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Vital Materialism

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Introductory Editorial: Towards Vital Materialist Aesthetics

Mandy-Suzanne Wong

Morton Feldman – ally of Jackson Pollock, composer of a gorgeous string quartet which is six hours long and rarely rises above *pianissimo* – this man said to Karlheinz Stockhausen: "'sounds are very much like people. And if you push them, they push you back. So, if I have a secret: don't push the sounds around.' Karlheinz leans over to [Feldman] and says: 'Not even a little bit?'"[1] The joke is that when it comes to describing how composers compose, how musicians make music, both Feldman and Stockhausen are correct, and Feldman knows it. Music making is the pushing and pushback of humans against sounds, of instruments against sounds, of papers and instruments against humans and sounds, and always, always vice versa. Feldman, composer of *Intersections* as well as *The Rothko Chapel,* spoke of composition as a collective act of human and nonhuman agents.

As a composer beleaguered by Western classical traditions, Feldman confessed to the desire to hear "the right note in the right place with the right instrument"; but at the same time he embraced the fact that sounds and instruments never do exactly as they are bidden.[2] They push back. "[S]ounds exist in themselves – not as symbols," he wrote.[3] Thus the "sounds in every piece intuitively seem to do things" of their own accord.[4] So do musical instruments, which Feldman refused to regard as mere amplifiers of human ideas. And so do pens and paper: as he composed, the author of *Coptic Light* and *Triadic Memories* happily encouraged the grain of paper and the flow of ink to influence his musical choices. "I have always found it more beneficial to experiment with fountain pens than with musical ideas," he said.[5]

In his bold yet stumbling attempts to describe how nonhumans were at work in his own work (in front of audiences who, steeped in 1980s-style American consumerism, were far from predisposed to such ideas), Feldman used the word "material" to refer to musical nonhumans: instruments, pages, sounds. Traditionally, he believed, composers were "very distant from material": "One of the problems with [what's traditionally called 'fine art'] is that it's not concerned with the medium, it's concerned with itself, that the idea is ego."[6] By contrast, Feldman wanted his own music and artistic processes to de-emphasize human ego ("the idea") and enjoy what happened when nonhuman "material" came under the spotlight. For Morton Feldman – who once wrote a seventeen-minute orchestral piece inspired by old bits of paper – composition wasn't an act of creation but a "conversation with [his] material" that was also a physical engagement with fidgety, inspiring, and stubborn nonhumans.[7] Attempting to describe the give and take involved in the compositional process, he said, "I work very much like a painter, insofar as I'm watching the phenomena and I'm thickening and I'm thinning and I'm working in that way and just watching what it needs."[8] He responded to the hints, the calls, and sometimes outright commands issued by instruments and sounds as by simply being themselves, they asserted what they would and would not do. Like a painter who feels the canvas push back against his hand and moves his arm to direct a dripping brush, Feldman worked by letting materials work on him.

From Feldman's reflections and artistic processes, I'd venture to extrapolate the general idea that aesthetic practice consists of human-nonhuman assemblages impacting one another affectively, physically, and creatively. This idea echoes Jane Bennett's vital materialist theory in which any "source of effects is … always an ontologically diverse assemblage of

energies and bodies" acting on each other "in competition and confederation."[9] Can we say the same of aesthetic experience?

When I listen to Feldman's music, I feel that I can't help but become aware of the bodies at work: sounds, humans, wooden things that scrape against themselves or mangle the air coming out of someone's lungs. It's a tense experience. If I listen to a recording of *Palais de Mari* or *The Turfan Fragments* while reading along with Feldman's score, the experience is almost stressful even though it is beautiful: an edge-of-my-seat feeling. I wait for the piano to refuse to emit any sound at all when Feldman calls for a six-note chord *ppp.* I wait for a sound to stumble from a trumpet too late, too loud, and fuzzily: the trumpeter struggling to squeeze air into the brass in a manner that befits Feldman's four notated *p*'s. This experience, which I call the experience of Feldman's music, is actually his pen touching paper pressuring a player's mind and lips and shoulders touching her instrument touching the air touching my body in a collective, mutually affective impact. By calling for extreme levels of quiet, Feldman asks instruments and players to exert themselves in order to restrain themselves in ways that far exceed their habitual levels of comfort, thereby calling attention to their specific material bodies and capabilities. We might say that Feldman calls attention to the general idea that aesthetic experience, like aesthetic practice, constitutes the mutual affecting of human-nonhuman assemblages.

It's tempting to argue that Feldman is an extreme case. His music is extreme: listening to his second string quartet, one must strain to hear the barely audible for six hours. His perspective is far from typical for a composer. But what about a more familiar aesthetic experience? The experience of reading a letter in Diane Setterfield's novel, *The Thirteenth Tale,* is also one of human-nonhuman assemblages.

> I opened the letter and pulled out a sheaf of half a dozen pages, all written in the same laborious script. Thanks to my work, I am experienced in the reading of difficult manuscripts. There is no great secret to it. Patience and practice are all that is required … your eye needs to study not just the shape of the letters but other marks of production. The speed of the pen. The pressure of the hand on the page … Until you wake into a dream where you are at once a pen flying over vellum and the vellum itself with the touch of ink tickling your surface. Then you can read it. The intention of the writer, his thoughts, his hesitations, his longings and his meaning. You can read as clearly as if you were the very candlelight illuminating the page as the pen speeds over it.[10]

Setterfield isn't talking about extreme cases: Margaret, the narrator, is not reading a weather- and time-beaten manuscript but an ordinary letter composed just the other day on ordinary paper, placed in a fresh envelope, and delivered by the usual postman. Margaret's point is that her work with extreme cases helped her to identify what goes on in ordinary experiences of reading. This experience is in fact very strange: a communion between reader, paper, ink, light, and writer that involves mutually affective tickling, desiring, imagining, and becoming, even trading places. In that sense, the aesthetic experience of reading resembles that of Feldman's music: both experiences consist of human-nonhuman bodies mutually affecting one another as components of equally affective assemblages.

The idiosyncratic features of page-bound nonhumans – hand-drawn characters – even seem to bring the physical bodies of reader and writer into contact with one another. In the shapes of the markings, Margaret seems to discern the qualities of the human body that produced them:

> The crisp-cornered envelope, puffed up with its thickly folded contents, was addressed in a hand that must have given the postman a certain amount of trouble. Although the style of the writing was old-fashioned, with its heavily embellished capitals and curly flourishes, my first impression was that it had been written by a child. The letters seemed untrained. Their uneven strokes either faded into nothing or were heavily etched into the paper. There was no sense of flow in the letters ... That is when I thought, It is the hand of an invalid.[11]

But as it turns out, the letters hoodwink Margaret. The author of the letter is not a child, and the irregularities in the handwriting are not due to any illness. Rather the markings defy interpretation, and they are irreducible to their human author's capabilities and intentions.

Any "source of effects is ... always an ontologically diverse assemblage of energies and bodies" acting on each other "in competition and confederation." Jane Bennett's theory seems to sum up both aesthetic practice and aesthetic experience, at least according to my brief examples. In turn, these examples suggest that even without being specifically "vital materialist aesthetics," aesthetic practices, experiences, and reflections

may engage the de-anthropocentric perspectives and relations which Bennett hopes to cultivate. In her indispensable book *Vibrant Matter,* Bennett's project is to think through what ontological, political, and ecological questions would look like if humans could admit that matter and nonhuman things are living, creative agents. The purpose of the Feldman and Setterfield examples is to begin to wonder what aesthetic questions would look like.

The driving principle of Bennett's vital materialism is that matter, materials, and things are not "passive stuff … raw, brute, or inert," but rather vital actants.[12] The "vitality" of things is "the capacity of things – edibles, commodities, storms, metals – not only to impede or block the will and designs of humans but also to act as quasi agents or forces with trajectories, propensities, or tendencies of their own."[13] "Actant" is Bruno Latour's term which, adopted by Bennett, connotes "a source of action that can be either human or nonhuman; it is that which has efficacy, can *do* things, has sufficient coherence to make a difference, produce effects, alter the course of events."[14] All things are actants: all things produce effects on other things.

The effects of things are not just the effects of things on humans or humans' effects on things. As Bennett puts it, *things* are not merely *objects*. Objects are things *as they appear for humans*, but things are "vivid entities not entirely reducible to the contexts in which (human) subjects set them"; things are "never entirely exhausted by their semiotics."[15] Each thing is more in itself than what it is for us. What Bennett calls *thing-power* is a "call" issued by a thing, calling attention to its singular existence for itself in excess of its relevance to humans.[16] Thing-power is also a thing's way of calling attention to the fact that it exists within a diverse, contingent, mutually affective assemblage of other things. In Setterfield's example, the thing-power of a written word on vellum calls attention to the pen with which it was written, which calls attention to the vellum which calls attention to the ink which has a certain feeling to the fingers, and that feeling invites the reader to dream of the writer's dreams. Even the semiotic associations that I draw in my head when I encounter a thing are instances of the thing's thing-power.[17] The thing-power of a thing is its inherent ability to dramatically and subtly affect others simply by being itself.

Vital materialism considers things in terms of what they do (their vivid thing-powers and varied affects), not how they appear (for it is all too easy to think that still things like vellum are nothing more than still). In

Bennett's ontology, to be a thing is to have thing-power. Being material *means* having the ability to produce effects: "I equate affect with materiality," Bennett writes.[18]

At the same time, being material means having a certain recalcitrance. "Recalcitrance" has two meanings in vital materialism. A thing's recalcitrance is its "'active impulsion' or trending tendency to persist"; it is a thing's active insistence on integrity, on remaining itself.[19] This sense of "recalcitrance" derives from Spinoza's term "*conatus*," which Bennett thinks through in depth. The second meaning of "recalcitrance" has more to share with Thoreau's idea of uncanny Wildness: a thing's recalcitrance is its resistance to human understanding, conceptualization, or control; the irreducible strangeness of even the most ordinary thing.[20] What is at stake here is not an epistemological limit. The idea is not that all things bare themselves to us although our minds are too limited to process all there is to take in. Rather, in the Wild-like form of recalcitrance, Bennett identifies an ontological moment in which things refuse to bare themselves to us, presenting only partial views of themselves to human consciousness. In that sense, recalcitrance is the formative "moment of independence (from subjectivity) possessed by things."[21]

Each thing that comes before me constantly alternates between disclosing itself to my consciousness as something in which I may find utility or meaning ("raw material") and something wild that stuns me with its inconceivable uniqueness so that I am too enchanted to do anything more than enjoy its presence ("thing-power"). Each thing is not just vibrant but "vibratory": its singularity is in fact multiplicity.[22] Each thing is "ontologically multiple."[23]

Bennett describes how each thing, each body, is actually a mosaic-like assemblage of other bodies. My body is the assemblage of my organs, bones, cells, nerves – yet a kidney by itself is not human: a human body is an assemblage of nonhuman things. The same goes for Setterfield's letter and Feldman's compositions, each of which are assemblages comprising human and nonhuman bodies. This means that in order to be itself – "recalcitrant" (Spinozan definition) – a thing must interact with other things. Like any effective ability, the ability to be oneself is "distributed across an ontologically heterogeneous field, rather than being a capacity localized in a [single] human [or nonhuman] body."[24]

But when things interact, they modify one another. I eat a burger and fries: I turn it into my tissue; it changes me by making my body physically larger. Thus if a thing is to remain itself, it must constantly invent new ways of interacting with other things so that it does not always – only sometimes – yield to the modifications on which other things insist. The work of being oneself is therefore not just a matter of one's *own* survival but also of balancing the competing interests of other things without which one could not survive. To "face up to the compound nature of the human self" or anything at all, including a nonhuman thing or assemblage of things "is to find it difficult even to make sense of the notion of a single end-in-itself. What instead appears is a swarm of competing ends being pursued simultaneously in each individual, some of which are healthy to the whole, some of which are not."[25]

In vital materialism, things and phenomena are thus contingent, heterogeneous assemblages in Deleuze and Guattari's sense:

> Assemblages are ad hoc groupings of diverse elements, of vibrant materials of all sorts. Assemblages are living, throbbing confederations that are able to function despite the persistent presence of energies that confound them from within … Assemblages are not governed by any central head: no one materiality or type of material has sufficient competence to determine consistently the trajectory or impact of the group … The elements of the assemblage work together … [yet] its jelling endures alongside energies and factions that fly out from it and disturb it from within.[26]

Things act on one another within assemblages. Assemblages act on other assemblages. The affective power of individual things spans, invades, and creates assemblages. The 'cause' of any particular action or effect is therefore never just a single thing. For example, Bennett analyzes the massive electrical blackout that gripped the United States in 2003 and the so-called 'epidemic' of obesity in twenty-first-century America as the results of decisions and actions by both humans and nonhumans.[27] These examples challenge Bennett's readers to "acknowledge the distributive quality of agency to address the power of human-nonhuman assemblages and to resist a politics of blame."[28] She has an ecological goal as well: vital materialism aims "to disrupt the political parsing that yields only active ([often] American [and] manly) subjects and passive objects … [in part] because the frame of subjects and objects is unfriendly to the intensified

ecological awareness that we need if we are to respond intelligently to signs of the breakdown of the earth's carrying capacity for human life."[29]

In general, Bennett's target is human hubris: the anthropocentrism that tends to dominate many levels of thinking. As she observes in a more recent article, vital materialism and object-oriented ontology (OOO) share the same enemy.[30] Both radical ontologies take aim at the anthropocentric bull's-eye with the argument that ontologically and effectively, nonhumans are no different from humans. In fact, OOO and vital materialism seem to share several basic tenets. Both perspectives equate being with effectivity. In the words of Graham Harman, OOO's pioneer, to be is to be "*capable of an effect,* of inflicting some kind of blow on reality."[31] OOO also champions the recalcitrance of things: even the most familiar entities are irreducible to human concepts and purposes. Hence in both OOO and vital materialism, each thing is divided from itself. But the theories differ in their conceptions of how a thing divides. In OOO (which unlike vital materialism uses the words "thing" and "object" interchangeably), "an object ... consists precisely of a rift between its appearance and its essence."[32] According to vital materialism, a single thing consists of multiple *other* things.

Moreover, unlike vital materialism, Harman takes the idea of recalcitrance a step further. In OOO, things not only evade *human* access and understanding but also conceal what they are in themselves from *every* other thing with which they come into contact. I cannot see both the top and the underside of my desk at the same time – but neither can my laptop, my notebook, or my teacup touch the top and underside of the desk at the same time. According to OOO, in every relation or interaction, a thing bares only part of itself (its appearance-for other things) and conceals the rest. What the thing is in itself (its essence) is always concealed or withdrawn from others. As Harman puts it, every thing "withdraws into its vast inner reality, which is irreducible to any of its negotiations with the world. Only in its relations with other entities is it caricatured, turned into a unitary profile."[33] In OOO, withdrawn, individual entities are ontologically prior to their relations. But in vital materialism, entities consist precisely of other entities and relations therewith; so relations are just as ontologically primary as things.

The question of the ontological priority of entities or relations may have countless implications that exceed ontology, some of which would doubtlessly impact aesthetic thinking. But an editorial cannot argue those implications. My purpose is rather to raise questions that may challenge

our readers to engage with vital materialism beyond the present publication.

What would aesthetic reflection in a specifically vital materialistic vein consist of? Hopefully my discussion so far intimates a few characteristics. Aesthetic practices, products, experiences, and reflections already encourage attentive, respectful, imaginative, playful, and reflective sensory engagement with human and nonhuman things – simply by virtue of being aesthetic. Aesthetic reflection already entails an enchantment with things like paintings, texts, and beautiful furniture. Aesthetic analysis already acknowledges that each aesthetic experience is contingent: it's different for each person every time, and no single experience of an object, e.g., a Sibelius symphony, ever yields the entire object. So even traditional aesthetics are aware of what Bennett calls thing-power and the recalcitrance of things. However, only vital materialism explicitly identifies thing-power and recalcitrance as ontological characteristics.

Hence specifically vital materialist aesthetics would recognize thing-power and recalcitrance as essential modes of being. This recognition could lead aestheticians to see their traditional ways of thinking in new light. It could encourage deeper thinking about the peculiar ontology of aesthetic objects and how they relate to other things. It may therefore complicate the relationship between aesthetics and ontology and other branches of philosophy. Vital materialist aesthetics would also question and debate the ontological and aesthetic priority of entities and/or relations and analyze the aesthetic and extra-aesthetic implications thereof. Vital materialist aesthetics would acknowledge that aesthetic practices and experiences are affective human-nonhuman assemblages – and not just recognize the fact but enjoy it, delve into it, explore the recalcitrant things and contingent relations that comprise these assemblages.

Drawing on Bennett's own scholarly and philosophical methods, aesthetic analysts and theorists might tweak our habitual perspectives in ways that attune our thinking to the distributed agencies at play in human-nonhuman assemblages. Along with "a cultivated, patient, sensory attentiveness to nonhuman forces," Bennett advocates a deliberately "countercultural kind of perceiving": a thoughtful form of attentiveness that deliberately refuses anthropocentrism and refuses to reduce events or phenomena *solely* to exercises in human agency, meaning, or social context.[34] The demystifying perspective of critique – though it is crucial to the understanding of human intention, hubris, and ideology – is insufficient

where nonhuman assemblages are also at stake. In addition, therefore, Bennett calls for "a bit of anthropomorphism – the idea that human agency has some echoes in nonhuman nature."[35] By "revealing similarities across categorical divides and lighting up structural parallels between material forms," she writes, "a touch of anthropomorphism ... can catalyze a sensibility that finds a world filled not with ontologically distinct categories of beings (subjects and objects) but with variously composed materialities that form confederations."[36]

In the following pages, some of our contributors engage Bennett's work directly. **Eric Lubarsky**, for example, analyzes the singular musical performances of Frances Pelton-Jones as assemblages of vital materials. However, even in contributions wherein authors adopt contrasting points of view, I hear echoes (sometimes faint, sometimes less so) of one of Bennett's most basic concerns: humans tend to understand our relations with the world in dangerously narrow, self-centered ways. It's my sense that even outside of vital materialism, this concern may have begun to permeate current aesthetic thinking. The authors of the ensuing articles share a commitment to questioning basic elements of human aesthetic experience, including time, bodily movement, conceptualization, and pleasure. In reflections on the incommensurability of lived and narrated time and between text and interpretation in *Tristram Shandy,* **Adam Schipper** finds that the "impossible movement towards complete conceptualization is precisely where one finds the pleasure of reading."[37] Via Nelson Goodman, **Joshua Hall** confronts the difficulties involved in attempting to reduce aesthetic human gesturing – dance – to linguistic or textual symbols. And in a new reading of Kant**, Ryan Johnson** demonstrates the general irreducibility of aesthetic objects and experiences to human knowledge – a realization that compels him to rethink the relationship between pleasure and aesthetic judgment as well as the structure of Kantian beauty. Whilst in most cases these authors do not explicitly champion de-anthropocentric points of view, it is evident in their thinking that events and entities – even when they are instigated by our own bodies – may exceed our conceptions of them. In fact, **Jane Bennett's** contemplation of damaged art pieces leads her to wonder if artworks may possess a form of life all their own. Even if they do not fit the usual definitions of biological life, the fact that in their own ways, art objects *strive* – working towards and producing effects – suggests the existence of multiple kinds or registers of liveliness that exceed biology.

It is this journal's privilege to host Professor Bennett's new article, "Encounters with an Art-Thing." When we editors voiced our idea of

dedicating the tenth issue of *Evental Aesthetics* to vital materialism and related aesthetic concerns, Professor Bennett responded with gracious enthusiasm. This publication barely skims the surface of the ocean of questioning to which the dynamic river of vital materialism leads. But I hope this issue will inspire far more thinking – especially in this and other aesthetic venues – about the vibrancy of things. The editors of EA dedicate this issue to Jane Bennett as a small offering of thanks for her work with the journal, her appreciation for independent scholarship, and her unique contributions to philosophical thought.

• Notes •

1 Morton Feldman, *Give My Regards to Eighth Street,* ed. B.H. Friedman (Cambridge: Exact Change, 2000), 157-8.

2 Ibid., 160.

3 Ibid., 35.

4 Ibid., 159.

5 Ibid., 62. See also 162-3.

6 Ibid., 192.

7 Ibid., 157.

8 Ibid., 183-4.

9 Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 117, 32.

10 Diane Setterfield, *The Thirteenth Tale* (New York: Washington Square Press, 2006), 4.

11 Ibid., 3-4.

12 Bennett, *Vibrant Matter,* vii.

13 Ibid., viii.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid., 5.

16 Ibid., 4.

17 See Ibid., 10.

18 Ibid., xiii.

19 Ibid., 2.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid., 3.

22 Ibid., 5.

23 Ibid., 8.

24 Ibid., 23.

25 Ibid., 12.

26 Ibid., 23-24.

27 Ibid., chapters 2 and 3.

28 Ibid., 38.

29 Bennett, "Systems and Things: A Response to Graham Harman and Timothy Morton," *New Literary History* 43, no. 2 (Spring 2012): 231.

30 Ibid., 230.

31 Graham Harman, *Tool-Being: Heidegger and the Metaphysics of Objects* (Chicago: Open Court, 2002), 20. Emphasis original.

32 Timothy Morton, *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology After the End of the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 168.

33 Harman, *Tool-Being,* 169.

34 Bennett, *Vibrant Matter,* xiv.

35 Ibid., xvi.

36 Ibid., 99.

37 Adam Schipper, "The Pleasure of Reading: Playing Games with Time in *Tristram Shandy*," *Evental Aesthetics* 3, no. 3 (2015): 25.

