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V General Aesthetics: The Fine Arts

Now we apply this perspective to the fine arts. We argue that the arts should be studied in conjunction with other subjects in the university. The new aesthetics should broaden the public outlook on art and widen the base for university research. This perspective fits the purpose of a liberal arts university as it brings students toward a different vision of their selves in the universe. It brings faculty into a new direction for scientific research and provides a greater purpose to the humanities.

This inquiry has a role to play in a period of academic development for universities.

Susan Feagin and Patrick Maynard describe how the word “aesthetics” is derived from the Greek notion of perception. The subject begins in everyday experiences.

From light bulb jokes to the vast and starry heavens above, from tragedies of Sophocles to symphonies of Mozart, from the exquisite lines of a Chinese porcelain bowl to the dynamic sculptures of Michelangelo: we experience amusement, the sublime, sorrow, joy, pleasure, and awe. Experiences such as these are the starting point for aesthetics, as the starting point for reflecting on the nature and value of the arts, the quality of our experiences of the arts, of natural and constructed environments and of various aspects of ordinary life.¹

These writers describe how aesthetics refers to an individual’s experience, which carries intrinsic value. But we add that it is equally a “collective experience.” Art is about how people in different races, classes, and ethnic groups expand their experience and increase the richness of life in their communities. The aesthetic experience is an intrinsic part of group life in the diverse organizations of society.

We have said that aesthetics is connected with science in a profound way. Scientists have made it clear that the universe is within us, artfully. Carl Sagan made that point in Cosmos. The universe is inside as well as outside:

All the elements of the Earth except hydrogen and some helium have been cooked by a kind of stellar alchemy billions of years ago in stars, some of which are today inconspicuous white dwarfs on the other side of the Milky Way Galaxy. The nitrogen in our DNA, the calcium in our teeth, the iron in our blood, the carbon in our apple pies were made in the interiors of collapsing stars. We are made of starstuff.²

We are like mirrors of the outer universe as we resonate with all its basic elements. We know that the universe evolved through groups, as in the gatherings of atoms, and through clusters of molecules, and assemblies of cells. And so we evolve at our level through human assemblies and bundles of organization in society.

Now Art, used collectively for painting, sculpture, architecture and music, is the mediatrix between, and reconciler of, nature and man. It is, therefore, the power of humanizing nature, of infusing the thoughts and passions of man into everything which is the object of his contemplation.
Samuel Taylor Coleridge, On Poesy [1818]

Now we raise new questions about the nature of knowledge. Immanuel Kant said that individuals can never directly experience nature as the ding an sich: the thing in itself. But he never thought in terms of knowledge constructed through groups and never imagined that our minds were already a transcendent form of nature.

*Natural science does not simply describe and explain nature; it is part of the interplay between nature and ourselves.*³

Werner Heisenberg, Physicist

Physicist John Wheeler proposes that our Mind and the outer Universe are a complementary pair. He says that there is an unexplored connection between our inner realm of consciousness as it reciprocates with the external world of our senses.⁴

General aesthetics is about exploring the relation between these master principles as Mind and Matter. We now view art as a refining feature of ourselves wrapped in a material universe. How could the mind be enveloped with this universe?

The Fine Arts

The fine arts are still being defined but they usually include music, literature, opera, ballet, theater, creative dance, poetry, painting, and sculpture. A work in pottery, jewelry, and other crafts becomes a fine art when it is viewed beyond its utility and acquires an aesthetic value. An aesthetic value is one that self-fulfilling. When the quality in a work is perceived as an end in itself, beyond practical use, it becomes a fine art.⁵

But the definition of fine art is what postmodernists worry about. They argue that it is judged by elite professionals and too often determined by a market price. A lot of money and elitism surrounds it. Professionals and market prices, they argue, should not be the basis for evaluating art.⁶

Our purpose is to examine how art is understood better through university research. In light of the perspective in Tables 1 and 2, we now look into the character of poetry, music, painting, and theater.⁷

Poetry

The use of a metaphor is critical to poetry but its use is also critical to every other subject in the university. It is designed in poetry to enhance our field of perception, but in other subjects it is often a root metaphor. A root metaphor is the way we describe the world in a most fundamental way.

Root metaphors in science have been lost from sight and are called dead metaphors. They include; the universe is “physical,” or nature is composed of “matter and energy,” or the world is a “machine,” or a “fixed and stable system,” or “an organism.” These metaphors are the images of science. In them, we see how science is “constructed” as a subject in universities.

A metaphor is a figure of speech in which a word that designates one thing is used to designate another, as in "The ship plows the sea." By the comparison of two different things, it creates a new image. Put another way, the metaphor is a synthesis of different images. It consists first of a "double image," presenting two objects simultaneously in the mind. It then produces a third image, a different image that we have not thought about before.⁸

It is like the principle of evolution that we mentioned earlier in which two different things are synthesized. The metaphor has its parallel in nature in "unlike atoms producing a molecule," or at the human level, different people (male and female) producing a baby. Virtually all creation is based on this principle of the metaphor.⁹

Poetry is feeling confessing itself to itself.

John Stuart Mill¹⁰

Through the metaphor, two types of discourse create a third type. This double image (one literal and the other fictional) requires us to "suspend belief" in one and take another seriously at the same time. It gives us a different sense of reality.

The combination of such different systems in nature (e.g. two molecular structures) gives the evolution of matter its power; now the combination of two images in a poem (literal and fictional) gives the evolution of language its power. The poetic metaphor brings us beyond the ordinary to the extraordinary and heightens our perception of what reality could be. Put another way, it brings an ideal into our picture of the material world. The ideal is created, as it were, inside the real. It teaches us how to go beyond our fixed picture of reality.

Metaphors are Beyond Belief

The poet Melville Cane illustrates how the principles of metaphor work in his own poem "The Dismal Month." He wrote this poem in the season of March when he was in a mood of impatience and dissatisfaction. Part of the poem follows:

The Dismal Month

Struggling to shake off
 The clutch of sleep,
 To strike off
 Winter's irons,
 Spring, imprisoned maid
 Stirs, arises,
 Bedraggled, disheveled,
 Dead leaves sticking to her hair.

March is the dismal month of her delivery.

Cautiously,

In gown of shabby green
 She picks her way unsteadily
 Under lowering skies
 Over ruts still frozen,
 Through dregs of snow.¹¹

When Melville Cane personifies the spring of the year as "struggling to shake off the clutch of sleep, to strike off Winter's irons," his images evoke feelings, not beliefs. Feelings are not a creed like we might find in a church or a belief like we might find in a nation. Feelings are beyond belief, but not unrelated to belief.

In this fragment of Cane's poem we see how the metaphor creates new images of reality. The phrase "shabby green" fuses the visual images of the country scene with a murky city sky. Cane is synthesizing contrary sentiments. He is creating a different mood that later in the poem become juxtaposed in a feeling that he has not felt before. He will point to hope with discouragement, tension with relaxation, and at a later point, a sense of inertia with life, all opposites working to generate a new feeling for the season. This is a transformation of reality in the mind.

<p><i>Genuine poetry can communicate before it is understood.</i> Thomas Stearns Eliot, Dante, 1929</p>
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In light of our theory, we would wonder whether the poem might be creating a new frequency in the brain. We know that matter and the mind are in a close encounter.

A Close Encounter: Classifying Metaphors

The classification of metaphors below represents a direction for research on the metaphor in connection with matters of the mind, so to speak. I summarize what sociologist Richard Brown sees as a difference in types of metaphor. Here we see how the metaphor in poetry connects with its use in science.

Iconic and analogic metaphors have different functions. An iconic metaphor creates a mirror image of something. An analogic metaphor creates an image by contrast or comparison; it shows what a thing is like.

