forward a framework for describing the ways in which digital technologies might be used as creative tools and media.

- a) *Creativity in physical and virtual environments*: The places in which we live, work and relate to others are connected with a range of meanings: experiences, perceptions, memories and meetings. Digital technologies can bring together physical and virtual spaces and offer exploration, play, risk, reflection and relationship with other people. Our network and mobile devices can capture, compose and communicate creative responses to physical settings and encounters.
- b) *Developing ideas*: Creative imagination not only generates ideas, it also discerns which of those ideas potential. Such creative processes are supported by play, exploration and focused engagement. There are many digital tools for conjectural and provisional play.
- c) *Making connections*: We are familiar with the opportunities for making connections with information, case studies, resources and creative practitioners – from international museums to small scale webcams. Social software, such as Flickr, YouTube and last.fm, enables the development of folksonomy tagging, and scrobbling, where users can categorise and retrieve web content, tracing the links made by others.
- d) *Creating and making meaning*: Creative practitioners, teachers and students use a variety of digital tools to manipulate text, image, sound and multimedia in order to express and share ideas and meaning. Such tools range from simple painting software, to digital movie making and music composition. Creative media production moves beyond immediate capture and presentation, but includes phases of fashioning, manipulation and an awareness of an audience to share and evaluate the meanings of the works.
- e) *Collaboration*: Creative practitioners and educators have long used tools from email to videoconferencing to collaborate with each other. Virtual Puppeteers, for example, is a resource which enables children to make 3D virtual puppets and stage settings, and create puppet plays in networked collaboration with other puppeteers and audiences in different locations. Digital tools for making connections, sharing spaces and producing creative content can disrupt the relationships between traditional institutions of media producers and broadcasters, and loosely organised networks of creative collaborators.

- f) *Communication, publication and audience:* This theme draws attention to the role of an audience in the evaluation of originality and value in creative activities. The growth of social software and the establishment of online communities has created opportunities for presentation and performance of creative digital work, from the informal space of YouTube and MySpace, to the formal ‘showcase’ of digital media awards.

Action

Action is expressed in recent policy and practice since the publication of ‘All Our Futures’, the report of the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (NACCCE), which defined creativity as ‘imaginative activity fashioned so as to produce outcomes that are both original and of value’. Policy initiatives have ranged from the production of curriculum materials to support creative practice in schools, to the establishing of Creative Partnerships, and the support for creative and cultural industries in the UK. This will provide a boost for these industries, but there are problems. There is a gap in the skills that the workforce will need to develop these industries. There is also a tension in the development of creativity in the school curriculum - is it for personal development and learning, or is it for training for the economy? How do teachers develop the curriculum and their teaching methods to deal with these different approaches?



A recent research project in the University of Brighton School of Education focused on how experiences in teacher education might promote critical understandings of creativity in education and the affordances of digital technologies to support creativity in schools. In the four year project researcher/tutors worked with student teachers in their final year of the BA(QTS). The students had demonstrated through their school

placements and university courses that ‘they knew what they were doing’ as ICT specialists in Key Stages 1, 2 & 3. They had a good understanding of how ICT can support learning and teaching, and had met the standards for teaching in a variety of classroom settings. The student teachers were experienced and confident, and ready to take up their first teaching posts. The projects were therefore designed to challenge some of the usual ways of working in university taught modules, in order to provoke new ways of thinking about teaching for creativity with digital media technologies. The creative activity focused on the making of digital videos with primary pupils in a variety of curriculum contexts. The funders were the Teacher Development Agency and the Creativity Development Fund in the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) for Creativity.

Five themes were identified in the analysis and presentation of the findings from the project.

- a) *The affordances of digital video*: The digital resources afforded opportunities for engagement, communication and knowledge building through ‘hard fun’ and ‘smart luck’. Pupils and student teachers were able to act in a variety of production roles, from composing narratives to directing action and capturing images. They were able to draw upon creative processes and express their ideas using film as a distinctive medium.



- b) *Creating spaces*: Theory and pedagogy for creativity were explored and discussed as the student teachers prepared and planned a range of teaching strategies to support and fashion imaginative ideas and capability with a technical medium and tool.



- c) *Improvisation and skilful neglect*: The student teachers acknowledged the differences between teacher-directed planning, and learner-focused preparation. They could improvise in creative activities if they were well prepared, and step back with 'skilful neglect' to let pupils take risks and make mistakes safely. They learned how to act, think and reflect in the past, present and future simultaneously.



- d) *Roles and relationships*: The project provided opportunities to reflect on the challenges to traditional roles between teachers and pupils as they engage in creative activity. The student teachers had personal experience of risky, creative activities to enable them to develop new combinations of knowing, and new ways to model learning with their pupils.



- e) *Ready, willing and able*: Professional knowledge was described in Shulman's model through vision, motivation, understanding capability & reflection for individuals, and communities working within capital of policy and resource.

Looking back and asking questions:

In reflecting on the issues raised in thinking about wonder, theory and action in our creative practices with digital technologies, the following questions framed the subsequent discussion:

- How might we recognise the ‘glimmers of pleasure, progress and achievement along the way, as well as a sense of fitness, elegance or beauty?
- What might be the implications of creativity becoming more mainstream than marginal?
- How might we recognise and sustain the creative tension and energy that can be generated from the margins?

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The turn to aesthetics in archaeological theory - experiencing materiality through art and experiment

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Introduction

Since the mid-1990s there has been a development towards acknowledging the value of practical knowledge and individual experience in archaeology in recent years. With the aim of gaining an understanding of individual agency and experience of the past, some theorists have begun to appropriate contemporary art practice and aesthetics. This calls for a re-appraisal of aesthetics beyond the notion of aesthetic experience and beauty. Aesthetics in conjunction with phenomenology and art practice may be able to facilitate a meta-critical discourse, which examines perception and experience across the disciplines. Featuring a case study from the field of experimental archaeology, this paper argues that Aesthetics, can be of particular value to archaeological theorists in their attempt to overcome the dichotomy between 'materiality' and mind, which dominates current archaeological debates.

Archaeological theories from positivism to phenomenology

Having emerged as a science rather than a leisure pursuit of the upper class and the enthusiastic dilettante, archaeology began to define its own methodological approaches and philosophy. Before the 1990s, archaeological theory concentrated on a scientific approach to data collection and evaluation. This was seen as advancement from the typological approach used by antiquarians, which had the artefact as its main focus of attention. Scientific advances in dating and location techniques, such as Carbon 14 dating and geophysical or radar surveying, facilitated a shift away from the traditional methods of typological classification of objects towards interpretation of whole sites and artefacts in their contexts. With aerial photography settlements and other archaeological sites could now be viewed in relation to natural features such as mountains, rivers and lakes, placing them into their contextual landscapes.

This emphasis on context rather than the individual artefact had been advocated previously. From the 1930s onwards, Grahame Clark, professor at Cambridge during the mid-20th Century, called for an approach in his field of prehistory which would take economic and ecological factors into account. His concern was not chiefly with the 19th Century method of object classification, but with gaining an understanding of life in the past. This was to be achieved through the detailed study of individual sites, paying close attention to so-called slight archaeological remains, such as pollen, bone

fragments and plant remains. This was to facilitate a reconstruction of human activity in past societies within their respective environments.

From the 1960s onward, Processual Archaeology developed as the main framework in the English-speaking world, especially in North America. It could be characterised as on the one hand following the social sciences in acknowledging the significance of environmental influences on human culture and behaviour. On the other it promotes a combined approach, which draws on rigorous scientific techniques and methods with the aim of understanding past societies.

This approach, also termed “New Archaeology” by its first proponent Lewis Binford in 1962, could be described as mainly empirical in direction. Separating itself from the historical sciences and its methods of documenting and tracing of historical records, it borrowed heavily from the natural sciences. Processual archaeologists viewed societies in a way that mirrored emerging scientific approaches such as systems analysis – if one element, for instance the environment or available technology changed; it was assumed that a society would change in a measurable and predictable way. As a method of collecting reliable data, Binford advocated the study of past societies with a particular view to their diversity, in order to identify their respective responses to environmental or technological change. Based on cultural materialism and an assumption of survival-driven motivation in past societies, the main subjects of enquiry were function and purpose with regard to artefacts and environments.

Binford's deductive-nomological approach, in which the testing of hypotheses against empirical data generated the majority of findings, was criticised by both scientists and archaeologists. The main point of contention was its effectiveness in reconstructing past events. It was argued that Binford's methodology was producing self-evident laws, such as the increase in dwellings found on site being directly linked to the increase of the population.

It has been argued that the use of scientific methods alone does not constitute a scientific discipline (Greene, 1995:130). In fact, archaeology as a discipline concerned with human subjects, albeit from the past, struggles with the rejection of individual or subjective interpretation so prevalent in modern “scientific” paradigms. Even the repeatability of the archaeological experiment as a method of hypothesis-testing is impeded by the circumstance that, “no two sites or artefacts are ever the same” (Greene, 1995:130). Therefore, archaeological analysis will need to include individual consideration from case to case.

With the emergence of a theoretical discourse, which explored the nature of archaeological knowledge itself, archaeology and its histories were increasingly understood as social constructs. The influence of Critical Theory is highly evident in post-processual, or interpretive archaeologies. Due to its flexibility towards interpretation of the archaeological record and questioning of the claim to objectivity made by archaeologists, post-processualists have been accused of nihilism and relativism. When considering the value attributed by interpretive and post-processual

archaeologists to the individual experience, this may be understandable from a scientific point of view.

However, while many interpretive approaches are founded on philosophical methods, they have supported the development of other archaeological methodologies, which are beginning to consider a practical or individual experience of and in the past. Much discussion has centred on postmodern abstract concepts such as 'performance' and 'materiality', which seek to interpret the archaeological record, its physical components, within a social context. It could be argued that these new views in archaeological theory are valuable in their 'deviation' from now traditional scientific approaches, through their emphasis on the individual experience and their awareness of archaeology itself as sited within a social context.

Experiment or experience?

Having opened a philosophical discourse on the nature of archaeology itself, theoretical archaeology now concerns itself with the fundamental questions about perception, knowledge and practice, which seems to mark a similar development to that in contemporary art practice.

Archaeology, art, design and architecture could be, and in research and education often are, conflated under the term 'material culture studies', as they all deal with our relationship with the physical elements of human activity, both natural and artefactual. The discourse within the field of Material Culture Studies has even generated terms such as 'object agency', which ascribes an active role to physical objects in a society. Aesthetics as the 'science of perception' is therefore gaining in importance to these disciplines, as it investigates human interaction with the physical environment.

In the course of this process, experimental archaeology has become increasingly popular in Europe, with some universities offering programmes or modules as part of more traditional archaeology courses. This demonstrates the apparent need for a direct engagement by archaeologists with physical experience as a 'way of knowing'. In recent years, different approaches have developed towards the practical aspects of life in the past.

Initially, experimental archaeology as practiced by academic specialists is heavily influenced by the scientific approach. Practical experiments are conducted to test hypotheses pertaining to questions of the use of technologies, function and manufacture of artefacts and structures, and the archaeological record itself, such as decay rates. In addition to this, the sites of archaeological experiments themselves have been developed into displays accessible to a more general public. Reconstructed buildings are valuable to archaeologists as they yield data on, for instance, the durability of the construction materials or the division of space and labour. Many of these sites have grown into open-air museums, such as Lejre in Denmark, or the Oerlinghausen open-air museum in Germany – examples are plentiful. Demonstrations of historic activities and crafts are hosted by these museums as educational events. As these activities differ in the intention and aims of its participants, a distinction must now be made between the archaeological experiment,

the experiential activity and re-enactment. This will go some way to illustrate some of the problems connected to an aesthetic, that is a perceptual experiential approach to archaeological topics.

The archaeological experiment in its original sense uses scientific methods and instruments in order to test hypotheses concerned with physical archaeological material. For example, the Butser Ancient Farm has been conducting experiments testing the rate of decay of structures and artefacts. Earthworks were constructed by archaeologists, incorporating artefacts of different materials. In regular intervals, sample excavations are conducted to check the decay in the artefacts themselves, and the earthworks are recorded in order to track their disintegration. In the case of the archaeological experiment, the results are measurable or observable data, which are often concerned not with past situations, but with the nature of the archaeological record itself, the only evidence archaeologists have available to them. The emphasis on empirical, controlled data collection and a positivist approach has been pointed out in order to distinguish the archaeological experiment from other practical activities (Reynolds, 1999).

The category of experiential activities may be more relevant in discussing an aesthetic turn in archaeology. As mentioned before, these activities are widely used in educational settings and include demonstrations and hands-on workshops to communicate archaeological findings. Often these are hosted by institutions such as museums or visitor centres. An example of experiential activities within a larger research group is the Umha Aois (Irish for 'Bronze Age') project. As part of an annual symposium, educational events are held for school children. The students typically participate in the making clay moulds, which are then cast by the facilitators. They are also invited to try the reconstructed Bronze Age bellows as part of a guided tour of the workshop site. From the demand for such activities it is clear that the aesthetic that is the physical and sensual involvement in the actual activity is seen as being of equal or greater value than the verbal or written communication of historical dates in the classroom. The question "What was it really like in the Bronze Age?" can be more fully answered through facilitating a direct experience to the learner. The physical effort and sense environment cannot be fully reconstructed through verbal description to a receiver who has not previously had that experience. Therefore the scarce and valuable findings from this period are more efficiently communicated if practical experience is also provided. In addition to the value as an educational tool, however, experiential activities can also provide information to the archaeological researchers themselves. Although results are not always measurable through figures and numbers, certain behaviours of materials in craft processes and architectural structures, or even of people in work situations, only become apparent through practical activities. A version of events in the past may emerge as a side-effect of the main experiment. As opposed to the experiential activity, which is aiming to widen an understanding of practical and perceptual circumstances in the past, re-enactment or 'living history' events are again to be distinguished as a different category of activities. Indeed, re-enactment has been criticised as "at best theatre, at worst the satisfaction of character deficiencies" (Reynolds, 1999). The use and teaching of historical or pre-historic techniques is not seen as advancing archaeological understanding and knowledge. The claim to authenticity in the reconstruction of objects and events must be severely

questioned, as romantic views of the past and personal ideological preconceptions influence the re-enactment.

It could be argued that re-enactment concentrates on the reproduction of the material aspects of historical periods, such as dress and artefacts. It could further be said that its primary aim is not strictly to advance scientific archaeological knowledge, but rather the spectacle, the personal interpretation of past events as well as an opportunity to socialise. Much like fantasy role-play, re-enactment has established its own rules, such as regulating verbal speech used during events in order to avoid “non-authentic” references. This demonstrates the recreational – and maybe escapist – nature of these activities, as their participants do not acknowledge their 'play' as an experiment, but play a role created by themselves.

From the above definitions it is becoming clear that the aesthetic element in archaeology is most prominent in the field of the experiential activity and education. These activities are increasingly seen as 'putting flesh onto the bones' of scientific data, communicating the essence of the findings to a lay audience as well as the specialist. This is achieved through directly observable processes and 'hands-on' experience. In theoretical archaeology, this direct engagement with the physical world has been considered under the concept of 'materiality'. This term has been used profusely in titles such as “The Materiality of Stone” by Christopher Tilley or “Rethinking Materiality” by Colin Renfrew. As a philosophical concept, it is beginning to be defined as the social meaning and significance of 'things' in relation to people (Tilley, 2007).

The following short exercise will illustrate some of the current ideas regarding human engagement with the material world as proposed by archaeologists today. The visual material used here was produced during recent Umha Aois events in 2005 and 2006.

Terms of engagement – approaching materiality through sense experience

Scientific method

When faced with an object or artefact in isolation (Fig 1), processual archaeology may begin with identifying the object through a typological analysis, which means comparing it to other, similar objects from the archaeological record whose provenance and function are already documented. Failing this, a materials analysis may yield some information on the possible function of the object. Having identified the body material as clay in its vitrified form, the vitrification will point to an exposure to great heat around 1,200 degrees Centigrade. Further analysis will show traces of copper, tin and lead, which have 'soaked' into the clay. This evidence will possibly lead to the conclusion that the object was a crucible, most likely for casting bronze. Although a lack of organic matter and situational context seems to preclude accurate dating of the object, a more detailed analysis can identify the metals used in the crucible as being of modern origin. When recorded, artefacts and sites are presented as diagrams in black-and-white line drawings, not as photographs. Archaeological drawings as a record are thus edited in order to provide only information which is deemed relevant.

It becomes clear that processual archaeology when applied to individual artefacts is well equipped to deal with hypotheses with a clear scientific slant, such as questions pertaining to the technical function or the age of the artefact. When present in context, as is mostly the case in archaeological excavations, the impact of technological objects on the social structure can also be determined from a functional or utilitarian perspective.

Figure 1.



Truth to Materials

In what could be understood as a very recent 'Turn to Aesthetics', anthropologist Tim Ingold calls for the consideration of “materials” as opposed to “Materiality” (Ingold, 2007). He proposes to view materials as ever mutating components of an environment which we ourselves are a part of, rather than the 'materiality' of artefacts or the 'materiality' of landscapes. It could be argued that this idea is a reversion to processual, empirical methods, where artefacts and non-modified objects are analysed on a molecular scale according to their physical properties only without taking into account their cultural meaning. This 'materialism' has had a parallel in modernist movements in art. The idea of 'Truth to Materials' was particularly prevalent in modernist practice and could be defined as a consideration of the inherent qualities of the medium, for example the unique qualities of paint, or the weight and volume of sculpture materials. This work is concerned almost exclusively with the material nature of art and artefacts. References to cultural context and representation and figurative context are omitted in order to concentrate on the medium itself.

To illustrate, our example could be seen through the lens of 'materials, not materiality' – and interestingly, seeing on its own may not be enough to fully grasp its material nature. At first glance, the object appears to be solid, approximately three inches high with a rough textured surface. Irregularly shaped areas of this surface are stained a glossy red with some copper-coloured specks, others are protruding slightly in a matte dark grey. We gain further information only by handling the object. When picked up it the object reveals itself as hollow (Fig. 2). It contains some glassy nodules and grains of what could be sand – or grainy silica. The material initially used may have

been clay, as there are some indentations which point towards a former plastic state. This was then transformed through great heat into the vitreous substance we now see.

From a modernist art critic's point of view, the object may not be the most successful work of art. Although its most prominent feature is the surface texture – created through the specific properties of its ceramic material interacting with heat – the object has other characteristics, too. The combination of texture and form makes this clearly an archaeological object. In either case – where do these observations from a 'materials only' position lead? While still practicable in art, any archaeological interpretation will eventually need to include the question of function and social context, if the aim of archaeology is an understanding of past societies and cultural change.

Figure 2.



Materiality as experience of materials

For interpretive archaeologists, the study of material objects is closely linked to questions of perception and the creation of meaning. Christopher Tilley uses the term 'materiality' in conjunction with a phenomenological view, thereby facilitating the exploration of the meaning of objects in a social context (Tilley, 2007). The term 'agency' or 'object agency' then means “providing affordances and constraints for thought and action” (Tilley, 2007:19). The post-processualist or interpretive approach aims to include the experience of the material world into its interpretation of the past, rather than just the materials themselves.