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Aesthetic Inquiries

COLLISION

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A new genre of speculative writing created by the Editors of *Evental Aesthetics,* the Collision is a concise but pointed essay that introduces philosophical questions raised by a specific aesthetic experience. A Collision is not an entire, expository journey; not a full-fledged argument but the potential of an argument. A Collision is an encounter that is also a point of departure: the impact of a striking confrontation between experience, thought, and writing may propel later inquiries into being.

Adam Schipper, "The Pleasure of Reading: Playing Games with Time in Tristram Shandy,"
***Evental Aesthetics* 3, no. 3 (2015): 18-27.**

ABSTRACT

The aesthetic experience of Laurence Sterne's *The Life and Opinion of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* is not reducible to an interpretation of plot or a linear critical analysis on the level of structure. Instead, it is thematized around a particular paradox of "double chronology" of autobiography, which continues the unfolding of the text yet simultaneously disrupts it. As such, *Tristram Shandy*'s lack of plot is a secondary phenomenon to the textual *game* of detour and digression it plays. This essay is less concerned with providing a closed argument and much more concerned with opening up inquiry into time and the aesthetics of reading with brief recourse to Paul Ricoeur and Hans-Georg Gadamer. Overall, I hope to indicate how *Tristram Shandy* provides a space wherein the pleasure of reading itself is disclosed.

KEYWORDS

Laurence Sterne, narratology, reading, time, hermeneutics

The Pleasure of Reading: Playing Games with Time in *Tristram Shandy*

Adam Schipper

This essay proposes an investigation of the specific aesthetic experience of reading encountered in Laurence Sterne's *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*. This experience is one of *pleasure*, but it is not encountered in the plot of the narrative, since the logic that motivates *Tristram Shandy* is one whose reliance on interruption, digression, preoccupation, and so on moves the narrative forward. In other words, taken merely as a work of fictional autobiography, there is no plot to offer a decisive aesthetic moment. In fact, speaking of a plot for *Tristram Shandy* beyond anything other than a general sequence of events is misleading. It disobeys a chronological linearity, for the "plot" turns on the distracted recall of the narrator rather than a more deliberate narrative organization. Therefore there is an experience of pleasure located within the larger logic of *narrative* that this novel offers wherein the act of reading itself becomes the source of the aesthetic experience rather than what is offered in and through the plot. In this sense, the form of *time* that reading retrieves from the narrative is a clue to the source of aesthetic

pleasure in *Tristram Shandy*. Playfulness, and more importantly *playfulness with time*, inaugurates the aesthetic experience of the pleasure of reading.

By "aesthetic pleasure", I do not mean, following the English Romantics, an emotional response to a work of art; nor do I mean a critical conceptual response achieved by a reader through engaging a work from a detached and intellectual distance à la Kant. Similarly, the value of the text is not found in a moral or didactic explanation alone. Instead, the form of pleasure I wish to explore is best expressed by Anne Sheppard in her book *Aesthetics*, where she defines aesthetic pleasure as "a desire to continue or repeat the experience."[1] The experience of aesthetic pleasure specific to *Tristram Shandy* derives from its games with time, which calls the reader to seek out an intellectual cause for said response. The experience is disqueting, however; there is no innate or particular textual datum by which this emotional response could be determined as its cause beyond this moment of response into which the reader is drawn. The plot of *Tristram Shandy* does not follow an arc along a linear progression of events. There are events and actions, but they are connected by the fancy of the narrator rather than a larger organizing *telos.* The response to the call then is a sundering moment whose indeterminacy unsettles the reader into making a renewed emotional response, and so the reception begins anew as the narrative turns. The result is the continuous ungrounding of the possibility for a final or concise conceptualization of the reader's experience of reading the text, as opposed to pinpointing a particular moral or intellectual stance with which *Tristram Shandy* challenges the reader. In short, the novel continuously gives cause for the reader to ask him or herself "Why am I reading this?"

I contend that the mechanism upon which this textual back-and-forth turns is Sterne's playfulness with time over and above formal considerations of plot. By "time" I mean the relation between the text's internal temporality — the unfolding of the narrative — and temporal conditions external to the text — the way in which time passes for the reader during the act of reading. The sense of play does not stem from either sense of time considered alone but rather from both in tandem. Part of my aim then is to draw out the manner in which this occurs, in hope of launching a broader discussion about a work of art, its interpreter, and the temporalities that both inhabit. However, my primary aim here is to show how *Tristram Shandy* presents such a possibility in its starkest and most pleasurable sense. Reading such a novel makes time most accessible, but ironically this accessibility is a product of time's inscrutability.[2]

The Life and Opinion of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman turns on the narration of a "life" by means of an "opinion," one which is in turn tempered by and manifested within lived experience. Shandy continuously makes recourse to digression: in order to tell the story, he must also leave the story to the side. At each moment of disruption, the next movement of the narrative is disclosed. The only regularity present is the one by which one scene or another is disrupted by the narrative as it turns to the next. In other words, Sterne's strategy of plot is a strategy of detour.

This regularity points toward some degree of narrative intention: there is an identifiable structure at work, even when that structure expresses a rupture of narrative structure itself. Of course, the *author's* motives, which *driving* underlie the narrative and plot strategies, are only ever provisionally available for analysis. However, in the inaugural words of the story, the *narrator* expresses a desire for a rational ordering for his life rather than the "logic" of sequential accidents bound in common to a single agent according to which the rest of the narrative seems to follow. "I wish either my father or my mother ... had minded what they were about when they begot me ... I am verily persuaded I should have made a quite different figure in the world, from that, in which the reader is likely to see me."[3] From the beginning, *Tristram Shandy* contains a plot that challenges the concept of emplotment itself.

At the outset, Shandy disrupts the possibility for a concise delivery of a life story from beginning to end. Rather, the reader receives a life emplotted according to the whim of the narrator, which colors the anticipation of an ordered progression through this life. From the moment of his conception, an eye for logic or structure is contingent on the ongoing events of life itself. Plot, according to Aristotle, is the *mimesis* of an action. And through text, plot is achieved by the ascription of an action to an agent through the "imitation" of life in language.[4] So what is imitated in the plot of *Tristram Shandy* is a life reduced to a narrative object and mediated through the subjective viewpoint of "the middle" of the story – the lived time of the present in which it is being written. If Shandy writes the *totality* of his life story, up to and including the moments in which he is writing, then the full figure of his identity may be received by the reader. His opinion, or subjective self-reflection through narration, would then be fully commensurate with the totality of his lived experience. In other words, if Shandy were to succeed in writing the totality of his life story, then the time relayed within his story would be the same form of time encountered by the reader as the time of the narration itself. The novel would succeed then in being both a "life" and an "opinion"

as well as delivering both over to the reader. But the more he narrates, the more time passes between the "now" of narration and the "then" being relayed through the narrative. There is a continuous discontinuity or time lag between Shandy as the narrator and Shandy as the subject of narration.

This betrays a particular concept of time at work in *Tristram Shandy* that is exemplary of a paradox found in all autobiographical literature, fictional or otherwise. On the one hand, there is the time of the narration: the time of the unfolding of the narrative through the narrating *action* of a narrator. On the other hand, there is the time of the narrative, which is disclosed and thereby structured by the time of narration but remains phenomenally distinct since there is no point at which they ever emerge within the same moment. Paul Ricoeur notes in *Time and Narrative* that the "double chronology" of narrative becomes a coherent concept when one notices "the remarkable property narrative possesses of being split into utterance [*énociation*] and statement [*énoncé*]," whereupon reading is the act of "grasping together" the two.[5] A narrative is thus irreducibly split into its material status as a text (i.e., its "utterance") and its content (i.e., its "statement").[6] This bifurcated world is precisely that which is experienced by the reader.

Shandy bemoans the impossibility of autobiography frequently. Early on in the first volume, he provides a helpful summation:

> there are archives at every stage to be look'd into, and rolls, records, documents, and endless genealogies, which justice ever and anon calls him back to stay the reading of: —— In short, there is no end of it; —— for my own part, I declare I have been at it these six weeks, making all the speed I possibly could, — and am not yet born: —— I have just been able, and that's all, to tell you *when* it happen'd, but not *how* ; —— so that you see the thing is yet far from being accomplished.[7]

Shandy's desire to set out and write one's story in its entirety from the absolute beginning is consistently interrupted at every moment of reflection by the seemingly impossible epistemic burden of truth and documentation. But at no point does this burden seem to make Shandy's project an impossible one. More specifically, its impossibility is always concealed for Shandy by the act itself. The incommensurability of truth and documentation is doubled by the incommensurable structure of life and writing: Shandy could never make the leading event of his

autobiography fully coincident with the event of writing it. Similarly, the reader could never make the time of the text the time of its reception one and the same. What frustrates the reader of *Tristram Shandy* is precisely what frustrates the eponymous character — time plays games with the reader inasmuch as reading inaugurates a game played with time, but this is nevertheless a necessary condition for its reception in the first place.

This is the heart of aesthetic experience and *Tristram Shandy*: the discontinuous and insistent disruption of the reader's interpretive efforts is also the necessary condition for its reception. The aesthetic experience *is* the rupture of continuity and identifiable meaning for the reader. Later, Shandy begins to relate his father Walter's idle hobby of researching the science of noses, but insists to the reader that he or she delay judgment carried away by the imagination, which is the devil's work. Rather, one must withhold it in view of a certain virtue:

> Read, read, read, read, my unlearned reader! read ... for without *much reading*, by which your reverence knows, I mean *much knowledge*, you will no more be able to penetrate the moral of the next marbled page than the world with all its sagacity has been able to unravel the many opinions, transactions and truths which still lie mystically hid under the dark veil of the black one.[8]

Shandy offers the source of aesthetic experience within reading: if the reader does not continue, then he or she will not "penetrate" the text, and quite playfully, the immediately following page contains the printed image of a marble surface. But the call to read here is to pass through the blackened page: placing a judgment on the text (either on Walter's pseudoscientific interests or on a page covered by a black space) is precisely what ends reading and thus the temporal games upon which the narrative turns. The satisfaction of certain knowledge that the world claims stands in opposition to the work of reading *Tristram Shandy*, but since the call to "penetrate" the text is what motivates its reading, and this activity is met with the impenetrable nexus of digression, this virtue is ambiguous.

So the virtue called for in the text itself is ambiguous as soon as the source of its aesthetic experience is brought to the fore. It is better to allow oneself to be taken up by the game and let it remain in play than to terminate it with the certitude of judgment. *Tristram Shandy* is then a

novel about the ambiguity of interpretation, and more specifically the *pleasure* of ambiguous interpretations, which challenge the reader to play an interpretive game with them. But playing the game that *Tristram Shandy* offers does not reveal a hermeneutic "key" to answering the challenge and uncovering its aesthetic experience since this is what precisely what it hides away. The frustration of reading *Tristram Shandy is* its aesthetic experience, and so even the reader is participating in its games. This is echoed later when Shandy recalls watching his father do his research with his uncle Toby: "he had got out his penknife, and was trying experiments upon the sentence, to see if he could not scratch some better sense into it."[9] The moment he believes he has encountered the meaning of the sentence, he has destroyed it: "I've done it, — said my father, snapping his fingers. — See, my dear brother *Toby*, how I have mended the sense. — But you have marr'd a word, replied my uncle *Toby*."[10] The act of interpretation changes the subject of interpretation. Attempting to identify meaning beyond the "dark veil" and blackened page of text is to deny the challenge to play its game and find pleasure in engaging in the play.

When one reads *Tristram Shandy*, one becomes complicit in its games, surrendering to what Gadamer calls "the mode of being of the work of art itself."[11] Specifically, the condition for an aesthetic experience in reading *Tristram Shandy* is that one read it as a novel in spite of the insistent resistance to such categorization revealed in the act of reading. It is the very impossibility of totalizing a life story into which the reader must buy if he or she wishes to buy into the games *Tristram Shandy* plays. In other words, the reader enters into a peculiar intersubjective relationship with *Shandy,* a relationship that finds an analogy in Gadamer's notion of "play." For Gadamer, play "fulfills its purpose only if the player loses himself in play."[12] He assumes the "*primacy of play over the consciousness of the player* ... without goal or purpose but also without effort."[13] Of course, there is still a *seriousness* in the form of a fidelity to the text here: in reading, one must take *seriously* the possibility for making "the play wholly play."[14] In the context of *Shandy,* the primacy of the play at work in the narrative calls the reader to surrender to the interrupting folds and warps of the narrative, at the heart of which is the "double time" that results from the "self-presentation" of both a life and an opinion.[15] The aesthetic pleasure found here is borne of a concern for the play of language with time, which *takes* time to unfold but in doing so *makes* more time for itself. This oscillation between creation and expenditure opens the space in which the play takes place.

Theories of aesthetic interpretation that reckon with temporality can find fruitful results when the manner in which the time of the interpreter's aesthetic experience is considered in conjunction with that of the work itself. Indeed, a work whose structure subverts movements toward conclusive interpretations is still an aesthetic experience. Resistant interpretation is still interpretation. This is not a new claim, but it gains significance when one considers the manner in which the activity of the interpreter is coincident with the activity of the work, which the interpreter engenders by engaging the work in the first place. Ricoeur agrees that a *game* is played both within the narrative and between the narrative and the reader. He affirms that "we may call the relation between the time of narrating and the narrated time in the narrative itself a 'game with time'" that "has as its stake the temporal experience (*Zeiterlebnis*) intended by the narrative." [16] As we have seen, there is a time that is primary to reading itself and that is "'codetermined' by the relation and the tension between the two times of the narrative and by the 'laws of form' that result from them."[17] In *Shandy,* these "laws of form," according to which the text plays its game, are the text's digressions from "logical" narrative structures. *Tristram Shandy* is an example of the extreme limits of the temporal unity of a narrative. As Ricoeur states, such a narrative requires "a view of time that has no possible overview, no overall internal cohesiveness."[18] *Tristram Shandy* takes this view to its outermost limit and induces one to lose oneself with pleasure in this game. Time both emerges and is subverted in *Tristram Shandy*'s deliberate disunity; and this impossible movement towards complete conceptualization is precisely where one finds the pleasure of reading, which in turn feeds the desire to continue along such an impassable path. Indeed, *Tristram Shandy* teaches one to take seriously the manner in which time runs circles in and around interpretive consciousness.

This seriousness of time's play suggests a possible pedagogical function for *Tristram Shandy's* games with time. The entire novel can be construed as a chronologized sequence of detours and digressions that is nonetheless pleasurable because it offers a challenge to read and in doing so learn about oneself as a reader. Reading itself is a pleasure, and *Tristram Shandy* is a text that calls upon one to become a better reader. And if the effort to decipher such a text can be pleasurable, other time-consuming forms of interpretation, including research, analysis, and philosophizing, can also be sources of pleasure.

• Notes •

1 Anne Sheppard, *Aesthetics: an Introduction to the Philosophy of Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 64.

2 Time's "inscrutability" is one of the major temporal aporias that Ricoeur reckons with in *Time and Narrative*. See *Time and Narrative* Vol. 1, part 1.

3 Lawrence Sterne, *Tristram Shandy* (London: Penguin Classics, 1977), 5.

4 Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative Volume 1*, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 31.

5 Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative Volume 2*, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 61, 79.

6 Unfortunately, a more detailed exploration of double chronology in terms of speech acts is beyond the scope of this essay. My aim in raising the concept here is to highlight narrative's inherently dualistic nature.

7 Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, 35, Sterne's emphasis.

8 Ibid., 203-204, Sterne's emphasis.

9 Ibid., 207.

10 Ibid., 208, Sterne's emphasis.

11 Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (London and New York: Continuum, 2004), 102.

12 Ibid., 103.

13 Ibid., 105.

14 Ibid., 103.

15 Ibid., 106.

16 Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative 2*, 80. For a detailed discussion of this concept, see Gérard Genette's *Narrative Discourse: an Essay in Method*, trans. Jane E. Lewin. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983).

17 Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative 2*, 80-81.

18 Ibid., 81.

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ABSTRACT

In this article, I explore the relationship between dance and the work of Nelson Goodman, which is found primarily in his early book, *Languages of Art*. Drawing upon the book's first main thread, I examine Goodman's example of a dance gesture as a symbol that exemplifies itself. I argue that self-exemplifying dance gestures are unique (among other self-exemplifying symbols) in that they are often independent and internally motivated, or "meta-self-exemplifying." Drawing upon the book's second main thread, I retrace Goodman's analysis of dance's relationship to both notation in general and also Labanotation in particular. My argument is that dance gives the false impression of being notational, or is "meta-notational."

KEYWORDS

Nelson Goodman, dance, gesture, exemplification, Labanotation

Rearticulating *Languages of Art*: Dancing with Goodman

Joshua M. Hall

In this article, I explore the relationship between dance and the work of Nelson Goodman, which is found primarily in his early *Languages of Art*.[1] Drawing upon that book's first main thread, I examine Goodman's example of a dance gesture as a symbol that exemplifies itself. I argue that self-exemplifying dance gestures are unique (among other self-exemplifying symbols) in that they are often independent and internally motivated, or "meta-self-exemplifying." Then, drawing upon the book's second main thread, I retrace Goodman's analysis of dance's relationship to notation in general and Labanotation in particular. My argument is that dance gives the false impression of being notational, or is "meta-notational."

1 • Meta-Self-Exemplification

1.1 • Exemplification

Goodman observes that though "seldom given much attention," exemplification is "an important and widely used mode of symbolization in and out of the arts."[2] His first example is a "tailor's booklet of small swatches of cloth."[3] Goodman notes that although such a swatch possesses many properties, including a certain "color, weave, texture, and pattern," the swatch only exemplifies its color.[4] That is, of the many things that are true of the swatch, only its color is intended to be illustrative. Similarly, one might point to a random dog on the street in order to teach a child what dogs are, in which case it would be exclusively the membership in the species of dog (rather than other attributes like fluffiness or being named "Sam") that a particular dog would exemplify. This is so because, as Goodman puts it, "exemplification is possession plus reference."[5] In other words , the swatch possesses both rectangularity and a certain color, but it does not refer to the rectangularity, only the color – at least in the tailor-world, which is "the particular system of symbolization in effect."[6]

Goodman then specifies that in exemplification only "predicates and other labels" are involved; thus, "while anything may be denoted, only labels may be exemplified."[7] In simpler terms, only grammatical predicates – and not grammatical subjects – can be exemplified in Goodman's sense. For example, Sam the dog can exemplify "being a dog," but nothing can exemplify Sam as an existing entity (because that is simply not what exemplification means). The concept "label" here includes not just linguistic predicates but also symbols "from other systems – gestural, pictorial, diagrammatic," all of which "function much as predicates of a language."[8] In other words, verbal language provides labels, but pictures (like on a restaurant menu) and gestures (like greeting someone with a friendly wave) provide labels as well. Goodman's specific attention to gesture and his affirmation of its language-like characteristics have important implications for dance, ultimately constituting the first of several suggestions that dance played an important role in Goodman's initial conception of labels and symbols.

1.2 • Self-exemplification

Dance is also important in Goodman's subsequent discussion of self-exemplification. Fairly casually, he acknowledges the existence of "symbols that refer to themselves," his first example being the word "word."[9] That is, "word" both refers to words in general (such as "dog" and "Sam") and is also itself an example of a word. Goodman's first example of a dance-relevant gesture which denotes without exemplifying is tapping one's feet while listening to music.[10] Put simply, although tapping one's feet to the music denotes that one is hearing catchy music, the actual feet-tapping does not itself serve as an example of catchy music. As for the converse case (namely gestures which exemplify without denoting), Goodman anticipates that one example might appear to be that of a physical education instructor's in-class demonstrations, such as executing the dance move known as "jazz hands." When the instructor spreads her/his fingers wide and then spreads her/his hands slowly apart and downward, one might think this merely refers to the activity of performing "jazz hands." After careful consideration of this example however, Goodman concludes that something else is going on:

> since the demonstrations are part of the instruction, and are accompanied by and may be replaced by verbal directions, and have no already established denotation, they may — like any sample not otherwise committed as to denotation — be taken as denoting what the predicates they exemplify denote, and are then labels exemplifying themselves.[11]

Put differently, since the instructor's execution of the "jazz hands" move would not have some pre-existing denotative function (as opposed for example to the "peace" sign), then that execution could be understood to refer to the same things in the world (executions of that move) to which the verbal instruction (yelling out "Jazz hands!") also refers. Denoting what the label that you exemplify denotes is nothing other than self-exemplification. In short, the instructor's performance of jazz hands is an example of the performance of jazz hands, offering "itself" as its own example.

Goodman's second dance-relevant example of a self-exemplifying gesture is that of a mime who is miming walking, although Goodman acknowledges that in the world of pantomime ("as in English and in painting") such examples are "in the minority." The one art form for which this is not the

case, according to Goodman, is dance. This is not to say that dance does not include many gestures that denote or exemplify without doing both. Indeed, particularly in regard to classical ballet, I agree with Goodman that some "elements of dance are primarily denotative, versions of the descriptive gestures of daily life (e.g., bowings, beckonings) or of ritual." For example, a dancer may wave "hello," not in order to offer said wave as an example of waving but rather to merely carry forward a plot in which two characters have a happy meeting. On the other hand, "other movements, especially in the modern dance, primarily exemplify rather than denote." For example, Martha Graham introduced a whole new vocabulary of moves for (especially female) dancers, characterized by strength, assertiveness, and percussiveness. And these moves did not refer to preexisting activities being performed by typical Western women in their ordinary lives. What such merely-exemplifying (and not also denoting) gestures exemplify for Goodman are "not standard or familiar activities, but rather rhythms and dynamic shapes."[12]

In Goodman's beautiful and fascinating description, such exemplifications "may reorganize experience, relating actions not usually associated or distinguishing others not usually differentiated, thus enriching allusion or sharpening discrimination." In the case of my previous example, Graham brought femininity, strength, assertiveness, and percussiveness into a new and powerfully expressive relationship. Goodman rejects any characterization of such movements "as verbal descriptions" as being "absurd"; rather, "the label a movement exemplifies may be itself; such a movement, having no antecedent denotation, takes on the duties of a label denoting certain actions including itself." Such a phenomenon in fact is an example of how (as "elsewhere in the arts") dance's vocabulary "evolves along with what that vocabulary is used to convey."[13] To give a non-dancing example, it is a bit like what happens when one friend starts making a funny new movement, which then takes on the status of an inside joke, and eventually becomes a kind of shorthand for the type of person the first friend is, a shorthand which can be used by any friend in the group.