An iconic metaphor is a direct representation of something. There are many varieties. For example, a *statue* is an icon sculpted from marble to represent a person. The statue abstracts only selected features of that person. A *photograph* is an icon of greater abstraction because it translates the spatial relations of literally three dimensions into a fiction of two dimensions, and color into a black and white image. An *organization chart* is an icon of even greater abstraction because it represents fewer dimensions in static form. An *atomic chart* is an abstract icon of only a very few selected features of nature. It translates those tiny dimensions of nature into a system of objects.

An analogic metaphor is more selective, though richer in its representation. It occurs when a poet calls old age "stubble," and produces a "learning" by the "common genus." (Both old age and stubble are "past their prime.") The metaphor is analogic in the sense that "life" is to "old age" as "the harvest" is to "stubble."

Notice the difference. The "iconic metaphor" allows us to apprehend what the particular is in its uniqueness (e.g. statue = person), while the "analogic metaphor" lets us comprehend the particular in its likeness to other particulars that have been classified in a common group (stubble = age). An iconic metaphor creates an object as a unique entity, showing what a thing presumably is. An analogic metaphor creates an image by contrast and shows what a thing is like. The iconic is holistic and systemic; the analogic is relational between systems or elements. Poets and scientists use both types of metaphors in their work.¹²

Physicist David Bohm believes that geniuses are able to think creatively because they could tolerate ambivalence between opposites or between two incompatible subjects. The work of geniuses, such as Einstein, Mozart, Edison, Pasteur, Joseph Conrad, and Picasso suggests this type of creative thought.

The swirling of opposites creates the conditions for a new viewpoint to develop freely from the mind. Physicist Niels Bohr believes that if one can hold opposites together, then one can suspend thought and the mind moves to a new level. The suspension of thought allows intelligence to work beyond thought to create a new form. Bohr's ability to imagine light as both a particle and a wave led to his conception of the principle of "complementarity."

Thomas Edison's invention of a practical system of lighting involved combining wiring in parallel circuits with high-resistance filaments in his bulbs, two things that were not thought possible by conventional thinkers; in fact, they were assumed to be incompatible. Because Edison could tolerate the ambivalence between two incompatible things, he could see the relationship that led to his breakthrough.¹³

Poetry and Natural History: The Unique and the Common

The philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche raises the question of how the uniqueness in scientific data could become translated into the uniformity of language. Art, he says, plays a key role. The metaphor, is "the transfer between the idioms of experience through speech." The mind's first use of metaphor is in the act of cognition itself -- translating a sense perception into an image. He says that metaphors are "leaps out of the original sphere into a radically different and new one." That first leap is unique as it takes place at a "prepredicative level," before the word itself is translated or made common. That uniqueness is what is so true of nature and it cannot be captured by science.¹⁴

Yet, poetry and science, the unique and the common, join in the field of natural history. Natural history is called an "almost science" and is viewed sometimes as an art. The subject deals with what is unique as well as what is common in nature.

The subject of natural history borders on poetry because naturalists and poets must both be participant observers. In order to understand a bird, they should have a proportionate degree of empathy along with detachment. When naturalists want to really know their subject, they go into the woods and look at a bird first hand. Bird watchers and poets in this sense are alike. The bird has become as much a subject as an object of inquiry.

The new aesthetics asks how a subject comes to be understood.

A bird watcher will return to the woods repeatedly to see a bird because it is unique, but also because it is more. A single beautiful bird can link the mind to what is universal. It might symbolize Beauty or Form, or Swiftness or Freedom, more than meets the eye.

Here we see an object become a subject in the observer.

A naturalist will return again and again to observe nest building because it is both a science and a work of art. Nest building is a fine art in the animal kingdom. At some point, however, the science of nest building is seen as a work of art and it is poetry. This bird, which has been an object of inquiry, moves toward the observer's interior life.

Why do people go repeatedly to see Shakespeare's Hamlet?

They do not go for its surprise and novelty. They know the plot. The play's poetry leads them to experience a feeling that they have forgotten. Hearing the story a second and third time brings up emotions that were beyond recall, perhaps archetypal. It is not easy "to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" everyday.

Why do we go to poetry readings to hear the same poem time and again? Why do we look at a Matisse painting over and over? Why do we listen to Beethoven again and again? It is a movement from the exterior to the interior, from the object to the subject.

To know a subject well, we need the experience that it provides. A repeated experience deepens our perception of the qualities in art. To appreciate a great work of art -- a beautiful bird, a masterful painting, and a noble sculpture -- demands that we feel it and let move deep into our personal life. The work then fuses with unconscious images.

This is why both the ancients and medievalists saw nature as a "sacred book." They said that nature reminds us of something precious that we have forgotten.

<p>The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an "objective correlative"; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion. Thomas Stearns Eliot, <i>Hamlet and His Problems</i>, 1919</p>

Scientists and poets are alike. Poets work with contradictions in the heart that seek resolution. Scientists work with contradictions in the mind that seek resolution. They both want to resolve mindless separations, but working together they might, possibly, build a higher level of consciousness.

If poets and scientists were to talk together about the universe with all its mystery, they might move into a single stream of consciousness that makes sense at a level surpassing the separations of mind and heart. They might help the university bring the different tributaries of knowledge -- poetry and science -- toward a new field of intuitive thought about nature.

The new aesthetics is about finding that single stream. When human history links with natural history, the subject of history should assume a new frequency in the brain. It should create a “new-sprung mood.” This single-stream history then yields a wholly different sense of our nature. The subject of history is a New World.

The Poetry of the Universe Within

Philosophers argue that poetry is an avenue to the unconscious. By the outlook in Table 2, we could imagine that the poet’s deep intuition could translate those primal forces of the material universe for us.

Walter Wilie, professor of philology at the University of Berne, would think so. He asks how “humanists” could have ever received the “forms of spirit” first found by the Greeks and Romans. He argues that the most powerful forms of this spirit were revealed in the “inexhaustible riches of the Latin hymn writers,” in the “ecclesiastical authors,” as in Augustine and Boethius. These poems “were nurtured from the deep springs of primal experience.”

Wilie says that humanistic interpretations today seem trivial in comparison with the spirit of those early poems. Today’s humanism may have gained some “breadth and diversity” but it has acquired “no new depths.” Those poems had depth. Women were among the first to translate what Wilie would call the “primal” feelings into poetry.¹⁵

Wylie quotes a stanza from St. Hildegarde of Bingen (1098-1179). She represents the spirit of those early times with her “amazing hymns.” Below are a few lines of one hymn:

I am the supreme fiery force
That kindles every spark of life;
What I have breathed on will never die,
I order the cycle of things in being:
Hovering round it in sublime flight,
Wisdom lends it rhythmic beauty.¹⁶

Ancient wisdom holds that each male and female has the primal forces of nature within them. Symbolically, the male is in the female and the female is in the male. The symbolic powers of each gender are mutually involved within the interior of each individual. Each male and each female may look inward to find the power of the other. The potential for unity is then deep inside each separate gender. Poets tell us about the power that lies within the soul, that we are all androgynous.¹⁷

The Irish novelist and poet James Augustine Aloysius Joyce (1882-1941) was of this mind. He describes the presence of a “primal logos” in what he calls an “epiphany.” An epiphany is an aesthetic experience that is something “not to reject or to possess,” he says, but to which we should bear witness. It is a momentous spiritual experience in which all the “parts” are in an “exquisite” relationship. It carries what Aquinas says are the requisite for beauty: integrity, wholeness, symmetry and radiance.¹⁸

Music

Music is produced through multi-layered contexts. It is created within individuals who live within a subculture that exists within a larger society, which exists in turn within a civilization in a time period of history. But music is created in a still larger frame in the new aesthetics. It is created in the context of the body, which is created within the larger universe.

The human body is an instrument for the production of art in the life of the human soul. Alfred North Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas* [1933], ch. 18.