To illustrate this approach using our example, its scope needs to be extended beyond the object itself. At this point the experiential aspects of archaeology discussed above are vital in creating a physical experience and a 'live' context for the object. Bringing together the function and the empirical aspects of the object, the experiential event generates the site for a phenomenological approach. This site is not the excavation or decayed monument in a modern landscape that archaeologists are usually confronted with. It includes the elements of human agency as part of the site – the agents in this case are artists, crafts persons, researchers, academics, groups and individuals. As phenomenology suggests, there are as many layers of meaning and context as there are agents in the situation. Therefore the relationship between agents is as important as the objects or people themselves.

The object – it is now used as a crucible, not a piece of sculpture – placed into a pit-furnace assumes its functional place within a bronze casting process (Fig.3). It also forms a focal point for a communal experience; the fire containing the crucible may assume a social function as well as affording the technical process. If casting takes place at different times of the day, the experience necessarily changes, almost becoming a ritual activity (Fig.4). In the same way, people's different roles during this process will affect their experiences. They may in their own experience become bronze smiths or high priests, spectators or participants.

Figure 3.



Figure 4.



It could be argued that the physical process brings forth social relationships, and in turn, social relationships facilitate technological activities (Fig.5). The individual experience, intangible as it may be to the researcher, advances an understanding of past and present beyond the materialism of the New Archaeology. It takes into account the human scale of events in its temporality and negotiation of space, instead of concentrating on large scale events and long-term changes.

Figure 5.



Material engagement theory and contemporary art

Methodologically, it has been difficult for archaeologists to combine the scientific, empirical approach with a phenomenological perspective, which, as mentioned previously, has been criticised as relativist and even nihilist. In their search for an approach that unifies 'mind' and 'matter', archaeologists have even looked to art practice as a discipline which may further their understanding of experience and perception. Colin Renfrew's volume 'Figuring it Out' deals exclusively with contemporary art practice and its potential for archaeological understanding. What is difficult about Renfrew's attempt to use art as a means of understanding archaeological issues is that he appears to view artworks as artefacts, results of processes. Although this cannot be held against an archaeologist, his claim would necessitate a further discussion of what is meant by 'contemporary art', as the artwork is not always the sole focus of the artistic process.

Renfrew's interest in art practice as a means of furthering archaeological understanding is connected to his proposal of a 'material engagement theory', which also seeks to unify the concepts of 'mind' and 'matter'. Renfrew argues that many symbolic concepts are actually contingent on their material substance. For example, 'currency' or 'value' are dependent on a material substance to which these concepts can be ascribed. "The symbol cannot exist without the substance, and the material reality of the substance precedes the symbolic role [...]" (Renfrew, 2004:25). He further explains that some conceptual or social properties can become 'immanent in things', not only physical characteristics of physical mass or chemical composition. From this would follow that meaning is somehow inherent in material objects, not constructed by the engagement with other objects or people. Some of the criticism towards Renfrew, especially in connection with his use of avant-garde art to investigate archaeological perception, has been directed at the type of understanding Renfrew proposes. According to Leo Klejn, this is "just intuitive appreciation" (Klejn, 2006:983). Renfrew is accused of 'defecting' to the side of the hermeneutic archaeologists, the post-modern approach of interpretive archaeologies and of deserting the scientific, rational approach of the New Archaeology.

Indeed, it is difficult to see how Renfrew's discovery of apparent similarities in artworks and artefacts, creative processes and archaeological methods can be used as a method to yield additional insights into the past. The assumption inherent in his suggestions is again that social and conceptual values are somehow stored or recorded in the artefact and can be retrieved by viewers on demand today. This view is similar to some of the modernist approaches to art criticism – the meaning of the work is assumed to be universal and therefore can be understood by any viewer willing to patiently look at the work.

Conclusions

From an art historian's or practitioner's point of view, this understanding of aesthetics as a 'feeling' seems outdated. Already during the early 20th Century artists like Kandinsky have attempted to generalise the emotional and perceptual effect of physical attributes such as colour and form – and failed to come to a conclusion. With post-modern approaches in art, the effects of meaning and context are the main concern, but again there have been no general conclusions that can be proven in a positive, scientific sense. It is interesting that archaeologists are turning to the aesthetic approach at a time when art, the discipline arguably most involved with aesthetics, is now much more concerned with sociological, or even anthropological issues.

In his 'Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics', Hegel already grappled with the definition of beauty in art, the value of art and the possibility of a scientific approach to art at the beginning of the 19th Century. Hegel did not understand art as a self-expressive activity, which is so often the case today. Belonging in the same category as philosophy – and by extension, science – and religion, art is defined as a way of discovering the truth. In contrast to philosophy and science, however, art is limited as it communicates in a physical medium, appealing to the senses rather than abstract thought. Hegel further argues that art, once it becomes conceptual and concerned with the immaterial, it turns into 'picturesque philosophy'.

Most importantly, art and experience both depend on their interaction with physical media. Perhaps it is time to re-evaluate the way archaeologists and artists perceive objects and environments. The pre-occupation with abstract concepts which we assign to objects is proving to reinforce the dichotomy between mind as abstract and matter as concrete. Rather than imposing theory onto artefacts, we may consider observing our physical and mental interaction with the physical environment. In this case, the role of aesthetics as dealing with 'taste' or even an 'aesthetic feeling' retreats into the background. Instead, aesthetics could become concerned with human perception, as the original Greek term suggests.

Instead of confining mind, emotions and thought to the realm of the 'immaterial', they may be seen as part of the material world. Neuroscience has enabled us to physically detect how the brain is shaped by experiences and actions. This is acknowledged by archaeologists like Chris Gosden, who argues that the idea of intelligence should be expanded beyond its verbal expression to the emotions and the felt body experience when considering material culture (Gosden, 2004). This argument justifies the turn to practice and experiment, as well as the experiential activity in archaeology, as these

activities explore the impact of individual and shared physical experiences on culture and society. They are therefore 'aesthetic' in that they create sense experiences for researchers and the public alike.

Art practice as a way of understanding archaeology as suggested by Renfrew may be useful in the context of 'theorising practice'. As practiced today, art not only deals with certain subject matter outside of itself, but also investigates our interaction with environments, both physical and social. In its function as 'picturesque philosophy', as a metacritical tool, it may be uniquely qualified to negotiate the distinction between 'materiality' and the elusive immaterial.

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Taking the aesthetic temperature: reflections on the role of the arts in a healing context

Peter Jordan (Waterford Institute of Technology, Ireland)

This paper will consider the role of the arts in a hospital context through an investigation of their aesthetic, psychological, affective and physical effects. It may be useful as an introduction to provide a summary of the context in which the arts for health movement operates through an investigation of changes taking place in both the art world and the healing environment. I am writing from the viewpoint of someone more involved with art theory than art practice, and with the visual rather than the other arts, so if what I say is skewed towards the visual arts, then it is because this is what I know best.

In the first instance, a transformation is now apparent in the role of the artist - from the 'romantic loner' of the nineteenth century to the socially engaged facilitator of the twenty-first. This lack of a single clearly demarcated role for the artist - that of the 'visionary seer' - has led to artists becoming what has been termed 'flexible cultural opportunists.' i.e. ready to engage in art practice at any number of levels and for any number of social purposes. This shift has been evident in art educational changes over recent years. At Waterford IT for example, the curriculum has been significantly broadened from purely studio-based training to projects of an applied nature involving application of new technology, working in site specific contexts and facilitating public involvement in the creative process.

Alongside a more public role for the artist has been the development or re-development of the concept of 'public art' and a move towards the greater democratisation of the arts. One consequence of this has been the increasing trend to take artwork out of the conventional and elite gallery space into the broader public arena. In this respect the hospital may now be seen to provide the ideal 'public' space, attracting a considerably more diverse audience than the traditional art gallery, concert hall or education centre, and a much larger one too. Waterford Regional Hospital has for example has in the region of 5000 visitors per day.

At the broadest artistic level then, there are new opportunities and wider audiences available to artists by expanding their role, as exemplified by the growing arts in health development. These changes have not come value-free however, and the transition from Paul Gauguin's 'Artist as God' to Joseph Beuys' 'Artist as Everyman' has involved significant compromise and loss of autonomy for the artist. He can no longer expect automatic public reverence, and must be prepared to negotiate his role to find an appreciative audience.

(Related) changes have also begun to take place in medical and health practices with an expansion of conventional scientific ways of treating illness to include a more humanistic view of illness, well-being and the healing process. The growth of medical humanities as a subject on the curriculum of many medical and nursing courses is evidence of this concern to treat the whole person. This includes incidentally, a replacement of the arrogant condescending authority of the medical expert by a more approachable and humane mediator, concerned not only for the physical but also for the emotional and even spiritual welfare of patients. There is now awareness that the self-esteem and dignity of the patient are critical factors in recovery and an approach in which the patient is merely treated as an object of investigation hinders this process.

It can be seen that one consequence of the two changes cited above is a concern to provide life-enhancing experiences to diverse audiences and the arts make precisely that claim. Indeed, they hardly need to since most people would agree that art in a hospital setting is a good thing. The growth of the arts for health movement over the past two decades is evidence of this general approval and popular appeal. But how is this phenomenon to be explained or justified? 'It is claimed that 'there is nothing as practical as a good theory', and so the second part of this paper will attempt to trace theories or concepts which underpin this phenomena and explain the life-enhancing role of art.

Starting with some general aesthetic theory, most philosophers have seen a primary artistic purpose in giving pleasure by taking people out of themselves, albeit quite temporarily. Remember also the French artist, Henri Matisse's statement, "What I dream of is an art of balance, of purity and serenity, devoid of troubling or depressing subject matter...a soothing calming influence on the mind, something like a good armchair which provides relaxation from physical fatigue" (Harrison and Wood, 1992: 76).

Psychologists explain this 'taking out of oneself' as a focusing of attention on something which has an intense interest for the viewer/listener. People become 'enraptured'. But what can it do for those who are ill or working in particularly stressful situations? As Matisse claims, the work should exert a soothing influence, particularly to allay the physical preoccupations and anxieties that attend illness. But in order for the work of art to exert this influence, it must first of all be recognized. Psychologists talk about 'schema' or patterns that are the basis of the mental representations we possess. One delight in the contemplation of art is in our recognition of the pattern or the schema - something we already know, and gain pleasure in meeting again. For example in visual art terms recognising a particular grouping of figures as an 'Annunciation' theme. At a more sophisticated level, this would involve perhaps recognition of balance and completeness in the underlying structure of a composition. Whilst taking account of personal experience such schema also embody the general cultural and temporal conventions of the time.

In music, when someone is listening to a piece whose schema or pattern is known, part of the pleasure may be in the fulfillment of expectancies and anticipation of the pattern of the melody or the dynamics of the music. We know what will come next. In

this case, if the musical rhythms align with visceral ones, then the result should be a reduction of high blood pressure and nervous tension.

The schema in relation to music that people possess may be quite basic or through experience and exposure quite sophisticated. For example, a music-lover will appreciate the subtle changes of schema in a particular performance of a piece of Bach's music and the pleasure will be in recognising these. Someone who has never listened to eighteenth century music before may not be able to recognize the pattern of the music at all, and will have a reduced experience.

Another psychological and emotional purpose of art, allied to recognition, is that the work creates an 'instantiation' or a vivid instance of some event or situation that is important to the recipient. One purpose of literature, stories, drama, or poetry is to show in rich and imaginative detail the nature of a particular experience. For example, what happens when a reflective and indecisive person who is asked to avenge his father's murder? You will recognise this as the theme of Shakespear's Hamlet. Experiencing the work of art may enable us to live through some very powerful emotions, ones we recognise or even fear, and thereby undergo some kind of catharsis or relief or perhaps simply a recognition that other people have gone through the same experience. In other words it can help to create meaning in situations of illness that are often frightening and bewildering. As Imogen Locke notes in her introduction to Susan Macfarlane's exhibition, 'A Picture of Health', "It demystifies the latest in clinical practice...reveals a dedication and compassion in the care of patients...(and)...helps many people for whom breast cancer is a daunting reality to understand better their illness and treatment" (Lock, 1996:3).

The psychological processes described above are cognitive ones we have all experienced, but there are clear emotional benefits too. We know from research carried out on colour and mood that certain colours (like certain chords in music) are known to have a calming effect and can act to reduce tension and to alleviate physical symptoms, whereas other colours/chords may generate depression or cause stress.

There is a close connection here between arts for health, which I have presented as a form of public art, and art as therapy. Sometimes, one crosses over into the other. For example some research in the UK with cognitively disabled adults in a care setting used reproductions of well-known visual art works to stimulate emotional communication in patients unable to communicate their feelings through language (Denicolo, 2006). This communicative role of art may also feature in more non-targeted art interventions by allowing people to share emotions of laughter or of sadness. For example, in 2003 the Royal Brompton Hospital in London showed an exhibition of cartoons based on portraits of hospital staff to the entertainment of all. The well-known longitudinal 'Nuns study' that has been conducted in the USA over the last few decades, shows that nuns who are happier and more socially integrated live considerably longer than those who are socially isolated.

For other audiences, such as hospital staff and visitors, the art-work serves to create a richer environment than one simply associated with sickness. This rich environment may serve to call up a multitude of stimuli, not simply those associated with health or

well-being, thus 'normalising' what may be an intimidating environment. It also incidentally perhaps for some of these other audiences, health or art practitioners for example, allows them to engage in reflective practice and experimentation of a type not routinely used, and so stimulate creativity. In this sense art for health has an educative role.

Apart from psychological considerations, the type of socialisation and group processes that may be involved in experiencing or creating art is important in enhancing well-being. Up to the middle of this century it was common for hospitals and asylums, particularly where patients stayed for long periods of time, to have orchestras in which both patients and staff participated, or to put on dances or plays which served to encourage social interaction at a number of levels. Many of these practices disappeared as a more scientific model of medicine took over, but the effect on patients and staff of participating in a vital community was a strong one. These social relationships served to enhance dignity and self-esteem and provided opportunities for autonomy in groups of dependent people who otherwise had little control over their lives.

So what are the implications for designing cultural programmes in hospitals of these brief theoretical considerations? Some are obvious as follows.

The provision of rich sensory environments can take place at a number of levels. In the case of Waterford Regional Hospital, the Healing Arts Trust originally made attempts to enhance the physical ambience of the hospital by adding visual adornment to an otherwise bleak environment. This activity has since been superseded by a highly developed multi-disciplinary arts programme with both active and passive components, embracing; visual art, music, poetry, drama, creative writing and storytelling. The question may be raised as to whether all art forms are equally effective as healing agencies. For instance, different art forms pose different challenges and choices. Music for example forms an ambient and pervasive context - it can't be turned off and people cannot opt not to listen in the way that a viewer may choose not to look at a piece of visual art. Does this imply that music should be restricted to particular venues to which people should come rather than being played, as in *muzak* in supermarket aisles to everyone.

A second question raised is in relation to the role of art as reassuring or as challenging. Given that people like what they know, does this imply that the art presented should be the known, the anodyne, the reassuring? Should there be a preference in music for the lyrical or the popular at the expense of the striking or the *avant garde*? What would a constant playing of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* do for the blood pressure of patients or staff?

So too with visual art. Should there be an avoidance of certain themes or subject matter, to do with illness or death for example? Is it better to stick to pleasant landscape? Could there be use of more emotional themes or subjects as a way of allowing people to come to terms with illness, or is it too prescriptive an approach? Another question is that of choice. To what extent should groups, for example of patients or staff be asked what they would like to experience in an arts for health

setting at the expense of their being challenged by newer or more radical or innovative forms?

These are not questions divorced from standard art practice - any arts centre or art gallery faces the same considerations. Perhaps the difference is in the enhanced need for well-being in this particular context and with this key audience. As Richard Smith stated in his BMJ Editorial (December, 2000),

More and more of life's processes and difficulties are being medicalised. Medicine cannot solve these problems. It can sometimes help but often at substantial cost. Worst of all people are diverted from what may be much better ways to adjust to these problems... If health is about adaptation, understanding and acceptance, then the arts may be more potent than anything that medicine has to offer. (White, 2005)

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John Lindley

Poetry written and performed by John Lindley

THE THIS AND THAT RANT

it's mobile phones and mobile phones
in the cot, in the car, in the grave, in our bones
it's Millennium Bugs and Millennium Domes
it's replicate, duplicate, send in the clones

it's Star Wars 12 at the Multiplex
it's unspecial films sold on special effects
it's physical jerks and physical wrecks
with stars in their eyes and pains in our necks

it's Chelsea this and Man. U. that
it's sod where the rest of the bloody game's at
it's first in the queue and first out of the hat
it's the fat of the land and the land of the fat

it's The Daily Mail and The Daily Express
with their 'Moral Crusade' and their peek up the dress
it's The Star and The Sun and the whole bloody rest
it's Murdoch most horrid - the pox of the press

it's Techno that and Retro this
it's samples and loops and taking the piss
it's redub, replay, rehash and remix
it's the record that sticks and then sticks and then sticks

it's war over there and it's war over there
it's Bush and Bin Laden, it's Saddam and Blair
it's the *doing what's right* and the *doing what's fair*
it's the lies and the scams, the *concern* and the *care*

it's Winfrey and Springer and Rantzen and co.
it's talk shows that talk but have nothing to show
it's plebs and celebs with a fortune to grow
it's The National Enquirer, OK and Hello

The Turn to Aesthetics

it's 'The People's This' and 'The People's that'
it's the Daily Sport with it's tit for tat
it's SHOCK! and FURY!, EXCLUSIVE! and pap
it's crap for the masses and masses of crap

it's a Sky TV with nothing to say
it's 'Pay-as-you-view' 'stead of 'Match of the Day'
it's the Premier League and the sweet F.A.
those guilty of giving the game away

it's magazine fashion and magazine sex
it's Maxim and Loaded, it's 'boob jobs' and 'peccs'
it's this wally's wife and that wally's ex
it's Becks and Posh and Posh and Becks

it's that and this and this and that
it's a new bloody cheese in the same bloody trap
it's this and that and that and this
it is what it isn't and it isn't what it is

EARLYS AND LATES

As a kid I never really understood what Dad did,
leaving early on a 3-speed Raleigh,
the wheeled song of his pedals in the yard
half-dreamed by me in the winter dark.

Something to do with machines,
with chains, tools and oil,
the latter half-mooned beneath each nail
like a partial eclipse,
a weekly pay packet from Renold in his pocket.

Of a morning he was all buttered toast on the run,
a fuss of bike clips, bread, corned beef and thermos
and an army knapsack that smelled of tobacco and brass.
And of an evening, on lates, much the same,
scoured fry-up and tea leaves in his wake
and, in the ashtray, the dimp not worth taking.

Forty years on I pass a mill he never worked at,
see a bike that wasn't his
tethered by a chain he didn't make.
But it doesn't take much to gulp him in,
to close my eyes just enough
for the rain to be machine oil,
the full moon his cloth cap
flat on the kitchen table.

And then there's a part of me
that imagines every bike that I see, a Raleigh,
every chain that I hear, a Renold
and every link, one forged by my Dad.