1.3 • Self-exemplification in dance

The previous passage from Goodman offers several important insights for the present investigation. First, by way of clarification, Goodman seems to be saying that at least some of the abstract movements in dance, particularly in

modern dance, function in their very enactment to create new "types" of moves, of which each such movement thereby becomes the first "token." For example, Martha Graham's famous "contraction and release" move suggests a novel connection between the attributes of strength and vulnerability.[14] And since this connecting power derives from the fact that a move like contraction and release does not in its first appearance belong to any preexisting conventions or "symbol schemes," creativity is absolutely essential. In a given dance, the creation of a self-exemplifying gesture is the creation of a brand new move that instantaneously "holds its own" in the vocabulary of that dance. In other words, the new move immediately has the potential to be on equal standing with all the existing moves in that dance, at least for the purpose of that performance. And by "holding its own," I mean that all moves, even new moves, have the potential to be repeated so that they organically amplify the established "lexicon" of dance in general.

Second, I would like to extend this idea further, shifting the exemplary discourse from modern dance to contemporary Latin dance.[15] On one hand, like ballet, a Latin dance such as "salsa" (or "mambo") involves a formalized repertoire of moves, which constitute at least part of salsa's symbolic vocabulary. For example, the leader's left hand's holding the follower's right hand and tracing an upward moving diagonal constitutes the standard "lead" for "the follower's right-hand turn." On the other hand, as in modern dance, both leader and follower in salsa are given a significant degree of latitude in regard to everything else about this move, including all other aspects of the specific body parts (including the hand and arm) that are otherwise directed by that move. In the follower's right-hand turn, for example, the leader can turn her/his head in any direction, smile or frown in concentration, and also raise her/his arm more or less forcefully, smoothly, rapidly, and with a slight twist or extension of the fingers, etc. All of these non-governed movements both allow for the expression of personal style or uniqueness and arguably constitute a different kind of example of the rhythms and dynamic shapes that Goodman finds especially prominent in modern dance.

The central difference between, for example, the follower's right-hand turn in salsa and contraction and release in modern is that the latter has become a self-exemplification which is universal in scope (insofar as it illuminates an aspect of dancers' inner experiences) while the former is particular in scope (insofar as it illuminates some aspect of a particular dancer's singularity).[16] In other words, an improvised move could be on equal standing for a given dance performance on a given night, even though it would be impossible for that improvised move to become enacted in the repertoire of most salsa dancers around the globe based on just the one night's performance.

Some readers might object that there is an important difference between on the one hand contraction and release and on the other hand the right-hand turn in salsa. To wit, it may appear that in the case of contraction and release, the move is part of the dance's own symbol system; while in the case of the right-hand turn, the move is part of a separate symbol system employed by the dancer to learn the dance's own symbol system.[17] I would argue however that in a social dance, this separation into two separate symbol systems, in which the performers employ an additional system to learn the system of the dance, breaks down. Because salsa is a social dance, most salsa dancers learn much or all of the dance "on the fly" while in the middle of executing the dance. And since the dancers are primarily executing the dance for themselves and each other, typically on a floor-level space (which limits any non-dancing persons' ability to observe the execution of the dance), there is no clear distinction in most salsa dances between performers and audience. A majority of the non-dancers, moreover, usually talk and drink instead of watching. (Otherwise, they would probably be dancing themselves).

Third, I wish to carefully unpack Goodman's phrase "dynamic shapes." Shapes can be either pure abstractions (such as the shape of the triangle described in the Pythagorean Theorem) or concrete features (such as the triangles of the Egyptian pyramids). The etymology of the word "shape" comes from the Old English word *gesceap*, which means "creation, creature; make, structure, natural character; form, figure, configuration, pudendum ... also decree, destiny."[18] Shape thus unites the contemporary meaning of structural form with a whole theology of creators, creatures, and destiny, thus suggesting the saying, "Design is destiny." Importantly for the present investigation, these other connections trouble the commonsensical understanding of shape as a neutral, independent fact as opposed to something like one moment in a more complex activity, process, or — in terms of the other word in the phrase under consideration — dynamic. In the cases of "decree" and "destiny," for example, this dynamism is found in how much activity and work must be done in the present — from the position of the one who has been given the decree or had the destiny chosen but who has not yet acted on the decree or fulfilled the destiny. This future activity thereby reaches back retroactively into the lived present and infuses that present with energy.

"Dynamic" currently means something that is in motion, perhaps implicitly full of the energy that motion requires, and its etymology comes via Leibniz's French from the Ancient Greek δύναμις, meaning "power, strength," a word that is of utmost importance in Aristotle's philosophy.[19] This *dynamis* connection emphasizes that which makes the energetic motion of the dynamic possible in the first place: the strength that both gives and maintains its shape.

Thinking "shape" and "dynamic" together therefore shows both that every shape is dynamic in its origins and "destinies" and that all dynamism is shaped by the strength that infuses it. The challenge is to describe "dynamic shapes," as Goodman uses the phrase, in a way that does not reduce to meaningless tautology. Insofar as the etymology of "shape" betrays a hidden dynamism, Goodman calls self-exemplifying gestures "dynamic dynamisms" or "shaping shapes"— as if there were any other kind of shapes.

1.4 • Dance as meta-self-exemplification

Once again, dance provides the solution to the problem. Dance is a privileged site of the illumination of the aforementioned neglected aspects of the two words that make up the phrase "dynamic shapes." That is, dance is a locus where shapes manifest themselves in their beginnings, their endings, and the journeys that connect the two. That is, no shape is static, and all are in fact frozen time-slices of movement (like standing up conceived as a frozen moment between getting out of bed and sitting down at the breakfast table). And although one might think that, instead of shapes manifesting themselves, it is the dancers who dance the shapes directly, this is arguably impossible insofar as dancers are four-dimensional beings who necessarily produce (at least 3-dimensional) objects, of which these 2-dimensional shapes are the third-person perceptual residues or epiphenomena. To put the point differently, most activities, including most art forms, assume certain shapes as given and erect more dynamic shapes against this background of the former (relatively static) shapes. In dance however there is no absolutely fixed set of shapes since any shape is eligible for change, removal, or replacement — including every line, surface, and depth of the body as well as clothing, individual movements, and interpersonal interactions with the bodies of other dancers.

Moreover, in dance, the strength of the body leaves nothing to the imagination in regard to the "where" from whence comes the "what" of the performance's dynamism. To put it in Goodman's terms, dance is the self-exemplification of shape and dynamism per se, because a shape in dance denotes other examples of that shape in the world and does so by foregrounding itself as an example of that shape. Dance transforms shapes and dynamism from mere useful tools (for construction, math, beauty, or whatever) into purely referential possessions of themselves as shapes. Put simply, dance is shape as an end in itself. Much like in a free verse poem — as

opposed to ordinary conversation — every word is only there because of the specific word that it is and so that it can receive the spotlight; so in a dance, every visible shape is specifically selected for what it is and placed in the spotlight of our attention.

Of course this is also true in the other arts (as several of my previous points suggest) albeit to different degrees and in different ways. The history of Western painting, for example, includes many examples of self-exemplifying images, brushstrokes, or gestures. However, the difference between non-dancing and dancing gestures is that for every non-dancing gesture there remains some material product that can be interpreted as the purpose of that gesture whereas every dancing gesture by definition evaporates the moment it occurs, leaving no trace, let alone an enduring material product.[20] In other words, whatever might be left of static-ness in the shapes that make up dance's "dynamic shapes" is undermined by the fact that dance's gestures do not occupy a stable spatiotemporal location in which to be viewed as objects or entities. Dance gestures are instead pure process or activity.

Perhaps the reader will object to the implication that every non-dancing gesture makes something, or engages with some object outside the gesturer's body in order to achieve some purpose. Scratching one's head, for example, may seem to be a gesture which does not fit this description. If one were to regard head-scratching as a gesture (which might not be feasible given the lack of both conscious intent and semantic content), I would argue that its purpose would be to perhaps relieve an itch, or discharge nervous energy, and that its material product would be the change in the skin of the head (perhaps including tiny scratch marks?) and the nervous system. More generally, a gesture's default status is to use materiality to communicate a message to a second person in the world, so dance's self-exemplifying gestures are the exceptions (and it is important to recall that not all dancing gestures are self-exemplifying), while head scratching (insofar as it is a gesture at all) is the norm.

I would therefore argue that dance gestures have something "meta" about them. The idea is that a merely self-exemplifying gesture both refers to something in the world and also refers to its own referring to that thing in the world. To return to Goodman's first example of self-exemplification, the word "word" both refers to words in general and refers to itself as an example of a word. And "word" does this in a stable and static way by always "staying put" long enough to illustrate its point. By contrast, dance's self-exemplifying gestures go beyond mere self-exemplification by dynamically refusing to stay

put long enough to preserve the example of self-exemplification as a clearly graspable phenomenon.

Perhaps the reader will object that there are particular dance moves that "stay put" long enough to be identifiable across different dances and different performances of the same dance, such as a pirouette. In response, I would first note that a pirouette is not a member of the "self-exemplifying" subset of the set of all dance gestures. However, even if one were to interpret it as such, a dance gesture like what call a "pirouette" only stays put insofar as it is locked in place by a regimenting power structure which denies dancers the freedom to blend moves into each other. Thus, there exist what we could identify as quasi-pirouettes, or pirouette-esque moves, but we would only need to do make such identifications because the conventions of ballet (including ballet instruction) force certain forms onto the dancers' bodies. In short, "pirouette" only stays put to the extent that we freeze it, and use it to keep dancers' bodies bound.

More specifically, something in certain self-exemplifying dance gestures goes beyond the level of mere self-exemplification. This can be seen most clearly perhaps by contrasting it with the merely self-exemplifying example of red (i.e., red text), which necessarily relies on some external assistance in order to perform its self-exemplification. Red requires that the person using the word-processing software not only perform the necessary tricks to shift the color of the text from black to red, but also provide red with a reason for it to appear at all on the occasion in question. Certain self-exemplifying gestures in dance however, such as those which concern "rhythm" and "dynamic shape," are not merely self-exemplifying but also self-creating or self-motivated insofar as the dancer performs them without external support or assistance and as ends-in-themselves, perhaps even without any conscious intent (as when one involuntarily slips into a dance while walking down the street).

But perhaps some readers will object that such dance gestures are not in fact self-motivated but rather motivated in part by previous moments in the dance. One form this motivation might take is the development of a musical theme.[21] In that case, I would argue that the gestures to which I am referring take place in improvisational dances such as jazz dances and certain aleatory dances. In these dances, there is no pre-given theme, the development of which would compel or motivate later notes to follow previous ones. Even in the absence of a theme, though some audiences may seem to sense a kind of activation of later moments by previous moments or a kind of motivation of later shapes by earlier shapes. Even in this looser formulation however, at least in regard to more improvisational dances such as salsa, any such activation or

motivation would have to be constructed retroactively. This construction would amount to a tracing of the dynamic series of shapes that could not have been predicted even by the dancers or choreographers in the "real time" of the present.

The reason for this is that every gesture in dance is potentially polysemous, capable of presaging various subsequent movements. To return to the example of the right-hand turn in salsa, the diagonal lift of the leader's left hand, which initiates the turn, can just as easily be inflected at the last moment toward the partner's forehead. This slight difference is used to initiate the lead for the right-hand drape instead (in which the partner's hand is guided over his/her head as if the partner were smoothing his/her hair with the leader's hand cupping the follower's hand). In short, the beginning of the diagonal lift can motivate or activate a right-hand turn or a drape or multiple other moves. One could almost say, therefore, that these types of self-exemplifying dancing gestures "gesture themselves." Perhaps one could legitimately regard dance gesture as potentially involving meta-self-exemplification.

2 • Meta-Notationality

2.1 • Notational versus non-notational arts

Before I turn directly to notation, it may be helpful to summarize Goodman's larger discussion of forgery, within which he introduces notation. Though this forgery discussion ultimately focuses on music and dance, it begins in a thoroughly comparative way, as suggested by Goodman's claim that "in music, unlike painting, there is no such thing as a forgery of a known work" because "all correct performances are equally genuine instances of the work."[22] Music is thus an example of what Goodman terms an "allographic" art form while painting is an example of an "autographic" one, meaning that "even the most exact duplication of [a painting] does not thereby count as genuine."[23]

As for the other canonical arts, Goodman asserts that "sculpture is autographic" because it is similar to the autographic art of painting while "[a]rchitecture and the drama, on the other hand, are more nearly comparable to music." The reason for the phrase "more nearly" here is that architecture's

need for external assistance in moving from blueprints to buildings and drama's need for stage directions raise the possibility that these two arts are "less purely allographic" than music.[24] In this way, a significant shift has already occurred, namely from a pure dichotomy to a continuum of degrees, thereby raising a host of questions which, for Goodman, "cannot be answered" prior to "some rather painstaking analysis."[25] Dance, although already implicitly at stake via its frequent inclusion in drama, is formally introduced by Goodman here as the first step in this "painstaking analysis."

"Since an art seems to be allographic just insofar as it is amenable to notation," Goodman begins, "the case of dance is especially interesting."[26] While this explicit turn to dance certainly foreshadows its ultimate role for Goodman as a necessary part of his full-blown classification system, dance may actually have been the phenomenon that suggested these problems to Goodman in the first place. To put it figuratively, dance as a "white hat" hacker designing foolproof software may have originally been the "black hat" hacker who undermined the original version of the software. That is, perhaps dance already destroyed Goodman's initial classification system, like a virus in a cyber-attack, as a result of which Goodman then hired the same hacker to design a less vulnerable IT fortress. But this left the system still vulnerable should the white hat hacker choose to switch back to the original black hat. A non-dancing analogy here would be the motif in which a government or wealthy individual hires a known thief to design or test a foolproof new antitheft system and is thus rightly suspicious that the thief will use her/his abilities to double-cross her/his employer.

One reason to think that dance helped Goodman formulate these problems (and not just their solutions) is that prior to this moment in the text, Goodman has focused primarily on Hegel's five central arts; and the history of aesthetics shows that attempts to go beyond those five frequently undermine their own classifications.[27] Goodman ascribes dance's interestingness here to its being "an art without a traditional notation; and an art where the ways, and even the possibility, of developing an adequate notation are still matters of controversy." In other words, as is so often the case in various contexts, dance appears to gets things heated with a heat that extends to its neighbors as Goodman suggests that dance's relationship to notation raises questions about the use of notation in the arts generally. His answer to these questions takes the form of the following narrative: perhaps at the beginning of human history "all arts are autographic," but — exclusively in the case of those arts whose works are "transitory, as in singing and reciting, or require many persons for their production, as in architecture and symphonic music" — as the ages wear

on, "a notation may be devised in order to transcend the limitations of time and the individual."[28]

The central achievement of such a notation, in Goodman's view, lies in its "establishing a distinction between the constitutive and contingent properties of a work"; nevertheless notation is guided "by the informal classification of performances into works and by practical decisions as to what is prescribed and what is optional."[29] Thus in music for example, the opposing qualities of objective and subjective (or substantial and idiosyncratic) might be distinguished after the first appearance of its notation. But in painting the line between these pairs of qualities remains invisible to this day; or more precisely to even speak of such a line for an art like painting might constitute a kind of category mistake.

2.2 • Dance as an allegedly notational art

As for dance, it is clear to Goodman that it is both ephemeral and dependent on entire communities and thus "qualifies on both scores" as allography.[30] But this conclusion is perhaps too hasty. That dance is ephemeral — if "ephemeral" means something like "does not leave behind a static material object at the end of the work" — seems true enough, but that dance always requires more than one person is far less obvious. Presumably, Goodman is thinking here of dance as a part of theater, for example in an Ancient Greek chorus, but there are also many solo dances, many of which are performed by the same person who choreographed them. That Goodman would have simply forgotten about solo dances seems implausible, so perhaps he has some other reason for excluding them.[31]

To whatever degree it is allographic, dance, like music, is for Goodman constitutively immune from forgery because to that same degree, dance's essential properties are determinable, independent of its histories of production. That is, to whatever degree dance can be annotated, as with Labanotation, dance according to Goodman is a kind of "paint by numbers" process which anyone can master and follow without having had to study with a certain choreographer at a certain time and place. Goodman's introduction of the rhetoric of 'allographic' here marks the beginning of his detailed discussion of notation defined as a "theoretically decisive test for determining that an object has all the constitutive properties of the work in question without

determining how or by whom the object was produced."[32] Put differently, Goodman's allographic arts are those in which the essence has been completely distilled through mathematically-precise tools, and thus notation marks the complete victory of the machine over the human, of technology over authenticity.[33] In music, for example, musical notation indicates what is most important or essential to music, namely, time signatures, pitch, mathematically precise rhythms, etc. (as opposed to volume, the exact shape of the body as one plays the instrument that produces a given note, etc.).

This Luddite framing is admittedly uncharacteristic of Goodman, in whose sunnier terms (albeit with similarly violent political connotations) the "allographic art has won its emancipation not by proclamation but by notation."[34] From whom or what, however, has the art of music "won" its "emancipation"? Was music's previous "master" the individual artist, like those to whom other arts such as painting remain "enslaved" to this day? This very question presupposes that an art form is ontologically capable of either having a master or being free, but perhaps this is another category mistake. Perhaps only living beings can meaningfully achieve emancipation.[35] I will return to this issue and its important political connotations below.

Assuming that such freedom for an art such as music is possible, one might conclude that the rest of the arts too could and should be translated into unique notations. Remember, however, that for Goodman the other arts — again except dance — could only be annotated in artificial and meaningless ways, exemplified perhaps by the paint-by-numbers feature found in certain coloring books. To reprise Goodman's earlier claim regarding what makes such notations fake, (or in Goodman's terms, "forged"), where "a pertinent antecedent classification system is lacking or flouted, a notational language effects only an arbitrary, nominal definition of a 'work,' as if it were a word newly coined," and thus one lacks "material grounds for choosing one systemization over another."[36] Although the word "fake" here might seem too pejorative, my reason for using it is to follow Goodman's rhetoric of "forgery" (with which he introduces notation).

For another art such as painting, the problem then would lie not with any notation in itself but with the impossibility of choosing the right notation among what would amount to equally arbitrary options. To clarify, I am talking about notating the "paint by numbers" type of activity for the painting itself, rather than notating the gestures that produce the painting, attempting to follow Goodman's own example. In other words, a genuine notation requires that there be at least two historical narratives regarding an art, one of which must classify distinct works independently of the production of those works.

Although Goodman does not pursue this point, these two aspects imply that something can fail to be a notation in two importantly different ways.

Paint-by-numbers fails in one way because it does not belong to a classificatory narrative, but other quasi-notations could fail by classifying only via behind-the-scenes connections to other narratives of art production. To clarify, with "behind-the-scenes" here, I am referring to Goodman's claim that a given notation must have absolutely no connection to the historical way in which the artistic method has arisen, or else that notation is problematically still linked to history, authenticity, traditions of mastery, etc., as a result of which linkage, questions of forgery could still meaningfully arise. And although the reader might object that paint-by-numbers belongs to art for children, which itself has a long history, I would respond that paint-by-numbers does not produce art, but rather helps train children in a way that primes them to later produce their own art.

To paraphrase Goodman's main point here, he is claiming that notation classifies the world in new and productive ways. In other words, Goodman claims that notation classifies the world in new and productive ways. And if art is notational, then this notational structure constitutes a good reason to think that art, like science, classifies and creates worlds rather than, as is typically assumed, merely imitating things and expressing feelings in preexisting worlds. But if my previous point is correct, then the arts most deserving of the name "arts" are not notational. Fortunately however, even if this is true, the self-exemplification of the arts could still facilitate the world-making function that Goodman ascribes to them. Through a series of intricate steps, his entire project could be understood to rise or fall with dance's amenability to notation.

2.3 • Goodman's stake in dance's allegedly notationality

Goodman acknowledges that the "possibility of a notation for the dance was one of the initial questions that led to our study of notational system," lending significant support to my earlier suggestion that dance was formative for his conception of the problem of notation and forgery from the very beginning.[37] Notation constitutes the second of Goodman's "two routes of investigation" in *The Languages of Art.*[38] As to the specific reason why notation and therefore dance are so important for Goodman, I would suggest the following account.

Dance is the only other art besides music to which Goodman attributes a legitimate notation (because literary artworks are in natural languages, which are only quasi-notational), but if the controversial issue of dance notation were to definitively implode, then Goodman would have only one potentially notational art (namely music), and for him "an art seems to be allographic just insofar as it is amenable to notation."[39] The presence of only one allographic art would in turn undermine the autographic/allographic binary at its foundation; because how can any classification be meaningful if it puts all but one thing into one brand-new category and everything else into another? The existence of this binary is itself crucial for Goodman because, as previously noted, it bridges art and science.