If faculty were to see music connected with the universe, they should see the interplay of natural forces in this subject. Music and nature both synthesize vibrations. Nature synthesizes atoms and molecules. The artist synthesizes the sound of the drum with the violin and the clarinet. The composer synchronizes different chords and produces new energies that link the body with its natural vibrations. Composers adjust pitch, signature, beat, and rhythms to transcend old forms and create new ones. When this is done well, music moves people “beyond their mind.”¹⁹

Music works powerfully upon the mind and this is why Plato and Aristotle had so much difficulty with it. Plato was concerned about music’s tendency to take hold of the “inmost soul.” Other great thinkers down through history have said that music can be dangerous. There is a long history recording the rejection of certain types of music.

All major religious and national groups have at some point in their history suppressed music. When the vibrato sound first appeared in Baroque music, it was so stimulating to people that the Victorians made it into a sin. Communist nations regulate music to control its power. The Taliban in Afghanistan hated music. They undertook search-and-destroy missions; musical instruments were seized and burned in public pyres.

Why is music so hated and conversely so loved? Why is it so powerful? No one knows. But the quest for the answer is the subject of a new aesthetics.

Music is Composed of Vibrations in the Universe

Psychologists have calculated the rate of vibration for music at about seven pulsations a second, precisely matching the theta-wave state of the brain. This is the twilight zone between waking and sleeping where the customary censorship of the conscious mind is absent.

Elmer and Alyce Green of the Menninger Foundation report a number of extraordinary psychic experiences during the theta state. Their list includes great philosophers, scientists, and artists who have received inspiration through this state of consciousness – William Blake, John Milton, Samuel Coleridge, Robert Louis Stevenson,

and Jean Cocteau. They describe Henri Poincaré's vision as he lay in bed waiting sleep. Poincaré tells how he experienced mathematical ideas dancing in the clouds before him; they collided and combined into what he saw as the first set of Fuchsian functions, the solution to a problem he had long been struggling to solve.²⁰

When history from the Big Bang to human consciousness joins with the study of music in a single stream of thought, it should lead musicologists and physicists to study sounds of the universe. Today "sounds of the universe" is not the subject of history or science, but it becomes the subject of a new aesthetics.²¹

All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music.

Walter Pater, *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, The School of Giorgione 1873.

The attempt by composers to copy the sounds of nature (e.g. ocean waves and bird songs) is well known, but we are now talking about sounds that are an integral part of our bodies carrying the basic elements of our universe. They are interior sounds. Since we know that the body is a reservoir of nature's elements that were created in evolution, the mind/nature interaction should now become the subject of musicology.²²

Benjamin Britten's Four Sea Interludes is a set of four short pieces for orchestra taken from his opera 'Peter Grimes' (Op 33). The composer does not try to copy sea sounds directly by orchestral instrumentation, but the sounds inspire him. The Interludes are drawn from an environment on a Suffolk coast that reportedly has damp mornings, mist, foghorns, rough water, and the threat of storm clouds. How could these conditions resonate with the composer?²³

If we were to study what happens to a composer who writes in such an environment, we would keep in mind his or her knowledge, skill and sensitivity, but also recall that the body is encased in electromagnetic fields. All of nature's forms are vibrations composed of wavelengths that are resonating with the body.²⁴

Some research has begun on how these fields of energy touch all parts of the body including the internal organs. Barbara Brennan, trained in atmospheric physics and working as a research scientist at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, has studied the inter-influence of outer and inner orders of energy. She finds certain outside sounds adjust and tune with different organs of the body.²⁵

In this perspective, Britten's whole body could be tuning to outside sounds that resonate with it. We would normally think that he hears outside sounds with his ears but Brennan's research asks whether his whole body might be listening and tuning. The scientific question in the new aesthetic is how such sounds may be heard throughout the body.²⁶

Biologist Rupert Sheldrake proposes that nature at all its levels of its complexity - - atoms, molecules, crystals, cells, tissues, organs, and organisms -- are organized by vibratory fields with an inherent memory. Cells and organs inherit that memory from all

previous forms of their kind by a process called “morphic resonance.” Organisms in all likelihood resonate with each other to produce a new sound.²⁷

Morphic fields are not measurable by scientific instruments, but their effects can be seen. One example is said to exist in the harmonious movements among animals, like flocks of birds and schools of fish. A flock of birds will turn simultaneously together without checking into the whole flock by their senses, suggesting that an unseen field of information is transmitted to them. A morphic field of communication would coordinate their movement together. In other words, the harmonious movement is too complex to perform by each bird watching all its flying neighbors, by each animal responding to ordinary sensory information.²⁸

Sheldrake believes that these joint movements among animals are like the iron filings coordinated around a magnet. When you move a magnet, a whole pattern of the filings changes because they're all responding to the field of which they are a part. This could be true for a flock of birds or school of fish that communicate through unseen electromagnetic fields. Some research has begun to test them in biology and electrical engineering.²⁹

Other evidence exists in the fact that some people, called clairvoyants, can actually see these electromagnetic fields. There is a serious gap between the knowledge of “intuitives” and the workings of the brain. There is still no clear and established relationship between the neurons of the brain and clairvoyance, even the processes of higher thought.³⁰

Composers also hear music from some unknown place within themselves. Mozart would hear a symphony “inside” himself that was already fully formed. We must ask where did it come from?³¹

Two Theoretical Perspectives

The two theoretical perspectives in Tables 1 and 2 should be separated from the recent controversy over postmodernist thought, which rose to a peak in the academy in the last decade.

To demonstrate the excesses of postmodernism, physicist Alan Sokal perpetrated a hoax in an article called “Transgressing the Boundaries: Toward a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity.” It was published in a reputable journal called Social Text with support from its distinguished editors. Sokal pretended to support postmodernism, but was secretly satirizing it. His article lampooned postmodernist, poststructuralist and deconstructionist theory. It was peak irony you might say Sokal played against postmodernist irony about truth having no foundation. The article developed support among faculties, partly because Sokal is a respected left-oriented physicist at New York University. He knows the field.³²

Sokal’s article reviews the developments in quantum gravity and the literature on radical theory and concludes that all those claims about research in physical reality is at

bottom a social and linguistic construct. He argues that scientific knowledge, far from being objective, encodes the dominant ideologies and power relations of the culture that produced it.

Notice the subtle argument. We have noted that the language of the physical sciences is based on metaphor. All language is based on metaphor. But that does not eliminate the valid pursuit of the physical sciences. Socal argues that an independent world exists, whose properties are independent of any individual human being and indeed of humanity as a whole. He contends that these properties are encoded in eternal physical laws; scientists can obtain reliable, although tentative knowledge of these laws by sticking to the objective procedures and rules of the (so-called) scientific method.

Table 1 and Table 2 provide different perspectives for the study of music in the new aesthetics. Table 1 emphasizes the dynamics of opposition in aesthetic theory and Table 2 emphasizes the concept of evolution. Notice how the two perspectives do not mesh.

Evolution is usually conceived as linear and progressive in the scale of time, but Table 1 suggests that such concepts have polarity. History in this view may not be altogether linear and progressive. This view also questions the standard meaning of time. In a new aesthetic study of music, the connection of such polarities, “linear/cyclical and time/timeless – as well as progress/regress, present/past -- and become subject to inquiry.³³

If we go back for a moment to Table 1, we see how these polarities stand in tension with one another. The present and the past look as if they are separate and cannot be connected, yet, Table 1 proposes that at the (principled) symbolic level they are not separate.³⁴

Historians know something the “mutual involvement” of the past inside the present. Each great work of art in the past remains present with us through historical records. Beethoven’s “Choral” symphony, composed in the 19th century, is re-played today and deeply appreciated. Great music in this sense is timeless.

This is equally true of great works in literature like the Vedas spoken before written records. They are read today for their wisdom. Great works of art bring the past right into the present. And so great music works by these paradoxes as presented in Table 1. If we have the mind for it, the sound of music is timeless.