JIVING AT THE JUNK FOOD BALL

We don't want seed, we don't want veg.
You can't eat flowers, you can't chew sedge.
We're living life out on the edge
Down at the Junk Food Ball.

We bring them down with knife and gun.
We burn the buggers till they're done.
We slap them on a sesame bun
And scoff them one and all.

We've plucked the feathers, shorn the fleece.
We've fried the chicken piece by piece.
We're swimming in a lake of grease
Down at the Junk Food Ball.

We don't want veg., we don't want seed.
We don't want muesli, plants or weed.
Triple cholesterol's all we need
To satisfy us all.

We lick our fingers, smack our lips.
We all 'go large' on Coke and chips
As the fat and grease and pastry drips
Down at the Junk Food Ball.

Egg McMuffins, Spud McFries -
We shovel them in for exercise
Till our bellies swell to twice their size
And our chins begin to fall.

We like the craic, we like the banter.
We hail from Grimsby to Atlanta.
We're mainlining on Coke and Fanta
Down at the Junk Food Ball.

We don't use steel, we just use plastic.
The trays are cool, the lids fantastic.
The drinks are sweet, the meat, elastic.
The grease is wall to wall.

Burgers burn and donuts dunk.
In insane cows our teeth are sunk.
And it's junkety-junkety-junkety-junk
Down at the Junk Food Ball.

DOIN' IT IN STYAL

I'm doin' it at the weekend
I'm doin' it through the week
I'm doin' it in the way I walk
and the way I've learned to speak

I'm doin' it for my missin' dad
I'm doin' it for my mum
doin' it for my girl in care
doin' it for my son

doin' it mean and nasty
doin' it sweet and pleasant
doin' it for a misspent past
and a fuckin' misplaced present

I'm doin' it with attitude
doin' it with tears
I'm doin' it for weeks like months
and for months that seem like years

I'm doin' it in the chapel
doin' it on the wing
doin' it down the seg'
when I haven't done a thing

doin' it in Wilson
doin' it in Fry
it seems I'll keep on doin' it
until the day I die

I'm doin' it in Nightingale
in Righton, Howard and Size
in Barker, Bruce and Bronte
in a hundred alibis

in Mellanby and Patterson
in Gaskell and in Fox
I'm doin' it for the walls, the yard,
the doors, the keys, the locks

in Butler and in Martin
in Davis and on Waite
in the gym and in the Reeman
in my head and out the gate

The Turn to Aesthetics

I'm doin' it for my feller
and he'd do the same for me
though it's me who's doin' the sentence
and it's him who's walkin' free

I'm doin' it for the governor
I'm doin' it for the screws
for the chaplain and the tutors
and the ones like me and you

I'm doin' it for the listeners
for the dogs outside the class
for the pigeons who refuse to leave
for the ducks behind the mess

for the ones who've shipped to Brockhill
for the ones that went Drake Hall
for the ones back on the outside
I'm doin' it for them all

for the cutters and the jail bent
for the straights, the gays, the lost
for the innocent and the guilty
the crooked and the crossed

I'm doin' it as daytime tough
I'm doin' it with a smile
I'm doin' it in nighttime tears
I'm doin' it in Styal

I'm doin' it cos' I got no choice
but to do it here in Styal
I'm doin' it just to do my rip
and I'll been doin' it for a while

Many of the place references in this poem are to the names of the 'houses' where the inmates are transferred to from the wings in Styal women's prison.

FATTY ARBUCKLE

There's many a slip 'twixt a Max Sennett clip
And the unscripted prat fall of sin.
Via gossip and scandal publicity's handle
Is turning to let the dark in.
Through the pious address of the carrion press
Peeks the hypocrite morals of men;
And in Roscoe's scared face we see every trace
Of the hunted, accused and condemned.

He's fat, don't you see? And as rich as can be,
So he's guilty as Judas and Cain
And although his defence proves there's no evidence
To remotely connect him to blame
The public's decided - been conned and misguided
And his name has been blackened with lies;
And in Roscoe's sad face can be seen every trace
Of a victory that falls down and dies.

Although later reports show strong moral support
From Chaplin and Keaton and more
A career resurrected, well steered and directed
Soon's shattered on apathy's shore.
When the public decide who has lived and who's died
They vote with a turn of their backs;
And Roscoe's lost face is ravaged with waste -
Hacked to pieces by unfeeling hacks.

You can see him today (in an odd sort of way)
When you're hungry for burgers and Coke;
Immortality found in the money-go-round
Of shopping arcades. Here's the joke:
As you sit there and munch on your Arbuckle lunch
Do you question what brought him his fame?
A bottle, a corpse and injustice, of course,
And a saleable, memorable name.

FOR THE TAKING

I've spied it, clocked it,
broken or unlocked it.

Swiped it, pinched it,
snaffled and half-inched it.

Took it, nabbed it,
robbed it, grabbed it.

Thieved it, bagged it,
seized it, blagged it.

Borrowed it, begged it,
done a runner, legged it.

Filched it, picked it,
knocked it off, nicked it.

Flogged it, shifted it,
racked it, lifted it.

Conned it, fibbed it,
pocketed and cribbed it.

Smuggled it, diddled it,
cheated it and fiddled it.

Seen it, clutched it,
hidden it, crutched it.

Burgled it, bungled it,
gone before they've rumbled it.

Scrounged it, raided it,
looted it and traded it.

Pilfered it, proffered it,
took it when I'm offered it.

Got it, carried it,
took it home and married it.

Sampled it, swapped it,
took a card and chopped it.

Chilled it, rushed it.
pedalled it and pushed it.

Scored it, dealt it
snorted it and felt it.

I've blitzed it, blown it,
bombed it, known it.

I've wrecked it, ruined it,
I'm back in here for doin' it.

I'm back in here for doin' it.
I'm back in here for doin' it.

DARKIES

I'm the savage in the jungle
and the busboy in the town.
I'm the one who jumps the highest
when the Boss man comes around.

I'm the maid who wields the wooden broom.
I'm the black boot polish cheeks.
I'm the big fat Lawdy Mama
who always laughs before she speaks.

I'm the plaintive sound of spirituals
on the mighty Mississipp'.

I'm the porter in the club car
touching forelock for a tip.

I'm the bent, white-whiskered ol' Black Joe
with the stick and staggered walk.
I'm the barefoot boy in dungarees
with a stammer in my talk.

I'm the storytelling Mr. Bones
with a jangling tambourine.
I'm the North's excuse for novelty
and the South's deleted scene.

I'm the one who takes his lunch break
with the extras and the grips.
I'm the funny liquorice coils of hair
and the funny looking lips.

I'm the white wide eyes and pearly teeth.
I'm the jet black skin that shines.
I'm the soft-shoe shuffling Uncle Tom
for your nickels and your dimes.

I'm the Alabami Mammy
for a state I've never seen.
I'm the bona fide Minstrel Man
whose blackface won't wash clean.

I'm the banjo playing Sambo
with a fixed and manic grin.
I'm the South's defiant answer
that the Yankees didn't win.

I'm the inconvenient nighrah
that no one can let go.
I'm the cutesy picaninny
with my hair tied up in bows.

I'm the funny little shoeshine boy.
I'm the convict on the run;
the nigger in the woodpile
when the cotton pickin's done.

I'm a blacklist in Kentucky.
I'm the night when hound dogs bay.
I'm the cut-price, easy light relief
growing darker by the day.

I'm the "yessir, Massa, right away"
that the audience so enjoys.
I'm the full-grown man of twenty-five
but still they call me 'boy'.

For I'm the myth in Griffith's movie.
I'm the steamboat whistle's cry.
I'm the dust of dead plantations
and the proof of Lincoln's lie.

I'm the skin upon the leg iron.
I'm the blood upon the club.
I'm the deep black stain you can't erase
no matter how you scrub.

CLEAN DYING

I was taken on a Friday in late June;
not quite ready –
a few loose ends to be tied,
a few that wouldn't meet.
Truth told, it was something of a nuisance;
being rushed like that, I mean,
but when death knocks
it doesn't do to knock it.
I went. Grumbling, but I went.
Heavy?
The situation maybe but not me.
I didn't give them much trouble;
felt the lift in the darkness
which could have been wings,
could have been arms –
sometimes flesh feathers to the touch
when your senses shut down.
I left it all behind: a third-full cup of Java,
a splayed magazine,
the jeans and shirt they'd find me in.
There'd been a kind of gasp at the end
but it was incomplete and too tiny
to be found by anyone.
I'd been a considerate corpse,
left the gate unlatched,
one weak lock to the house to break,
an appointment diary
to say what I wouldn't do in July and August.
They'll remember me for these things at least:
a barely forced entry,
a magazine soon straightened
and a cup that needed little washing.
It wouldn't have done to leave nothing;
nothing at all for them to do.
What kind of epitaph would that bring?
Better remembered as a minor inconvenience
than as a ghost twice over.

Neil Campbell

Acoustic Guitar Performance

Note from the editor

We were very fortunate to have Neil perform his music live during the conference and I know it was very well received by all. For those in the audience who are interested in all things aesthetical there are many lines of debate concerning the appreciation of live performance, composition and style – in music and poetry. For these reasons David Torevell and I were keen to incorporate some live performances into the programme that might promote discussion further amongst academics and “professional appreciators” in a relaxed atmosphere. Neil and John’s performances were not scheduled as ‘items’ for critical debate - they were intended as (aesthetically relevant), relaxing and entertaining accompaniments to the conference programme which we hope people enjoyed.

Abridged contributors note for Introduction

Neil Campbell is a classical guitarist, multi-instrumentalist and composer. As a solo guitarist he has produced three albums of original music; *Through the Looking Glass*, *Night Sketches*, and *Fall*. During postgraduate studies in musical composition at Liverpool Hope University, he began to develop a body of generative music compositions. His group *The Neil Campbell Collective* are an experimental/progressive rock band that have produced two albums of original music; *3 O’Clock Sky* and, his latest work, *Particle Theory* (2008) album cover featured below. For more information see www.neilcampbellcollective.com.

The Neil Campbell Collective - “Particle Theory” (2008)

Quotes from reviewers about Neil’s latest recording with his band ...

“Progressive Ears”

"Musically, this stuff is all over the map and right from the start, I was impressed here.This is some very interesting and inventive music that is derivative of practically nothing at all. Excellent production effects and a unique approach to the overall delivery of the music make this a truly progressive release. Neil Campbell is a remarkable composer and arranger and hopefully has enough of what it takes to make a name for himself in the music business....." www.progressiveears.com

“Wayside Music”

“This is definitely progressive rock, but it's very fresh and very uncontrived and unconventional sounding. The classical-style guitar and cello are especially prominent and define the over-all sound. Some really great, moody melodies are explored. I was VERY impressed. You will be too.”

“Space-Rock”

“...a dense and complex suite of music that constantly challenges your perception of how music should be. With imaginative arrangements and some imaginative use of instrumentation (aided by Nicole Collarbone on cello, Mark Brocklesby on drums and percussion, Dan Owens and Liam Carey on bass, Stan Ambrose on Celtic Harp and Alex Welford on horns), Mr Campbell has certainly created a constantly challenging musical experience.” space-rock.co.uk

CD cover of *Particle Theory* (2008) from the The Neil Campbell Collective'.



A socio-aesthetic account of construction and destruction in world football

Joel Rookwood (Liverpool Hope University, UK)
Clive Palmer (Liverpool Hope University, UK)

Introduction

On the global stage, the notion of “who wins” may be the most news-worthy aspect to speculate upon as Conn (1997) and Balague (2005) have indicated, that, football is often represented as a sport in which elite level success is of predominant significance. The game is continuously presented in the media as a function of reactions to victory in significant competition by elite teams who are passionately supported by global fanbases. In addition to the perceived relevance of competitions such as the FIFA World Cup and the UEFA Champions League, and the victories obtained in such events by national and club teams respectively, much of this media coverage on the sport focuses on the behaviour of the football supporters who travel to witness and effectively ‘participate’ in these spectacles. This relates to instances of destructive conduct from supporters, a phenomenon known generally as football hooliganism. In response to such occurrences, popular representations of the game frequently rely on a photographic medium to supplement or even provide the focus of a message. The photography of Clarke (1999) is a notable example in this regard. Also, the media presentation and sometimes amplification of key events often rely on powerful or even sensationalist language to convey a message (Boyle and Haynes, 2000).

In addition to watching the game played in a professional context, participating in football serves as another hugely popular global pastime. As a result of the physical and visual accessibility of football and the fact that consistent regulations (rules) are universally applied, there is a minimal requirement for performers to understand inter- and intra-continental linguistic or practical variations. Given its perceived simplicity and universality, football has considerable potential to be used as a tool to promote social development in numerous contexts (Sorek, 2007). Indeed sport has been found to facilitate social development in a variety of contexts (Riordan, 1991). Notably, it has been utilised to promote peace in a number of politically and socially tense environments (Riak, 2000), and to facilitate harmony in some nations plagued by separateness (Keim, 2003). Although the effects of football-based charitable programmes such as those discussed here are not extensively represented within the media, projects of this nature have recently begun to receive academic analysis, including the work of Whitfield (2006) and Sugden (2007). Football projects have been established in several countries in order to build bridges between communities,

to promote social development and integration, and strive for peace in a variety of circumstances for a number of years.

The football projects

The first author on this paper has worked on football-based projects within a developmental and charitable capacity for Christian Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in thirty countries across six continents. Five of these community programmes are presented here in pictorial form, images which capture something of the real-life context in each situation. It is this context which serves as a key determinant for understanding one aspect of the photograph's aesthetic worth. The simplicity of the game and the importance of social interaction are perceived as examples of social construction in this regard (figures 1,2,3). In addition, by reflecting on some of the more socially destructive images (figures 4,5), other fundamental components of the game are also considered, namely the requirement for performers to be focused on the game and to be able to play in a secure and free environment.

The photographic evidence provided is considered here in relation to four ideas, namely the use of photography as representational art, the aesthetics of football, and the notion of social construction and destruction in this context. This depicts various forms of youth work with the underprivileged and those who have been the victim of terrorism, disaster, warfare, crime, poverty, famine and persecution. These projects involve the use of football in working with street children in Venezuela in the Americas; and in Africa on child ex-combatants in post-war Liberia. The remaining programmes include a project working with murderers in youth prisons in Belarus from a European perspective. Finally, moving further east, projects focusing on a Palestinian orphanage and the survivors of the Beslan School terrorist attack in Russia are pictured. This paper therefore includes five images, each illustrating a football project that focused on a very distinct and challenging situation. The photographs display the subjects as a function of these circumstances, presenting the child as 'street child', 'soldier', 'prisoner', 'terrorist' and 'victim of terrorism' respectively. Each image is set in the context of a value-based football project that sought to serve as a vehicle of social development in each of the locations.

Photography as representational art

Photography has both critics and proponents in terms of perceived aesthetic worth and propensity for representation. Scruton (1981) for example, claims that a photograph of an object does not interpret the subject, but the mere duplication it provides reflects aesthetic form. According to this understanding therefore, an aesthetically pleasing photograph must portray an image that itself has aesthetic worth, which is then replicated by the photographer. Conversely, Wicks (1989) contends that a photographer's skill in representing a scene is vital to the aesthetic quality of the image. Wicks also identifies the stillness of a photograph as a key component contributing to its worth. Seeing a picture therefore offers a different context and experience for the observer than actually being present at the scene in question would provide. Also, a photographer who masters the technicalities of the medium can control the image by making adjustments in aspects such as composition and focus. Subsequently, pre-existing expressive qualities of an object being photographed can be altered and therefore 'represented' (Cassirer, 1957). This reflects the medium's

“capacity to depart from naturalistic representation” (Wicks, 1989:7). In this context, the images illustrate how football can be represented, focusing on contrasting elements of the game. The message conveyed through the photographs and their respective titles and explanations reveal both the subtle and explicit nuances of the meanings of the global game.

The images

Figure 1. Venezuela - the child as a “street kid”



Street children (relocated to this rural orphanage from the slums of Caracas), are playing ‘Fubulito’, the Latin American equivalent of small-sided football. The group are still adjusting to a more spacious and protected living experience, illustrated by the enthusiastic and at times violent manner in which they play the game.

Figure 2. Liberia - the child as a “soldier”



On the left is a former child soldier from the recently resolved Liberian War. This football camp facilitated the re-integration of such ostracised boys back into their communities. The boy on the right was initially unhappy at being paired together in this relay race. In this very deliberately reconstructed form of football however, both were encouraged to see the value of supporting one another in the pursuit of a common goal.

Figure 3. Belarus - the child as a “prisoner”



These boys are imprisoned for murder. Their average age is 15. Seemingly disinterested in learning techniques such as passing and dribbling, they attempt instead to master an observed skill which they perceive to hold greater aesthetic worth.

Figure 4. Palestine - the child as a “terrorist”



Christmas day in a Bethlehem orphanage in the West Bank. These two boys, recently relocated from Gaza City, walk out in the middle of a game of football. Instead they continue an apparently more appropriate activity, namely a horrifically realistic ‘intifada’ role-play with their handcrafted machineguns.

Figure 5. Russia: The Child as a ‘Victim of Terrorism’



Three weeks after a Chechen terror attack on a Beslan school, British football coaches travel to work with the survivors. It was in this sports hall, where the children once played football, in which children, teachers and parents were forced into by terrorists. The murder toll was 344, with the majority killed in this room.

The aesthetics of football:

The images presented here highlight some interesting features for understanding the game, which seemingly go beyond how football is usually represented. Best states that in ‘purposive’ sports such as football, the manner of achievement “is of no or little significance as long as it comes within the rules” (1978: 101). The author rightly states that the aesthetic component is not fundamental to the activity. However, in these cases, it was the nature of how the sport was played rather than who the victors were in any particular competitive context that provided the focus of their significance. The images capture something of this aesthetic content. The claim here is that understanding the fuller context of such social contests as these contributes more to the aesthetic appreciation of what ‘merely’ appeared on the pitch.

Football and social construction

Best (1974) states that the nature of a viewer’s background contributes to the likelihood of a given performance or image being accepted as part of the subject in question. Therefore an observer who has not experienced football in such a form may be less likely to associate these different representations of football as part of the game. The messages that these NGO images and respective captions convey present football in a very different form to that typically illustrated in the media. Here football is stripped of what is often considered as the focus of its aesthetic worth, such as its power to capture the imagination of the collective (Balague, 2005). These photographs instead remind the viewer of the truly fundamental ingredients of football. The simplicity of the game and the importance of having space in which to play and adapting to that space are illustrated by the image taken in Venezuela. Social interaction in the form of communication and cooperation are also presented in the photograph of Liberia. Finally, the Belarusian image highlights the significance of that which for many renders football beautiful (namely skill), as oppose to merely

purposive. In each of these five projects, football was used for a purpose of greater significance than merely playing sport, with differing messages presented about the importance of social and moral behaviour.