2.4 • Dance's resistance to notation

The first thing that strikes Goodman as unusual about dance is that it is "visual like painting, which has no notation, and yet transient and temporal like music, which has a highly developed standard notation."[40] Goodman is anxious to anticipate the objection that dance "is far too complicated to be captured by any notation," with the claim that "a score need not capture all the subtlety and complexity of a performance"; instead, a score need only "specify the essential properties a performance must have to belong to the work; the stipulations are only of certain aspects and only within certain degrees."[41]

Even with this provision however, it is not clear that dance artworks are best defined as classes of performances corresponding to a score for at least two specific reasons. First, whereas in Western classical music (since that is the only genre that Goodman considers), one must study scores in the form of sheet music to acquire the ability to give a performance of any score, virtually no dancer acquires the ability to perform a dance through a dance score in the form of Labanotation, for example; on the contrary, most dancers have probably never even seen an example of dance notation. Moreover, it would be constitutively impossible to learn to dance through any notation alone because dance is an embodied practice that requires an embodied instructor and an embodied education. It is worth noting however that this last claim is true of music as well. Thus, insofar as one defines music as an embodied, performative practice, one also undermines the notationality of music.

A second reason why dance artworks in general are not best defined as merely performances of a score is that the cultural authenticity of a dance and/or the identity of a dancer – for example, as raced or gendered – are in many cases considered essential aspects of the performance; and these aspects cannot be captured in a neutrally reproducible way in notation. For example, in American minstrel shows, often performed in blackface, a given dance performance was frequently defined not only by reference to a score but also or instead by the cultural authenticity of the performance and the racial identity of the dancer.[42] More specifically, if a particular audience considered a particular dance authentic only if performed by a black person, then any dancer raced as white would not have been able to perform that work for that audience even with a perfect notation perfectly transposed into movement. Goodman's stated reason for thinking that "such requisite antecedent classification exists for the dance" is that without looking at scores, audiences "make reasonably consistent judgments as to whether performances by different people are instances of the same dance."[43] However, Goodman fails to offer any evidence for this claim, and based on my own twenty years' experience in dance, I would argue not only that most people would not in fact be able to distinguish most dances but also that any apparent exception to this inability would derive from the distinguisher's own dance education. This claim will perhaps seem less debatable if one shifts from the typical focus on specific dances in musical theater to the world of folk and social dance. For example, many dancers, even those with years of experience, frequently struggle to distinguish salsa, merengue, and bachata dances from one another at a given event. The reason for this is that most dances across history and the globe are folk or vernacular dances, and such dances evolve, blend, and become identified as distinct new dances in continuously, imperceptibly, and physically remote ways.

2.5 • Labanotation's failure as indicator of dance's resistance to notation

After merely asserting that non-dancers possess this independent ability, Goodman then claims that dance is not merely theoretically amenable to notation but has already been effectively captured by Rudolf Laban's "Labanotation," which to Goodman "seems deservedly to have gained most recognition."[44] On one hand, since I have argued that dance artworks are not (merely) classes of performances and thus do not have any notation-relevant

essential properties, Labanotation's merit in capturing such properties is thus irrelevant – at least as this merit is compared to real or potential rival notations. On the other hand, however, I would suggest that Labanotation reveals different degrees of inadequacy depending on the type of dance to which it is applied, which suggests that there is a kind of meaningful co-variation worthy of exploring between Labanotation and dance. More specifically, Labanotation seems least inappropriate to ballet, keeping in mind that ballet is generally understood as the most formal and rigid type of dance; more inappropriate to modern and post-modern dance, perhaps due to the comparably greater importance of individual emotional expression in the latter dances; and most inappropriate in virtually all other dances, including jazz, tap, clogging, hip-hop, and ballroom.

According to *Laban for Actors and Dancers*, a concise introduction to Laban's work, written by his student Jean Newlove, Laban conceptualized all movement as ranging on a set of continua from "flexible" to "direct" (in how it traverses space), "sustained" to "sudden" (in how it consumes time), "light" to "strong" (in its attitude toward its weight), and "free" to "bound" (in how it flows).[45] Against this background, the system of Labanotation consists of pictorial symbols whose (a) shape, (b) shading, (c) length, and (d) position on a staff indicate (a1) nine directions in space relative to the body's center, (b1) a low, middle, or high spatial position of the entire body, (c1) duration of the movement, and (d1) the body part to execute the movement, respectively.[46]

Goodman admits that Labanotation actually violates two of his five necessary conditions for notation, which makes it even more confusing that he then immediately thereafter reaffirms Labanotation's status as notation. In Goodman's words, these five conditions are "unambiguity and semantic and syntactic disjointedness and differentiation."[47] As this terminology suggests, these concepts are highly complex and technical, but the gist is as follows: in a notation, every symbol must correspond to only one phenomenon in the world, and every phenomenon in the world being referred to must be referred to by one and only one symbol. "All in all," Goodman concludes, "Labanotation passes the theoretical tests very well – about as well as does ordinary musical notation, and perhaps as well as is compatible with practicality."[48] According to what kind of standard, however (outside of baseball), does missing two out of five points count as doing "very well"?

Similarly surprising, therefore, is Goodman's subsequent claim that "the development of Laban's language offers us an elaborate and intriguing example of the process that has come to be called 'concept formation.'"[49] Although Goodman offers no elaboration as to why this is true, I would suggest the

following possibility, which is inspired by my previous considerations of Goodman's use of the rhetoric of violent political struggle. Dance could be understood as an art form that attempts to transform what is in certain respects the most intransigent content, namely the human body. Thus, any theoretical attempt to capture dance discursively would have to endure the longest, most elaborate process imaginable. One by-product of this process therefore would be yielding quantitatively more (and qualitatively more intense) traces of that struggle (compared to theories which had to grapple only with comparably abstract or immaterial art forms).

2.6 • Political implications of dance's resistance to notation

This metaphor recalls my previous observations regarding Goodman's use of the racially-connoting rhetoric of "emancipation" and "authenticity" in regard to notation. The connection between the idea of dance as notational and the idea of emancipation is that dance as a practice is associated in the modern-day Western world with various disempowered beings and communities, including women, people of color, non-heterosexual men and women, the poor, non-Westerners, children, and nonhuman animals.[50] Thus, I would argue that the power relationships whereby the artistic production of these beings and communities is co-opted — and even classified using notation — are complex and important to keep in mind.

One could even liken dance to a war of emancipation, such as the famous Haitian slave revolt of 1791. Such fights for independence, waged by the formerly-enslaved, darker-skinned peoples of Africa, Southeast Asia, South America, and the Caribbean, came later and after more extended struggles than did those of the lighter-skinned peoples of the global North. These global southerners remain linked to dance in the imaginary of global northerners. Perhaps the comparatively greater intensity of dance's apparent movement toward freedom — from "autographic" to "allographic" — might be connected to dance's association with the peoples of the world whose fight for freedom has been the longest and most difficult. I say "apparent" here because it is only in Goodman's terms that this would mean freedom for dance. From my perspective, what Goodman describes as 'freedom' is more like the mislabeled "freedom" of complete conformity, melting away all one's racial and cultural specificity into the bland whiteness of the majority, forgetting how to

dance by learning how to move in mechanical obedience to the dancing equivalent of a musical score.[51]

This metaphor of a war of emancipation might also be useful in thinking about Goodman's reason for affirming Labanotation despite the latter's failure of his test for notation. Perhaps, since Goodman's concept of notation constitutes an attempt at a conceptual capture of a certain phenomenon, and since a perfect catch ultimately appears impossible; then rather than conclude that concepts have failed, perhaps Goodman instead concluded that to capture part of the phenomenon — and then to crucially redefine that part as the entirety or essence of the phenomenon — was in actuality to capture the phenomenon itself. To specify the metaphor at the level of the war's individual commanders, Goodman's move might be comparable to the losing general, now a prisoner of war, clinging to a lock of the opposing general's hair as delusional evidence of triumph.

Understood in this way, Goodman's concluding valorization of Labanotation is of course pervasively flawed. Even more troubling is Goodman's subsequent affirmation of how Laban "conceived his system as a notation not merely for dance but for human movement in general, and went on to develop and supplement the system as a means for analyzing and classifying all human physical activities." In further affirmation of Laban's project, Goodman observes that the "need for some such system is especially apparent, for example, in industrial engineering and psychological experimentation."[52]

Unfortunately, Goodman does not acknowledge the problematic potential political implications of such an expansion of Labanotation, as illustrated for example in the elaborate efforts of totalitarian regimes to completely control the movements of the bodies of every member of their populations. Fortunately, much as the unruly multiplicity of actual dances seems to have resisted Goodman's pristine theory of notation, the irreducibly singular movements of individuals and communities within such totalitarian regimes have so far valiantly resisted those controlling attempts since such regimes are unfortunately less radically opened-minded than Goodman himself. Although one might argue that not all dance notations need to be extended beyond dance to non-dance movement, it has become increasingly difficult to justify the distinction between dancing movement and non-dancing movement and thus even the existence of non-dancing movement. The watershed moment here is usually identified as choreographer Yvonne Rainer's (in)famous "NO manifesto."[53]

2.7 • Dance as meta-notational

To rehearse the insights of this section: (1) dance does not always rely on more than one individual and thus had less cause historically, vis-à-vis Goodman's narrative, to become notational in the first place; (2) dance artists, unlike musical artists, cannot master their art through notation, making any such notation peripheral; (3) notation is supposed to definitively distinguish the essential properties for a performance to be "of" a given score, but the identity of a dancer, which cannot be incorporated into notation, is frequently an essential aspect of a dance performance; (4) dance does not clearly possess a classification system prior to the production of dances because people appear to possess such a classification only to the degree that they have been trained in dance productions; and (5) the most widespread dance notation does not even meet half of Goodman's conditions for notation.

Overall then, dance is unique — as in so many other ways — in its relationship to notation. On one hand, like music, dance possesses at least one standardized notation (and in fact at least thirteen historical notations).[54] On the other hand, and like virtually every other art, even the best imaginable dance notation is without historical necessity and precedent and also without pedagogical, theoretical, and occasionally practical sufficiency, and it can therefore be imposed on dance only artificially and meaninglessly. Put differently, unlike music — which has a notation and should because it works — and unlike the rest of the arts — which have no notation and should not because they would not work — dance uniquely has but should not have a notation because that alleged notation only works in a way unconnected to dance history, education, or practice.

As a consequence, I would suggest that dance could be meaningfully understood as meta-notational in that dance is the only art that deceptively appears to have a meaningful notation while in fact having none. In other words, it seems inappropriate to lump dance together with other arts like painting as "non-notational arts" since dance possesses a globally-recognized notation albeit of debatable value. On the other hand, I have attempted to show in this section that dance exceeds the bounds of any notation, wriggling free of its constraints no matter how tight the bindings. Thus, dance is an annotated art which continuously moves "meta" (beyond) the existing notations. In this sense at least, dance could be meaningfully described as "meta-notational."

3 • Dance as Meta-Notational Self-Exemplification

Combining the efforts of my first two sections, I offer the following Goodman-inspired definition of dance: "meta-notational self-exemplification." What this means is that dance is the art which both refers to itself and also exemplifies itself as that which appears notational but ultimately goes beyond notation and with politically problematic consequences. In other words, dance is a performance which is not only caught up in misperceptions but also both "says" this about itself and "shows" this through itself. In conclusion, I would suggest that we build on Goodman's own conclusion to *Languages of Art* — again replete with dance-connoting rhetoric — by adding that "how we feel in our bones and nerves and muscles as well as grasped by our minds" and that "all the sensitivity and responsiveness of the organism participates in the invention and the interpretation of symbols" — adding only that how we feel, for example in our varied artistic endeavors, is knowable in our minds as well as in the rest of our bodies; and that symbol-creation, for example in our varied scientific endeavors, requires all the sensitivity and responsiveness of the organism, without which the consequences have been and will continue to be politically disastrous.[55]

• Notes •

1 Nelson Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1978), x. For one recent example of Goodman's influence on dance scholarship, see Gabrielle Klein and Sandra Noeth, eds., *Emerging Bodies: The Performance of Worldmaking in Dance and Choreography* (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2012).

2 Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1976), 52-53.

3 Ibid., 53.

4 Ibid. Goodman will later modify this claim, adding that swatches also exemplify, in Nelson Goodman and Catherine Elgin, *Reconceptions in Philosophy and Other Arts and Sciences* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1988), 22.

5 *Languages of Art*, 53.

6 Incidentally, and in a foreshadowing of his explicit discussion of self-exemplification, in the world of philosophy (as opposed to the world of tailoring), for example here in Goodman's text, the swatch becomes an example of the phenomenon exemplification, and thereby exemplifies itself!

7 Ibid., 57.

8 Ibid., 53.

9 Ibid., 59.

10 Incidentally, although this gesture, according to Goodman, is "called forth by the music" (rather than "calling it forth") the gesture nevertheless qualifies as a label on his view, specifically because labels "may be used to record or to prescribe," and they "need not themselves have any particular properties in common with the music" (Ibid., 61, 62). In other words, something can denote something else without being similar to the denoted object and without causing the denoted object to exist. I would argue, however, that in various senses, foot-tapping does in fact function to "call forth" the music. Consider for example a concert in which the audience amplifies its applause with loud foot-stamping, in part in an effort to persuade the performer to do an encore.

11 Ibid., 63.

12 Ibid., 64.

13 Ibid., 65.

14 See, on this point, the groundbreaking work of Gerald Myers, especially *Who's Not Afraid of Martha Graham?* (Durham: American Dance Festival, 2008).

15 Although these analyses of contemporary Latin dance are similarly applicable to a variety of other dances and types of dance (including tap, jazz, hip-hop, post-modern, and various folk dances), an adequate consideration of these applications is, unfortunately, beyond the scope of the present investigation.

16 See Martha Graham, "I am a Dancer," in *Routledge Dance Studies Reader*, ed. Alexandra Carter and Janet O'Shea (New York: Routledge, 2010). Although the latter characterization implies that an indefinitely large number of moves could exemplify the same aspect of a dancer's uniqueness, this is not a problem on Goodman's terms because self-exemplification requires only that the move have no prior denotation (through convention), not that no two moves be symbols for the same object.

17 I am indebted for this suggestion to an early reviewer of this article.

18 "destiny, n." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, December 2014. Web. 9 March 2015.

19 See, for example, Joe Sachs, *Aristotle's Physics: A Guided Study* (New Brunswick: Rutgers, 1995).

20 And even if the attempt is made to produce such a material object as remainder of the dance, as for example by filming a given dance performance, then all that is achieved thereby is that one has created a new cinematic artwork (along with its cinematic material product in the form of film). The dance itself, in such a case, has still not produced its own material product.

21 I am indebted for this insight as well to the same early reviewer of the article.

22 Goodman, *Languages of Art*, 112.

23 Ibid., 113.

24 Ibid., 120.

25 Ibid., 121.

26 Ibid., 121.

27 For one discussion of this repeated failure of classification systems, see John Dewey's chapter "The Varied Substance of the Arts," in *Art as Experience* (New York: Perigree, 2005), 214-244. Though this reluctance to consider all of the arts is of course unjustifiable, one can nevertheless sympathize with the architects of such schemes in light of what, as the reader will see below, happens to Goodman's own hyper (as "above measure") classification.

28 Goodman, *Languages of Art*, 121.

29 Ibid., 121.

30 Ibid., 122.

31 One possible reason for this suspicion is that Goodman's counterintuitive omission is immediately followed by his long-delayed definition of forgery. Perhaps, that is, Goodman is offering – in the guise of an authentic description of dance – what I will term a "forged" description. In support of this possibility, a forgery for Goodman is "an object falsely purporting to have the history of production requisite for an original of the work," and a description is an abstract object therefore a description (like an artwork) also has a kind of history of production (Ibid., 122). Along these lines, then, I would suggest that a description is a non-forgery if it results from familiarity/experience with the described entity, but if it instead merely purports to be the product of such familiarity/experience, and is instead artificially, externally imposed on the described entity, then the description is a forgery.

32 Ibid., 122.

33 I use the word "victory" here, with its connotations of warfare, to remind the reader of Goodman's narrative, in which all art forms began with singular artworks that were irreducibly linked to their histories of production but later fell victim, one after the other, to allographic precision – etymologically an "other-writing" in which the self of the artist is eclipsed and dispensable.

34 Ibid., 122.

35 If this rhetoric seems hyperbolic it may seem less so below, where I explore Goodman's affirmation of Laban's attempted expansion of his dance notation to cover any and all human movement whatsoever – a comprehensive and totalizing science of movement in which something like dance might achieve emancipation, but who know how much else, human beings included, might fall (further) into slavery.

36 Ibid., 197.

37 Ibid., 211.

38 Ibid., xii.

39 Ibid., 121.

40 Ibid., 211.

41 Ibid., 212.

42 Even if one were to attempt to include dancer identity into dance notation, perhaps on the model of instrumentation in Western classical music, one would not be able to both specify, in the case of minstrelsy, for example, both the identity of the dancer (such as "black") and also an ever-current definition of such identity markers (such as "a person possessing one drop of black blood"). See, for example, Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

43 Goodman, *Languages of Art*, 213.

44 Ibid., 213.

45 Jean Newlove, *Laban for Actors and Dancers* (London: Routledge, 1993), 70-73.

46 An accessible introduction to Labanotation can be found at the Dance Notation Bureau's website "Read a Good Dance Lately?" http://dancenotation.org/lnbasics/frame0.html. Accessed January 31, 2015.

47 Goodman, *Languages of Art*, 156.

48 Ibid., 217.

49 Ibid., 214.

50 See, for example, Joshua Hall, "Revalorized Black Embodiment: Dancing with Fanon," *Journal of Black Studies* 43, no. 3 (2012), 274-288.

51 I am indebted, for a third time, to the aforementioned reviewer for the suggestion to connect these two analyses.

52 Goodman, *Languages of Art*, 218.

53 Yvonne Rainer, "Some Retrospective Thoughts," *Tulane Drama Review* 10 (1965), 178. And for an important example of such analyses, see Sally Banes, *Terpsichore in Sneakers: Post-Modern Dance* (Middletown: Wesleyan, 1987).

54 For an extended comparison of thirteen such notational systems, see Ann Hutchinson Guest's *Choreographics: A Comparison of Dance Notation Systems from the Fifteenth Century to the Present* (New York: Routledge, 1998).

55 Goodman, *Languages of Art*, 259.

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ABSTRACT

Perhaps one of the most troubling passages in all three of Kant's *Critiques* is a short, confusing passage in which Kant claims that a judgment of taste must precede the feeling of pleasure. Many interpreters have argued that such a claim necessitates a viciously circular argument. But this circularity might not be vicious at all. In fact, this revolving shape actually leads to the most important site of the entire Analytic: the logic of the "without" as in the famous "purposiveness without purpose." From an alternative position we will see that this spiraling shape repeats throughout the text, especially the four moments of the Analytic of Beauty. We will try to distinguish this aesthetic spiral from the classic hermeneutic circle, then return to the circular order of precedence in aesthetic judgment. Finally, we will try to clarify what is universally communicated in the demand on others involved in a judgment of taste.

KEYWORDS

Kant, aesthetics, purposiveness without purpose, hermeneutics

Kantian Excentricities

Ryan Johnson

... damn everything that won't get into the

circle, that won't enjoy, that won't throw

its heart into the tension, surprise, fear

and delight of the circus, the round

world, the full existence ...

— e.e. cummings

• Voice of Fire •

Imagine walking into the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa. Walk up the stairs to the second floor and into the International gallery. Hanging near the back is a very large painting, nearly eighteen feet tall and eight feet wide, consisting of three equally-sized vertical stripes: two blue stripes on the outside and a red stripe down the center. The painting is Barnett Newman's *Voice of Fire* (1967). Staring at the deep blue and

red which span the height of the painting, a question arises: which comes first, the feeling of pleasure or the judgment that this is a beautiful painting? Does the sensation of pleasure come first, followed by the judgment of the object to which the sensation refers? Or is there first a judgment of the object and only subsequently a feeling that fills in the content of the judgment?

In §9 of his *Critique of Judgment*, one of the most troubling yet important passages in all of his writings, Kant answers this question. If the pleasure were prior, he says, then the relationship to the object would be determinative. I would look at Newman's *Voice of Fire*, its deep colors would hit me, and I would feel pleasure. The object would *cause* me to feel pleasure. My aesthetic judgment about the painting would be a mere effect of the sensation. The object would completely determine the subject's feelings and opinions. Kant's term for such a causal relationship is "*agreeableness.*"[1] What is lacking in the merely agreeable is the subject's contribution to the determination of the object.

For Kant, the order of aesthetic experience is the inversion of agreeableness: *a judgment of taste must precede the feeling of pleasure*. Aesthetic experiences are thus not causal in the Kantian account. Rather, the relationship between the subject and, to continue the example, Newman's *Voice of Fire* is less determining than is the case in causal relationships. The subject contributes to the contemplation of the aesthetic object. The represented object, rather than causing the pleasure, merely opens up an opportunity for the subject to judge the object as beautiful or ugly.

This is what Kant says in §9:

> If the pleasure in the given object came first, and our judgment of taste were to attribute only the pleasure's universal communicability to the presentation of the object, then this procedure would be self-contradictory. For that kind of pleasure would be none other than mere agreeableness … Hence it must be [that] the universal communicability of the mental state … which underlies the judgment of taste as its subjective condition [comes first], and the pleasure in the object must be its consequence.[2]

Many interpreters have argued that Kant holds two incompatible positions in this passage: (1) the judgment must precede the pleasure, and yet (2)

the pleasure must precede the act of judging.[3] Thus a judgment of taste presupposes the feeling of pleasure, and a feeling of pleasure presupposes a judgment of taste. It seems that Kant is left with a viciously circular argument.