<p><i>Time is the moving image of eternity.</i> Plato</p>

There is more to investigate on this matter of music and its timelessness, but we want to see how it also evolves in linear time. History is linear time, yet, different from evolution. So, we ask, How does music develop as a feature of evolution, not just history. Does the story of music show affinity with the broad concept of evolution, which we said is based on principles of synthesis and transformation?³⁵

Below we suggest how the symphony would be viewed from an evolutionary perspective. In this sense, Mozart's symphonies are part of an evolutionary process. The evolution of music is like the evolution of nature. Each new species in nature evolves from a previous species. And each new form [species] in music must survive a particular environment.

The Symphony in Evolution

At one time there was no clarinet and no trumpet. There was no concerto, no opera, and no symphony. The modern concert did not become known until the 17th century, indeed, the first building with a music room designed for concerts was not built in Europe until 1678. This was at a time when new styles of music were rapidly evolving. Different styles were competing and they were all leading toward new species: the symphony.

If we want to examine how the symphony evolved, we go back to its "predecessor forms." At the time of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714-1788), for example, we see that concertos and operas had been created, but no symphony. A symphony must then develop its form in this environment. By the logic of evolution its essential elements should come from these forms. Now I refer briefly to this development without the credentials of an historian only to illustrate a special method of inquiry for a new aesthetics.

The basic elements that form a symphony appear present in the 18th century. Instrumental music and the opera were in Italy, France and Germany. The development of keyboard music as an instrumental style was just becoming known. Domenico Scarlatti (1685c-1757) was a harpsichord virtuoso, who composed short keyboard pieces called "exercises," which were then developed as sonatas. Music historians suggest that the sonata was a precondition for the new symphonic form.³⁶

But notice for our purposes the dialectical tensions in these prior forms. The sonata developed an exposition section with two contrasting themes, which was followed by a development section, and then a third section serving as a synopsis or a recapitulation. Here we see the dynamics of opposing themes seeking resolution.

Piano writing was evolving as a technique, moving back and forth from polyphony to homophony. In that added tension of differences we see melody and rhythm developing. Then, more competing elements appear. Composers develop a playful mood and alternate it with a serious mood. The serious mood could have been selected from parts of the opera that were in a solemn dramatic form. So we see the symphony starting in this tension of contrary conditions seeking resolution.

<p><i>There is in art a clairvoyance for which we have not yet found a name, and still less an explanation.</i>³⁷ John Russell, art critic</p>

The symphony is reportedly a synthesis of certain elements drawn from the opera and sonata. In the third decade of the 18th century, the name sinfonia was given to a three-

part sonata form, which was used to open the Neapolitan opera. This opening opera sinfonia soon began to acquire a public acceptance. It gradually moved out on its own in public as a musical form. In other words, it divorced itself from the opera and began to be performed separately as an instrumental piece.

On the one hand, it appears that keyboard sonatas, like those of C.P.E. Bach, were the basis for bringing together the essential elements of the symphony.³⁸

On the other hand, the sonata and the opera were like parents to the newborn symphony. The sonata particularly was “pregnant with symphonic sound” when it first developed what historians call a “balanced opposition” through its fast-slow-fast movements. This pattern, in turn, had its precedent in the allegro-andante-allegro opera sinfonia.³⁹

Music historian Paul Lane suggests that the new keyboard music was the real stimulus for this symphonic form. Here is my summary of how Lane describes the new synthesis.⁴⁰

The seeds of the earlier rococo style – the grace notes, embellishments, flourishes, and sighs – were present at the formation of the symphony. Here the seeds were nourished. The sonata then influenced Haydn and Mozart who developed a deeper sense of the symphony as a new form. Beethoven’s sonatas, developed through a direct lineage with Bach’s “dramatic sonatas,” developed the form still further.

The elements of the symphony gradually came together as, “a new stylistic principle,” “a new form of musical logic,” a new “coherence and construction,” and now a singularly new instrumental form of music. At this moment, the symphony began to “monopolize” musical consciousness.⁴¹

So, that’s seems to be the story in quick fashion. It is more complicated than we could propose here, but we would argue that historians have more to explore as they would be guided by this analogue of evolution.

Charles Darwin confronted the complexity of biological evolution in finches on the Galapagos Islands. He saw the extraordinary diversity in beak structure develop through the feeding habits of finches. Each species developed a special beak because each would feed differently. Some finches eat seeds, some eat insects, some remove ticks from tortoises, some eat leaves, some eat flowers, and some drink blood from seabirds, and some use twigs or cactus spines to extract insect larvae from holes in the dead branches of trees.⁴²

Experts who know the history could tell us more about the complexity of the symphony’s origins by this analogue. In natural history, Darwin saw a detailed interaction going on in one feature of this bird: beak vs. seed, beak vs. insect, beak vs. tick, beak vs. leaves, etc. A few historians describe the symphonic melody as one feature alone evolving in a “dualism.” Dualism does not explain evolution, but its perspective offers insight.

The contrasting dualism of tutti and solo, forte and piano, unison and polyphony, employed to differentiate between principal theme and subsidiary theme, was now carried into the individual theme groups. If pure dualism had been maintained, the great organic symphony would never have been created. Therefore it became imperative to establish between the opposing complexes a relationship which would bring them into a whole. This necessitated a new grammar and syntax of the language of music.⁴³

The two types of evolution -- natural and human -- should not be confused. They are vastly different. Music is evolving through a stage of human consciousness that has so many more complex features based in human consciousness and culture. It is evolving, for example, through the interaction of a conscious vs. unconscious mind, but the parallel is striking. The parallels between our physical and human evolution call for more research.⁴⁴

Evolution is only Part of the New Perspective

We are building a different research direction for music studies. If we keep the perspective of Table 1 in mind, we know that great principles (like difference vs. sameness, and individual vs. community) cannot be reduced to each other. We are mindful of the balance between these great opposing principles; each cannot be reduced to its significant other. When one principle is reduced to its opposite, it becomes lost from view. It becomes reductionism. And this properly concerns postmodernists.⁴⁵

So, a study of the symphony stays with the particulars, like an individual composer, or a special event like The Magic Flute played on Friday, the 30th September 1791. The particulars are not there in history simply so that we can discover universal principles. The study of each particular, each song, each rhythm, each human figure becomes a basis for new insight into our nature.⁴⁶

Is music a universal form?

Anthropologists have never found a society without music. If we think of music as an intentional production of rhythmic sounds, it is a universal form. But the difference in styles and the development of music from culture to culture is enormous. Even a trained musicologist, listening for the first time to music in a foreign culture, will not be able to hear the subtleties of tone and rhythm, which members of the culture hear with ease. A sense of aesthetics in music then depends upon being in the culture with people and learning the particulars. Research requires sensitive field observation to grasp all those details.⁴⁷⁻

Is there to be an end to the symphony?

It looks like the symphony is still evolving, but no one knows in what direction it will go. Some 20th-century composers like Shostakovich found the symphony to be a prime vehicle for the future. But avantgarde composers keep writing symphonies to deliberately outrage "received standards." The problem in determining the end of the

symphony is the lack of its precise definition. The “origins and endings” of different “species” of music is a subject for the new aesthetics.⁴⁸

We will now look at the new aesthetics of music in connection with sociology and other social sciences. We shall see that this study requires new methodologies.