Football and social destruction

Walking around Beslan School, which is located just five miles from the Chechen border, had a significant impact on the observer. Bodies were exploded on walls, clothing was scattered in 'rape rooms' and evidence of explosives dominated the sports hall. No photograph could have captured the full extent of what remained from this destructive attack. However, the chaotic image of the sports hall represents a notion that is clearly antithetical to the fundamental characteristic of what is considered aesthetic in this regard, given that "chaos is the opposite of beauty" (Newton, 1950: 25). Here the playing area is painfully symbolic, and the very evident hazards highlight the present danger and therefore the limitations of playing the game freely. In addition, the photograph of the Palestinian boys and the context of this scene emphasises another universal principal of football, namely the need to be focused on the game. Having been exposed to such horrific experiences as these can clearly inhibit this capacity within performers. Although it would not be universally considered as a primary prerequisite of the game, football requires a safe environment. This fundamental component is lacking in both of these destructive scenes.

Conclusion

Kuper argues that, "people talking about football tend to draw their metaphors from one of two fields: from art, or from war" (1994: 96). Football therefore, is presented as adopting differing levels of significance in different cultures. The sport can be employed in different circumstances as a vehicle of both social construction and destruction, as these images illustrate. In addition, several commentators from a variety of perspectives have echoed such contentions. Nelson Mandela for example, argues that football "is one of the most unifying activities amongst us" (Kuper, 1994: 138). Also, Sorek (2003) comments that football has the potential to be an 'integrative enclave', in societies that, both historically and currently have experienced considerable social disharmony (Ateek, 1989). More specifically, team sports such as football can, in the appropriate environment, serve to encourage human contact, engagement and bonding, which according to Tidwell (1998) are important in order to avoid hatred and violence. However, football can also reflect and represent destruction in this regard. This could be the case in instances where cultural, socio-political and practical limitations to playing the sport are apparent, which inhibit the performer's ability or even desire to play the game.

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Drawing upon the aesthetic heritage of Men's Artistic Gymnastics to create a personalised *technique* in competition performance – a case study of the performance qualities of Aleksei Nemov (Russia)

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Abstract

This research indicates how a recent World and Olympic Champion gymnast, Aleksei Nemov, used a central aesthetic feature of gymnastic protocol; the salute, to great dramatic effect in his Floor exercise. The socio-aesthetic heritage of the saluting action in gymnastics, as in many other cultures both military and civilian, is a shared [international] gesture of friendship and respect. Within Men's Artistic Gymnastics, the simplicity of this action communicates a complex message in an instant which for the spectator or recipient of this intended gesture, means a great deal more than a casual wave or some other choreographed but equally non-descript action with the arms. Aleksei Nemov seemed to understand this aspect of aesthetic material in Men's Artistic Gymnastics and personalised his performance to assert his personality to great effect within the rules of the sport. This is understood to be an aspect of his performance technique.

Introduction – an aesthetic heritage in Men's Artistic Gymnastics

The history of gymnastics as a form of structured and challenging exercise reveals an extensive association with military training, used principally by governments and militia to raise the fitness levels of the young in preparation for a combatant career (Harvey, 1903; Holmstrom, 1939; Goodbody, 1982; Prestidge, 1988). From this long association some significant aesthetic features have been transferred to the contemporary sport of Men's Artistic Gymnastics. These are practices of saluting, marching and parading (Figures 1 and 2) which are militaristic customs for showing respect and discipline and recognising the status and decisions of officials [see Harvey, (1903) and Wooten (1934) for an example of military influence in gymnastics and Zschocke (1997) for current presentation rules in gymnastic competition]. This aesthetic legacy provides the sport with a structured protocol to manage and present its contests and promotes a formality in outward presentation which may help the spectator to recognise Gymnastics as opposed to, for example, circuit training, dancing, aerobics or yoga.

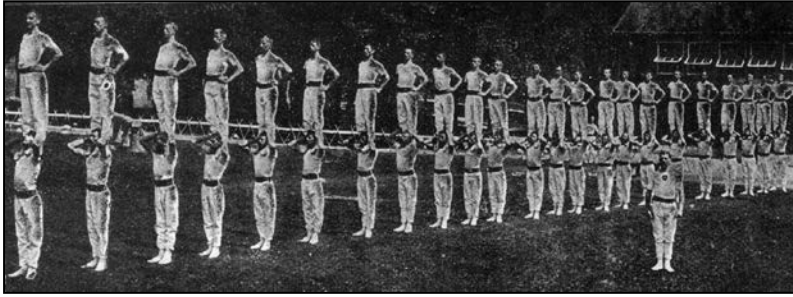


Figure 1. British Army Physical Training Instructors at Aldershot, present themselves in a team display of balance that is in line, regimented and ‘at attention’ which is part of the aesthetic presentation for this exercise. (Harvey, 1903).



Figure 2. Depicts gymnastics teams marching in rank and file to represent regions within Britain at the Northern Union Gymnastics Championships at Carnegie Hall in 1967. (Prestidge, 1988).

Personalised performance technique

The use of the term technique relates to the individual endeavour of the gymnast to demonstrate how he wishes to satisfy the technical demands of the elements, which he has selected to perform in his personalised routine. Part of the gymnast’s technique may be to execute his chosen elements in a unique and interesting way, which both meets the technical criteria and distinguishes his performance from others. Elements of personal technique may be accentuated by for example, the size and shape of individual gymnasts and where their best areas of performance lie with regard to personal strength, flexibility, and speed. Also aspects of personal signature during a performance may indicate the gymnast’s preference “to do” in a particular way, for example, incorporating pauses, motifs and changes of speed into his routine which could be part of his preferred technique. This might be demonstrated in the speed of flicks, control of flight, and lightness of touch, which may indicate subtle differences between gymnasts. These may be some of the substantive features of technique which help to create the shades of dynamic within a performance, as well as personal and personality features that individuals bring to any solo performance, which in turn may alter the aesthetic appearance of the gymnastic product.

A gymnast's personal technique may help to stake ownership on his performance in a way that identifies the gymnast with the particular aesthetic he produces, similar to an artist who signs their work or a song which is synonymous with a singer. For example, the performances given by Aleksei Nemov (2000 Olympic Champion) have an aesthetic which only he can bring to the routine. If another gymnast were to copy the routine it would arguably have a different aesthetic compared to Nemov's performance of it. Koppers (2000) provides an account of Nemov's routines. The first paragraph cited is a list of technical content (gymnastic actions), which is contrasted by the second paragraph, providing some that evidence Nemov's individual display of technique may be readily perceived in his performance. Koppers reports that:

(1) In Cottbus, March 1999, Aleksei competed in the Grand Prix finals. He opened with a very impressive pass of: round off - backflip - layout double back full. The full twist was performed exactly in the middle of the flight, take off and landing were done with perfect posture. The second pass consisted of forwards tumbling: front handspring - layout front - layout front full - layout front 1 1/2, with a jump into planche dive towards the centre of the mat, landing with stretched body on the mat.

(2) Aleksei rests on his arms with stretched body, before setting up a very impressive series of close to the mat work, alternating between Thomas flairs, spindles, Thomas flairs and finally his trademark break-dance shoulder rolls, ending exactly in a straddled sit and striking a classic male gymnastics pose, facing the audience.

Nemov's "break-dance shoulder rolls" and his "classic male gymnastics pose" (which is a straight arm salute to the crowd with his head raised whilst in Splits position) do not appear as formal features of execution in the Code of Points (Zschocke, 1997) but are clearly very important aspects of Nemov's technique when performing his gymnastics. Figures 3 and 4 depict Nemov and another elite gymnast demonstrating their flexibility in the Splits position during their Floor exercises.



Figure 3. Yang Wei (China)
(Black, 2000)



Figure 4. Aleksei Nemov (Russia) (Holmes, 1998)

A technical feature of the Splits position may be the demonstration of leg and hip mobility. Therefore the various positions of the arms, head and torso may indicate a range of personal interpretations or techniques that are possible to individualise this static pose. That is to say that the position of the head and arms in the Splits position

may be of inconsequential as the technical interests of the element “Splits” are for leg and hip mobility. However, the positioning of the head and arms is still required to be smart and in a “gymnastic manner” which, in doing so may serve to individualise a performance and accentuate personal technique.

Nemov is also an expert competitor on the Pommel Horse on which he is able to demonstrate such a high level of competence, confidence and showmanship that it enhances his technique (from Koppers’ (2000) point of view) and therefore signifies the aesthetic of his performance. Under earlier F.I.G. Codes (Lylo, 1975, 1979) Nemov may legitimately have been described as a “virtuoso” on this apparatus as Koppers (2000) points out:

Aleksei has a superb routine showing he is complete master of this extremely difficult and spectacular apparatus. His routine even has a touch of arrogance, as he bravely nods his head midway in the series of Thomas flares, the sign of his complete command over the apparatus only the very best display.

This kind of interpretation brought to gymnastic performance may help to differentiate between elite male gymnasts on aesthetic grounds by emphasising personal signature through their technique of performance.

Conclusion

Through the constant practice and perfection of the routine as a whole, the gymnast may be able to reveal his performance qualities as he develops his expertise at the highest levels of competition. He can then use his technique to create an impact or aesthetic impression with his routine which sets him apart from other gymnasts and is particular to him. The position of “Splits” or Straddle Sit which Aleksei Nemov and the other gymnast featured are displaying, is intended to demonstrate leg and hip mobility. In this static position a basic choreographic problem arises for the gymnasts in finding something sensible to do with their arms that does not distract the judges from the intended action being scored. That is, the Straddle Sit is the scored element for value in their routine but careless positioning of the arms could affect the overall impression of the performance and reduce the final score. Most gymnasts showing this position have discovered something neat and presentable to do with their arms but fail quite noticeably to achieve the same dramatic effect that Nemov achieves when he salutes from that [sitting] position. (NB: Nemov’s salute is given to the audience mid-routine and cannot be misconstrued with the salute to signal the end of the performance as this is always given to the judges from a standing position.) By doing this he appears to ‘kill two birds with one stone’ as Nemov’s salute is not scored as an element but adds significantly to the overall aesthetic of the Straddle Sit and the routine as a whole. Also, and perhaps importantly, a salute necessitates eye contact, this action being a form of acknowledgement in non-verbal communication. Nemov maintains eye contact in his salute whilst the others seem to avert their eyes and look away. In this manner Nemov asserts his personality during his performance whilst the others fade somewhat due to the comparatively, rather vague arm and head action they use. When 100ths of a mark separate a competitor from the medals these fine details can count enormously at this level of competition. For Aleksei Nemov, the saluting action added greatly to the aesthetic of his Floor performance - this being

an important aspect of his personal technique to show to the world his style of gymnastics within the codified rules.

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Olympic art contests 1912-1948, their invention and demise

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The Invention of the Olympic Art Contests

Abstract

This paper is divided into two sections: the first section discusses how the Olympic Art Competitions were created by Baron Pierre de Coubertin at the beginnings of the Modern Olympic Movement. The second section discusses the reasons for the International Olympic Committee to set an end to the Art Contests. Furthermore it displays which ideas the successors of the Art Contests namely the Cultural Olympiads are based on.

In 1904 Coubertin mentioned the idea of a “Pentathlon of the Muses” as a second pillar of the Olympic Games. He was looking back to the “heyday of [ancient] Olympia [...] [where] the fine arts were combined harmoniously with the Olympic Games to create their glory.” Two years later Coubertin called for a meeting to discuss the idea of an Olympic Art contest - he invited artists from the different artistic disciplines, representatives of the International Olympic Committee and honoraries to the Fourth Olympic Congress. The meeting took place at the Comédie Française in Paris on 23-25th May 1906. This Meeting may be regarded as a cornerstone in Olympic arts history. The participants referred to possible ways of co-operation between the arts and sports. One of the results was an architectural competition advertised by the IOC in 1910. After futile attempts to include the Art Contests into the programme of the 1908 Olympic Games in London Coubertin pushed forward his idea and made the Swedish Organising Committee organise the contests for the next Games in 1912. None-the-less it seems awkward that the address for the contributions was “Rue Oudinot” in Paris – Coubertin’s home.

From the outset Coubertin fought opposition to the art competitions which were entered by professionals only - a thorn in the amateur-representatives' flesh. Ironically it was Avery Brundage who fought for the abolition of the contests, ironically because

it was the same Brundage who was awarded an honourable mention at the literature contests in Los Angeles in 1932 for his contribution entitled "The Significance of Amateur Sport". The so-called Brundage commission at the 44th IOC session in Rome decided that Olympic medals should not be awarded to professional artists. After discussions and proposals to maintain the art competitions on an amateur basis the Olympic Art competitions could have been regarded as safe. Even the decision of the 1951 Session in Vienna to restore the Olympic Art Contests made the advocates feel safer. However, at the 1952 Olympic Games only an Art Exhibition was prepared. For the following Olympiads a cultural programme around the games was organised. It displayed national culture with a different emphasis in 1956, 1964, 1976 and 1980 but also covered international ideas in 1968, 1972, and 1984. The artistic forms were expanded by photography, folklore, popular art, and film.

Prelude

Pierre de Coubertin was the driving force behind the Olympic art contests but he had to overcome a number of difficulties in order to bring about what he saw as a vital element of Olympism. 1906 has to be regarded as a crucial date for this development. After the congresses in Le Havre (1897) and Brussels (1905) it was decided that science would play a part in the Olympic Movement. Now Coubertin saw his chance to also include the fine arts as a further column of Olympism so that the modern Olympic Games might come closer to the ancient ideal and become an intellectual meeting point as well. As early as June 16, 1904 he had published an article in the French newspaper *Le Figaro*:

Now the moment has come when we enter a new phase and intend to re-establish the original beauty of Olympic Games. In the heyday of Olympia [...] the fine arts were combined harmoniously with the Olympic Games to create their glory. This is to become reality once again.

This article was written in preparation for a congress which Coubertin scheduled for May 23 to 25, 1906 as a "Conférence Consultative". On reading Coubertin's circular letter of April 2, 1906, many IOC members proposed writers and artists for the art contest. The number of negative replies (e.g. Selma Lagerlöf) suggests that Coubertin wrote to all those nominated and asked them "to come and study to what extent and in what way art and literature could be included in the celebration of the modern Olympiads". It can be claimed that this invitation sent at the end of April was too short notice for artists who showed interest in the conference. Perhaps the cost of travel also served as a deterrent. Besides Coubertin and the three French members, the IOC was represented only by the Englishman Courcy Laffan.

The *Revue Olympique* reports that 60 guests listened to Coubertin's opening speech "Un Grand Mariage" and was used later as a general text in favour of the Art Contests. In this speech Coubertin explained why it was important to combine sport and art. Among the guests were famous French writers, sculptors, architects, and painters plus a number of actors from the *Comédie Française* whose director Jules Clarétie had assumed patronage. Representatives of state institutions and sports associations were also present but there was only one foreigner (from New York). A considerable number of art representatives at home and abroad declared their support

in writing. Coubertin asked the artists present to make a contribution to help this aim. *Le Figaro* gave particular prominence to the reply by Maurice Pottecher, the founder of the first French people's theatre in Boussang. He promised to promote earnestly Coubertin's plans and saw in them an excellent opportunity to bring art to the people. The well-known architect, Frantz Jourdain, underlined the special role that architecture played for the "renewal of such passionate work" as the Olympic Games, and he declared his full commitment. The chairman of the French writers' association, Emile Blemont, also promised to support Coubertin's plans.

Architecture, theatre, dance, decoration, literature, music, painting, and sculpture, were discussed in several commissions. It is stated that the discussions were enriched by lectures on the various subjects. The commissions discussed all the topics listed on the programme and made recommendations but no resolutions as such. The results were presented to the participants at the closing meeting. The most important decision of the Conference referred to the introduction of five fine arts competitions in the genres of architecture, sculpting, painting, literature, and music at future Olympic Games. The competitions were to be set on an equal footing with sports competitions and should be inspired by sports. An international jury was to be responsible for the awarding the prizes and the successful works were to be exhibited or performed during the Olympic Games. The majority of recommendations of the Conference referred to possible ways of co-operation between the arts and sport.

A closing ceremony was staged in the auditorium of the Sorbonne on May 26th. Approximately 2,000 guests received a warm welcome from the Parisians. Olympic diplomas and the Olympic cup donated by Coubertin were awarded, a number of actors of the Comédie Française performed recitations, choral singing, classic sword fighting demonstrations, and a scientific lecture was also part of the programme. The event meant to combine sport, science, and the fine arts to demonstrate unequivocally the three pillars of Olympism. Coubertin himself considered this Advisory Conference to have the status of an Olympic Congress. This was justified by the level of debate and the quality of the participants. The meeting had been Coubertin's idea and he made sure it happened. He deliberately chose the term Advisory Conference on purpose. He wanted to ensure the support of intellectual circles. It could be argued that the conference had too few foreign participants. Coubertin put this down to the fact that the invitations had not reached the right people. He had perhaps relied too much on the co-operation of his IOC colleagues for their artistic guidance. This was found wanting.

On many previous occasions, including the Founding Congress at the Sorbonne in 1894, Coubertin had attached great importance to artistic decoration. At the Conference of Paris, famous artists benevolently acknowledged his efforts and they developed his ideas in the discussions. The Conference fulfilled its main purpose by initiating competitions in the arts which became part of the Olympic Games from 1912 to 1948. The presence of these artists gave the IOC the extra dimension it had longed for, this being Coubertin's basic aim in calling this Conference. The pentathlon of fine arts was to perfect the athletic competitions in the same way the Greeks had achieved in the ancient Games. Did Coubertin not know that the classic Olympic Games did not include arts competitions? There was another aspect to the

Conference. It provided Coubertin with an excuse for being absent during the Olympic Interim Games (or Intercalated) which he rejected. These had taken place a few weeks earlier in Athens. The majority of the IOC members were present in Athens, but not in Paris, since they considered the Conference less important. We can clearly see just how important the Conference was to Coubertin from the following statement:

“The 26th of May will assume an outstanding place among the important dates of history; it will be ranked immediately after the 23rd of June 1894.”

Caesura

The art competitions did not happen in 1908. Reasons cited included that the proposed competition was too formalised and the notice was too short. The Olympic Games organising committee had less than two years to make ready for the sporting programme. In the Official Report of the British Olympic Committee for the 1908 Games it is noted that with future Olympic Games the announcement of the Arts Competition has to be made public at least three years in advance and the results should be shown at an exhibition during the Games. Another important resolution of the Conference in Paris in 1906 for Coubertin was, however, realised. The participants of the Games entered the stadium at the Opening Ceremony in their sports wear and in many cases carrying their sports equipment. In frustration Coubertin wrote in the Olympic Revue and later in his Olympic Memoirs:

But how much more perfect the whole effect would have been if, instead of the popular tunes played by military bands, there had been one of those massed choirs which excel in England in performing the incorporable cantatas of Händel. [...] That sculptors and painters should hesitate to cross a forgotten threshold is understandable, but that the public should be so reluctant to try a combination whose individual beauties complement each other so well passes all understanding.