However, this circularity might not be vicious at all. Allaying the problem of circularity is not merely a matter of determining an order of priority for judgment and sensation. The solution to the problem does not consist in simply explaining why one comes before the other. Although Kant calls §9 the "key to the critique of taste," the question of priority is a false problem. To avoid it, we should look for a break in the circumference in order to exit the circle and examine the issue from a different perspective. From such an alternative perspective, we will see a revolving shape repeating throughout the *Critique of Judgment*, especially in the four moments of the "Analytic of Beauty." Breaking open this vicious circularity, we will locate four moving spirals. Once we distinguish this aesthetic spiral from the classic hermeneutic circle, we can readdress Kant's rotating analysis of the order of precedence in aesthetic judgment and sensation. Finally, we will try to clarify what is universally communicated in the demand made on others involved in a judgment of taste. Let us begin with a few points of clarification.

• The Act of Judging •

It is important to be clear about what is meant by the act of judging. The first thing to note is that the judging is a particular kind of activity. Rather than fully constituting an object, or as Kant would say applying an objective rule of the understanding, the act of aesthetic judgment "picks up on" the harmony in the object. Aesthetic activity is the act of attuning the subject with the object, reaching a certain accord with the object – engaging with the object as something that could be but is not necessarily "taken up" and used as a determinate object for some specific purpose. However, before the subject "takes up" the object for the purpose of determinative or moral cognition, there is a sort of "holding up" of the object to the subject. We could say that prior to "taking up" the object, the subject plays with the object, pushing and pulling it in various directions, exploring possibilities for objective determination. In aesthetic judgment, the subject speaks *with* the object rather than *to* or *for* the object.

This does not mean that the subject perfectly captures the actual sense (*sensus*) or meaning that is conveyed through this spontaneous community (*communis*); for that would presuppose that the object contains a determinate sense or meaning which we cannot access due to the lack of some key according to which one can decipher it.[4] Rather there is always more to the object. Later we will see that the object's inexhaustibility is key to understanding at least one interesting aspect of Kant's non-objective notion of universality. As it is "picked up" by the subject and played with by the faculties, the object is not exhausted, nor are its possibilities for cognition. There are always alternative ways to determine the object. In the aesthetic realm, for instance, no artwork is exhausted by any one interpretation or set of interpretations. Each interpretation, each engagement, certainly offers something about the object, something is definitely conveyed or "made sense of," but there is no such thing as a "complete" interpretation or total conveyance. This claim about the impossibility of "complete" interpretation is not an underhanded gesture towards the possibility of an exhaustive account of an object in an omniscient being but simply the claim that nobody, regardless of cognitive prowess, could ever discover all that there is to know about an object. In short, an aesthetic object is interpretively inexhaustible.

The *Critique of Judgment*, on which my argument is based, primarily considers judgments of aesthetic objects. But does the inexhaustibility I've described characterize *only* aesthetic objects or all objects? Are non-aesthetic objects also conceptually inexhaustible? While answers to this question are contentious, we can make a provisionary observation. Perhaps it is not that all objects are in fact inexhaustible but simply that all objects are *potentially inexhaustible.* How is this potentiality realized? How does an object escape cognitive exhaustion? One answer is to claim that an object appears inexhaustible when one's stock of concepts fails, becomes stale or leads to some problematic state of affairs. An object escapes determination and becomes inexhaustible when concepts fail to account for the potential expressivity of the object. An everyday object, such as a urinal, usually seems exhausted by purely utilitarian purposes. Most of the time, we do not give it a second thought. The meaning of the urinal seems fixed and completely determined. However, as Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain* reveals, there is always more to the object. A urinal does certainly express determinate utilitarian meanings, but it can also reveal an ever-expanding set of meanings: deep aesthetic considerations, a tortured history of policy decisions, a cultural preference for cleanliness, the distribution of gender through corporeal affordances, ad infinitum.

Reflecting back on the last one hundred years of art history, it is clear that one aim of much of twenty-first-century art is to reveal the aesthetic potential in seemingly non-aesthetic objects. In works like Duchamp's, aesthetic experience shows us that determinative cognition about objects does not exhaust the potential for engaging with objects.

• The Analogical Spiral of the 'As' •

The inability of a subject to exhaustively determine aesthetic objects returns us to the circularity of §9. Why is Kant's discussion of the precedence of the act of judging and the pleasure circular? Because there is always more to the aesthetic object. Consider one of the most common phrases in the *Critique of Judgment*: "as if" (*als ob*).[5] The "as" expresses the analogical stance one must assume in aesthetic discourse, in particular when attempting to describe the transcendental grounds for aesthetic experience. As is apparent from the inexhaustibility of the aesthetic object, neither the vocabulary nor the rational and conceptual frameworks of science and morality do it justice. Hence the only way to talk about such an experience may be analogically. The ultimate indeterminacy of both "as if" and "like" express the necessarily inexhaustible excess of the aesthetic object.

The constructions involving "as" or "like" are very often followed by "without" (*ohne*). For instance, recalling the four headings in the "Table of Judgment" from the first *Critique:* the quality, quantity, relationality, and modality of aesthetic judgments are *like* those which are found in determinate judgments *without* being identical. The analogy rests on a spiraling shape centered on the "without." The analogical structure has this form: x is *like* y *without* x being y.

The use of "as if" (*als ob*) and "without" (*ohne*) is later echoed by what Derrida refers to as the *embouchure*.[6] The *embouchure* is an opening or mouth, e.g., the mouthpiece of a musical instrument, the mouth of a pipe, or the mouth of a river. In itself, the *embouchure* is meaningless; but as the shared border of two worlds, it forms an effective yet indeterminate circular threshold. The *embouchure* is the place where two different systems meet: the land and the ocean, the body and the world, etc. The world on one side of the opening is inexplicable from the other side and

vice versa. The two systems have very different vocabularies and conceptual or concept-free frameworks, so the crossing of the threshold or mouth must be an analogical movement. The form of an *embouchure* is thus a circle of untranslatability. In the *Critique of Judgment,* this idea of a mouth or opening functions as the empty center of four spirals moving through the four moments of the "Analytic of the Beautiful," pulling the analysis along, revealing a genetic structure that leads out of one moment and into the next.

With this cyclical structure revolving through our minds, we can address another longstanding question that is raised in the third *Critique*: why does Kant retain the architectonic structure of the previous two *Critiques*?[7] Why does Kant retain the category headings of the logical table of judgments — quality, quantity, relation, and modality — in his discussion of aesthetics? An obvious albeit unsatisfying possibility is that the faculties at play in aesthetic judgment share the same formal conditions for determinative judgment; and since these formal conditions are revealed through previous *Critiques*, Kant should retain a similar structure for the final *Critique*. However, this answer loses credibility as soon as we see that the concern of the last *Critique* is neither knowledge-based nor determinate. Since the character of aesthetic reflective judgment is indeterminate, it requires its own grounding, its own conditions. The question of the retention of an earlier architectonic persists.

Perhaps the best way to answer this question is to examine the way in which the analytic is divided. The first part of the "Analytic of the Beautiful" is divided into four sections, which Kant calls "moments."[8] Etymologically, "moment" comes from the Latin *momentum*, which was taken up into German and English almost unchanged. Momentum is the moving power or the quantity of motion of a body often as it moves around an axis. Like a center of gravity, the axis is the hollow point around which momentum gathers. The moment is thus the axis that emits a centripetal force maintaining the momentum until the force of attraction is broken. A moment lasts as long as the momentum carries. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant defines a moment in at least two ways. In one sense, he writes, "every reality in appearance has an intensive magnitude, i.e., a degree. If one regards this reality as a cause ... then one calls the degree of reality as cause a 'moment.'"[9] In a second sense, an effect is "possible only through continuous action of causality, which ... is called a moment. The alteration [effect] does not consist of these moments, but is generated

through them as their effect."[10] Kant thus defines a moment as an intensive magnitude, a degree, or a spark that generates movement.

In the *Critique of Judgment*, the moments of quantity, quality, relation, and modality are four axes around which the analysis of beauty begins. Since Kant uses the cognitive structure of determinative judgments to analyze indeterminate objects, as the revolving momentum increases at each moment, the tie to the center breaks and unspirals into the next moment. As the machinery of cognition reaches out to determine the structure of aesthetic experience, the indeterminacy of aesthetic judgment reveals an inexhaustible excess, which judgment then seeks to determine yet again. As Kant tries to determine one moment of aesthetic judgment, the indeterminacy of that moment carries the analysis into the next moment. In using the architectonic structure of the critical enterprise in the four moments of the third *Critique*, Kant does not simply continue or complete his critical system but instead pushes it beyond its systematic limits. In the four moments of the "Analytic of Beauty," Lyotard writes, "it [is] shown four times that taste only lets itself be understood by the category on the condition that it escapes the category's logic."[11] When the four logical categories prove unable to fully determine and exhaust the aesthetic object by placing it under a concept, the logical "as" gives way to the analogical "as if" in Kant's phrasing. Here he encounters the threshold between the determinate domains of knowledge and morality on the one hand and the indeterminate "world" of life and aesthetics on the other. And thus, through the analysis of aesthetics, Kant confronts the limits of his logical system.

• The Four Moments and the Site of the "Without" •

The architectonics of the four moments in the "Analytic of Beauty" thus function as a genetic structure of interlocking spirals which are under constant threat of unraveling as the necessary inexhaustibility of aesthetic objects pushes Kant's critical project to its limits. Beginning with the logical problems of the seemingly vicious circle from §9 of the *Critique of Judgment*, the viciousness drops away as the circle opens up, producing a set of moving spirals guiding Kant's analysis. In other words, the open-ended and de-centered form of the analogical spiral is a repeated genetic

structure that produces and organizes Kant's "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment." Let us now explore the unspiraling nature of each moment.[12]

• First Moment of the Judgment of Taste: Quality •

In the "Analytic of the Beautiful," Kant writes that "taste is the power of judging an object or a presentation through a liking or disliking *without* (*ohne*) any interest. The object of such liking is called beautiful."[13] Disinterestedness is thus the quality of aesthetic judgments. This may simply mean that there is no liking of an object that occasions one's experience such that this liking differentiates one subject from others. When the subject experiences disinterested pleasure, it is in rapt engagement with the object, pulled in by the gravitational force of the object's form, without a moral or theoretical interest motivating such an engagement. In a related sense, to say that an aesthetic judgment is disinterested could also mean that the subject has no interest in the existence of the object. Whether the object exists or not is not important, for the subject is only concerned with how he or she is affected by the presentation of the object within his or her experience. Since there is no personal interest in the existence of the object, the subject can claim that all beings with similar mental machinery should judge likewise. Anyone who shares the same cognitive structure should judge that *this* object is beautiful, ugly, etc.

In a different sense, the disinterested quality of the aesthetic moment is simultaneously the 'birth' and 'death' of the subject. On the one hand, the subject is born out of the harmonized "quickening of the faculties."[14] On the other hand, the aesthetic moment occurs when the subject's faculties fail to determine the object as a particular kind of thing. As Kant says in both the A and B versions of the deduction in the first *Critique*, while the necessary condition for the proper functioning of the faculties is the transcendental unity of the subject, subjectivity requires the actual employment of faculties for its existence. Without the proper operation of its mental powers, the subject cannot be expressed. In short, it is not possible to be an "I" without the working of cognitive machinery. When the requisite determinacy of an object slips away, the faculties cannot perform an act of determination, pushing the whole mental machinery, including subjectivity, to a breaking point.

It is thus in this indeterminate moment that the subject 'dies' or ceases to function as a moralizing or knowing subject; it is de-subjectified almost to a point of selflessness. As we will see below in the discussion of the *sensus communis*, it is in an aesthetic experience that the subject's faculties become attuned to the world, reaching a sort of harmony with an object however indeterminate that object may be. Unlike pleasure in the agreeable or the good, the disinterested pleasure of aesthetic experience is a pleasure without a determinate object.

When the subject takes pleasure in an aesthetic experience, there is a "quickening of his cognitive powers."[15] Since the faculties of the imagination and the understanding are not engaged in determining the object of aesthetic experience as this or that type of thing, the mind spins its gears, revving itself up to a pleasurable degree. This pleasure aims "to *keep* us in the state of having the presentation itself, and to keep the cognitive powers engaged in their occupation without any further aim. We *linger* in our contemplation of the beautiful because this contemplation reinforces and reproduces itself."[16] Thus, lacking the guidance of a concept, it seems that the feeling of pleasure leads out of and into itself, arching along the rounded edge of judgment, thereby encouraging us to preserve the state of pleasure and linger therein.

Let us now look at the structure of the quality of aesthetic judgment. On the one side, there is pleasure; on the other side, interestedness. In between, simultaneously keeping the two sides apart and keeping them together, the middle is the analogical structure of the "without": aesthetic pleasure is *without* an object, *without* a motive, *without* a concept or idea of the good, *without* interest. The "without" is the axis that emits both centrifugal and centripetal forces to the two sides of the quality of aesthetic judgment. In short, the qualitative engagement with an aesthetic object is *like* the rapt engagement in the pleasures felt in the agreeable or in the good *without* actually being the same. Hence, the qualitative state of aesthetic pleasure is *without* interest, that is, disinterestedness. The structure generating the momentum spiraling out of the first moment is repeated in the second.

• Second Moment: Quantity •

The second moment looks at the quantity of a judgment of taste. A judgment of taste is singular and universal. One judges a singularity; one calls *this* very presentation beautiful or ugly, only *this* painting, only *this* song, only *this* flower. The quantity of aesthetic judgments is different that the quantity of determinate judgments. In the first *Critique*, Kant states that the universal and particular judgments embodied by determinative cognition are completely different from singular judgments. "[I]f," Kant writes, "we compare a singular judgment with a generally valid … cognition … then the former relates to the latter as unity relates to infinity, and is therefore in itself essentially different from the latter."[17] In the third *Critique,* Kant explains that when singular judgments become universal or particular, they are no longer aesthetic but logical. "I may look at a rose and make a judgment of taste declaring it to be beautiful. But if I compare many singular roses and so arrive at the judgment, Roses in general are beautiful, then my judgment is no longer merely aesthetic, but is a logical judgment based on an aesthetic one."[18] Thus to say that some (a particular judgment) or all (a universal judgment) objects are beautiful is to make a logical and determinative judgment; in contrast, aesthetic judgments are indeterminate and thus have no recourse to objective concepts, laws, or rules. "For since I must hold the object directly up to my feeling of pleasure or displeasure, but without using concepts, these judgments cannot have the quantity that judgments with objective universal validity have."[19] Aesthetic judgments have a different but analogous kind of quantity: aesthetic judgments are *both* singular *and* universal.

The singularity and universality of aesthetic experience take the form of subjectivity without personality. Unlike what happens in agreeableness or a moral judgment, in an aesthetic judgment, the aesthetic object is experienced by the singular subject without reference to the peculiarity of the person. On the one hand, aesthetic judgments hold only for the subject in that unique moment in which a singular representation is held up to the subject. In this sense, the judgment is subjective. At the same time, Kant claims that there is a sort of "*general validity*" to aesthetic judgments.[20] In other words, aesthetic judgments are universal. The universality of aesthetic judgments is not a determinative universality, for it is not derived from the imposition of objective concepts supplied by the

understanding. Instead, according to Kant, aesthetic judgments are universally valid in the sense that the claim that *this* object is beautiful should hold for *all* subjects. This does not mean that everyone *will* or even *would* deem this presentation of the object beautiful; such a prediction would assume the form of a logical judgment mediated by concepts. Rather, in saying that everyone *should* find this object beautiful, there is a peculiar kind of normativity at play. Since the 'should' of aesthetic judgments is indeterminate, aesthetic normativity lacks prescription. In other words, without the mediation of an objective rule, the force of the normativity of aesthetic judgments lacks a conceptually determinate prescription. This concept-free and indeterminate experience of liking is a kind of harmony that Kant calls "*sensus communis*." If my liking for an object were derived from my personal history and experience (as would be the case if I found the object merely agreeable), then my judgment would not be universal; the 'should' of aesthetic normativity would only apply to those who share my history and my experiences. But since this liking emerges solely from my subjective faculties beyond any personal idiosyncrasies, according to Kant, it applies to all subjects. The universal voice of aesthetic judgment is thus a voice without a command, an expression without logos, an echo without a determinate source. Since aesthetic judgments are subjective without being personal, they are both singular and universal.[21]

The structure of the second moment of aesthetic judgment is the same as that of the first: the quantity of aesthetic judgments is universality *without* conceptuality, universality *without* objectivity, singularity *without* personality – in short, subjective universality. "Beauty," Kant says, "is what, without (*ohne*) a concept, is liked universally."[22] The universality in aesthetic judgments is *like* the universality in objective judgments *without* being identical. Subjective universality is thus an alternative kind of universality.[23] The quantity of aesthetic judgment – subjective universality – also rests on a familiar shape, the turning spiral of the without that brings two seemingly contradictory things together as it also holds them apart.

• Third Moment: Relation •

The third moment of the "Analytic of the Beautiful" argues for a notion of formal purposiveness or finality as that criterion by which objects can be judged as beautiful. As expected, there are two conflicting sides to the nature of the relation of aesthetic judgment: on the one side, there is purposiveness; on the other, there is an actual determinate purpose. In the middle of course is the very familiar spiral of the "without." Kant begins the third moment with the notion of a purpose or end (*Zweck*). To phrase it in a typically Kantian manner: that which we regard as a purpose is the effect of an action that is dependent on the preexistent concept of the thing. Unpacking things a bit: a purpose is the product of an action, but this product is of such a nature that it could only have been produced according to a process that includes a representation of its nature prior to its existence. Calling something a purpose is to claim that the process of producing it seems to require a concept governing and conditioning its appearance. The purpose would not have been achieved unless there was a concept of that purpose guiding the productive process to the end. On this side of the "without" there is a purpose.

But on the other side of the "without" is the idea of purposiveness or finality (*forma finalis* or *Zweckmäßigkeit*), which is derived from Kant's definition of purpose or end. [24] An object is considered purposive if it seems to have been produced according to a purpose, that is, according to some driving force or plan. To attribute purposiveness to an object is to say something about the causal history of the object's production, namely that there was a certain goal in mind that guided the production of the object and is thus the cause of the object. An object is purposive because it seems to require an intention or plan in someone's mind in order for it to have been produced.[25] Purposiveness then is the momentum driving toward a purpose. It is now possible to insert the "without" (*ohne*) that ties and separates both purposiveness and a determinate purpose. The "without" is the circle of untranslatability of Derrida's *embouchure*. When a subject comes across a certain object, unclear as to what purpose this object is intended to serve, one can still see it as purposive, given that its formal qualities seem to have required a plan that guided the very production of the object. While an object may or may not have a determinate purpose behind it, it is still possible to consider it purposive even in the absence of such a purpose. In other words, Kant claims that

certain objects seem to have a complex design, an appearance of form that leads us to postulate a designer for that form and ascribe purposiveness to the object. The way in which the parts of the aesthetic object hang together, seemingly for some purpose, is *like* the way in which other objects hang together in their being directed towards some definite purpose – only aesthetic objects actually lack such a purpose. Hence Kant's description of aesthetic objects as "purposiveness *without* purpose."[26] Spiraling around the "without," like Derrida's *embouchure*, is the analogical structure that requires purposiveness to seek out a purpose without ever arriving at one. Purposiveness and purpose strive to coincide but continually miss each other, almost like two ships passing in the night. Since it never arrives at a determinate end, the momentum of the third moment breaks the gravitational force that binds it to the empty center and unspirals into the fourth moment.

• Fourth Moment: Modality •

Kant's discussion of the moment of subjective necessity also shows us that there are two incongruous sides of the "without": on one side is subjectivity; on the other is necessity. To understand subjective necessity, it is helpful to recall the subjective universality of the second moment. Like universality, necessity seems to entail objectivity. The necessary assent of human subjects to empirical truths of science, for example, stems from the appeal to objective proofs or criteria by which disagreements can be measured and resolved. Everyone ought necessarily to confirm the accuracy of the physical laws of motion because their validity is susceptible to open experimentation and testing that holds for all subjects, not merely for a single person or particular group. However, like subjective universality, since subjective necessity lacks determinate concepts of the understanding, it is subjective insofar as it is justified "by feeling rather than by concepts."[27] Unlike subjective universality, which entails the normativity of aesthetic judgments, subjective necessity concerns the strength of the universal voice. Not only does the 'should' apply to all, it applies to all by necessity.

If aesthetic judgment is not rooted in any objective criteria, what gives the modality of aesthetic judgments its necessity? The answer to this question revolves around the notion of a *sensus communis*. Although

Kant defines *sensus communis* in a few different ways, it is sufficient to notice the general force of this concept.[28] The *sensus communis* is a condition that is required for subjects to make indeterminate judgments. Considered a "subjective principle," this condition is a way of attuning the subject to a certain object in a way that finds no recourse to practical or cognitive principles.[29] In an aesthetic judgment, the mental faculties are left ajar, freed up and therefore open to new possible forms of cognition; it is in this state of free play that the subject harmonizes with the indeterminate object. Since neither the understanding nor the imagination assumes a legislative role in aesthetic judgment, the two powers are set at a certain tension that exists prior to any particular determination. This pre-cognitive or pre-practical open space, a sort of ground without determinate ground, is where the subject speaks as an anonymous subject with a universal voice. It is a ground of determinability (*Bestimmbarkeit*) without determination (*Bestimmung*).