Society and Music

Sociology relies on subjective and objective methods in its search for truth. The subjective method is developed through qualitative studies, which include participant observation. The objective method is developed through quantitative studies, which include empirical research. The study of music in society is connected to both methods of inquiry, but the question is how this can happen.⁴⁹

The social philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911) argues that scientists cannot interpret music adequately because it is rooted in the subjective field of consciousness. Music cannot be “empirically demonstrated” and analyzed without losing its meaning, but he was interested in expanding the role of science in music studies. Dilthey thought that music sprang from some unexpressed depth of the soul, but science could study the objective side.⁵⁰

That, exactly, is the value of music, that it is an expression of the feelings (*Gemüt*) of the artist, and that it makes them objective. This complex consisting of quality, duration, form of movement, and content is to be analyzed in the musical composition and to be brought into distinct awareness as relation between rhythm, tonal sequence, and harmony, a relationship between beauty of sound and musical expression.⁵¹

Science can study the objective, the “quality, duration, form of movement, content” in relation to “rhythm, tonal sequence, and harmony,” but the problem is to connect the subjective side.⁵²

This is a methodological problem. Dilthey argues that Bach’s music “is one of the deepest inventions” that ever sprang from “Germanic fantasy,” but its subjective meaning is not easy to grasp, not even in social science. Concepts such as the “soul of a people” or the “nation” that go with such German music are complex. Social scientists can analyze the life of a nation in terms of its grammar, rhetoric, logic, ethics, jurisprudence, and types of music, but the symbol of “nature” and “soul” is very difficult to interpret. We will come back to this question of “nation” and the “soul” in a moment.

Vision is the art of seeing things invisible.

Jonathan Swift, Thoughts on Various Subjects; from Miscellanies, [1726]

Dilthey was pointing to the need for a qualitative methodology, which was to develop in sociology after his death. The method of participant observation became part of that development in qualitative studies as it seeks to report what is apprehended immediately in the experience of people. The authenticity of the inner world is sought before any attempt to interpret its meaning in society. People verify original feelings with resonant sounds as the latter arrive directly from the body into consciousness. Participant

observers then seek to clarify the meaning of signs and impulses that stand between the body and the mind. After that, the interpretation becomes more complex as it connects with the myths of society.⁵³

So, a new aesthetics links sociology to music on two grounds. Sociologists study music in both subjective and objective modes and search for links. The method of participant observation seeks to make a connection between human feelings that are immediately apprehended in to music and the objective correlates of music – rhythm, tone, cadence, beat, pitch, scale, chord, etc. This is part of the agenda for the new aesthetics, but there are equally more traditional studies that become part of this study.

Social Stratification

The new agenda includes a postmodernist concern: social stratification. The elite defines “fine music.”

Paul Honigsheim analyses the political factors shaping music in society. His research includes the social rank of audiences, variations in the use of musical instruments, the influence of religious leaders on music, the role of private associations and their sponsors on music development. He studies the influence of the privileged few on the development of music, the life style of musicians, the role of gender and class in music, and much more.

Honigsheim further examines the “societal uses” of music in ceremonial occasions: garden music, theater music, concert music, etc., but most significantly his studies show how music takes positive to perverse forms through governments. He points to Dilthey’s concern about the interpretation of the soul and the nation as he examines how the so-called “soul” developed perversely in the German nation in the 1930s:

The Nazi leaders also displayed their own peculiar preferences in instruments. Strings were considered effeminate, as opposed to the more masculine brass and woodwinds. Brass instruments were especially favored for their volume. Choirs of trumpets and trombones, which had been common in Lutheran churches for centuries, were adopted for general use. They were stationed on the towers of churches and town halls so that everyone throughout the surrounding countryside could hear them. Many older compositions by Bach and his predecessors and their admirers were transposed and reproduced for use by these trumpet and trombone choirs.⁵⁴

Theodor Adorno said “The beautiful, the sublime and the ugly are reservoirs of human experience.” Critical art can be an agent of domination or an agent of change, an oppressive or potentially liberating force among those “appropriately attuned subjects.”⁵⁵

How do we become appropriately tuned?

Jacques Attali, professor of economic theory and Counsellor to President François Mitterand, describes the form music takes in terms of prophecy. He argues that new art forms are a prophetic indicator of a major social change, even a revolution. Indeed, new music sounds like “noise” before a revolution. He asserts “Music is a herald, for change. That change is inscribed in noise faster than the actual changes are made in society.”

Attali argues that music is one of the stakes in the game of power -- whether that power is a totalitarian government or “the more subtle force of democracy.” The way music might be a prophetic indicator of change becomes a subject of inquiry in the new aesthetic.⁵⁶

Art critic Robert Hughes gives us positive picture on the role of the avant-garde artist. He says historians have overlooked how they play a critical role in society.

The essence of the avant-garde myth is that the artist is a precursor; the truly significant work of art is the one that prepares the future. The transitional focus of culture, on the other hand, tends to treat the present (the living artist) as the culmination of the past.⁵⁷

How do sociologists make a contribution toward the new criticism of music? First, they work with musicians to study how subjective feelings connect with objective tones, pitch, loudness, timbre, and waveform. Second, they advance studies on how music connects with the forces of society. Third, they work with musicologists on the relation of music to the subtle order of nature and the universe.

Painting

Paintings illustrate how contrary emotions and ideas are put into one frame. Literally, the frame of a painting requires that all contradictory feelings be seen as jointly involved. Every painting seeks a larger meaning for its elemental parts, a unitary meaning one might say. A painting is like religion in this sense; it carries symbols that call for unity. The art critic must look to see how all the parts are expressed together.

Painting isn't an aesthetic operation; it's a form of magic designed as a mediator between this strange hostile world and us, a way of seizing the power by giving form to our terrors as well as our desires.

François Gilot and Carlton Lake, Life with Picasso [1964], ch.1

The method of participant observation in sociology is relevant for the art critic. The different emotions expressed by a painting should be interpreted with proportionate empathy. We will use the paintings in Sister Wendy Beckett's Story of Painting to suggest how this methodology is followed in a new aesthetic.⁵⁸

Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640) was a renowned painter during the 17th century who worked with religious subjects. One of his paintings, Descent from the Cross, pictures Jesus being lifted down from the cross after having suffered and died. Jesus Christ has undergone severe pain and humiliation, and his body is about to be taken to a tomb without ceremony.

Painting placed here:
Rubens' "Descent from the Cross"

We pay attention to the painter's intent and the social setting. Rubens was a devoted Christian whose beliefs were expressed in his paintings. He may want the viewer

of “Descent” to have a direct experience of Christ’s death; more than might be gained by reading a text. But now the painting poses dramatic questions for believers.

We ask questions in the framework of Christian belief. How does Christ’s physical descent to the earth relate to his spiritual ascent? In Scripture, the body is taken into a dark tomb, and after three days it is transformed as Jesus ascends to heaven. Yet, Rubens has Jesus in descent. This descent vs. ascent is in principle a basic question for an art critic to consider.

Theologians argue over the meaning of Christ’s descent. Some say his descent meant going into the lowest shades of hell as a condition for his ascent to heaven. In the Christian tradition, Rubens could be saying we should feel the emotion of this transforming occurrence.

First let us take note. Art critics who are formalists may not deal with the Christian emotion and still have a high appreciation of the painting. They could observe the power and rhythm of the figures moving Jesus from the cross and be affected by the “significant form.” The figures give a sense of height in a vertical movement down. They seem to dance with care and concern and tenderness as they gently move Christ’s body to the earth. There is a deep dark background placed resolutely against the unfolding white cloth. The color of the cloth also stands in sharp contrast with the bright red garment of the figure below. There is enough movement and color here for a formalist to spend a day just looking at the relationship: strong people, kindness, colors, proportions, lines, and texture all framed together in what most critics observe as a magnificent painting.⁵⁹

But we are saying that a formal interpretation is not enough. The observer should go farther into the emotion of the painting in the spirit of participant observation. The observer should enter into the life of the Christian tradition, into the life of Christ if you will, asking questions. Is Rubens, emphasizing this descent, saying that we need to experience the humiliating downfall in order to understand this figure of Christ?