Overture languendo

The first definite result of the Conference in Paris was an architectural competition advertised by the IOC in 1910. The task was to build a model of a modern Olympia. In May 1911, the competition was supervised by the College of Architecture in Paris, and ended in prize giving to two architects from Lausanne: who were later winners of the Stockholm architecture gold medal. The first inclusion of arts competitions in the Olympic Games of Stockholm in 1912 turned out to be fraught with problems. The various Swedish artists' associations did not support the Organising Committee of Stockholm. In the end, it was left to the IOC and therefore to Coubertin to advertise the events and determine the winners. But Coubertin insisted on his plan and at the IOC Session in Luxembourg and he threatened not to attend the Stockholm games (he had also stayed away in 1904 and 1906). Under pressure the Swedish organising committee agreed and approved 5,000 French Francs for the organisation. Coubertin published an announcement in English, German and French in the September 1911 issue of the Revue Olympique. Entries were invited in architecture, sculpture, literature, music and painting. Artists were to submit works which should be thematically linked with sport and which had not been exhibited before. The works should be sent to Coubertin's address at Rue Oudinot in Paris.

But unfortunately the opposition did not diminish in Sweden. After the Swedish Royal Academy, the Federation of Art Associations and the Section of Architecture of the Swedish Technological Association had argued against the plan which the Swedish organizing committee had agreed on 6 February 1912. That was, to delete the art competitions from the programme. But Coubertin would not give up on his ideas. He decided to put the Art Competition into practice alone. It seems likely that there was no jury so he may well have made the decision on which artworks deserved a medal by himself. Maybe he was advised by some experts in his decision. On 20 July in 1912 he informed the organizing committee of the winners. In the meantime the artworks were sent to Stockholm and exhibited in a hall in Karlapan that was close to the Olympic stadium. There was probably no official award ceremony.

The competition in architecture was somewhat unusual. The Jury had French President, Ernest Monis as its patron. It was chaired by Theophile Homolle, director of the National Library in Paris who had already awarded a prize for the best concept of an Olympic stadium on 16 March 1911. The idea behind the announcement of the award was to stimulate young architects to submit plans for an ideal Olympic stadium. The Swiss architects Eugène-Edouard Monod and Alphonse Laverrière were the winners. Eight writers took part in the literature contest. According to the Official Report the winning entry was by the two German authors Georges Hohrod and M. Eschbach for the Ode to Sport. Later it was revealed that these names were pseudonyms. In the Official Report the ode was printed in German. Seven years later Coubertin admitted that he was the author. It could be said that he honoured himself with a gold medal. One question will occupy statisticians eternally. To whom was the gold medal assigned: Germany or France?

The music competition was under the direction of the Swedish Crown Prince Gustaf Adolf. The first prize was won by the Italian Richard Barthélemy with a march. The painting competition had the fewest entries, only four artists submitted their works. Coubertin awarded the first prize to the Italian Carlo Pellegrini with his three-part frieze entitled “Winter Sports”.

There were eight entries for the sculpture competition. The regulations specified limits on the dimensions of works to avoid problems with transportation. The artworks were to be no longer or wider than 80 centimetres. Many well known artists were represented. Presumably the competitor listed as Vinuski was the Polish architect Antoni Wiwulski. The Italian Rembrandt Bugatti (1884-1916) was the brother of the famous car manufacturer Ettore Bugatti. Rembrandt Bugatti lived predominantly in Paris and Antwerp. Nothing more definitive can be said about his contribution to the Olympic Art contest. Probably his most famous artwork is an animal sculpture – the dancing elephant used as the bonnet ornament of the famous car Bugatti Royale Type 41. Even Bugatti’s teacher, the Russian painter Paul Troubetzkoy was represented in Stockholm. However, almost nothing is written on his contribution. Sculpture was the only discipline in which a silver medal was awarded. The winner was the French Georges Dubois. He designed a model for a modern stadium gate. However he had not finished the artwork but submitted only sketches and enclosed a financing proposal. This stadium gate would have been 14 metres high and 16 metres wide. It would have been quite similar to the Arc de

Triomphe in Paris. A bronze medal was not awarded. It is possible that the Canadian sculptor Robert Tait McKenzie was a candidate. He created a bronze medallion with the title *The Joy of Effort*. His medallion was not accepted as its dimension (167 centimetres in intersection) exceeded the prescribed limits. In addition to this doubts persisted as to whether Tait McKenzie, Professor at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia at that time, had exhibited his artwork at an earlier date. Today his bronze plate can be found on the wall of the stadium in Stockholm. Twenty years later he won the bronze medal in the art competitions at the 1932 Olympic Games in Los Angeles. In Stockholm the gold medal in sculpture went to Walter Winans.

The Demise of the Olympic Art Contests

Climax

World War II meant the Olympic Games in 1940 and 1944 were cancelled and time was of the essence as London prepared for the 1948 Olympic Games. In January 1947 the first public newsletter of the Organising Committee set out the rudiments of the art competitions and in June the Olympic Organisers made a general progress report to the IOC. It had this to say about art:

An exhibition of Fine Arts was arranged to begin on 15th July but if we are unable to acquire the London Gallery we have in mind we shall hold the exhibition in Wembley Town Hall.

The Gallery in mind was the Victoria and Albert Museum in one of the most exclusive areas of London. The problem was that the rules of the competition made provision for the Organising Committee to act as a go between in arranging the sale of works exhibited. This contravened the museum regulations and it was only after further assurances from the Olympic Organising Committee that no sales would be conducted during the time of the exhibition that the museum decided it would be happy to proceed. In February 1948, the final rules were announced. The organisers specified that although the entries had to concern sport in some way

... the connection between sport and art will be very liberally interpreted to give the artist more liberty in the execution of their work.

Each nation was able to select up to three entries in each category to be sent to London. The deadlines and precise destinations varied according to discipline. The jury could, at its discretion, also give honourable mentions. The Jury was also empowered to withhold any award if it felt the required standard had not been reached. Even the British Olympic Association official report noted the problems. They recruited Daily Mail Art critic Pierre Jeannerat to write their summary. "When one looked around the galleries at the Victoria and Albert Museum one had to deplore the absence of most of the best known living artists."

The United States Olympic Committee decided against participation because of the lack of interest shown by American artists in 1936. The absence of the best known French artists was also a cause for concern as "... one looked in vain for names which

recent controversies had made familiar in every household – like Matisse and Braque”. Even the editorial in the official catalogue felt obliged to emphasise the absence of America (North and South) and also Australia and New Zealand from the contests. The home artistic community did enthusiastically back the competition and the exhibition was duly opened by HRH the Duchess of Gloucester. Nearly 1000 guests attended this gala occasion including IOC president J. Sigfrid Edström and Organising Committee President Lord Portal. Entrance was two shillings (approximately ten pence in decimal currency) but although reductions were made for students and children the official report noted pointedly “a number of people with children abandoned the idea of entering on hearing of the charge”. Two publications had been produced to mark the exhibition. A non illustrated catalogue and an illustrated souvenir which contained almost a hundred black and white photographs of exhibits but this unfortunately offered only basic information about the artists and their work and was not comprehensive. It included 97 illustrations.

Even so the exhibition began on 15th July and stayed open throughout the Games – on two nights each week the galleries remained open until 10pm. 196 commemoration medals and diplomas were sent to overseas exhibitors and 44 entries were received in the literature competition and 36 music pieces. The exhibition included the competitors but also embraced a number of other works including those by judges. Norman Wilkinson, chairman of the painting jury exhibited his depiction in oil of the Fastnet sailing race, and 1928 Architecture champion Jan Wils displayed his designs. The Route of the torch relay in water colour by J. Heather Child was displayed along with examples of the torch itself. Finally, no less than twenty five examples of studies on horse racing by Sir Alfred Munnings, President of the Royal Academy were exhibited:

The [architecture] models of the winning designs are all beautiful examples of craftsmanship especially that of the Swiss training centre awarded the silver medal in the planning section. The architectural quality however of the Austrian group of winter sports buildings [...] is not impressive and that applies to several of the commended designs.

The regulations for graphic art were similarly wide ranging. The winner of the oil painting went to a work depicting the London Amateur Boxing championships. The artist Alfred Thomson was deaf and dumb. It was perhaps appropriate that an artist with a disability should be so honoured, for this was the year the first Paralympic games were held in Britain. But the French artist Albert Decaris did earn some praise – his Swimming Pool which won the prize for engravings and etchings was, according to Jeannerat, “... remarkably composed and carried out.” The Swedish sculpture entry *Homage to Ling* by Gustaf Nordahl was criticised by Jeannerat: “... however capable as a specimen of straightforward modelling, lacked real sporting interest. A boy and a girl stand motionless and sport surely is motion.”

For the literature competition writers were allowed up to 20,000 words depending on the nature of the work and had to submit four copies of their work together with a précis in English, French or Spanish. Translators from the University of London were called in to help. The situation was clearly far from ideal. After the games the judges

recommended that only the two official Olympic languages should be permitted in the competition. In their official report they noted “It is impossible to judge fairly from a précis ... and the question of language made things extremely difficult”. The author could also keep his identity secret during the judging.

The music competition had three elements: Songs, an instrumental setting for one or more instruments, Choral and Orchestral work. The BBC music department were called in to help sort through the entries before judging. Original plans called for a special concert which would feature the winning entries in the contest. This idea did not come to fruition but there was an Olympic Concert at the nearby Royal Albert Hall.

Swan song

After the successful art competitions at the 1948 Olympic Games in London the death knell tolled for Coubertin’s idea to integrate art competitions into the Olympic programme. The man who did most to bring them to an end was Avery Brundage. As an athlete he had taken part in the decathlon and pentathlon at the 1912 Olympic Games in Stockholm and following his athletic he became a prominent national and international sports leader and administrator. President of the U.S. Olympic Committee from 1930 to 1952 he began a twenty year tenure as IOC President in 1952. His time in office was characterised by his uncompromising fight for the preservation of amateurism. His worship of Olympic amateurism drove him also to recommend the abolition of the art competitions from the Olympic programme. In January 1949 what became known as the “Brundage commission” met in New Orleans. Its task was an amendment of the Olympic Charter. The report ran to seven pages and was presented at the 44th Session of the IOC, held from 26 to 30 April, 1949 in Rome. In point 23 it noted:

No. 23 – Medals for Art competitions. – Since Art competitions contestants are practically all professionals, Olympic medals should not be awarded. This event should be in the nature of an exhibition.

This recommendation was followed at the session in Rome. (Ironically Brundage himself was given an honourable mention for the submission of his article “The Significance of Amateur Sport at the Olympic Literature Contests in 1932.) It is thought that this decision was connected with a proposal made by Sigfrid Edström (IOC President 1946 to 1952). As early as the 33rd Session of the IOC held on 28th February in 1935 in Oslo, Edström had proposed that the participants of the art competitions were almost all professionals and therefore not eligible to take part in the Olympics. After the decision in Rome the topic was fervently disputed. A number of appeals were submitted to Otto Mayer the Swiss chancellor of the IOC. In October 1950 Mayer forwarded to the executive committee a proposal made by the Swiss Alex Walter Diggelmann who had won several medals in the Olympic art competitions in 1936 and 1948. His proposal was to maintain the Art Competitions and to organise them on a serious Amateur basis. Diggelmann went to suggest that the art works which had been awarded a prize should be handed over to the respective National Olympic Committees (NOCs) in order to prevent the artists selling the works on the open market. The NOCs could decide whether they wanted to donate the art

works to museums or not. The proposal was discussed by a special commission launched by Edström on 25th October in 1950. The Greek IOC member Angelo Bolanaki who had also protested against the decision of Rome, chaired this commission. He presented a report in favour of the art competitions to Mayer.

In the report it was stated that it was a mistake to apply amateur rules to the art competitions as Coubertin would have known that the participants in the art competitions were neither amateurs nor professionals but artists. Finally it was decided to restore the art competitions at the Session of the IOC in 1951 in Vienna. But this decision came too late for the 1952 Olympic Games in Helsinki. Due to a lack of time the Organising Committee was unable to stage the art competitions. It was decided to arrange an exhibition. Despite the successful appeal this spelt the end of the Olympic art competitions.

Postscript

When the IOC abolished Art Competitions in 1954, it was criticised for ignoring Coubertin's attitude towards the arts. This is reflected in the fact that historical and sociological works on sport hardly mention Olympic Cultural Programmes after 1952. The manifold appearance of Olympic Cultural Programmes is documented. The first concepts of the period concerned were based on the Olympic Art Competitions. Later, the Olympic Cultural Programmes developed in an independent but not uniform way. There were a few national Cultural Programmes, for example in Melbourne 1956, Tokyo 1964, Montreal 1976, and in Moscow 1980, presenting national culture with a different emphasis. Other Programmes were an international cultural encounter (1968, 1972, 1984, 1988, and 2000). Barcelona celebrated a "Cultural Olympiad" which for the first time covered the entire Olympiad from 1989 to 1992. The Barcelona Cultural Olympiad had a sizeable budget (80 million dollars) and was a highlight in recent Olympic history. Five international culture prizes were given to well known international artists. Atlanta 1996 highlighted the American Deep South in its presentations. Internationally renowned dancers (for example the Soweto Ballet and the "Nederlands" Dance Theatre) offered top level performances but the audiences were small. The Five Rings presented world masterpieces in painting and sculpture. Sydney 2000 combined Australian traditions with international contributions. The Cultural Olympiad was concentrated on the period before the games to encourage interest in the games amongst Australians and the unity of body and mind. Athens 2004 also organised a Four year Cultural Olympiad with annual highlights, but the most important elements came during the summer months of 2004 with more than 150 exhibitions and cultural events in theatre, architectural contests, book and music publications. Different organisations were involved and a coherent image of the Cultural Olympiad was not easy to bring about, but the quality of the programme on offer was outstanding.

The importance of the Olympic Cultural Programmes regarding the politics of culture is reflected by the growing participation of national institutions in organising the events and making contributions. The time span of Cultural Programmes has been increased to last far beyond the duration of the Olympic Games. This extension offered the chance of a cultural preparation for the Games, but at the same time it

obstructed the integration of Cultural Programmes into the Olympic Games. In general, the events took place at the cultural sites of the host cities and not necessarily in the neighbourhood of the sports facilities. For example, the events in the Olympic Park or in the sports sites, like the Play Road in 1972, the sculpture exhibition in Seoul 1988 or street visual arts in Atlanta 1996, attracted a large number of sports spectators in relation to the total number of visitors. An investigation by Mainz University found that 26 % of the sport spectators in Sydney 2000 and 38 % in Athens 2004 were very interested in the Cultural Olympiad and visited arts performances or exhibitions. Lillehammer 1994 staged the first real cultural programme at a Winter Olympic Games. Their aim was the demonstration of the Norwegian tradition and culture to the world. Salt Lake City 2002 and Turin 2006 were also dedicated to arts events; both cities presented their interpretation of Olympism to large audiences, some of whom were more interested in “arts and culture” than sport.

Closing ceremony

The early arts competitions were restricted to the “Fine Arts”. The artistic forms were expanded by photography, folklore, artisanship, popular art and film. These newer forms of art have made audiences more interested in Olympic Cultural Programmes and cinema in particular has played an important role. Although the Olympic Charter does not call for sports-related artistic works, some of the ideas presented combined the arts with topics of sport or the Olympic Games. Internationally renowned artists participated. Even after the cancellation of the Arts Competitions following 1948, the Cultural Programmes showed competitive forms at subsequent Olympiads.

When searching for an outcome for a given task, like the composition of an Olympic anthem, the design of an Olympic poster or Olympic emblem, a “competition” was thought an appropriate means to find the best solution. Why could Olympic Arts Competitions not be understood as competitions of “Applied Arts”? The story outlined here makes clear that the Cultural Programmes were not so much integrated into the Olympic Games but an addition. Generally, the sports spectators hardly participated in the cultural events – this was at odds with the idea of a joint experience of art and sport during the Olympic Games. Nevertheless, the participation of artists at the Games affirmed the Olympic Ideal to some degree and added a new and richer dimension to the celebration of culture and life at an Olympics.

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Structure and surface - contextualising aesthetic form in the sport psychology process

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Abstract

This article illustrates an insider's perspective on the actions of the sports psychologist by reflecting on their work with a number of elite performers at Olympic, World and European championship levels. The aim is to reveal a perspective on the structural aesthetic of the actions of the sports psychologist. The research is supported by images from a range of competitions and reflections upon the sports psychologist's "input" before and after competition. The first author has found himself experimenting with different ways of giving advice and providing support as the events have progressed. That is, patterns of advice have been emerging regarding the types of advice given, which were sometimes specific to the psychological characteristics of the performer. The article reports on the differing frameworks of professional advice with examples from a range of sports using images and examples as appropriate.

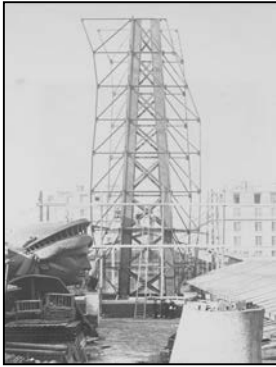
Introduction

The premise operated from is that the efforts of the sports psychologist are essentially behind-the-scenes endeavour to support performers and coaches. The pattern of actions and advice from this "inside view" reveals a structure or form to the support work of the sports psychologist. This work forms part of the foundation for what is exhibited externally by the performer at competition, that is, how well they perform may be a reflection of how well they have been coached, and counselled psychologically to give that performance. A parallel being drawn here, with aesthetics in construction and architecture is that the competition performance is likened to the façade of a building which masks the structural aesthetic of the actions which have brought it about, in this case, from a sports psychologist's point of view.

The applied sport psychologist working with national governing bodies, teams and individuals at all levels of sport is a growing phenomenon within the US and the UK (McMann, 2005). Tod and Anderson (2005) and Moran (2004) suggest that elite performers and coaches want to work with consultants to gain practical advice on ways to improve their mental preparation and/or competitive performance. Tod and Anderson (2005) also highlight that the lack of "hard science" in sports psychology consultancy presents a "difficulty" for the sport psychologist compared to their Sport

Science counterparts. That is to say that the 'subjective' views of the sports psychologist may lack the status that so-called Scientists (perhaps in white coats) enjoy. For example, those Sports Scientists involved with physiology or biomechanics, and use 'objective' measurement tools to substantiate their evidence and explain physical performance characteristics. This kind of scientism (McFee, 2005) creates a damaging divide amongst a cohort of sports-professionals who may claim to be working towards the same end – improved performance and competition success. The divide thus created seemingly makes it easier to separate and distance the Sports Science service provider from the athlete and perhaps, any subsequent improvements in their performance - akin to a coach receiving a diagnostic report from a laboratory. Implied here is that the task of "laboratory testing" is to identify faults alone and it is up to the coach to interpret that information and implement a corrective plan. There appears to be a dissociation of the Sports Science provider from the athlete lest the information be poorly interpreted or poor performance at competition becomes a reflection of the quality of that support perhaps? Even the work of the sports psychologist could fall foul of this judgement - that losing may be an indicator of inadequate support. However, losing at competition does not strictly imply shabby work from support professionals in sport and this artificial divide between the "science" and "non-science" helps to identify the close working conditions of the sports psychologist with the athlete. That is to say that the sports psychologist is not a "hard scientist" and is associated with the success and failure of the athlete very closely, in similar vein to that of a coach or manager of a team. The claim being made here is that the applied sport psychologist is the service and is the individual working directly with coaches and athletes providing the products which will hopefully lead to improvements in performance. Their interaction with the athletes is subtle and interpersonal and has been of great help at critical times both in and out of the competition arena, for example during a final at an event or during rehabilitation after injury. The personal and personality characteristics of the sports psychologist and the performer are tested to the full in these diverse and pressured situations from which a positive working relationship is the desirable outcome if a period of consultancy is to be deemed successful. In one way the presence of the sports psychologist for the athlete may be likened to that of a teacher in the art class who helps the student with a few deft strokes of the brush – the teacher's input may be hardly perceptible to outsiders but was of huge help to the student at the time of need.