The *sensus communis* is not an objective accord. It is not a subjection of empirical objects to a legislating faculty that also determines the role of the other faculties. Instead, it is a purely subjective accord. Conditioned by an ungrounded basis, it is an accord that makes a plurality of determinations possible without being tied to any single determination. This purely subjective accord in which an aesthetic judgment occurs is universal because the *sensus communis* is what makes cognition possible.[30] Again, aesthetic judgments are simultaneously subjective and necessity. The necessary demands that others judge as I do. The necessary relationships involved in aesthetic judgments are thus *like* the necessary demands and relationships in objective judgments *without* such a necessity being equivalent to the kind in mathematical or empirical judgments. Hence, subjective necessity or necessity without apodicity. As Kant says, "[s]ince an aesthetic judgment is not an objective or cognitive judgment, this necessity is not derivable from definite concepts, and so is not apodictic."[31]

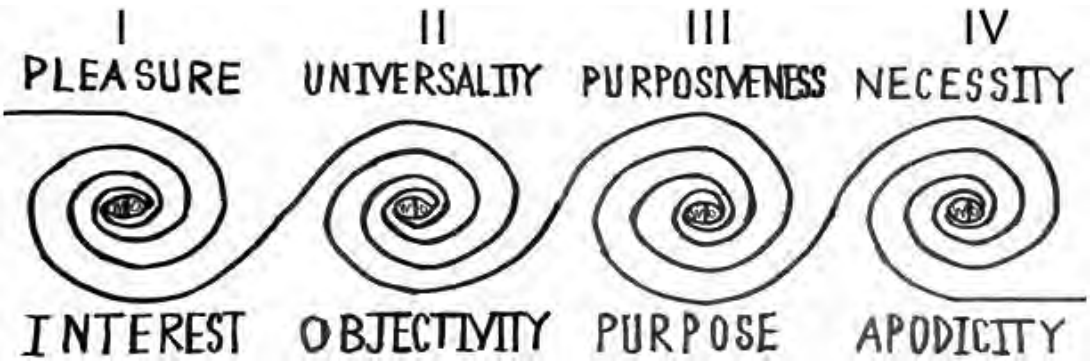
• The Three Characteristics of the Spiral •

The spiraling structure that recurs in each of the moving moments of the "Analytic of Aesthetic Judgment" has three main characteristics: (1) two exterior sides separated and connected by the central "without"; (2) the

inequality of the two sides; and (3) the decentered state of the empty center. Thinking back to the beginning of the paper, the dynamic structure of the three vibrant red and blue stripes in Newman's *Voice of Fire* is a visual expression of the sort of tripartite configuration of the four moments in Kant's aesthetic analysis.

In the aesthetic spiral, two sides are separated but simultaneously tied together by the "without." We have used Derrida's figure of the *embouchure*, the empty center at the heart of two incommensurable sides, to express the structure of the "without." Although the most explicit example of this occurs in the third moment – namely, purposiveness without purpose – this structure repeats throughout the text, as my analysis has shown.

In every moment, the two sides of the "without" are unequal, and this inequality carries the momentum of the analysis forward. Inequality in this sense indicates the "push" of, say, purposiveness, the striving towards a purpose and the inability of this pushing or striving to match up with a determinate purpose. The "towards which" is always empty, a sense of "attraction without anything attracting."[32] The "as if" and the "without" continuously revolve around each other at the empty core of this dynamic structure. The inequality between the two sides acts as the logical dynamic that, as we saw near the beginning, was mistakenly interpreted as a vicious circle. Rather than vicious, I have demonstrated that this is what pushes the analysis of aesthetic judgment along, communicating the momentum spiraling into the center of the *embouchure* and out into the next moment. If everything were at equilibrium, cognitive determination would be possible; a concept could be sufficiently applied to an intuition. Without an excess on one side and a lack on the other, there would be no room for free play, no affirmation of the pleasure, no self-generated impulse to *linger* over the aesthetic representation. Since the object slips away at every attempt to determinatively apply a concept, the inequality at the center of the four moments pushes the analysis along. Consider the following diagram of the four moments, each a spiral with the "without" at its center.



The center of the spiral, the moment-axis, is always decentered. The necessity of the constitutive inequality follows from the inability of the table of logical judgments to fully articulate a full aesthetic experience. If the table of judgments could fully capture the quality, quantity, relation, and modality of this experience, then the two sides of this circular structure would be tied down at the determined center. If this were the case, then aesthetic judgment would be pleasure *with* interest, universality *with* objectivity, purposiveness *with* a purpose, and necessary *with* apodicity. However, the center of these two dissimilar sides in a judgment of taste is not a "with" but a "without. " Thus, the repeated circular structure includes two unequal halves evolving around a displaced center: the without.[33]

• Spiraling Away from the Hermeneutic Circle •

To truly grasp the decentered nature of this circular structure of the without that continually appears throughout Kant's text, we can compare it to the famous hermeneutic circle popularized by the phenomenological tradition.[34] Despite some similarities, we will see, this comparison reveals significant differences.

The hermeneutic circle is meant to explain the phenomenological process that constitutes interpretation of a text or world. For the early hermeneuts, such as Schleiermacher or Dilthey, the hermeneutic circle was a way of articulating the relationship between the parts and the whole of a text. When a person reads and understands the text, one must not focus only on the particular word, sentence, or page that one is reading at the moment, for such myopia would cause one to lose sight of the entire work

and possibly misinterpret it. Instead, as the reader encounters the particular sections of the text, he or she must repeatedly refer to the work as a whole. The reader, as it were, moves from the part to the whole and back again along a turning circle with each side continuously affecting the other. It is in this movement that the reader successfully comes to interpret the meaning of the entire work although no interpretation is truly final. For Heidegger and later phenomenological hermeneuts, the mutual interdependence of the parts and the whole also appears in the form of *Dasein's* self-understanding of himself and his world. The important thing for Heidegger is not the leaving of the circle once a clear and complete grasp of the text has been achieved but rather a question of when to *enter* the circle. For him, it is important to authentically investigate the ontological conditions of the life of *Dasein* and relate those conditions to everyday existence. Again, we see a circular movement between, say, the ontological and the ontic.

The spiraling structure of the "without" is not identical with the hermeneutic circle. There are of course plenty of similarities. Both of the Hermeneutic circle and the Kantian spirals contain movements between two unequal parts: in aesthetic judgment, between, for example, purposiveness and purpose; and in hermeneutics, between the part and the whole. The spiral of aesthetic judgment and the hermeneutic circle also both potentially allow for infinite interpretations of a single thing. This latter similarity however is also a point at which the two diverge.

While both the hermeneutic circle and the spiral of aesthetic judgment allow for endless interpretations, the hermeneutic circle continues to turn along a single path, proceeding in a linear direction. Although there is a back-and-forth movement from the part to the whole, the overall direction of the circle as it cycles towards a culminating (albeit only temporary) interpretation is unidirectional. The spiraling structure of the "without" in aesthetic judgment, on the other hand, unravels as it moves outward from the axis-point, trailing off in multiple directions at once. The unspiraling of the aesthetic spiral is without telos, without purpose, without definite direction, without linearity. It is nonlinear. However, it is not a descent into chaos but rather the movement of decentering or excentering itself: the momentary axis-point loses its centripetal force so that Kant's spiraling argument tips over and reorganizes according to another pattern. Rather than chaos, a new pattern of organization emerges. This is also the sense of new life in the quickening of the faculties involved in aesthetic judgments.

Since there is no end towards which aesthetic experience may head, it is unable to reach the sort of understanding that one obtains at the close of the hermeneutic circle. Rather than a determinative, cognitive understanding of the meaning of the text, there is only the free play of the faculties in a moment of indeterminate harmonization. While it is true that a somewhat conclusive interpretation seems to result from the experience of an aesthetic representation, the hermeneutic circle comes too late, arriving only after the aesthetic moment has lost its freedom from the laws of the understanding and has been determined.

The hermeneutic circle seems concerned with interpreting a ready-made meaning that is presumed to be there in the center, waiting for the interpreter to break the code. In contrast, the aesthetic spiral is actually decentered, lost, without center. There is no hidden meaning of the aesthetic object that merely needs to be punctured and disclosed through interpretive engagement. Rather, the more one attempts to determine aesthetic experience, the further away one gets from any such determination. Reminiscent of Alice's experience at the Sheep's Shop in *Through the Looking Glass*, the center of the aesthetic moment is always-already decentered, lost in perpetual displacement. Unlike in the book shop, where you will almost always find the text you are looking for, the Sheep Shop

> seemed to be full of all manner of curious things – but the oddest part of it all was that whenever she looked hard at any shelf to make out exactly what it had on it, that particular shelf was always quite empty, though the others around it were crowded as full as they could hold ... [no matter how close she got to the thing she sought] was always on the shelf next above the one she was looking at ... "I'll follow it up to the very top shelf of all. It'll puzzle it to go through the ceiling, I expect!" But even this plan failed: the "thing" went through the ceiling as quietly as possible, as if it were quite used to it.[35]

• Fire of Voice •

It is now possible to return to our discussion of the circularity in Kant's discussion of the order of precedence of the act of judging and the sensation of pleasure that first started this investigation. Which comes first: the judgment or the pleasure? As should be clear, this is the wrong

question. Much ink has been spilt over this small passage in Kant's text, and as tends to happen when such a difficult problem appears, attempts to help solve Kant's problem have actually led the discussion far away from the text itself.

A more productive approach then is to interpret the problem as a way of homing in on the site of the spiral of the "without" or *embouchure*. The problem of precedence may or may not be determinately solved, but this may not be such a grave concern. What is of concern is the location of a fundamental point or threshold of untranslatability; and this threshold of untranslatability, which is also the spark of infinite interpretability, appears along with each occurrence of the spiral. In this structure, Kant is showing us a limitation, a threshold that we cannot cross, a sight before which we cannot speak. As Nietzsche, a perhaps unexpected ally, might say, Kantian aesthetics locates a place that can only be "sounded out" with a sensitive tuning fork, that can only be sensed and not determinatively cognized. Neither words nor concepts will suffice; rules and laws do not apply. If one cannot help but speak, if one must communicate to the universe of like judgers an undecidable experience, then he must speak analogically by way of the "as if," but he cannot fully capture the complete sense of the sensation.

The "without" is then a pointing to more, a turning out, towards an exit, an indication of an exteriority, of an externality. The judger is without: without words, without concepts, without interest, without purpose; one is caught in an infinite turning out (*ex, Über,* or *Auß*) of the spiral from the decentered site of the "without." In short, a judgment of taste is *excentric*. All one can do is *ex*-pose oneself, and *ex*-pose oneself to the *ex*-cess (*Überschuss*) inherent to the object. This is a confrontation with an infinite *ex*-ternality (*Externalität*), an *ex*-ternality that will always remain an outside (*außerhalb*) insofar as there is an internal world of logic, science, and morality (the three fundamental disciplines of the Greeks).

We find in this also a way to reformulate what is meant by the normativity in this universal voice, this *fire of voice* (recalling Newman's painting). What is said in a universal voice; what is universally communicated in an aesthetic judgment? It is a demand or *ex*-pectation that others *ex*-pose themselves to the *ex*-cess, that others *ex*-ceed (*überschreiten*) the ends of the domains of science and morality and engage the object as a presentation of an always already (or never will be) *ex*-teriority. Others should judge as I do in that we should all put ourselves in an unfamiliar position on unsteady grounds, *ex*-posing

ourselves to the object. To *ex*–pose oneself (*sich expoenieren*) is to go out on a limb, to leave the trunk, to decenter oneself, to be without. This exposure of the subject is then a confrontation with the ends of subjectivity itself. Although the German word for "without" is *ohne*, a perhaps more accurate translation combines *Aus* – "out" – and *mit* – "with"– to get *Ausmitte*, which translates back into English as "eccentricity."

Hence, Kantian excentricities.

• Notes •

1 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987), 206.

2 Ibid., 217.

3 Although the secondary literature on this topic is vast, see See Beatrice Longuenesse, "Kant's Leading Thread in the Analytic of the Beautiful," in *Aesthetics and Cognition in Kant's Critical Philosophy*, ed. Rebecca Kukla. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) ,121-149; Hannah Ginsborg, "On the Key to the Critique of Taste," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 72 (1991) 290-313.; Paul Guyer, "Pleasure and Society in Kant's Theory of Taste," in *Essays in Kant's Aesthetics*, eds. Ted Cohen and Paul Guyer. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 21-54; Craig Burgess, "Kant's Key to the Critique of Taste," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 39, no. 157 (1989): 484-492.

4 This is not to say that there is actually "a code" in the object and that the problem is that we just cannot decipher it. Rather, the point is that we approach objects "as if" they were appropriate to our forms of cognition, "as if" there were a code embedded in the object and that we just need to find out what that code is; this is the sense of approaching the object as an object "to be taken up as a kind of object." In fact, one of the interesting elements of aesthetic judgment is that there will never be an act of deciphering the "code" of the object. As we will see, this impossibility of final decipherment then accounts for the potentially infinite amount of interpretations of the object.

5 Depending on the translation, in the "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment" alone the 'as if' appears over thirty-five times.

6 Jacques Derrida, "Economimesis," *Diacritics* 11, No. 2, (Summer 1981): 13.

7 While answers to this question are plentiful in secondary literature (although none is sufficiently satisfying), the discussion of architectonic structure is aptly addressed in the first *Critique*. See, for example, Longuenesse, "Kant's Leading Thread."

8 The German word that Kant uses – *Moment* – is identical to the English 'moment.'

9 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and eds. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), A168/B210.

10 Ibid., A208/B254.

11 Jean-Francois Lyotard, *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime*, trans. Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), 46.

12 It should be noted that the order of the circles does not, in itself, matter. For the order is quite arbitrary, and Kant himself echoes this sentiment as he changes the order of the moments of the logical table of judgments for the different Critiques. In the first Critique, Kant lists the logical table of judgments in this order: quantity, quality, relation, and modality. In the final Critique however the order changes to this: quality, quantity, relation, and modality. Although Kant says that this change is due to the special nature of aesthetics, this does not have to be read as necessitating a specific order of precedence.

13 Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 211; translation slightly modified, emphasis added.

14 Kant's use of the phrase the "quickening of the faculties" is quite interesting because in medical parlance "quickening" is the stage in a pregnancy when the fetus first gives indications of being alive.

15 Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 222.

16 Ibid., 222, emphasis in the original.

17 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A71/B96.

18 Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 215.

19 Ibid., 215.

20 Ibid., 214; emphasis in the original.

21 Based on this subjectivity without personality, some argue that judgments of taste may act as a foundation for moral judgments. While I think this is true, I push the idea even more. More than a foundation, judgments of taste are the genetic source for both moral and epistemic judgments. Even further, aesthetics is the genetic ground for morality and for knowledge.

22 Ibid., 219.

23 It is important to note that I am not claiming that subjective universality is merely an additional kind of universality without objective universality being the primary kind of universality. Rather, the order of dependency should be reversed. Objective universality is only made possible by first raising the question of the universality of universality, which is exactly what Kant's admittedly ambiguous discussion of subjective universality raises.

24 Ibid., 220.

25 It is important for Kant's theory however that the causal history is not determined; that is the process of production that brought about the existence of the object seems to be necessarily of such a nature, but the exact process of the causal history is not determined in an aesthetic judgment.

26 Ibid., 219.

27 Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 238. Thinking back to Kant's critique of Hume, the two things that Kant wanted to discover were universality and necessity. These two terms go hand-in-hand in Kant's project. This is another reason why the second and fourth moments of the third Critique are so closely connected.

28 See my "An Accord In/On on Kantian Aesthetics" for a more in depth analysis of the ternary usage of the sensus communis in the third Critique. In this paper I examine three uses of the sensus communis: one, the "subjective principle" as a prerequisite for the judgment; two, as the faculty/power of taste itself; three, and as the "free play of the faculties." Ryan Johnson, "An Accord in/on Kantian Aesthetics (or the Sensus Communis: Attunement in Diverse Sites of Purposiveness)," *Kritike: An Online Journal of Philosophy* 5, No.1 (2011):117-135.

29 Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, SS 20.

30 Although this is not the place to make a further claim, it might be worthwhile to put forward a suggestion for a future avenue of research that would to complete the open thread still lingering from this discussion. Namely, to explore the possible implications on Kant's critical project of claiming that aesthetics is first philosophy. Moreover, this is also why all objects, even seemingly non-aesthetic objects, are potentially aesthetic.

31 Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, SS 18.

32 Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 86-87.

33 Finally, although it is not possible to locate every instance of this circular "without" structure in such a small paper, this contrasting yet complementing structure appears in many other parts of the text. Just to name a few, there are the organized yet free play of the faculties (lawfulness without law), the definition of beauty (what pleases without a concept), the definition of aesthetic judgment (a faculty of judging without the aid of concepts), the mathematical sublime (magnitude without comparison), the dynamical sublime (aesthetic presentation without form), the answer to the antinomy (schematizing without a concept), etc.

34 Although I am trying to distinguish between the aesthetic circle of the "without" involved in aesthetic reflective judgment and the hermeneutic circle, the latter might be closer to teleological reflective judgment, especially considering the relationship between a particular representation of nature and the regulative ideal of nature as a whole when investigating living scientific entities.

35 Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking-Glass* (Boston: Lothrop Publishing Company, 1898).

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Vital Materialism

COLLISION

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Vital Materialism

A new genre of speculative writing created by the Editors of *Evental Aesthetics,* the Collision is a concise but pointed essay that introduces philosophical questions raised by a specific aesthetic experience. A Collision is not an entire, expository journey; not a full-fledged argument but the potential of an argument. A Collision is an encounter that is also a point of departure: the impact of a striking confrontation between experience, thought, and writing may propel later inquiries into being.

Eric Lubarsky, "A Cameo of Frances Pelton-Jones: for her, for Jane Bennett, (and for us, too)," *Evental Aesthetics* 3, no. 3 (2015): 80-90.

ABSTRACT

This essay sketches the musical art of Frances Pelton-Jones, an American harpsichordist active at the beginning of the twentieth century. Almost entirely unknown today, she was widely acclaimed in her day for performing elaborate costume recitals dressed as Marie Antoinette. More than just a recitalist in costume, Pelton-Jones staged elaborate *tableaux vivants* with environmental decor to elicit fantasies of the past. Bridging the worlds of fashion, environmental design, and music, her performances offer a compelling case study to investigate the aesthetic applications of Jane Bennett's ecological theory of assemblages. Exploring how different human and nonhuman actants (including costumes, instruments, staging, and performers) collaborated in Pelton-Jones' art to evoke whole historical atmospheres for her audiences, I elaborate Bennett's argument about the synthetic potential of combining certain materials to conjure an affect, highlighting how the delicacy of the assemblage as a whole often is contingent upon the frailty of the individual materials involved. Ultimately, Bennett's theory affirms the aesthetic sensibilities of Pelton-Jones whose musical productions delighted audiences by harnessing the synthetic potential of well-coordinated vital materials.

KEYWORDS

Frances Pelton-Jones, vitalism, costume recitals, Jane Bennett, historically informed performance

A Cameo of Frances Pelton-Jones: for her, for Jane Bennett, (and for us, too)

Eric Lubarsky

On February 19, 1915, an American harpsichordist based in New York City named Frances Pelton-Jones introduced a new program at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. Evocatively titled "*Caméos du Temps Passé*," it was attended by her normal audience of elite society women who wore the latest Art Nouveau fashions. The recital was in two parts: the first, subtitled "Elizabethan, Shakespearean," offered new repertoire of seventeenth-century English works, whereas the second, "A Morning at the Trianon," was a condensed version of Pelton-Jones' old formula of eighteenth-century French keyboard music. At the

encouragement of Arnold Dolmetsch, Pelton-Jones left her career as a church musician to become a harpsichordist, performing elaborate "costume recitals." She dressed as the notoriously fashionable French queen Marie Antoinette in full formal gown and petticoat, complete with a *robe à la française* cascading from her shoulders to the floor and her hair (sometimes a wig) bundled into a pouf with an ornamented ribbon.

Ad for Frances Pelton-Jones Recital. *Musical America.* October 14, 1911.

More than just a recitalist in costume, Pelton-Jones staged atmospheric *tableaux vivants* that assembled singers, instrumentalists, and elaborate stage decoration to create "olden time" fantasies in classy hotels or university recital halls. As one review explained, "Instead of leaving the platform after their individual numbers, the artists so carried out the program as to preserve the illusion that they were friends of Marie Antoinette enjoying an evening of music in her salon."[1] Thus the musical art of Pelton-Jones brought into collaborative synthesis three divergent aesthetic regimes with distinct materialities: music, environmental design, and costumes.[2]

Mingling fashion and environmental design, the musical performances of Pelton-Jones provide a compelling case study through which to investigate aspects of the ecological theory of vital materialism proposed by Jane Bennett. Pelton-Jones' performances and her audiences' reactions to them illustrate the potent affective synthesis of human and nonhuman actants that Bennett theorizes in her discussion of "assemblages," a term she borrows from Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari.[3] Like well-coordinated outfits, assemblages are more than the sum of their parts; they are collections of individual things that work in tandem to conjure affect in excess of what any one thing might accomplish naked and alone. Pelton-Jones' particular tastes and artistic sensibilities for the ephemeral and delicate thus affirm Bennett's characterization of assemblages as "ad hoc groupings" whose affective potential are "emergent properties."[4] At the same time, parsing the character of the actants within Pelton-Jones' assemblages might build on Bennett's theory by opening up an alternative personality of the vibrant materials involved. As she works to articulate the efficacy of vital materials, Bennett begins by strategically deploying a traditional anthropomorphism of dead matter: stubbornness. Matter has "recalcitrant materiality" or "a trending tendency to persist" (in her interpolation of Spinoza); a thing remains "absolute" in that it cannot be reduced to any subjective perception of it.[5] This traditional personification remains useful for Bennett because the participation of actants within an assemblage is not mere assimilation but rather a collaboration that benefits from an actant being simultaneously a part of and apart from the whole." Assemblages are living, throbbing confederations that are able to function despite the persistent presence of energies that confound them from within," Bennett explains.[6] While Pelton-Jones' performances themselves illustrate the transience of the assemblage as a whole and the affects it may conjure, they also highlight alternative personifications of the actants involved, furthering Bennett's

ambition to massage anthropocentric tendencies when she encourages readers "to allow oneself … to anthropomorphize, to relax into resemblances discerned across ontological divides."[7] If at times the delicacy of Pelton-Jones' performances comes from the stubbornness of the actants asserting themselves within the assemblage, at other times the intended delicacy of the assemblage as a whole grows from the material frailty of individual parts. The persistent presence of energies that confounds the assemblage from within is both material stubbornness and vulnerability.