Thus, we enter into the religious belief behind this painting and feel the vivid tension between ascent and descent. For Christians, the tension of what lies above vs. below can be terrible. The great gap between heaven and hell must be resolved and this is the moment of resolution.

In the art criticism that we propose, the observer should work through a wider mode of interpretation. We are looking for a universal. We ask, To what extent is the tension (ascent/descent) in this painting of the Christ figure a condition of all people? Is Rubens portraying a quintessential condition of humanity? We search for that condition within ourselves and ask how other religious traditions might carry this message. The search for a universal is present in this aesthetic.

We are looking at a sacred event, but aesthetics is a secular tradition. Sister Wendy does not describe the event as “Holy” because she is working in this tradition. But we are saying that aesthetics has developed a secular tradition that has trouble with the

meaning of what is “holy” and the “sacred.” The question in the new aesthetics turns back to the perspective on polarities placed in Table 1 where we see a tension between what is sacred vs. secular, holy vs. profane.

An interpretation of this painting now raises questions about how a secular aesthetics should deal with a sacred subject; this is a holy event in the eyes of Christians.

We know by the perspective in Table 1 that we cannot reduce the sacred to the secular without distortion. This would be reductionism. In order to understand the Christian meaning in this painting, we must move deeper into the emotion with a sense of what is sacred in the event. This new aesthetic criticism means finding a proper connection between what is sacred and secular, what is holy and profane, as it were.

The academic issues are too complex to examine here but we need to explain by example. There is a problem to be resolved in the old secular aesthetics. The problem goes to the “foundation” of modern aesthetics and its setting of the secular university.

Emile Durkheim’s view of religion in society can illustrate the academic problem. He argues that religious phenomena emerge when a separation is made between the sphere of the profane -- the realm of everyday (secular, utilitarian) activities -- and the sphere of the sacred -- the area that pertains to the numinous, the transcendental, and the extraordinary. An object is intrinsically neither sacred nor profane, but people make it become the one or the other. It depends on whether people choose to consider the secular (for Durkheim: utilitarian) value of the object or certain intrinsic attributes that have nothing to do with any instrumental value. The wine at “mass” has sacred ritual significance in that it symbolizes the blood of Christ; in this context the wine is not a beverage.

In the case of Rubens’ painting of Christ on the Cross, we are not looking at an ordinary event, rather an extraordinary event, a holy event. A community of believers bestows a special meaning on such events that is close in feeling to worship.⁶⁰

Now we are saying that art critics cannot pass by this Rubens’ painting too quickly. If they want to understand it, they must move empathetically into the life of Christ as followers would sense and feel it. The new question is how a secular critic should interpret this painting in this context.

Put another way, art criticism has a secular tradition, but this painting is about a sacred subject. The art critic then must learn how the sacred is understood inside the secular, as we say. This means developing the rigor of a truly empathic observer who identifies with the event without embracing the doctrine. The observer is not looking at the painting with irony. The ability to have a true experience of this art, to identify with the holy event and still retain proper detachment, is not easy. It becomes a big subject for research in a new aesthetics.

Notice the importance of this point for postmodern thought. There is a sacred territory that develops around every body of people who deeply bond together. This principle of empathic interpretation applies equally to works of art originating among races, genders, classes, and nationalities. The new aesthetics will have the very difficult task of sustaining that delicate balance between identity and detachment.

Durkheim again can illustrate the problem. He collapses everything sacred into the secular. He argues that religion is a “collective thing,” a pure expression of society. He takes an objective standpoint toward all things under observation. Thus Durkheim would give no reverence to the event depicted in this painting. But in the new mode of art criticism that we are proposing, we emphasize reverence. We have reverence for what is sacred in the context of a secular subject, if that makes sense.

This means that art critics should search for integrity. We cannot assume that fine art is false or ironic. This assertion about art criticism in a new aesthetic demands painstaking study.

Note that we have an added problem here. This painting proposes the existence of a “universal” in the Christ figure. This “universal” is not a matter for philosophy to resolve, as though it were a matter of reason. It involves the question of a universal spirit that presumably resides in the figure of Christ who says in the Gospels that all people may know him, apart from gender, religion, race, or class.

This painting suggests that university studies should research a new secular/sacred aesthetic. The studies begin with a dialogue between faculty in the arts and theology, and the dialogue could summon participation from faculty in other disciplines.⁶¹

Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528) was a German artist, who Sister Wendy says, searched for “the inner truth of his subject.” Dürer sought to portray a multiplicity of things in his paintings: the wholeness of humanity; the unity that would at best characterize a church; and the need to live united without a hierarchy.

He painted The Four Apostles (John, Peter, Mark, and Paul) to represent four respectfully different temperaments that he saw in them: sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric, and melancholic. Sister Wendy comments on their differences with the question: How could they be so different and yet all remain the same in this mission?

Albrecht Dürer, The Four Apostles

These unlike apostles must work with an abiding equality in the spirit of Christ. But life on earth is not all that equal. So, how could these apostles with such different tempers work together and bring unity to a church?

We enter the scene again as participant observers. We have a set of beliefs about the life of Christ to consider as we face the symbolism of this painting: equality vs.

inequality. The two principles are not the same; they cannot represent the same condition in the same place at the same time. But the life of Christ, Dürer is proposing here, transforms the difference. In Christ, people with such different temperaments work as one.

The feeling and message of the painting in the Christian tradition remains with us as onlookers, not as belief or a dogma. To understand a work of art, we seek a balance between becoming too close or too distant from the message. We seek to understand Christian belief, but with an aesthetic perspective that does not adhere to the doctrine.

The same is true for interpreting a painting of Buddha and his followers.

Painting is silent poetry, and poetry painting that speaks.
From Plutarch, *De Gloria Atheniensium*, III, 346

Now let us look at the larger issues of social stratification in Sister Wendy's collection.

Hans Holbein (1497/8-1543) was educated in Augsburg, Germany, and was introduced to English court circles. In those circles he received royal patronage from King Henry VIII and thereby had the opportunity to paint the aristocracy. One of his portraits called *The Ambassadors* is a memorial to two very wealthy and powerful young men. On the right side of this painting is Georges de Selve, recently made a bishop, and on the left is Jean de Dinteville, a French ambassador to England. Between the two Frenchmen is a table that has an upper and lower shelf.

Hans Holbein, *The Ambassadors*

Sister Wendy notes how objects on the upper shelf represents the study of "heaven" and objects on the lower shelf represent the study of the "earth." She notes that on the upper shelf we see a celestial globe used to calculate astronomical measures; next to it are a portable brass sundial and a navigational instrument to calculate the position of a ship as it travels; to the right of this is a polyhedral sundial and another astronomical instrument used for measuring the position of heavenly bodies. On the lower shelf are all the educated pursuits on earth, a guidebook on arithmetic for merchants and a globe representing the latest information on geography; next is a lute that stands for the earthly love of music, and beneath it, next to compasses, is a Lutheran hymnbook.

Heaven and earth are represented on different shelves, but we know that they are intricately entangled as contrary symbols in one frame. The one frame requires that we see them as mutually involved, not merely separated.

How do we see them as mutually involved? Do we need a higher symbol to represent them both as part of a larger whole?

We search for what is universal in this divided symbolism as it goes beyond the Christian tradition. Our mind moves to other traditions that carry the same division between the shelf “below” and the shelf “above.”

In Egypt there is aphorism, “as above, so below,” which does not see them as totally separate. Thousands of years ago in Egypt, the alchemist Hermes Trismegistus (a probable contemporary of the Hebrew prophet Abraham) proclaimed a fundamental truth: “As above, so below: as below, so above.” The maxim implies that the transcendent God, beyond the physical universe, is at once the immanent God within. The separate stations of truth, the upper and lower shelves, are mutually involved. The symbolism says they are actually One consciousness, if you have the sense(s) to see it. The symbolism says that Heaven and Earth -- spirit and matter, the invisible and the visible worlds – are mirrored as one within the other.