It would therefore appear that "input" from the applied sport psychologist has a complex dual aesthetic compared to support from other Sports Science providers. To understand this concept of appearance a conceptual link can be drawn between the aesthetic of the sport psychologist to an aesthetic understanding of structural and surface form in architecture, for example, that displayed in the construction of the Statue of Liberty.



1



2



3

Figure 1: The extended iron framework of the statue, encased in scaffolding (Fernique, 1883).
Figure 2: Although still housed in scaffolding, the façade is near finalisation (Fernique, 1883).
Figure 3: Scaffolding is being removed to reveal the statue's completed surface form in the nearby Paris streets (Fernique, 1886).

Structural aesthetics - common strategies for psychological support in sport

The structural aesthetic in the work of the sport psychologist could be represented by the iron framework designed by Alexandre Gustave Eiffel to support the façade for the Statue of Liberty (figure 1). A situation which may be regarded as “structural” for this analogy to hold true is when the sports psychologist is working with athletes in rehabilitation after injury and wanting to regain their competition fitness. A further notion of structural in this context is also relevant to the kinds of knowledge or standard “consultancy strategies” that the sports psychologist may use in their counselling of the athlete. Winters (1991:253) claims that a [structural] engineer deals with “...first order properties” which support an outward appearance. This may be similar to the technical insight and expertise required to be a sport psychology consultant working in this essentially supportive mode; the distinction being made here is that “technical” details are in some way structural and are part of the basic engineering ‘tools’ of the sports psychologist. Winters (1991) points out that as a result of the engineer being classed as a scientist and his understanding of a building being scientific, [he] therefore leaves appearance at the surface. The engineer has to comprehend how the materials are used, judging their capabilities, as well as their strengths and weaknesses. Theoretically some parallels could be drawn to the technical process conducted by experienced consultants, that is, they have a great deal of knowledge about the limits and capabilities of the ‘materials’ they are working with (frameworks/models/roles/strategies) to perform the tasks required of them. Figure 4 highlights what is perceived to be the structural aesthetic of how I operate in my consultancy role, that is, “what I do” personally to help prepare individuals and teams for training and competition.

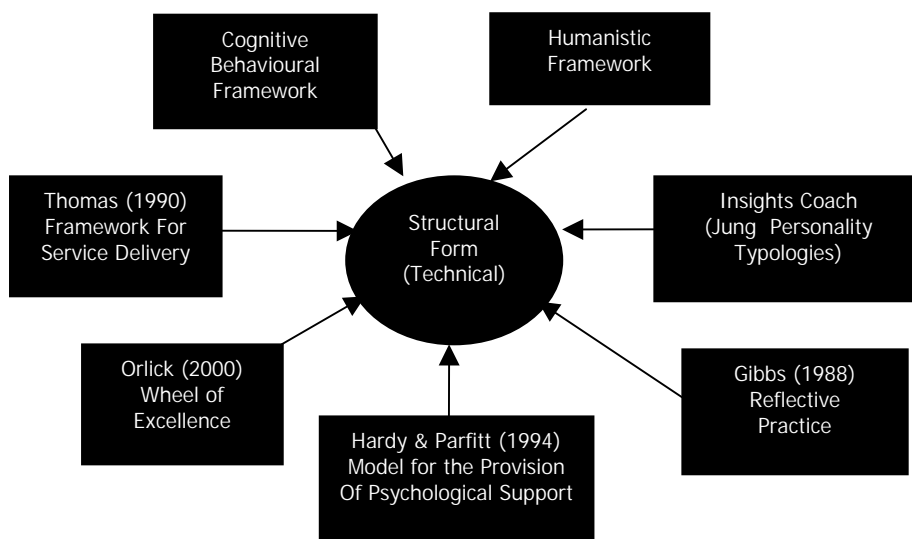


Figure 4: My structural aesthetic - “what I know affects what I do” in this role of sports psychologist.

Surface aesthetics – ‘my way of consulting’

In contrast, the surface aesthetic of the sport psychologist could be represented by the façade of the Statue of Liberty created by the technique of the architect (figures 2 and 3). The distinction being made here is that technique is in some way, the personal and subtle application of the sports psychologist to work with athletes once a structural plan of action is in place for them. Winters (1991:253) suggests that the architect is an artist and his interest is focused on the surface i.e. “...in the look of the thing”. For the architect the appearance is considered to be everything which is not constrained by the underlying technical reality. This may infer that the technique of the applied sport psychologist could be likened to a veneer or cladding that creates a façade and provides a personal signature i.e. ‘my way of consulting’, which is supported by the technical/structural processes for working with an athlete. Within sport psychology Hardy, Jones and Gould (1996) hint at a similar situation by stating that specialist knowledge alone (technical/structural process) does not guarantee one’s effectiveness as a practitioner. What arguably does, is the consultant’s personal characteristics and situational variables that arise or are created to interact at a personal level. Figures 5, 6 and 7 are examples of what I feel represent my technique or surface aesthetic as a sports psychologist “in the field”. Lubker, Watson, Visek and Geer (2005) support this view by acknowledging that the way sport psychologists relate to athletes at a personal level, for example in terms of the language they use, verbal and non-verbal, can “make or break” a consultancy.

The outward appearance of a sport psychologist's technique may create the first impression or aesthetic impact upon the athlete, coach or support team member and will help to differentiate himself from others, even though he may be working within the same technical framework. Hash, Munna, Vogel and Bason (2003) and Lennon and Miller (1984) also state that body type, body language and choice of clothing may influence an athlete's perception of a practitioner's level of knowledge and competence. Lubker et al. (2005) add that a sport psychologist that fits the profile of a lean build and wears athletic clothing is perceived by athletes to have higher sport-knowledge and is more likely to be sought out for consultation.



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6



7

Figure 5: Being 'ball boy' in Barcelona, 2005.

Figure 6: Analysing splits for the athletes at the top of the track at the World Championships in Calgary, 2005.

Figure 7: Observing performance on the last run of women's Skeleton race at the 2006 Turin Winter Olympics.

Self initiated survey: perceptions of my surface aesthetic in consultancy

According to feedback from athletes, coaches and support staff that I have worked with at training camps and competitions, their view of my surface aesthetic, the "how I do it", begins to have some resonance with findings from Orlick and Partington (1987) who carried out some qualitative research exploring effective consulting practices. These authors established that highly effective practitioners were "likable" and able to quickly establish rapport with athletes, showing care and interest in them. My own survey asked athletes and coaches about their perception of me as a sports psychologist working for them. Some of their responses were collated and grouped (below) in a similar manner to that in Orlick and Partington (1987). These are their perceptions of me – however, my perceptions of them and what they need from me as a sports psychologist are quite different in many cases. This begins to highlight that there is a structural and surface aesthetic of "me" in this role and that I should be more aware of things I can do to manipulate the surface aesthetic to mutual advantage. It is also reasonable to say that features of my surface aesthetic alluded to by their comments are brought about because of my structural knowledge to act usefully and productively as their sports psychologist. Without this structural element of underpinning knowledge there could be no good surface aesthetic in this role given that simply being "likeable" is not enough to sustain a good reputation for psychological support at any level in sport.

Category: Friendly

“He is really interested in helping everyone to do their best”
“We can have a laugh with him which is really important in our environment”
“He gets on with the squad as a friend and not only as a sport psychologist that we see every now and again”

Category: Accessible

“Easy to talk to and very approachable”
“Provides support when it is needed and wanted i.e. well timed”

Category: Good listener

“Good active listener”
“Trusted listener who can help”
“A good sounding board”

Category: Applied knowledge and has useful practical suggestions

“Makes me think about what I do and how I do it”
“Evidence based support that I understood”

Category: Flexible, open and creative in his approaches

“Is flexible and always available to the athletes and coaches”
“Extremely tolerant in dealing with situations and individuals”

Category: Good at meeting individual athlete needs by providing person-specific suggestions and feedback

“Provides individually tailored solutions”
“Helps me to rationalise e.g. think logically and not emotionally”
“Provides options so athletes can make educated and calculated decisions”

Category: Involved in long term contacts with athletes and teams

“He has been a fixed sport psychologist from the start of the programme so has gained peoples trust”.

Conclusion

This feedback from the athletes seems to reinforce the notion that there are levels of knowledge and experience which people bring to a situation in order to comprehend it. These varying degrees of insight, between structural and surface features of sports psychology consultancy may legitimately reflect their interests and demands as performers. Keeping within the “architectural” theme of the article, Winters (1991:255) thoughts seem to have some further relevance:

...that when they look at a building, qua architect and qua engineer, then their focus is directed upon different objectives of thought. It is how the building is seen that determines the understanding of each of the two onlookers, and thus determines what is looked at. It is the same building, but seen from different points of view; seen differently, so to speak.

For the sports psychology consultant, the combined aesthetic evaluation of the technical process and the personal technique of the practitioner, seemingly contribute to a notion of an effective applied sport psychologist that can enhance performance.

This is reinforced by Hardy *et al* (1996) as they suggest that the most effective way to aid elite athletes is for consultants to integrate scientific knowledge with their own personalities and their understanding of their clients, together with the athletic environment in which they perform.

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Sheer aesthetics - a closing comment on The Turn to Aesthetics Conference

Mark Titmarsh (University of Technology, Sydney, Australia)

The conference is over, the book is written, now the work of thinking aesthetics anew begins. Before the conference it seemed obvious that aesthetics would be a slippery word since it tended to shift unpredictably between academic, professional and everyday uses. As an academic discipline aesthetics stretches from the dawn of Greek philosophy to the rise of the modern subject. In professional domains aesthetics has become a contemporary tool for understanding and enhancing the business of human resources, sport and education. In everyday usage, the word 'aesthetic' has evolved from an noun to an adjective, a shorthand and condensed way of indicating that something is beautiful or stylish. Even for those trained in the philosophy and history of aesthetics it is hard, if not futile, to resist this kind of popular usage in ordinary conversation. Ironically it is the everyday understanding of the word that tells us most about the journey of aesthetics from philosophy to the street and back again. And so it was that aesthetics became an elusive, fugitive, moving target collectively captured by the conference and momentarily examined.

Almost as complicated as aesthetics itself is the word 'turn', since it suggests several positions in a spectrum of cold and warm relations. At the warm end, turn can be short for a return, a re-embracing of aesthetics after a period of separation. Indeed the academic discipline of aesthetics was rejected during the last century since its major concepts of beauty and connoisseurship could not match the revolutions of new industrial cultures. Both modern and post-modern discourses found aesthetics too ponderous to deal with paradigmatic issues such as mass culture and gender dynamics. New disciplines of art theory and visual cultural sprang up to occupy and extend places where aesthetics had once stood. A turn to aesthetics suggests a rapprochement, an acknowledgement that something at the core of aesthetics is still operative and has been too hastily overlooked.

A turning could also be something less emphatic than a 'return', such as a change in direction influenced by the pull of aesthetic thinking, but without embracing all the terminology and conventions that goes with it.

At the cool end of the spectrum is the kind of turn takes place when there is a shift in orientation without changing the direction of attack. Such a turn to aesthetics would be more in the nature of a formal indication, a pointing in the direction of aesthetics that acts as a conceptual nod of recognition.

Arriving at the conference I expected individual papers to function as a kind of positioning device that would indicate where each discipline sat in relation to a world of aesthetic thinking. I waited for each participant to define the primary term of 'aesthetics' and move on from there. Instead nearly all the papers took aesthetics as understood or implied by the overall context of discussion. For example in Heather Hopfl's paper on management theory, aesthetics was equated with sensuousness and affect, providing a tool for re-awakening emotions and fairness in the work place. I understood her paper as turning aesthetics away from a science of perception to an ethics of compassion, a method for critiquing and constructing virtuous managerial strategies.

An usual and very appropriate aspect of the conference involved nightly performances of live music and poetry. This reminded us all of the categorical difference between thinking aesthetics and the visceral experience of an artist in performance. Another 'live' aspect of the conference was the warm sense of camaraderie that developed between participants regardless of backgrounds. Aesthetics functioned like an intellectual Esperanto that mediated between geographical distances and professional disciplines as diverse as art, sport, tantra, new media and archaeology.

During the conference no individual sought to find the common denominator linking all the various aspects of applied aesthetics or to suggest what it was about the discipline of aesthetics that made it ubiquitous at this point in time. However now that the conference is over and more serious thinking is to be provoked by the book it seems important to begin such a search. On the basis of many of the papers contained in this volume it could be claimed that aesthetics can no longer be considered a mere adjunct to contemporary life. Rather it has become the very essence of human interaction, underlying a system of coherence that determines preferences for art, leisure, labour and politics and defining an overall sense of existential contentment.

There is no longer an inside or outside of aesthetics, nor is aesthetics a discrete discipline that can be called on or ignored. Instead aesthetics has become our sense of the world, with every aspect of life felt and valued as aesthetic phenomenon.

Metaphorically, aesthetics has changed from being a lens of observation, to a body stocking, a sheer, near imperceptible second skin through which everything is perceived, constructed, experienced and judged. No longer simply a tool for judging works of art and sensuous phenomena, aesthetics produces and defines the primary sense of being a subject in a world of objects and events.

Aesthetics rather than simply mapping the visible and sayable, becomes a tool for construction and change, the do-able so to speak. Starting from a definition of art that must be continually revisited and revised, aesthetics fans out to investigate and reconstitute all the conventions of representation and thinking that constitute what we broadly define as culture.

The last surprise of the conference was the way all the various disciplines fitted neatly together to form a unified field of enquiry seeking out parts of aesthetics and creative

activities that had not yet been fully articulated. Art is often characterised as a peripheral luxury past time only for the lucky few who can afford to buy it and those others who indulge in the obscure antics of making it. Consequently compelling aesthetic discourse has begun to appear where the main action is taking place, that is in the world of business, information technologies and entertainment. The conference showed that aesthetics could be applied in these non artistic domains and reveal something about the politics of life, something non sensuous, something precisely non aesthetic. It is this non aesthetic dimension that suggests that there can be no simple return to aesthetics nor any final overcoming of aesthetics. Instead there is an aesthetics after aesthetics, involving some of the original concerns of aesthetics, that sense of primary wonder for things, merged with the dark side, that which is left out, that which withdraws and slips away because it cannot be captured aesthetically, technologically or economically.

Abstracts

Conference programme order, six keynote addresses and fourteen parallel sessions

<i>Tuesday 5th June 2007</i>		
	Opening Keynote Address (1)	Peter Lamarque
<i>Wednesday 6th June 2007</i>		
	Keynote Address (2)	Heather Höpfl
Paper 1,2	Keith Owens	Steve Brie
Paper 3,4	Jan Betts	Jan Jobling
Paper 5,6	Michael Newall	Lynn Hilditch
Paper 7,8	C. Holtham and A. Owens	Anthony Haughey
	Keynote Address (3)	Mark Wynn
Paper 9,10	Donna Lazenby	Razieh Rezazadeh
Paper 11,12	David Clayton	A. Owens and C. Holtham
Neil Campbell - Acoustic Guitar Performance		
<i>Thursday 7th June 2007</i>		
	Keynote Address (4)	Michael Balfour
Paper 13,14	Tim Prentki	M.C.P. Chryssovergis
Paper 15,16	Leila Hojjati	<i>No speaker</i>
Paper 17,18	Pauline Brookes	Janet Evans
Paper 19,20	Stephen Bamber	Patrick Carr
	Keynote Address (5)	Graham McFee
Paper 21,22	Doug Sandle	Alexandra Mouriki
Paper 23,24	Mark Titmarsh	Nik Gkogkas

Poetry Performance by John Lindley (www.johnlindley.co.uk)		
Friday 8 th June 2007		
	Keynote Address (6)	Avril Loveless
Paper 25,26	Cordula Hansen	Peter Jordan
Paper 27,28	Dan Cavedon-Taylor	Matthew Rowe
Plenary Session and Depart		

Keynote Address (1)
Professor Peter Lamarque (York University, UK)

Title: Aesthetics and the practices of art

What exactly is going on in philosophical aesthetics at the moment? Is it still a live branch of philosophy or just an irrelevant relic from the past? How does it relate to the arts as currently practised? The lecture will give an upbeat assessment of contemporary philosophical work in aesthetics, stressing its interdisciplinary nature and how it intersects with other discourses about art: art criticism, debates about conceptual art, the move away from theory in literary studies, links with music and musicology, the idea of ‘value’ and the idea of ‘beauty’ in the arts. What is distinctive about aesthetics in the past 10 years or so is how it has sought to accommodate and engage with different art forms: from literature and film to music and dance to theatre and painting. Look in any recent “Companion” or “Guide” to aesthetics and you will certainly find sections on the major art forms. This is a change and a change for the better, in the way philosophers do aesthetics.

Keynote Address (2)
Professor Heather Höpfl (Essex University, UK)

Title: The art of management: why has aesthetics become so popular as a form of management theorising?

I will undertake a brief history of management interest in aesthetics and offer some reasons why it has become so popular in the last ten to fifteen years. I would also like to comment on early work relating aesthetics to management and to organisation theorising and to consider a preoccupation with ugliness, lack of style, absence of symmetry, and absence of concern for the working environment. I will comment on the success of the Art of Management conference and other conferences which have examined this theme over the past decade. Finally, the paper will offer some examples of recent work in aesthetics and assess whether or not it is of relevance to management practice.

Paper 1

Keith Owens Assistant Professor (School of Visual Arts, The University of North Texas, USA)

Title: Turning towards aesthetics, turning away from responsibility

Aesthetics concerns artists in part because they realize work created with this topic's grasp can trigger transformative viewer experiences. This reality, however, raises a number of vital questions. Among them: can narrower concerns for aesthetic properties and experiences negate more expansive concerns about artistic responsibility? This paper presentation will argue that among certain artists and in certain instances, the answer to this question is yes.

To support its position, it will examine graphic or communication designers: applied artists whose members often privilege what they consider to be their work's aesthetic merits at the expense of its social impact. It will further argue that the practitioners in this group who adopt this perspective often downplay ethical responsibilities clearly attributable to the artifacts they produce. This amoral, neo-formalist stance is evident in the many ways in which communication designers characterize themselves, market their services and praise their work.

The presentation will conclude by suggesting that the insights derived from this singular example are useful insofar as they can be generalized across a broader artistic register and can add to the discourse engaged with the relationships between and interplay among art, aesthetics and ethics.