By sketching Pelton-Jones' transient assemblages and their connections (both metaphorical and material) to portable fashion and atmospheric installations – offering a cameo *cum* case study – I aim to illuminate the delicate, spritely, and capricious aspects of assemblages while also considering how the persistent frailty of the whole might result from the frailties of the parts. At the same time, this cameo of Pelton-Jones might rekindle a partially disenchanted and partially discarded discourse of historically informed performance.[8] Despite her contemporary acclaim, Pelton-Jones was one bit of vital material scrapped by musicology.[9] Due to their loose commitments to material replication and historical accuracy, she and her contemporaries were discarded by mid-century enthusiasts of 'authentic' performances. Then in well-known critiques of the 1980s, scholars challenged the validity of 'authentic' performances by advocating the subjective interpretation of individual performers over the 'objective' recreation of historical material conditions.[10] Considering the musical art of Pelton-Jones as assemblages thus provides an alternative mode of appreciation for performances doubly outmoded by authenticity and by the anthropocentric ethics of postmodernity.

When she described her recitals as "cameos," Pelton-Jones invoked the perfect metaphor to link fashion and environment. A piece of jewelry depicting a literary or historical figure, a cameo uses what Bennett calls "Thing-Power" to conjure a whole world. Thing-Power is the "curious ability of inanimate things to animate, to act, to produce effects dramatic and subtle."[11] In the case of Pelton-Jones' cameos, I suggest Thing-Power to be a potent admixture of memory and historical imagination that Paul Ricoeur described as conjoined, affective actions.[12] Yet cameos also highlight the aesthetics of delicacy, which was crucial to Pelton-Jones. Linking the dainty style of cameos to the sounds of her harpsichord, she explained, "The lovely sustaining quality (really a developed overtone), which makes our grand piano of today so splendid, is

really quite destructive to the classics, which demand perfect clarity, a cameo-like purity of tone rather than great sonority or resonance."[13] The concise, restrained materiality of the cameo is the source of its evocative power.

Just as the jeweled cameo might trigger an affect that freely traverses interiority and exteriority, so too did Pelton-Jones' diminutive and fine harpsichord performances move simultaneously outward to conjure whole environments and inward to reveal hidden truths in the ears of her audiences. As one reviewer suggested, "An early eighteenth-century musical atmosphere was in part re-created by the succession of artistic miniatures that the harpsichord solos became under her hands."[14] Another reviewer enthused that the harpsichord's prickly tone revealed character and depth in the musical relics that Pelton-Jones performed. "[The historical works'] counterpoint takes on a new and fascinating character enunciated in the brittle clarity of harpsichord tone. The entire physiognomy of the composition stands projected in more sharply graven relief. This physiognomy Miss Pelton-Jones paints with the rose color of a delicate imagination and charges with a gracile, quickening poetry."[15] Rather than stubborn or imposing materiality, it was the frailty of the harpsichord's sounds and the subtleties of Pelton-Jones' interpretation that elicited the cameo effect.

The theme of delicate transience came not just from the music but also the environment Pelton-Jones created. The most noted aspects of Pelton-Jones' art were the atmospheric effects activated in part by her decorated venues. Notably she called her venues *salons intimes* – intimate salons – blending physical and metaphysical interiors. Quite frequently, she used candelabras to make all other things more cozy, romantic, and nostalgic. Less often, she used shaded lamps in the style made famous by Louis C. Tiffany. In these lights, the individual components of the assemblage gained affective warmth beyond their individual means. Still, the characterizations of her atmospheres seemed to seep into the music as well. One reviewer connected Pelton-Jones' musical style to the character of the historical environments: "Her artistic accompaniments for the singers admirably reflected the spirit of the dainty, intimate settings of Dr. Arne, Purcell and some of the early Italians."[16] Illustrating what Holly Watkins has described as music's ability to place and displace audiences, a different listener marveled at the way the music could manipulate spatial perception.[17] "One work, 'The King's Hunting Jig' was remarkable for the effect of distance produced."[18] Like subtle changes in lighting, timbral

manipulations from the harpsichord's registration could create elaborate illusory effects of place and space.

Not simply an issue of perception, the power of an assemblage was a delicate endeavor that relied on ephemeral actants, human and nonhuman, to collaborate as catalysts of affect. As one critic – one of many who used this cliché – suggested, the touch of the player had its own special quality. "Under her vivifying and persuasive touch [the harpsichord] ceases, indeed, to be obsolescent and the listener is transported by the charm of delicate colors and subtle effects of tonal etching."[19] While the review described yet again the way delicate music could locate and relocate the audience, it also showed how the quality of individual things within the assemblage changed. The harpsichord stopped being "obsolescent" in Pelton-Jones' presence. Concerted in an assemblage, the identities of individual actants transformed.

What ultimately verify the flimsy and capricious nature of these assemblages are various instances when they failed to coordinate. For example, being a very special thing, Pelton-Jones' personal harpsichord had to be shipped everywhere like luggage. When the Great War broke out, embargoes disrupted shipping trains but not passenger trains. Quite often, Pelton-Jones had to cancel or postpone performances because her harpsichord simply did not arrive.[20] At other times, it was Pelton-Jones' frail body that was the absent actant: in 1915, she was thrown from an automobile and suffered a compound fracture of the ankle that left her bedridden in a sanatorium and forced to cancel an entire season.[21]

Even when all components were in place, other factors could disrupt the fragile assemblage. Granting life to a thing in a way that Bennett would appreciate, Pelton-Jones often complained about the instrument's temperamental response to environmental changes by anthropomorphizing her harpsichord: "It is as susceptible to the weather conditions as the most delicate human throat, and that is why I seldom take summer dates, because the harpsichord is not then at its best. Indeed, with excessive humidity, it often sings only in 'half voice.'"[22] Reports too would comment on the irascible temperament of the harpsichord. "The instrument was particularly capricious yesterday owing to its resentment of the current changes in weather; so, much of Miss Pelton-Jones' fine technique was lost in the afternoon's concert at the Hotel Plaza."[23] Even when all actants collaborated, the movements of weather had their own influence on the delicate assemblages.

In sum, this cameo of Frances Pelton-Jones, presented in a string of bilateral interpretations, shows how conjuring affect through synthetic assemblages was indeed a delicate endeavor, as Bennett suggests, and also how the delicacy of the whole was often contingent upon the frail materiality of the distinct actants involved. The fragility of individual actants in both the successes and failures of Pelton-Jones' art might raise additional questions for Bennett and other vital materialists. In her theory of "distributive agency," Bennett wisely argues that both nonhuman and human actants in an assemblage might share in the burden of responsibility.[24] Meditating upon the vulnerability of individual actants within an assemblage, I might inquire about extending another kind of limited agency to nonhumans. What might it mean to honor in nonhuman actants what Karl Popper described in humans as fallibility?[25] Yet just as the art of Pelton-Jones provides historical verification of the potent materiality of actants and assemblages that Bennett theorizes, Bennett's appreciation for affects activated by specific materials might help reaffirm the aesthetic sensibilities of Pelton-Jones. Bennett's theory points out how the affective potential of music relies on the careful coordination of human and nonhuman actants and their material specificity. While appreciation for historically informed performance has tended to oscillate between praising objective material reconstruction or a performer's subjective interpretation, Bennett's theory collapses this binary and underlines Pelton-Jones' greatest talent: delighting audiences with the synthetic affective gains of well-coordinated assemblages of vibrant materials, human and nonhuman alike.

• Notes •

1 "An Hour In Marie Antoinette's Salon," *Musical America*, March 23, 1912.

2 I borrow the term "regime" here from Jacques Rancière. Just as Rancière argues that aesthetics and politics share certain rhetorical strategies but are nonidentical with irreducible differences, so too do I suggest that fashion, environment, and music share certain metaphors but are ultimately distinct. See Jacques Rancière, *Aesthetics and Its Discontents*, trans. by Steven Corcoran (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2012), 28-29.

3 Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 23-24.

4 Ibid., 23.

5 Ibid., 1-3.

6 Ibid., 23.

7 Ibid., 119.

8 This ambition is inspired by John Butt, *Playing With History: The Historical Approach to Musical Performance* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002) as well as Jane Bennett, *The Enchantment of Modern Life: Attachments, Crossings, and Ethics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

9 Pelton-Jones is absent from *Oxford Music Online*, and she merits all of three pages in Larry Palmer, *The Harpsichord in America: A Twentieth-Century Revival* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989).

10 See Laurence Dreyfus, "Early Music Defended Against Its Devotees: A Theory of Historical Performance in the Twentieth Century," *The Musical Quarterly* 69 (1983): 297-322; Nicholas Kenyon, ed., *Authenticity and Early Music: A Symposium* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); and Richard Taruskin, *Text and Act: Essays on Music and Performance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

11 Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 6.

12 Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting,* trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 6.

13 Quoted in "Bringing the 'Piano' of Bach's Day into the 20th Century," *Musical America*, April 17, 1915.

14 "Frances Pelton-Jones, Jan. 30," *Musical America*, Feb. 10, 1923.

15 "Frances Pelton-Jones's Art," *Musical America*, Jan. 25, 1919.

16 "Elizabethan Music Given," *Musical America,* May 27, 1916.

17 Holly Watkins, "Musical Ecologies of Place and Placelessness," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 64, 2 (Summer, 2011): 404-408.

18 "Frances Pelton-Jones Gives Harpsichord Recital in Oxford, O," *Musical America,* November 8, 1913.

19 H.F.P., "Frances Pelton-Jones Gives Artistic Recital," *Musical America,* January 31, 1920.

20 "Frances Pelton-Jones to Resume Tours Next Season," *Musical America,* May 31, 1919.

21 "Frances Pelton-Jones Injured," *Musical America*, August 21, 1915.

22 "Harpsichord Yields Wealth of Tone Color, declares Frances Pelton-Jones," *Musical America*, May 25, 1918.

23 "Frances Pelton-Jones Plays Treasured Sonata," *New York Herald Tribune*, Jan. 9, 1929.

24 Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 31-38.

25 For a brief explanation of fallibility see Karl Popper, "Addenda 1957, 1961, 1965," in *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (New York: Routledge, reprint 2002), 564-566.

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Vital Materialism

Jane Bennett, "Encounters with an Art-Thing," ***Evental Aesthetics*** **3, no. 3 (2015): 91-110.**

ABSTRACT

What kind of things are damaged art-objects? Are they junk, trash, mere stuff? Or do they remain art by virtue of their distinguished provenance or still discernible design? What kind of powers do such things have as material bodies and forces? Instead of attempting to locate proper concepts for salvaged art-things, this essay, from a perspective centered on the power of bodies-in-encounter – where "power" in Spinoza's sense is the capacity to affect and be affected – attempts to home in on the presence of a material vibrancy in the hope of better understanding the postures, reactions, and comportments that damaged art pieces inspire as we engage with them. This article proposes that even so-called "inanimate" things convey specific degrees of animacy even if not all of them qualify under the biological definition of life.

KEYWORDS

salvaged art, vital materialism, Spinoza, animacy, conatus

Encounters with an Art-Thing

Jane Bennett

• The Dinner •

In the summer of 2012, I received an email from Elka Krajewska, a Polish-born artist living in New York City (www.elka.net), inviting me, a stranger, to a dinner in lower Manhattan. Its purpose was to discuss a small archive that Krajewska had recently acquired from AXA Art Insurance Corporation. The archive consisted of artworks that had once circulated in museums, galleries, or the art market but had been broken or otherwise damaged (often in transport) such that AXA had deemed each a "total loss." Trucks, boxcutters, human error, water, mold, fire, and gravity all were important agents here. Once the owners of the insurance policies had been paid, these demoted objects (for example, a torn 1850 oil painting by Alexandre Dubuisson, bits and pieces of a Jeff Koons balloon dog) were stored in a warehouse until some of them were donated to Krajewska under the auspices of her Salvage Art Institute.

Photo by Jane Bennett

Krajewska was now organizing a dinner, a collection of people to explore questions raised by a collection of things.[1] What was this archive, and what could be done with it? I attended and spent a fascinating evening in the company of Krajewska, the summer heat, a long wooden table, candles, tasty stews and breads, and people who practiced video-art, photography, art curation, poetry, environmental psychology, intellectual property law, art conservation, architecture, lighting design, artbook publishing, and art history. I was invited because I had written *Vibrant Matter*, a philosophical exploration of the strange agency by which "inanimate" things somehow produced real effects both on and in living things. The book used Spinoza's theory of conative bodies, the vitalisms of Bergson, Hans Driesch, Deleuze and Guattari, and insights from actor-

network theory to try to refocus theoretical attention upon a distinctively *material* kind of effectivity operative within human *and* nonhuman bodies. And it tried to do this cognizant of several decades of humanities scholarship devoted to the historicization and de-naturalization of identities, concepts, and practices.

Much of the discussion that night circled around the question of how to categorize the items in the archive. What kind of things are they? What is their conceptual status? Each item had been an *artwork* and also a *commodity*, but what is its status now that changes in its form have stripped it of market value? Had it become *junk, trash*, or mere *stuff*, or did it (and to what extent?) remain *art* by virtue of its distinguished provenance or its still discernible design? The items were the *private property* of the Salvage Art Institute (Krajewska had the legal documents), but they also had a public presence as important pieces of Euro-American cultural production. Despite their having been deemed a "total loss" by the insurance company, might the original artists still make a (moral? political? aesthetic?) claim upon the objects if the Institute were to stage an exhibition of them? Was the archive mere *junk* when it lived in a dark warehouse, only to once again become valuable *art* upon exhibition? (In November of that year, there was such an exhibition, "No Longer Art: Salvage Art Institute," at the Arthur Ross Architecture Gallery at Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture Planning and Preservation.)

The discussion that I have just described seemed to be organized around the implicit assumption that if we could indeed apply the proper category to these items, we would then have a clearer sense of the proper uses to which they could be put. Within this framing, the items are things that *are,* and we are things that *do*. But some at the table, including me, also struggled to articulate an approach that did not see only humans at the locus of action. Here the idea was to try to attend to *what the items might be doing to us*. What kinds of powers did these things have, as material bodies and forces? Must we rule out (for fear of superstition or animism or wishful thinking) the possibility that there is an efficacy or affectivity proper to them? Could we not understand the encounter with them more horizontally as, that is, engagements between bodies, some human and some not, each of which would re-form the others and be re-formed as a result of the exposure? What effects might these items produce or induce as we meet them directly (in space) or indirectly (as description)? Instead of positioning ourselves as active subjects facing a set of "demoted objects," we could meet them as vibrant materialities colliding with, conjoining with, enhancing, competing, or harming the

vibrant materialities that we are. Surely some of the power "of" these items would be a function of the auratic, artistic, or commodity residue still clinging to them, a function in other words of human sensibility, imagination, pragmatic need, greed, etc. This latter point is well-noted in a variety of historicist, social constructivist, and Marxist analyses. But just as surely, there are certain blind spots within these and other human-centered framings. In particular, they tend to blunt our powers of discernment of that "extra something" provided by the presence and posture of the thing (itself), that affecting oomph issuing from its shape, color, texture, rhythm, or temporality – from its style of inhabiting space, an emergent style that is irreducible to the design of artist or shaping powers of the imagination of audience. Matt Edgeworth makes a similar point in the context of the archaeological specimen:

> an archaeological site is a space where artefacts and structures from other times and places break out into the open ... [Our] ideas and models can influence what is perceived, to be sure, but there is also *something that pushes through beyond the boundaries of our social milieu*, which our models of reality are forced to assimilate. Theories are applied to shape the evidence that emerges, but there is the corresponding emergence of *matter* that resists and re-shapes us and our ideas.[2]

To try to home in on that insistent "matter," that "something," might afford us a better sense of the new postures, shapes, or comportments that we are taking on in our engagement with these (now avowedly active) things – things "which have a kind of directionality to them, which orientate the body, which point us in this way or that, and which to a certain extent must be followed."[3]

My tentative efforts to inject such a perspective into the conversation that night were met with some nods but also with warnings against fetishizing the object and ignoring the unequal power relations at work in art practice, museum display, and the art market. After going home and trying to educate myself a bit about the relevant debates within art history, I now see that the discussion that night had begun to take on the shape of what Alexander Nagel calls "an ancient dispute over idolatry and iconoclasm." For one group at the dinner, the art thing had a moment of independence from its human makers and recipients that was deserving of note if not respect; for another group, such a belief veered toward an idolatry that "served the interests of institutional power and cultivated an unhealthy, superstitious attachment to things."[4] I was and still am seeking an orientation organized around the power of bodies-in-encounter, using "power" in Spinoza's sense of the capacity to affect (to make a difference upon other bodies) and to be affected (to be receptive to the affections of

other bodies). In bringing people and things into a common frame of "bodies," the idea is not that things are enchanted with personality but that persons qua materialities themselves participate in impressive thing-like tendencies, capacities, and qualities.

• Conative Bodies •

It is helpful at this point to make more explicit the ontological imaginary motivating the quest for this "new materialist" approach to the salvaged art. I had brought to the dinner a Spinoza-inspired picture of a universe of "conative" bodies, human and nonhuman, that are continually encountering (impacting and receiving impacts from) each other. Gilles Deleuze describes Spinoza's notion of *conatus* thus: "A simple body's conatus can only be the effort to preserve the state to which it has been determined; and a composite body's conatus only the effort to preserve the relation of movement and rest that defines it, that is, to maintain constantly renewed parts in the relation that defines its existence."[5] This is not a world divided into active subjects and useful, decorative, or commodified objects but of bodies (human and nonhuman) striving to enhance their power of activity by forming alliances with other bodies.[6] Spinoza speaks of *the capacity to affect and be affected*, a power intrinsic to all bodies and linked to the generative power of Nature. As Dorothy Kwek notes, "affecting and being-affected are not a series of inputs and outputs to a stable unchanging body (a black box model), but rather waves of (re)constitutions."[7] Or we might here speak of the play of "material engagement," a notion developed by the archaeological theorist Lambros Malafouris, where various kinds of entities – understood as actants that persist in ways relatively indifferent to the distinction between animate and inanimate or organic and inorganic – confront and entangle with each other. Sometimes a nonhuman thing will become an extension of a human body and sometimes vice versa: "There are no fixed agentic roles in this game" but a continuous jockeying for "a 'maximum grip.' "[8]

The idea that an organic body such as our own strives to *affect* things (to make them over into food, tools, resources) in order to enhance its health and strength is relatively uncontroversial. But it requires a special effort to entertain the notion that *other entities too,* as participants in larger assemblages and processes*, engage in some analog of striving.*

William Connolly, drawing upon the philosophy of Whitehead, speaks in this regard of "searching" activities and of the "real creativity" of "actual entities":

> The universe is composed of 'actual entities' of innumerable types which help to set preconditions for new events. An actual entity is any formation that has some tendency toward self-maintenance, such as, differentially, a rock, a cell, a tornado ... Creativity is not the simple product of an agent or subject. Rather it is imbedded in processes that to varying degrees go through periods of ... teleodynamic searches ... The creative processes, at its most active, occurs in teleodynamic searches within and between entities whose relative equilibrium has been disturbed, and it draws upon the noise within and entanglements between entities.[9]

It also requires a special openness to entertain the Spinozist idea that my health, strength, or power can also be enhanced by a *receptivity to* the affections of other bodies, including "inanimate" ones. Kwek notes that there are of course "better and worse ways of being-affected, and certain things that heighten our sensitivities and powers for a short while may damage us in the long run, as is the case with some drugs. We often cannot know beforehand which ways of being-affected will harm us. Yet, it is precisely this fraught relation that calls for *more,* not less, *receptivity* to our milieu," in order to find out what does work to " 'refresh and restore.' "[10]

These Spinozists encourage us to sound some minor chords in our thinking and sensibility today. We might, for example, approach the archive of damaged art with attentiveness to the ways *things* act upon and change us (while also of course being affected by our acts of discussion, exhibition, etc.) and to the ways in which the human mind-body is *susceptible* to the affections endeavored by things. These affections are transfers of energy from one site to another, and insofar as one of the effects of this process can be the emergence of "meaning," we might also expand our understanding of semiosis to include what happens through these transports of affections. This is a suggestion developed by Maralfouris, who, distinguishing between the "material" and the "linguistic" sign, warns against assimilating *material* semiosis to a model of representation. "Things," he says, "act most powerfully at the non-discursive level, incorporating qualities (such as color, texture, and smell)

that affect human cognition in ways that are rarely explicitly conceptualized."[11]

• Animacy •

In the late 1990's, I, along with many others, was struck by a popular television ad in the U.S. for GAP khaki pants. In a large open white space, twenty or so young people in beige trousers danced the jitterbug with great exuberance. The tune was Louis Prima's "Jump, Jive an' Wail." Are the pants animated by the flesh of the dancers, or were the dancers animated by the clothing? The locus of vitality was unclear. But there was a strong presence of vital forces. A weird sense of the liveliness of the *pants* was reinforced by the videographic de-animation of the human dancers: at several points the camera would freeze the foreground dancer in mid-flight, turning him/her into stone or statue, and as the music continued, it was now the room's turn to swing (thanks to the camera's stop-and-pan technique). After that, the khaki-clad bodies, the body-clad-khakis, and the white room returned to their default positions: the first as animate, the second as animated by human technology, and the third as a passive background for the animacies of the others.[12]

That advertisement got me thinking about a liveliness or animacy *of matter*.[13] I like the notion of "animacy" as a way to think about vitality that is not dependent upon a dichotomy between organic life and inorganic matter.[14] Animacy encourages us to parse out the several different aspects, elements, or registers of liveliness. I'd say that each materiality conveys a specific degree or kind of animacy even if not all qualify under the biological definition of life.