Now the New Criticism takes a serious turn as it inquires into this meaning.⁶²

<p><i>As is the human body, so is the cosmic body.</i></p> <p><i>As is the human mind, so is the cosmic mind.</i></p> <p><i>As is the microcosm, so is the macrocosm.</i></p> <p><i>As is the atom, so is the universe.</i></p> <p><u>The Upanishads</u></p>
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The two young men in The Ambassadors stand in this tension between heaven and earth, but give no sign of searching for any general truth. They are richly adorned as their country’s representatives. They look as though they have a vision of their high place on earth, but no more. In art criticism, however, the onlooker does not ignore the question posed in the painting. The separate parts of the painting seek resolution. The meaning moves back into the eye of the beholder.

Does this painting reveal a universal? Is this tension true of all humanity? To what extent do people stand richly adorned with no awareness of any tension they might have to humanity? To the universe?

The Universal: The Peril and Promise of Painting

Postmodernists argue that modern aesthetics creates its order of values within a political hierarchy. Professional authorities define what is valuable in fine art. An elite judges aesthetic objects, performances, and events. Aesthetics as a discipline cannot – and should not—try to find universal criteria to evaluate fine art. Even if philosophers thought they could find a universal principle (a rational category) that would purport to summarize all the particulars, the task is futile. No universal category could explain all the particulars that might fall under it. They have a point.⁶³

The history of art is the history of masterwork, not of failures, or mediocrity.
Ezra Pound, The Spirit of Romance [1910]

We have argued that the principle of a “universal” is an essential criterion in art criticism. The principle belongs in the new aesthetics as long as it stays in tension with the particular and the concrete. But we keep postmodernism in mind.⁶⁴

Being “human” is a universal that includes everyone who is engaged in a symbolic life, but that category is not enough to explain all the features of humanity. This principle of being “human” could be misleading because it cannot explain all the particulars that keep unfolding in this postmodern search for meaning.

Put another way, a broad category is essential to understand particular things, but it cannot explain all of their characteristics. We do not yet understand how we are simultaneously human, organic, inorganic, and Divine. These contrary categories take us beyond what we think is our humanity. And so our ordinary picture of what is “human” stands in opposition with what is “animal” and what is “mineral.”

This outlook on the universal is different from that of postmodern critics. First, this is a search for the universal that does not establish it as a supreme category. Second, postmodernists usually think of themselves as humanists. We are saying in this outlook that “humanism” is not universal enough to carry the day.

This search to know who we are in the universe is the new aesthetics. We begin by recognizing the contradictions, not by knowing the answers. We are in the frame of the Ambassadors who are not altogether there. The new aesthetics is about how we live in the tension of contraries and opposites.

Now let us see how this outlook on the “universal” goes beyond western thought.

The Eastern Tradition in Painting

In ancient Asia, the search for a universal is widespread. The “universal Tao” nourished the arts. But the ancient Chinese said, “the Tao disappears as soon as you name it.”

Chinese paintings were interpreted through Yin/Yang theory as a guide to the Tao. They involved principles of balance, harmony, and change. In this perspective, the Chinese “saw” the macrocosm existing inside the microcosm. Chinese artists would paint a natural landscape and view it as participating in the “elements” of the universe. All the forces of the universe were represented symbolically in a local scene.

Ted Kaptchuk, a specialist in Oriental Medicine, describes Wang Yung’s Mountain Landscape as one in which the artist paints the scene in “balance and flux.” This painting illustrates how the Taoist symbols of Yin and Yang interact and transform

into each other. Nature is in that balance of a yielding Yin (foliage, water) and the unyielding Yang (rock, trees).⁶⁵

Wang Yung, Mountain Landscape
(Qing dynasty) Museum of Fine Arts,
Boston)

Students looking at Wang Yung's landscape painting should enter into the spirit and philosophy of this eastern tradition. The critic needs to know how ancient sages interpret the symbols of a microcosm inside a macrocosm.

A mountain landscape like that of Wang Yung portrays actual mountains, trees, and water but symbolizes something more, a season, for example, which transcends the scene. Winter usually represents death, a budding tree signifies spring, and a lake depicts all water. The painting represents an actual landscape but also represents what nature symbolizes to us as timeless and spaceless.

Chinese physicians also thought in these terms. The foot (or the ear) of the human body was a microcosm of the whole body. Treat the acupuncture points and the invisible meridians in a foot or ear and you treat the whole body. Invisible meridians travel across the whole body. And the whole body, in turn, is a microcosm that represents the universe.

In painting, western scientists seek to learn how the eye sees a landscape and then paints the image. George Leonard, writer and lecturer, describes the way the physical eye sees the landscape through vibration. Remember: physicists argue that the universe is all vibration.

For example, if you should glance for only a second at the yellow wing of a butterfly, the dye molecules in the retinas of your eyes will vibrate approximately 500 trillion times – more waves in that second than all the ocean waves that have beat on the shores of this planet for the past 10 million years. Were the butterfly blue or purple, the number of waves would increase, since those colors vibrate faster. With X rays instead of light, the rate of vibration would speed up a thousand times, with gamma rays a million. (The vibratory rates of the subatomic particles that make up ordinary matter are incredibly higher, while the waves at the heart of the atom's nucleus vibrate at a rate that would strain our imagination...)⁶⁶

Aristotle would argue that a table cannot be “a table” and “not a table” at the same time. He classified nature in denotative terms. He highlighted the law of absolute contradiction, saying “the same thing cannot at one and the same time be and not be.”⁶⁷

But while the West carries this preeminent scientific truth about empirical reality, a different outlook informed art in ancient China. Lao Tzu, the earliest Taoist sage, spoke of nature:

To be bent is to become straight,
To be empty is to be full,
To be worn out is to be renewed,
To have little is to possess.⁶⁸

Theater and Drama

The idea of the Tao in ancient China is not completely foreign to ancient Greece.

Early Greek thinking drew inspiration from Egypt in the time of Heraclitus (540-480 B.C.). Heraclitus was not far from Yin/Yang theory when he described “antithetical couples” in which each was necessary to the other’s existence; indeed couples were always passing into one another. For him, there is a continuous realm of experience, not simply separate “discrete categories.” He said everything is in flux as “All things flow.”⁶⁹

Anaximander spoke in similar terms, but cautioned against reductionism. He said the hot and the cold, the wet and the dry, stand to each other in opposition; therefore, if one of them were made “primary and unbounded,” the others could not exist. Everything cannot be reduced to degrees of being “hot” because then we would not know what is cold. Each condition cannot be reduced to its opposite.⁷⁰

The Greeks developed this perspective in playwriting and dramaturgy that still holds sway today. A brief review of it will tell us about how a new aesthetics develops as part of our globalizing world today.

The Concept of Tragedy: Past and Present

In Greek tragedy, the characters find themselves deprived of all outward help, forced to rely entirely on themselves, not the gods. In this genre, there are two tragic situations: First, the hero miscalculates reality, which brings about a fatality. Second, the hero stands between two conflicting (irresolvable) principles. In this second case, the protagonist must choose between two opposite duties, both of which claim fulfillment. This is the most compelling type of tragedy and Greek dramatists generally chose it.

This Greek theory was re-presented in the work of Hegel and Marx. It became the tragic affliction of their philosophies, a battle between Mind and Matter, Theory and Action. Marx won the war as he shaped politics through the next two centuries. Now we must deal with his unfinished work as we move into the 21st century.⁷¹

The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it.

Marx, Theses on Feurbach 1845.