Paper 2

Steve Brie (Liverpool Hope University, UK)

Title: The lightning flash of hope: the aesthetic of the absurd in the racetrack poetry of Charles Bukowski

The four key themes in Charles Bukowski's life and writings were the pointlessness of work, relationships with women, the acquisition, consumption and after-effects of drink, and the spectacle of the racetrack and the ongoing challenge of playing the horses. While the first three of these themes have been relatively well documented, Bukowski's preoccupation with the aesthetics and philosophy of the racetrack has attracted relatively little critical attention. This paper will focus on this neglected area, specifically in relation to Bukowski's racetrack poetry. The paper will argue that, for Bukowski, the rituals associated with gambling and the racetrack provided an aesthetic respite from the torment of existence and that the perfect form and ideal beauty of the thoroughbred racehorse presented an aesthetic distraction from what he saw as the absurdity and monotony of everyday life. The paper will draw attention to the way in which, like Beckett, Bukowski's philosophy grows naturally out of the clash between an individual's imagined sense of centrality within the world order, and the meaninglessness of human existence which, he argues, constitutes reality.

Paper 3

Ms Jan Betts (Beckett Park Campus, Leeds Metropolitan University, UK)

Title: That's not a door, it's an escape route': the meanings of artefacts in constructing personal work spaces

In the places where we work, we manage our own aesthetic environments through our construction, both physical and psychological, of the space around us. This paper asks how individuals use artefacts, aesthetic or functional, as part of that construction of their own immediate place and space at work. Rather than examining the shared (or mismatched) meanings of corporate artefacts, such as contracts or logos (Rafaeli and Pratt, 2006) it focuses on meanings and interpretations which have salience through their privacy. It draws on material generated when respondents in a range of workplaces were asked to use a digital camera to 'photograph those objects in your immediate working space (usually an office) which mean something to you'. Participants were subsequently asked to comment on why they had chosen these objects. As a further analysis, they were asked to use the images in a repertory grid exercise (Kelly 1955) which drew out, in more specific detail, the nature of the values and categories indicated in their first commentary on the photographs.

Initial analysis, using Vilnai-Yavetz and Rafaeli's (2006) primary categories of instrumentality, symbolism and aesthetics, suggests that meaningful objects for individuals often have little to do with the main job, and function in complex ways to support individual identity, resistance and practice at work.

Kelly, G. (1955) Principles of personal construct psychology. Norton, New York.

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Paper 4

Dr. J'annine Jobling (Theology, Philosophy and Religion, Liverpool Hope University, UK)

Title: Myth, mortality and transcendence in Kazuo Ishiguro's The Remains of the Day and Never Let Me Go

The narrative construction and reconstruction of lives in the quest for existential meaning is central to both *The Remains of the Day* and *Never Let Me Go*. In *The Remains of the Day*, the ageing Stevens is exploring his past in light of a growing awareness of his mortality: as, ultimately, he seeks to "try to make the best of what remains of my day". For Kathy H. and her friends, the "completion" of existence is the horizon in which, horrifyingly, they live out the remains of their days. This paper proceeds from the premise that the narrators in these novels mythologize their own histories and futures in the attempt to come to terms with the contours of their lives and to endow them with dignity, meaning and purpose; at the same time,

uncomfortable contradictions are rationalized and concealed. Through this mythologizing of their own existences, the characters seek to transcend the "reality" of Ishiguro's fictional universes and (re)construct their identities. However, the futility of such an exercise is demonstrated, since in the end these attempts are shown to fail; both Stevens and Kathy H. remain locked into a fundamental acceptance of the parameters of their worlds. They do not manage to transcend the harsh "truths" of their lives and pasts; rather, they are themselves transcended by their own narratives, which elude their stabilization and control. Using the work of Walter Benjamin on memory, history and social transformation, and then Heidegger and Levinas on the nature of the authentic life in the face of mortality, I thus seek to explore dimensions of meaning and transcendence in the narratives of Stevens and Kathy H.

Paper 5

Dr. Michael Newall (Rutherford College, University of Kent, UK)

Title: The philosopher in the studio: a course in drawing

During 2006-07 at the University of Kent, as part of the new Contemporary Arts degree, I am trialling a new approach to teaching drawing, which integrates the practical study of drawing with the study of pictorial representation in analytic aesthetics. The course is intended at once to teach students how to draw and to allow them to reflect upon the nature of drawing. The motivation for the course grew out of the idea that there is often a close, but unacknowledged, relationship between theories of pictorial representation and approaches to making pictures. Theories of pictorial representation aim to tell us what conditions must be satisfied for a flat surface to be a picture of X, so it is to be expected that some theories of pictorial representation can be interpreted as implying approaches to picture-making. The course aims to use such implied accounts of picture-making in creative ways to assist in teaching drawing. At the same time it also aims to provide an experimental environment in which these approaches to making (and by implication, the theories of pictorial representation from which they are inferred) can be tested. This paper describes the motivation, aims, content and outcomes of the course, reflecting both on its effectiveness as a course in drawing, and as a practical course in philosophical aesthetics. The paper will be illustrated with examples of student work.

Paper 6

Lynn Hilditch (Liverpool Hope University, UK)

Title: Aesthetics of war: the artistic representation of war in Lee Miller's WWII photographs

Susan Sontag in her 2003 book *Regarding the Pain of Others* suggests that images of war and destruction can be interpreted as aesthetic objects--that there is "a beauty in ruins". A landscape of war is still a landscape. A painting depicting war is still a piece of art. Lee Miller's photographs taken during the latter years of World War Two demonstrate this argument--that images of war can be justified as being aesthetic

artefacts through the photographer's creative use composition and form and by considering the image within the context of the Surrealist Andre Breton's theory of "convulsive beauty", his idea that anything can be deemed beautiful even the most disturbing or horrific of subjects. A scene of death and destruction can, therefore, be transformed into something beautiful, something aesthetic by convulsing it into its apparent opposite.

This paper will discuss how Miller's war photographs can be interpreted as aesthetic by analysing how Miller uses her knowledge of art--through the creative use of composition and form and the application of Bretonian Surrealism--and by arguing that a war photograph often involves a hybrid-aesthetic, justified by its interpretation as a combination of art and historical documentation. Miller's photographs taken at the Buchenwald and Dachau concentration camps, therefore, not only inform and act as crucial documentary evidence that the holocaust existed, they also show scenes photographed with a great sensitivity, a need to inform, technical excellence and the presence of a "surrealist eye".

Paper 7

Professor Clive Holtham (City University, London) and Professor Allan Owens (University of Chester, UK)

Title: The *dérive*: supporting scholarly collaboration across wide disciplinary boundaries

Our specific concern is with collaboration across what we call "wide boundaries". In business strategy one of the key findings relating to innovation is that it is actually more likely to occur when there are "weak ties" between potential collaborators (Granovetter), compared to the formalised "strong ties" found within organisational structures and hierarchies. This case study is of a scholarly collaboration between two academics in management and theatre/performance studies, which ultimately led to successful outputs in both research and teaching/learning. It turned out that one of the most important dimensions of this collaboration was the "*dérive*": "One of the basic situationist practices is the *dérive* [literally: "drifting"], a technique of rapid passage through varied ambiances. *Dérives* involve playful-constructive behavior and awareness of psychogeographical effects, and are thus quite different from the classic notions of journey or stroll." (Debord, 1958).

After initially accidentally initiating *dérives*, these have subsequently been self-consciously constructed as a support to our collaboration, and we have also used them successfully in other collaborations. Of crucial significance at key points in this collaboration was the specific lack of deeper purpose in the relationship. However, Debord argues that the seemingly random nature of the *dérive*, may not be as aimless as it appears: "Progress means breaking through fields where chance holds sway by creating new conditions more favorable to our purposes." (Debord, 1958). The paper concludes by reviewing how wide collaboration, supported by novel methods, needs be increased in a university system that is increasingly demanding explicit functional objectives.

Paper 8

Anthony Haughey (University of Ulster, Ireland)

Title: Imaging the unimaginable: disputed territories in Ireland, Bosnia and Kosovo

Disputed Territory (1999–2004) is a combined photographic and video practice artwork project, an ongoing series investigating the continuing conflict over territory, rights and ownership of land in Europe and the subsequent displacement and disappearance of communities in the aftermath of conflict. Culminating in photographic exhibitions, art books, installations, video, sound artifacts and scholarly essays. Disputed Territory utilizes diverse media formats in its effort to document post-conflict landscapes.

In the aftermath of conflict it is possible to observe history under construction. Visual media can contribute to knowledge and understanding of past events and keep alive the memories of those who lost their lives. Taylor argues that ‘memory is not simply a trick or faculty of the mind without obligation . . . The act of remembrance is also the payment of a debt owed to the dead; failure to bear witness may be even more unendurable than the act of recollection’ (1999: 298). For example, *Class of 73* is a photographic installation, which explores how a found defaced photograph of Kosovar schoolchildren can reveal historical and contemporary narratives prior to the Kosovo conflict in 1999 and the direct consequences of war for a group of Kosovar schoolchildren. For an artist, the re-reading of an archive is not only an academic exercise; it can also be a societal intervention, where historical narratives are ruptured and re-contextualized, generating an emerging critical and contested site of reinterpretation. Hall (2001) argues for a ‘living archive’, extracting and elucidating past histories and hidden information for critical attention; re-reading the archive in this way may be considered transformative.

This paper will critically interrogate examples of how cultural artefacts produced in contested territories transcend their original field site locations into a shifting and slippery context of the public domain where ‘reading’ of cultural artefacts and subsequent meaning is negotiated in site-specific locations, interventions and distribution networks. For example, in the art installation, *Resolution* the spectator is placed outside of the comfort zone of the art gallery and museum *Resolution* attempts to place the viewer somatically closer to the experience of the subject, encouraging an intense reflective and critical engagement, while simultaneously acknowledging the audience as an integral part of the work. I will also examine the ethical issues surrounding the production of an artwork in post-conflict Europe and its relationship to politics and aesthetics.

Keynote Address (3)
Dr. Mark Wynn (Exeter University, UK)

Title: Knowledge of place and the aesthetic dimension of religious understanding

In recent years, theologians and philosophers of religion have compared knowledge of God to the kinds of knowledge that we enjoy in other, non-religious contexts, such as perceptual knowledge, knowledge of other persons, and scientific knowledge. In this paper, I consider how recent thinking about knowledge of place offers another model for thinking about knowledge of God, and how this model brings into new relief the aesthetic dimension of religious knowledge.

Paper 9

Miss Donna Lazenby (Queens' College, Cambridge University, UK)

Title: Shaping the darkness: Virginia Woolf and the Apophatic Moment

Throughout a passionate and insightful literary career, Virginia Woolf contributed substantially to the fields of aesthetics and literature. However, in this paper, I explore the claim that Woolf has contributed to the arts in ways as yet unacknowledged, particularly, and perhaps most surprisingly, to theology. Through exploring the ongoing tension between the limitless nature of her artistic vision, and the desire, nevertheless, to attempt expression, I will consider how we might find, within Woolf, a striking and illuminating example of the shape of the apophatic moment in negative theological discourse. While, of course, Woolf remains herself an 'atheist', my hope is to introduce the idea that this exceptional observer of the human condition contributes to our understanding of the 'negative' approach to reality, not least by showing how the negative theologian's approach to the real is inherently, and positively, aesthetic.

Paper 10

Assistant Professor Razieh Rezazadeh (School of Architecture and Urban Design, Iran University of Science and Technology)

Title: Townscape quality and dimensions of aesthetic appreciation

One of the major aims of urban design is creating aesthetically appealing urban environments. Studies into aesthetics and preference of urban environment indicate a very close association between the two, and many researchers replace preference measurements for aesthetics. Therefore studies have concentrated on the environmental dimensions affecting aesthetic appreciation and preference.

Several studies into dimensions of urban environments and its relation to both preference and aesthetics are conducted. This paper reports on the results of two studies conducted in two major Iranian cities Shiraz and Mashhad using semantic differential technique. The studies are focused on the townscape quality and compares experts, citizens and tourists groups.

The results of factor analysis indicated three major environmental dimensions. These are visual harmony, functional vitality and typicality/historic connotations. These dimensions all had correlation with both preference and aesthetic judgment. Regression analysis was employed to develop forecasting models. The results were indicative of differences in the aesthetic judgments and preferences of the three groups. Experts were mainly concerned with formal aesthetics through visual harmony. Citizens were concerned with functional aspects of vitality and the denotative meaning of the environment. Finally symbolic aesthetics was of higher importance for tourists. The results indicate the importance of the status as well as the type of experience on the aesthetic level appreciated and the dimension of environment most important through short exposure, prolonged association and special concerns.

Paper 11

David Clayton, (Maryvale Institute, Birmingham, UK)

Title: The significance of form in representational art, with reference to the Christian tradition of iconography.

No artist in the visual can paint precisely the object that is seen. He is limited by his ability to see and by his skill in trying to reflect what is seen. At the very least he must summarise. In most artistic traditions, this has not been seen as a disadvantage, but is seen as an opportunity. To abstract means literally to draw out. It has always been broadly accepted (although there are exceptions) that as well as showing what is seen, the artist should seek to draw out invisible truths relating to what is portrayed. In this talk we will consider how the traditional Christian artistic tradition of iconography reflects the Christian view of mankind and creation: for example, that the human person is a profound unity of body and soul. In this tradition, the finished product reflects consideration not only of the content – the subject matter of the painting – but also form, that is, the distinctive style of iconography – how it is painted. The how encompasses the whole activity of the artist: it directs his training, the attitude of the artist during the painting and the materials used. This workshop will include a demonstration of some of the technical aspects of icon painting including the cracking of the eggs, the separation of the yolk from the white, the tempering of the pigment to make the paint and then its application to the gesso.

Paper 12

Professor Allan Owens (University of Chester) and Professor Clive Holtham, City University, London)

Title: Exhibiting professional creativity through collections.

In professional fields in particular, the question of effective communication skills is very far from being static. Powerpoint is taught in primary schools, yet is increasingly widely discredited as an authentic professional tool (Tufte, 2006). In parallel, emphasis is also continuing on encouraging professional creativity in the widest sense. This can be somewhat simplistically represented as promoting “right-brain”

thinking (e.g. intuitive, imaginative). This paper is based upon a study carried out in three disciplines: business information systems, management and drama education. It compares three distinctive approaches which explicitly promote both a wider repertoire of communications skills, and a more right brain approach, all involving formal methods of exhibiting student work. The first example relates to undergraduate students of business information systems. This is a discipline which has often been stereotyped as involving left-brain analytical skills, and is often represented as attracting left-brain personalities. In this case, students voluntarily produce and annual, professionally printed, anthology of poetry, short stories, drawings, paintings and photographs, visibly demonstrating right brain oriented orientations.

The second example relates to the use of sketchbooks for reflective practice by performing arts PGCE students, a method not typically deployed with this group. The sketchbooks were published to the student group as a whole. The third example is for MBA students taking an innovative module which draws on the perspectives of arts to provide insights into management. Students had to produce a summative coursework in the form of a “collection”, which was then displayed in an art gallery-like exhibition.

Keynote Address (4)

Professor Michael Balfour (Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia)

Title: The aesthetics of war and resistance

In Place of War (IPOW) [website: www.inplaceofwar.net] is a three and a half year Arts and Humanities Research Council (UK) project exploring the context of performance in sites of war: theatre refugee camps; in war-affected villages, in towns under curfew; in cities under siege. IPOW has been investigating a number of war zone case studies, including Sri Lanka, Rwanda, Northern Ireland, Palestine-Israel, and the Balkans.

In this keynote address I would like to draw on examples from IPOW and discuss the distinction between propaganda theatre and performance and ‘resistance’. I will argue that the categorisation of performance practise (particularly in post-war writings) as either ‘resistance’ or ‘propaganda’ needs to be considered with caution. The location of practice within these two categories is a deeply political and partisan act: one person’s propaganda is another’s theatre of resistance. Performance practice in a war zone occupies, borrowing from Levi, a ‘grey zone’, one in which it may be neither good nor evil, neither free of ideology, nor completely evacuated of humanising properties.

Paper 13

Professor Tim Prentki (Professor of Theatre for Development, University of Winchester, UK)

Title: The aesthetics of participation

This paper will examine the shift in emphasis from politics towards poetics in recent practice and thinking about Theatre for Development (TfD). The author will ascribe this tendency primarily to the placing of participation at the core of the agendas of development agencies; be these governments, local governments or NGOs. Having identified participation as a key concept the paper will explore two aspects of it that give rise to conflicts around its implementation. The first of these is the matter of token as opposed to genuine participation where agencies invite participation when they mean that 'ordinary' people will be allowed to participate in their agendas. Social inclusion is a pivotal term in this debate that rarely encompasses consideration of what kind of society or upon whose terms one is enabled to be included. The second aspect is to investigate what happens to the aesthetic dimensions of TfD when the participants not only supply the content (politics) for the project but also have a major say in determining the forms through which the communication happens. This latter element forces a consideration of the ways in which assumptions about what constitutes aesthetics can act as a means by which agencies, institutions and facilitators maintain control of the process while appearing to operate in a dialogical manner for the benefit of the participants.

The paper will close by offering a reconsideration of the very notion of applied theatre as a concept that is separable from theatre. Within this conceptual frame all theatre is viewed as an application: an application of the aesthetics of participation to the social realities that inhibit our coming of age as creative, humane beings.

Paper 14

Margaret-Catherine Perivoliotis-Chrysovergis (Technological Educational Institute Athens, Greece)

Title: Design for the ancient drama

The paper addresses an alternative approach to the diachronic aesthetics of ancient Hellenic drama, and an exploration and co-creation in art, design and new technology. The project is inter-disciplinary work, aiming to offer new aesthetics to stage design and new possibilities to artists, designers/stage designers and design students. The case study was an interaction of different disciplines, in regards to their aesthetic values, for application in drama performances, with the direct involvement of professors, students and people of art, design, and the theatre business. The research team explored connections and undertook research on the aesthetics and the creative powers of modern technology. Participating students' design on an ancient drama performance followed. Within both the preceding of the art/design creation, as well as during the process of the drama event, research within the areas of art and aesthetics, stage design and ancient drama, textiles and new technology was substantial part of the participants work. The case study proved that the application of ancient arts,

combined with modern technology could provide new aesthetics, improve sensibility, creativity, innovation and imagination. Examples from the research, the case study and the educational methodologies are hereafter provided.

Paper 15

Leila Hojjati (Liverpool Hope University, UK.)

Title: Acts of aesthetic confession in Saul Bellow's Ravelstein

This paper examines the dynamics of aesthetic confession in *Ravelstein*, arguing that although contemporary American politicians exploit their artists in order to govern the public and make money by entertaining them, the artists can also subvert political agendas and reveal deeper artistic truths in their biographical writings. The genre of biography is therefore received in this novel as a deconstructive genre. Chick is appointed by his friend, Professor Abe Ravelstein, the political philosopher, to write his biography. Ironically, Ravelstein who is generally idolized and worshiped by his devoted students, followers, and disciples, is compared, in Chick's writing, to the politicians who bully the public into believing and following them. In doing so, Chick destabilizes the authority of Ravelstein and all cultural authority figures. In addition, in writing about Ravelstein, Chick happens to write about himself, contemplate his own actions and produce his innermost truth. In doing so, he turns into a soul that aesthetically invents new personalities for himself and for Ravelstein. Combining the genre of biography with autobiography and confession, Chick employs stylistic devices such as serio-comic intonation, irony, allusion, polyphony, carnivalesque, grotesque and transgression. He creates an aesthetic space between himself and Ravelstein so that he can have a more objective view of him and of himself. In this paper, drawing upon the aesthetic theories of Michel Foucault, I will explore the presentation as well as the impact of aesthetic confession in this novel.