Many contemporary philosophers, following feminist, phenomenological, and new materialist paths, are today pursuing attempts to theorize this animacy in terms that are neither simply physiological nor simply psychological but both.[15] It is beyond the scope of this essay to survey this rich and diverse literature. I want only to highlight the fact that the modern taboo against (anything approaching) animism functions both as a spur to that work and as an obstacle to it, to, that is, the emergence of a more robust vocabulary for marking material vibrancy and vitality. This taboo is increasingly rubbing up against modes of electronic and

bioscientific technologies – lively and responsive hand-held devices, electronic clouds, pharmaceutically-induced personalities – whose materialities blur the line between organic and inorganic.[16] Some say that a neo-animism is underway in American culture, a thesis explored by Achille Mbembe in recent public lectures.[17]

• Hyperkulturemia •

People are affected by objects every day. In a recent *Harper's Magazine* Ben Lerner invokes the term "hyperkulturemia" to describe an extreme version of this event. Lerner is concerned primarily with the relationship between art and commodification and with the question of what happens to the market value of famous pieces that have been in some public way vandalized. He mentions the Salvage Art Institute to applaud its experimental "encounter [with] an object freed from the market" and its attempts to imagine "art outside of capitalism."[18] Drawing upon the work of the Italian psychiatrist Graziella Magherini, Lerner defines hyperkulturemia (also known as Stendhal's syndrome or Florence syndrome) as "a psychosomatic condition in which museum-goers are overwhelmed by the presence of great art, resulting in a range of responses: breathlessness, panic, fainting, paranoia, disorientation."[19]

Hyperkulturemia, a term that, I believe, expresses some dark or latent sense of the animacy of the art-object, appears in the context of Lerner's discussion of what motivates those who vandalize art. Was, Lerner wonders, the defacement of a Barnett Newman piece due to the fact that the vandal was "so struck by the work that he had to strike back, just as, in 2007, a thirty-year-old woman ... claimed to be so transported by a white panel of Cy Twombly's triptych *Phaedrus* that she spontaneously kissed it, smearing it with red lipstick?"[20] Were some of the vandals as much victims of the force of the art-objects as they were perpetrators of a crime?

Lerner is skeptical. And indeed, the term "hyperkulturemia" itself raises the spectre of material agency (of an artwork that "strikes" and "transports") only to dispel it by placing the encounter within the framework of human pathology. It opens but then closes the possibility of an animacy whose existence is not exhausted by a malfunctioning system

of human sense-perception, cognition, and imagination. The museum-goer's loss of consciousness thus ultimately appears (perhaps reassuringly in its maintenance of anthropocentrism) as a hyper-active human receptivity to human culture, an effect of the interaction between one individual's body-mind relays operating in a larger cultural context that idealizes great European art.[21] Indeed, Lerner's eye is trained (almost) exclusively on the powers of human individuals within a capitalist culture made by humans with the result that the art object appears as essentially *our instrument*: we commodify it or, under exceptional circumstances, we free it from the reign of commodification, and in either case whatever work the thing itself is performing makes (almost) no appearance. Again, I say "almost" because Lerner's very inclusion of the term hyperkulturemia introduces into the story a shadowy role for a thing's contribution to the affectivity of the encounter.

The theme of a culturally-constructed psychosomatic illness obeys the taboo against animism. But, as already noted, it also thus tends, both at the register of theory and in the regime of the sensible, to exaggerate the scope and efficacy of human agency and to minimize that of nonhuman bodies. Can we offer another account of the event and uncover a different etiology of its affectivity, one which lingers with the sense/intuition that a composition of colors, shapes, textures, smells, and sounds hanging on a wall could make an actual contribution to a swoon? Such an account would have to interrupt or forestall the urge to foreground differences between animate and inanimate in order to feel what is shared by persons and things. Both sets are conative bodies, sometimes sympathetic to each other such that they form a complex body or assemblage and sometimes not – but always affecting and being affected. The humans articulating this account would have to explore the taking on of new shapes for the "self." They would have to move out of the postures of (normal or pathological) subjectivity and try to inhabit something of the lived space of the artwork. From the (slower? less use-oriented?) temporality proper to that place, hyperkulturemia might feel like a healthy expression of material animacy. In what follows, I will try to enact such a responsiveness to that which emanates, focusing it around one particular encounter between human and nonhuman bodies.

• Corpse, Woman, Thrill •

At an early stage in the founding of the Salvage Art Institute, Krajewska encounters this particular object:

> When I arrived at an art conservation studio and saw 'the corpse': smears and clumps of chocolate stuck to its plexibox container and irregularly broken pieces accumulated at the bottom edge I thought I could simply take it. I was thrilled by its useless, demoted state, its orphan stance, its loss of ambition and almost erotic, glaring nakedness. But soon I found out I could not take it, and that though worthless it now belonged to the insurance company who as its new owner had rights to its future.[22]

An effect – a thrill passing between bodies – has been produced, but how? Krajewska's account is a rich text whose close reading can, I think, reveal something about the productive power of the cluster of materials present. The thrill-effect is associated with a set of characteristics the object is said to possess: this set includes not only what might be called physical traits (clumpiness, irregularity of shape, brokenness) and not only traits that betoken the human value placed upon the object (uselessness, demotion, orphanhood, worthlessness) but also traits ordinarily assigned only to moral agents (lack of ambition, erotic nudity). These latter carry a moral charge, implying some kind of choice or power over the trajectory of the body's movements. While some might say that Krawjewska's account is a simple instance of the "the pathetic fallacy" (the ascription of human characteristics to inanimate objects), I would say that her anthropomorphic language has the effect of sharpening our capacity to detect the presence and powers of materials. It exposes a *circuit* of "pathos" between different kinds of bodies, which bridges the gap between self and object.[23]

The gap shrinks further, however, if we acknowledge what Krajewska implies: not only can things participate in some traits of persons, but persons have some of the qualities of things. Humans share with things, for example, a susceptibility to being broken, smeared, and useless. I will return to this theme of the human "it" later. But first, let me clarify what I mean by "thing" and how it differs from an object, for in crafting an alternative to the story of hyperkulturemia, terminology matters.

To speak, as Krajewska does, of "demotion" or the demoted object is to emphasize the power of humans to turn (nonhuman) things into useful, ranked objects. The demoted object is something defined in terms of its recent *change of status* from more esteemed to less, from higher rank to lower. The demoted object is, in other words, the subject of a human judgment; it is a body judged wanting or defective in relation to a normative threshold or standard. Insofar as the object retains the aura of its former value, it remains for the most part a "for-us." But something really interesting happens when the demotion goes all the way, when the object falls so low, so below the standard as to be rendered irredeemable or, in the language of the insurance industry, a "total loss." What happens is that it becomes released from the tyranny of judgment – becomes, in my terminology, a *thing*. The radically demoted object becomes the orphan, who, appearing on the scene without external value or pedigree, floats on the surface of context and bobs over and shrugs off the grasp of established norms and judgments.[24] As thing it paradoxically rises to a new status – that of a more active party in encounters. It becomes a body among bodies with the capacity to affect and be affected. And we now become more sensitive to real forces that previously operated below the threshold of reflective attention. One could say that it becomes a *fetish* in the sense of things that "operate as causative agents in their own right rather than for what they might stand for – as with signifiers."[25]

Let us return now to Krajewska's irregular, broken, useless, demoted, orphaned, ambitionless, naked, and worthless "corpse." The thing is the reverse image of normal subjectivity in entrepreneurial America: it is irregular, broken, useless, demoted, orphaned, ambitionless, naked – in a word, worthless; a worthy I is a regular, whole person, useful, upwardly mobile, rooted in a family or at the very least family-friendly, ambitious, and carefully clad. The normal American is Promethean; the corpse is what Herbert Marcuse would call Orphic.[26] But of course it is very hard to be normal; it requires constant effort and maintenance.

Indeed, it seems to me that one condition of possibility of an "encounter" between person and thing, between the living flesh of Krajewska and the corpse, is the subterranean presence of certain material affinities between them. "Down" there in an underworld of Hades or Elysium, or all "around" us as a Deleuzean swarm of virtualities, or deep "inside" as an unconscious that nevertheless makes itself felt as uncanniness, things harbor animacies, and persons enclose a rich vein of active thing-ness. Malafouris, invoking the anthropologist Alfred Gell, speaks here of a "fluid dynamic between 'agents' and 'patients' as states to

be acquired in practice and not as *a priori* categorical positions ... The states of agent and patient [are] ... ontological moments or ingredients that persons and things share."[27]

That vein of thinginess can manifest as a recalcitrant or headstrong materiality that both enables and chafes against, overflows, or even breaks the mold of subjectivity into which most of us daily labor to cram it. What can come to the fore for the human in an intimate encounter with certain art-things is what Katrin Pahl describes as the "utter banality of the common predicament of subjectivity" wherein "we all have to perform the emotional [and physical] labor of covering over the paradoxes of what it means to be a subject."[28] In the face of the artwork, we can become temporarily relieved of the burden of normal subjectivity, of the strenuous effort and bent-back posture of the autonomous agent; we can relax into and inhabit more fully the homely shape of thinghood.[29] This is part of the thrill of aesthetic experience, an affect that may become intensified as the art-object approaches full demotion.

Krajewska's corpse has no use, no ambition, and while it clearly has a history, the details of that heritage remain vague and in the background of the encounter. This stuff has no future to look forward to; the orphaned body itself has no past to which to appeal. But it is also a positivity: it approximates the shape of the *present as such*, an a-futural a-historical temporality-spatiality of just-here-just-now.[30] The broken, non-striving orphan is oriented only to the site at hand; the pieces of a Jeff Koons balloon do not participate in the pursuit of any goal but exist "as is"; the canvas (of another item in the archive) sits quietly with the "mold blotches and spots [that] have left traces of grey and black."[31] "Take it or leave it/take me or leave me," they shrug. And in the encounter with the resolutely presentist body of the corpse, Krajewska's own latent thinghood – and its presentism – rise to the surface. She finds that her own tendency to *project forward* some future (for the object, for herself) is temporarily confounded or suspended, a hiatus that allows her to see, feel, smell what is there with an "almost erotic, glaring nakedness." Krajewska syncs with the (unwhole) shape, the (jagged) edge, the (unintended) color, the (ragged) texture, or in other words, her "aesthetic" capacities are heightened. Perhaps what she describes as a "thrill" is the jolt of restless, projective time grinding to a halt in the midst of a new experience that is *conveyed* to her.

The thrill may also involve something like recognition. By this I mean an uncanny feeling of being in the presence of an aspect of oneself –

a non- or not-quite-human aspect that is nevertheless intrinsic to one's flesh and blood and bones – also present in the body of another. We have recently become more comfortable acknowledging something like this at work between humans and animals as in the following hyperbolic text of an advertisement for a travel agency's tour of Rwanda:

> Wake up to a golden glow in the sky, mountains unveiling their mists … [a] dramatic natural setting for what is perhaps the most … thrilling wildlife experience to be had in Africa. Nothing can prepare the visitor for the impact of encountering a troop of gorillas munching bamboo … The sheer physical presence of an adult male silverback … defies … description. Nor are there words to convey the thrill of recognition attached to staring deep into the liquid brown eyes of these gentle giants, who share some 97% of their genes with humans.[32]

As we come to experience things less as objects and more as a kind of wild-life that exerts distinctive forces of its own in encounters, might we not also entertain the possibility of affective currents coursing between human and nonhuman things? One could then say that Krajewska recognized in the manner of the corpse a comportment that she herself had hitherto (albeit more darkly, lightly, or vaguely) experienced. There was an eerie familiarity to it.

The shift from hyperkulturemia to affinities of kinship marks a shift in theoretical terminology that directs attention to what a thing can *do.* And one of the things that a thing can do is expose the presence of a thinginess *internal to* the human, to reveal the animistic presence of an "it" internal to the "I." The self that acknowledges its thingness is paradoxically a body with newly activated sensory capacities – including the power to detect the presence of material agency. That activation can now filter into other aspects of our ethical lives, our relations with nature, our political sensibilities.

• Animacy Without Ambition •

The unbroken, esteemed object is encrusted with a thick coat of cultural meanings; the gravely demoted object qua thing allows a glimpse into

uncooked material power. The thing's "sheer physical presence" taps into the sheer physical presence of my body as external thing and my thinginess resonate. One result is that my experience of what it is to be "human" is altered, recomposed. Like Krajewska's ambitionless corpse that affirms what its body (in need of no improvement) already is, I too assume the posture of "take me or leave me." This is less a passivity than a vibratory tranquility. The useless corpse has no desire to become otherwise than it is, and the human body plunges with it into a hiccup that suspends the progress of time and restlessness of desire. It becomes, for a moment, thrillingly content. Animacy without ambition: writing or giving an account can bring us to the threshold of such a state, but it takes the encounter itself to make it happen.

• Notes •

1 I am grateful to the others on the guest list: Eileen Myles, Martha Buskirk, Alexander Dumbadze, Sonia K. Katyal, Robin Reisenfeld, Virginia Rutledge, Barbara Schroeder, Felicity Scott, Linnaea Tillett, and Jeffrey Stucker. Special thanks to Elka Krajewska, Bill Connolly, Mandy-Suzanne Wong, and two anonymous reviewers for *Evental Aesthetics* for their contributions to this essay.

2 Matt Edgeworth, "Follow the Cut, Follow the Rhythm, Follow the Material," *Norwegian Archaeological Review*, vol. 45, no. 1 (2012), 77, my emphasis.

3 Edgeworth, 78. See also Tom Yarrow, "Artefactual Persons: Relational Capacities of Persons and Things in Excavation, " *Norwegian Archaeological Review*, vol. 36, no. 1 (2003): 65-73: "the material properities of the site act to modify the thought and actions of the poeple who excavate them." (71)

4 Alexander Nagel, *Medieval Modern: Art Out of Time* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2012), 93.

5 Gilles Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza* (New York: Zone Books, 1992), 229-230.

6 This was a monism of sorts but one that is, as Deleuze puts it, "ontologically one, formally diverse." (Gilles Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza,* trans. Martin Joughin [Cambridge: Zone Books, 1992], 67.) Or, as Michel Serres says in *The Birth of Physics,* the cosmos is a turbulent, immanent field in which various and variable materialities collide, congeal, morph, evolve, and disintegrate. This might be called a "protean monism. "

7 Dorothy Kwek, "Power and the Multitude: A Spinozist View," *Political Theory*, Published online before print July 9, 2014, doi: 10.1177/0090591714537080), 7. As Mandy-Suzanne Wong notes, the effort of bodies is not only an effort to search for and make alliances with other bodies. It is also the work of staying, a striving to maintain a sense of self amidst self-alterations.

8 Lambros Malafouris, *How Things Shape the Mind*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013), 147. Malafouris pursues a project close to but not identical to my own. He is interested in developing a *theory of cognition* as a "synergistic process by which, out of brains, bodies, and things, mind emerges."(17) Cognition, from his "material engagement" approach "is not simply what happens inside a brain" but also "what happens in the interaction between a brain and a thing." (67)

9 William E. Connolly, *The Fragility of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013), 156.

10 Kwek, 8, citing Spinoza's *Ethics* (E4p45schol., G/ II/244).

11 Malafouris, 94-95.

12 I give a more sustained reading of the GAP ad in *The Enchantment of Modern Life*, Princeton, 2001. The khakis are quintessential commodies: designed, manufactured, and sold for profit. But still, I argue, the ad reveals a strange *animacy* proper to the material, a liveliness not quite reducible to the social meanings (hip, cheap, young) of GAP clothing.

13 Linked to consumerism and hyperconsumption. For a discussion of hyperconsumption and renewed interest in the power of things, see my "Powers of the Hoard: Further

Notes on Material Agency," in *Animal, Vegetable, Mineral: Ethics and Objects*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (Washington, DC: Oliphaunt Books, 2012), 237-269.

14 See Mel Chen's *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), for a good discussion of the concept.

15 As Bjørnar Olsen apply summarizes, "The phenomenological approach to human perception implied two important insights: First, ... we are entangled beings fundamentally involved in networks of human and nonhuman beings. Second, we relate to the world not (only) as thinking subjects but also as bodily objects ... Although the latter point may be ... more explicit in Merleau-Ponty's work than in Heidegger's, central to both philosophers was the attempt to break down the subject-object distinction implied in pervious approaches to perception. As Merleau-Ponty's latest works suggest, the thingly aspect of our own being (our common 'fabric' as 'flesh') is essential for our integration with the world. The ability to touch and be touched, to see and be seen, to act upon things while at the same time being acted upon by them, *can only happen if there is some kinship, 'if my hand ... takes its place among the things it touches, is in a sense one of them.'* (Merleau-Ponty [*The Visible and the Invisible*,] 1968: 133)." (Bjørnar Olsen, *In Defense of Things: Archaeology and the Ontology of Objects,* [New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2010], 67, emphasis added.)

16 On the last, see Mary Lou Jepsen, "Bringing back my real self with hormones," *New York Times Magazine*, November 23, 2013 at http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/24/opinion/sunday/bringing-back-my-real-self-with-hormones.html.

17 Mbembe's lectures are discussed by John Drabinski at http://jdrabinski.wordpress.com/2013/12/06/mbembe-democracy-animism/#comments.

18 Ben Lerner, "Damage Control: The Modern Art World's Tyranny of Price," *Harper's Magazine,* December 2013, 49.

19 Ibid., 46.

20 Ibid.

21 Of course, an *ideological* disposition is in play here but not only that. For a good discussion of the methodological limitations of reducing "the complex network of intereacions that constitute a given socio-technical trajectory to a mental template or ideological disposition," see Malafouris, 126 (and chapter 6 in general). And as Matt Edgeworth notes, "acknowledging the shaping power of material things does not imply a denial of cultural diversity" in the reception of objects. "Rather, it reminds us that the many and diverse cultural universes are part of the same diverse and changing material world, not different worlds." Edgeworth here invokes the "protean monism" mentioned above in my note #6. (Matt Edgeworth, "Reply to comments from Åsa Berggren, Alfredo González-Ruibal, Tim Ingold, Gavin Lucas, Robin Skeates and Christopher Witmore," *Norwegian Archaeological Review*, vol. 45, no. 1 (2012), 107-114.

22 Elka Krajewska, *No Longer Art,* Preface (March 16, 2011), Dancing Foxes Press, forthcoming.

23 I have argued elsewhere that a bit of anthropomorphism can catalyze a sensibility that discerns a world not of subjects and objects but of "variously composed materialities that form confederations." Anthropomorphism can reveal "similiarities across categorical divides and [light] up structural parallels between material forms in 'nature' and those in 'culture.' " (*Vibrant Matter* [Durham: Duke University Press, 2010], 79.) The valuable question of what possible models of subjectivity are *sacrificed* by the

pursuit of anthropomorphism is, one of the reviewers of this essay notes, one that I do not but ought to take up.

24 As Mandy-Suzanne Wong points out, one could also say that the thing gathers together and withdraws into *itself*. See, for example, Graham Harman, *Prince of Networks: Bruno Latour and Metaphysics*, re. press publications, 2009.

25 Malafouris, 133-34.

26 "If Prometheus is the culture-hero of toil, productivity, and progress ..., then .... Orpheus and Narcissus ... stand for a very different reality ... [T]heirs is the image of joy, fulfillment; the voice which does not command but sings; the gesture which offers and receives; the deed which is peace and ends the labor of conquest; the liberation from time..." (Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 162.)

27 Malafouris, 149.

28 Katrin Pahl, "Kleist's Queer Humor," Conference on The Aesthetics of Bildung, Johns Hopkins University, Fall 2012.

29 It is worth noting that the "almost erotic" quality of the thrill seems dependent upon the relatively short duration of one's inhabitation of this object-like posture, for when I encounter profound and enduring uselessness, demotion, orphanhood, and ambitionlessness in a brother with schizophrenia or a friend severely depressed, the effect is not contentment but profound sadness, which may share the intensity but not the energizing quality of a thrill.

30 It is a shape that is both useless *and* capable of producing powerful effects, a combination that neoliberal capitalism tries to rule out in its attempt to turn everything into a useful means for making profit. Things that are both powerful in their ability to draw human attention and yet non-commodifiable are threats to the system. This was Walter Benjamin's point when we wrote of the art connoisseur "who dreamed that he was in a world ... in which things were freed from the bondage of being useful." (Walter Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire*, 168-69.)

31 Elka Krajewska and Mathew Wagstaffe, *No Longer Art: Narrative* (with authentic inventory), Book I, Salvage Art Institute, August 2012, 55.

32 http://www.enticingtravel.com/enticing_rwanda.html

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