Paper 16 – vacant slot in the conference programme

Paper 17

Pauline Brooks (Liverpool John Moores University, UK)

Title: Interface: looking at bodies in live, filmed and digitised performance

Contemporary theories of aesthetics must take into account new conceptual frameworks of viewing and perceiving dance. They must also take into account developments in new media and technologies that have inspired innovations in creative practice. As early as 1995, the 3rd annual conference of Dance & Technology 'Transcending Boundaries' called for a rethinking of methodological approaches to critiquing choreography that involved 'computer-generated or virtual reality video-dance' (Doolittle, L. et al.).

This paper will discuss the dance performance project Interface. It is a dance performance that involves live dancers and digitised projections sharing a performance on stage with dancers on film. The purpose of the project is to advance knowledge and understanding of dance performance and technology and perceptions of the body in space. The work explores the interface of live and digitised dance using a software programme called Kandle. Applying the graphics animation mode of the software, the outlines of dancers' bodies are altered. The work includes sections of performance by live dancers, digitised graphically animated dancers and dancers on film. In other sections they cross boundaries and dance together. Interface challenges the perception of the dancer's body moving in traditional and virtual ways. Blending dance with new media and technology, it creates a 'marriage of actual and virtual choreography' (Hutera, D. Dance Umbrella News, spring 2000).

Paper 18

Janet Evans (Liverpool Hope University, UK)

Title: Reading the visual: creative and aesthetic responses to fine art and picture story books 4-11years

"..One of the strengths of the contemporary picture book is. Its power to delight, challenge, even mystifies its readers". Stephens and Watkins (eds.) (2003) From Picture Book to Literary Theory. "Children can be taught to appreciate the great works of art by talking about them." Brice Heath and Wolf (2004) Art Is All About Looking: Drawing And Detail. Works of art and picture story texts can both provide the ideal starting point from which to critically examine many contemporary issues with children, not least because of their brevity, acuity and ability to provoke the reader. Starting with the picture story book as an art form, delegates will be invited to consider how children's critical and creative responses to visual texts and their involvement with fine art is cognitive work which if nurtured effectively can develop thinking dispositions in children of all ages. Many visual texts are highly complex, multilayered texts that are used extensively at all levels of learning. The notion that there is no such thing as an innocent text; that no text can be interpreted in one single way; and that we bring our own personal views, expectations and reconceived, often stereotyped, ideas to the reading of a text will be investigated. Children's reflective and creative responses to visual texts will be considered and examples of their oral and written work will be shared.

Paper 19

Stephen Bamber (Liverpool Hope University, UK)

Title: Aesthetics and the spiritual technologies of Tibetan Buddhist tantra

The core message of Buddhism is that dissatisfaction and suffering are pervasive and congenial aspects of the human condition. In contrast to the renunciate Buddhist tradition, or sutrayana, where the locus of enlightenment is placed at some indistinct point in a future lifetime, Tantra affirms that self-perfection can be actualised in the

here and now; by harnessing, rather than rejecting or avoiding the emotional energies that are the raw fabric of our subjective experience. This paper explores the topography and unique function of aesthetics in Buddhist Tantra. Tantric iconography is vivid, immediate, and dramatic. The vast and highly heterogeneous array of images delineates the full spectrum of human emotional experience. But this is more than didactic symbolism: under precise instruction from a guru the tantric adept transforms the patterns of conditioned, dualistic clinging into the liberated energy of enlightenment. The tantric deity is both activant and outcome of this process.

Paper 20

Patrick Carr (Department of Religious Studies, Lancaster University, UK)

Title: Spiritual exercises and the aesthetic refinement of the moral self

This paper argues that recent work on the function of the imagination in ethics and in ritual can be brought together to give an account of the way in which spiritual exercises function to develop the moral subject. Martha Nussbaum has recently proposed a cognitive theory of emotions (2001) and argued that if emotions are seen in this way, they can be viewed as important sources for our moral evaluations. For Nussbaum, narrative provides a means by which emotions may be explored, clarified, and refined, in order to take account of objective states of affairs, and therefore provides a means by which moral sensibilities, such as compassion, may be systematically developed. Also accepting that emotions have a cognitive content, Michael Raposa (2004) has drawn on pragmatism to argue that ritual is an interpretative activity, which deploys certain techniques to focus the attention of the ritual subject and generate habits which guide thought, including that which constitutes emotions. By focussing attention within a particular symbolic framework, ritual allows a privileged space for imaginative activity which acts to test out beliefs, whilst the formalism and repetition of ritual also develop habits of perception based on those beliefs. I argue that taken together, Nussbaum and Raposa's work allows us to see spiritual disciplines such as prayer or meditation which deploy aesthetic means for the purposes of encouraging empathetic identification with others as systematic and cognitively meaningful means of developing and refining moral sensibility.

Keynote Address (5)

Professor Graham McFee (Brighton UK and California State University, Fullerton, USA)

Title: Artistic value: It's scope and limits (and a little something about sport)

Although aesthetic considerations, first, are widely invoked outside the sphere of what are sometimes called 'the fine arts' these do not offer the most direct entry into consideration of the nature and importance of the central case here: that of (fine) art. So the central topic of the presentation is the distinctiveness of the artistic value: that is, the thought that appreciation of the art differs fundamentally from the appreciation of objects of appreciation; and that this distinctiveness is of most importance in

respect of the distinctive (non-monetary) value of art. These claims are presented as slogans; and therefore as not exceptionless. They are defended by reference to some key examples, including that of literary fiction. In this way, it becomes clear that art is not just a culturally-valued form of popular culture. Once this central topic is in place, its relevance to the appreciation of sport is considered, given David Best's distinction between purposive and aesthetic sports (restated McFee, 2004 pp. 90-92). In reiterating who no sport-forms could be artforms, it explores aspects of the legitimate aesthetic appreciation of sport, contrasting it with our concern with, say, drama. One key point is that, if one fails to understand appropriately the artistic case (for example, drama), one will automatically fail to understand the corresponding case for sport. So, for instance, it will be important to distinguish players of sport from players (another name for actors) in the drama: the second are characters in a way the first cannot be. A part of the mistake here arises from an idealisation sometimes called 'Platonising': that is, treating the sport one sees as somehow reflecting the real or pure sport, divorced from the contingencies of life. The upshot is an unwarranted focus on elite sport (as most closely approximating this ideal). In contrast, recognising the variety of what, for these purposes, count as sport is refreshing.

Paper 21

Doug Sandle, (Reader in Visual Studies, Leeds Metropolitan University, UK)

Title: Locating the aesthetic in sport – the psychology of qualitative movement revisited.

The aesthetic in sport and physical movement is increasingly both referred to in popular journalism (the beautiful game) and as a subject of academic discourse. Sporting themes and references are also being used as a subject for the arts, for example Carl Davis' seven minute anthem, *Hold On*, commissioned to celebrate the achievements of Leeds Rhinos, the 2005 world rugby league champions. However locating the nature of the aesthetic experience in sport and physical activity to enable empirical and operationalised investigation can be problematic. Thirty five years ago, I wrote a contribution which argued that such an aesthetic was a perceptual phenomenon and resided in the notion of qualitative movement. It was proposed that such could be conceptually differentiated from qualitative movement (then dominating discourse on sport and physical education) and from the everyday experience of instrumental movement. While the work was well received, my academic interests developed in other areas, but recent involvement in the arts and sport has led me to look again at these concepts in the light of more contemporary concerns and issues – a revisiting that would be the subject of my proposed paper.

Sandle, D. (1972) *Aesthetics and the psychology of qualitative movement*, in Kane, J.E. (ed.) *Psychological aspects of physical education and sport* (pp.128-163). Routledge and Kegan Paul, London and Boston.

“An accomplishment deserving of the highest praise” – *British Journal of Education*.

“This excellent chapter provides the theoretical and empirical foundation on which future practice may be based” – *British Journal of Aesthetics*.

Paper 22

Alexandra Mouriki (Associate Professor, University of Patras, Greece)

Title: The Re-orientation of aesthetics and its significance for aesthetic education.

These last years though there is a growing interest for a re-examination of the conditions under which the discussion about aesthetics can be re-activated. Some speak about a 're-emergence' of the aesthetic or a 're-discovering' of aesthetics. But how this 're-emergence' is to be conceived? What would be the significance of a return of the aesthetic? I shall argue that this return puts forth a very interesting task: the task to re-evaluate and to re-orientate aesthetics so that:

a) It brings out the original character of the aesthetic, as something referring not strictly to the senses but to the spirit as well;

b) It recognises the autonomy of aesthetic sphere not as a kind of isolation but as a possibility for an unrestricted deployment of aesthetic experience's potential.

As such, aesthetics can have an essential role to play in the foundation of aesthetic education as a consistent, important and distinctive educational field. I propose that aesthetic education is primarily an attempt to develop people's ability to grasp the meanings available from expressive forms, i.e. to understand and respond to meaningful forms. It should be understood as an initiation into the processes of generating and capturing the meanings emergent from a specific mode of engaging with the world (or in other words, as an initiation into the aesthetic dimension of our contact with the world). It follows that it is essential for aesthetic education to seek for relevant and defensible answers concerning its nature, role and scope, in the field of aesthetics as described here.

Paper 23

Mark Titmarsh, (University of Technology Sydney, Australia)

Title: Heidegger's post-aesthetics

Recent years have seen attempts to revive the discipline of aesthetics in contemporary art by way of revised notions of the beautiful and sublime. This return to aesthetics comes partly because of the replacement of the proper word 'aesthetics' by 'art theory' and as a delayed reaction to post-modern pluralism and the wide anthropological focus of Visual Culture studies in Universities.

This paper takes an overview of those developments and projects forward into a realm of 'post-aesthetics' by going back to the earlier writings of Martin Heidegger. Heidegger's famous excursus into Art ("The Origin of the Work of Art") is on the one hand a valorisation of art as ontological revelation, but on the other hand notes the Hegelian pronouncement that the time of great art has come to an end.

Heidegger almost never mentions the word 'aesthetics' yet much of his philosophy is concerned by it—the work of the work of art, the shining of truth, the project, the sketch, the thing, poiesis, techne. So can Heidegger's ambiguity about art be resolved by thinking through the question concerning aesthetics? Notably when Heidegger does refer specifically to aesthetics he is not invoking anything comparable to Kantian

beauty, Greenbergian formalism or a Lyotardian sublime. Instead aesthetics functions as the emissary of metaphysics which he characterises as a limited anthropomorphic interpretation of existence.

While Heidegger rarely discussed contemporary art and his language often seems too rarefied for it, this paper will develop and extend Heidegger's aesthetic position by placing it in the context of recent Installation Art. Heidegger when writing in the 1930s was politically anti-Modernist while at the same time aesthetically focussed on ancient Greece. However through his association with artists such as Paul Klee, Georges Braque and Eduardo Chillida he demonstrated a latent proclivity to Modernist aesthetics, particularly its confrontation with the annihilating effects of technology. Art remained for Heidegger a place where technicity had not yet been fully consummated.

While Heidegger is rarely invoked to discuss the art of our own age, neither is Kant used to discuss post-modern works by Jeff Koons nor Greenberg in relation to recent Installation Art. However Heidegger does suggest the possible creation of a new discourse based on the existential analysis of works in the process of their making and in the thoughtfulness of their reception. In overcoming traditional aesthetics Heidegger bypasses the usual subjective interpretation of sensual delectation in favour of an existential analysis of the matter of art.

Installation Art has become as ubiquitous today as academic narrative painting was in the salons of the mid 19th Century. Heidegger's discourse provides an alternative mode of dealing with this kind of work so as to reveal its genesis out of the disappearance of painting and its clarification through an ontological analysis of its material production and critical reception.

This paper will develop these issues through what will be described as the 'post-aesthetic' theory of Heidegger resulting in a clarification of sliding terms, such as aesthesis, poiesis, techne, earth and world.

Paper 24

Dr. Nikolaos Gkogkas (University of Liverpool, UK)

Title: Repatriating humanity: aesthetics and the environment

In relatively recent times, philosophy has (re)turned to the study of the aesthetic dimensions of the natural and the human-derived (artificial or non-natural) environment. This turn is, on one hand, indicative of the growing concern about environmental issues in general, but, on the other hand, it signifies that the study of aesthetics is itself a valuable source of genuine alternatives, when it comes to such pressing issues. What one could call the Kantian alternative (best represented perhaps by Allen Carlson) is to treat the environment as a newly (re)discovered object for our aesthetic sensibilities, and to shape it accordingly. The more holistic approach (which is favoured here, and which is best represented by Arnold Berleant) consists in the appreciation of our surroundings by means of an 'upgraded' apparatus of experience, which energizes all bodily senses and the human body as a whole in its relation to what lies outside of it. In accordance with some of Nelson Goodman's views on symbolical constructivism and on the ultimate indistinguishability of the aesthetic and the cognitive, this latter alternative appears to be representing a much needed

understanding of humanity as an integral part of nature and the environment. In this respect, the present paper argues that aesthetics can indeed function as a guide and a paradigm for the appreciation of what human and non-human nature is taken to be.

Keynote Address (6)
Professor Avril Loveless (Brighton University)

Title: creating space with digital technologies: wonder, theory and action

Creativity can be understood as an interaction between people and communities, creative processes, subject domains and wider social and cultural contexts, and the contribution of ICT to this interaction raises interesting questions, opportunities and challenges. The presentation will address the development of some recent experience in my work:- setting up a community network called Creating Spaces; describing a conceptual framework for creativity, ICT and learning; and developing practical ways to express and extend the framework in teacher education in Higher Education.

Paper 25

Cordula Hansen, Dept. of Creative and Performing Arts, Waterford Institute of Technology, Ireland)

Title: Experiencing materiality through art and experiment

During the past ten years, in archaeological theory and practice a school of thought has emerged which seeks to overcome the dichotomies between Mind and Matter prevalent in the “New Archaeology” of the 1960s. The emphasis is now on an experiential view of the past, integrating material culture into a wider framework which includes the creativity and personal experience of both the researchers and past societies. Having coined phrases such as “object agency”, theorists have begun to acknowledge the impact of material culture on such experience. However, the most recent thoughts on the subject question the current understanding of material culture itself.

Anthropologist Tim Ingold calls for the consideration of “materials” as opposed to “Materiality”, a term which has not been sufficiently defined in archaeological theory. This paper illustrates the dichotomies between the material and the immaterial as distinct areas of enquiry, created by the modern movement in archaeology. In contrast, Modernism in Art is characterised by particular attention to what is seen as the inherent qualities of materials and techniques. Sculptors such as Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth used the phrase “Truth to Material” to explain their approach to form and content. Through a case study of a Bronze Age artifact, I will demonstrate how art practice may be employed to provide insights into materials and their uses within and beyond utilitarian function. This engagement with a physical creative process can advance our appreciation of individual agency and experience of the past.

Paper 26

Dr. Peter Jordan (Waterford Institute of Technology, Ireland)

Title: Taking the aesthetic temperature: reflections on the role of the arts in a healing context.

This paper considers the role of the arts in a hospital context through an investigation of their aesthetic, psychological, affective and physical effects. It begins with a summary of the context in which the arts for health movement operates, through a resumé of the changes taking place in the art world and the healing environment. It points out that a hospital may now be seen to provide the ideal ‘public’ space for artistic engagement, attracting a considerably more diverse audience than the traditional art gallery, concert hall or education centre, and a much larger one too.

Recent changes in medical and health practices are then discussed, notably the expansion of conventional scientific ways of treating illness towards more humanistic approaches. This is evidenced by the inclusion of medical humanities as a subject on the curriculum of many medical and nursing courses and the exponential growth of the arts for health movement over the past two decades – evidence of general approval and popular appeal.

The second part of the paper considers the theories which underpin and explain the life-enhancing role of art. The claim is made that most philosophers have seen a primary artistic purpose in ‘taking people out of themselves’, albeit quite temporarily. Psychologists explain this effect as a focussing of attention on something, which has an intense interest for the viewer/listener. People become ‘enraptured’. But what can ‘a turn to aesthetics’ do for people who are ill or working in particularly stressful situations?

Paper 27

Mr. Dan Cavedon-Taylor (School of Philosophy, Birkbeck College, University of London)

Title: Photography and the flow of information

Typically, viewers of photographs treat them as epistemically valuable artefacts, more so than they do paintings, sketches, and other hand-made depictions. The standard story about why this is so has it that photographs come by their contents in such a way that is not mediated by, or held hostage to, the image-maker's beliefs about what her subject looks like. More strongly, others have argued that photographs put us in actual perceptual contact with objects that are spatially and temporally remote from us in a way similar to, say, telescopes and other prosthetic visual aids.

Cohen and Meskin dispute the idea that we can understand the epistemic status of photographs by looking at facts about the photographic process alone [(Cohen and Meskin (2004); Meskin and Cohen (forthcoming))]. As well as holding that photographs are epistemically valuable because they are Dretskean information channels [cf. Dretske (1981)], Cohen and Meskin also hold that psychological facts about typical viewers are relevant for the medium's epistemic status. Specifically,

they hold that viewers possess contingent culturally and historically entrenched background beliefs that colour their attitudes about the trustworthiness of photographs in contrast to hand-made depictions, which may also carry information about the world. On the face of it, this two-fold strategy for explaining the epistemic value of photographs looks promising, but it is deeply flawed. Psychological facts about typical viewers are only relevant for the epistemic value of photographs if such value is a mind/response-dependent property. But by construing photographs as information channels Cohen and Meskin explicitly defend the idea that there's something about the photographic process itself that gives photographs epistemic value independent of viewer's beliefs. Cohen and Meskin's thesis is untenable, I argue, because on their view the epistemic value of photographs turns out to be both a mind-independent and mind-dependent property.

Paper 28

Mr. Mathew Rowe (Open University, UK)

Title: A new look at artistic minimalism

This paper looks at the idea of minimalism in art, in particular the role that artworks made by artists experimenting with the reduction of representational content or attempting to de-materialise the art object, have played in providing 'hard-cases' that provide counter-examples to definitions or theories of art. It provides an account of minimalism in art that recognises the artistic centrality of these projects whilst recognising the aesthetically problematic status of the works. This account provides a distinction between: (a) minimally made artworks - which are minimal in terms of the activities that have gone into making an artwork, and (ii) minimal objects, which are minimal in terms of the possession, or lack, of manifested aesthetic properties or variety by objects. Through a discussion of some seminal minimal artworks these two categories of minimalism are proved to be distinct so that each can be exemplified separately or both together. These types of minimalisms are then grouped together as a whole as 'empirical minimalism', as they concern an investigation into the limits of how artworks are manufactured, either in terms of an artist's action, or what results from that action.

The paper concludes with a call for the need of a 'post-empirical' minimalism that can function to provide 'hard-cases' for post-empirical theories of art and suggests a characterisation of such a minimalism - as objects have the persona of artworks but lack the procedural, intentional or institutional framework that would make them artworks for post-empirical theories or definitions of art.