The dramatic tension that Marx felt between theory and action became a thorny issue for playwrights in the socialist tradition. The concept of tragedy according to Aristotle is about the arousal of pity and fear in ways that disturb “the inner equilibrium” of an audience. Aristotle says that this process heightens consciousness, and is followed by “purgation,” a cleansing of emotions. But Marxist playwright Bertold Brecht (1898-1956) argued that Aristotle’s catharsis restores the audience to a state of reconciliation with evil. The theatrical experience purges pity and fear (disequilibrium), and creates a false harmony (equilibrium). Brecht was not interested in maintaining the status quo. He wanted action.

Brecht argued that emotions like terror and pity should lead to revolutionary action. In Greek theater these emotions are unfortunately neutralized, acting like a sedative. Therefore, Brecht strove for a didactic that heightened fear and oppression without any cathartic (neutralizing) resolution. He aimed for an estrangement of the audience and for a cartharsis interruptus, expecting the purification to take place outside the theater in the political arena. Brecht wanted art to be a weapon in the class struggle.

There are only two kinds of artists – revolutionaries and plagiarists.
Paul Gauguin

Maynard Solomon, scholar and educator, took a different view. He argued for a type of purification in theater that is unlike the view of Brecht. Solomon's purification would result in a new and higher equilibrium. The object of purging the emotions (or catharsis) is not a simple restoration to an old harmony, he said, not a return to the status quo. Rather, it is a disruption of harmony to create a new level of consciousness, "a new awareness of necessity."⁷²

Solomon connects tragedy with revolutionary art, but argues that Brecht failed to see the point. The purpose of catharsis is to purge "the violent and antihuman drives" in people. It is even to bring people toward some empathy with the enemy. The purpose of the revolutionary artist is to neutralize the drive to kill, rape, castrate, and mutilate. But it then seeks to encourage a propensity for higher unity, as in service to mankind.

An aggression aroused in the theater, Solomon contended, does not necessarily lead to humanistic action. It can lead to a devastating war and fascism.

Mythopoesis

Harry Slochower takes the dramatic arts one point a step further. First, he warns about the reductionism in Marxist thought.

The dialectics in art goes beyond ideology, he said. We should be interested in the way "particular and universal categories operate within the compass of the social, which shape their form and direction." He accepted Marx's statement that art is to "humanize man's sensibilities," but insisted that art mediate between extreme alternatives, such as "history and law," "time and eternity," "thought and action," "permanence and change." Art does it through the sensuous nature of its form.⁷³

Second, Slochower searched world literature to find the patterns underlying myth, looking at the way the central values of each historical epoch are organized. He defined mythopoesis as a kind of literary myth making. Great artists and prophets, he said, periodically redeem the values of the "past-and-present" in their symbolic form, and offer hope for the future. A typical myth attempts to "restore the dead past," but literary artists in mythopoesis explain the myth. The myth is typically about a "rebellious quest . . . pitted against a paralyzing tradition." It about a hero, who breaks the rules of a community, is expelled, suffers, and seeks reconciliation. The literary myth, mythopoesis,

is about a series of reconciliations that destroy the past, but also paradoxically redeem it.⁷⁴

Neither marxism nor existentialism were mythopoetic. They could not inform people clearly and correctly about their past-and-present, and literally inspire a future. Existentialism, he said, stops in the middle of this great poetic myth as it portrays the revolt of the individual against the collective, and fails to express redemptive power. It fails to heal human wounds and to point toward a communal future. It fails to incorporate and redeem the past.

In the following passage we illustrate how Slochower views existentialism and mythopoesis. We quote at length because of the implications it has for postmodernism.

Existentialism (and we add postmodernism), he said, is connected with the doubt of Descartes, Pascal, Montaigne, and Kierkegaard. It is connected with Husserl's phenomenology, Heidegger's "anxiety" and "anguish," and Jasper's irresolvable antinomies. Slochower states his thesis:

Existentialism has seized on one aspect of mythopoesis and raised it to an absolute. It centers on the second stage of the myth, that which is concerned with the revolt of the individual against the mythic collective. It is the stage in which Job challenges the Lord to justify the afflictions heaped upon him, Prometheus defies Zeus, Oedipus demands to know how in nature he was evil, Orestes trespasses the law of the Erinyes. It is Dante identifying himself with Paolo and Francesca, Don Quixote countering the traditional chivalric myth and the secular authorities of his historic present. It is Hamlet in his mother's room, Faust abandoning his Gothic chamber, Siegfried defying Wotan, Ahab leaving wife and home, Joseph wandering to Egypt. In these literary myths, the individual challenges his authoritative communality and exercises freedom in making his personal choice. In this process of loosening, the mythic hero experiences alienation, fear, and guilt. Yet, he continues on his journey away from "home," accepting the responsibility of his free action or his crime.

However, this is but the midway stage of mythopoesis. It is preceded by the initial stage out of which the ego is born, and it is followed by the third stage where the ego finds reconciliation with and rehabilitation in his collective. Job is reconciled with the Lord of the Whirlwind, Prometheus with Zeus, Oedipus with Theseus, his father-substitute, Orestes with his replaced authorities, Apollo and Athena, and so on. This reconciliation becomes possible because the individual grows to awareness of the hybris in his revolt, of the dangers in an unqualified repudiation of the old. This leads to his limiting and restraining his own demon. His choice can thereby become critical and self-critical, and his responsibility ethical. Moreover, the last stage is possible only because there has been recognition of the first stage. The hero can be redeemed only because he can return "home." To be sure, reconciliation regains, as a dialectical moment, the element of revolt through which the mythical hero has passed. The hero does not submit or surrender. He is not redeemed by returning as a child to a collective nursery. In the third stage, the authoritative code itself has been modified by virtue of the individual challenge. That is, the hero is saved because of his revolt.⁷⁵

Slochower sums up the problem that existentialism presents as it fails to become mythopoetic. But he does not answer the social question in the Marxist formulation. Why did the spirit of Brecht's drama remain so long in the last century? We should examine the reason.

I think what succeeded in the last two centuries is individualism. The principle of the Individual prevailed in the name of existentialism. It was then elaborated

sophisticatedly in the attempt to refute socialism and existentialism and deconstruct all master beliefs. The individual (and philosophically, the unique, the different, and the particular) today remains a prime “motif” for deconstructionists. Individualism remains the popular belief, even as great ironies play in the oppressive structure of capitalism and nation states. Slochower’s outlook on world drama depicts individuals fighting against their community, but not about communities fighting against communities: the social perspective that began with Marx.

Socialism rose to protest individualism. Now the dramatic arts should portray the problem and move beyond them. The “individual” and the “social” are enduring principles but neither can be reduced to an ideology without deadly consequences. The institutionalization of these beliefs in the 20th century spelled tragedies around the world.

This is the mission for the dramatic arts. It is a search to demonstrate what Slochower meant by mythopoesis.

The new aesthetic then deconstructs individualism and socialism. It honors the individual in a new drama is about how communities face mortal conflict as they struggle against one another. Today’s drama is about groups competing against groups, about corporations against corporations and nations against nations.

Aesthetics is in the middle of a world scene that spells tragedy.⁷⁶

Groups compete against groups; corporations compete against corporations; nations compete against nations – all with what the Greeks call hubris. Now we should portray group pride and national pride with all its meaning. Groups (ethnic, racial, class, nation) are building strong identities, as they should, but they cannot succeed without a solemn search for a higher order of community.

The new aesthetic requires a sociological perspective on the problem and the dramatic arts need to tell the story. Theaters critique the past, but in this larger picture, they also redeem it and even suggest a frame for the future.⁷⁷

The concept of tragedy was formed in Greece during the reign of Pericles. The great tragedians in his day wrote about hubris, human pride. Then, Pericles, paying no attention to the dramatists, sought to enact the tragic play on the world stage. He imagined the Athenian State as the greatest, the most glorious nation of all time. Athens, he said, has the highest principles and the finest culture of all states in the world.

Pericles wanted to spread the word about Athen’s glory. He opened a war against Sparta, roused all citizens behind him as he spoke with eloquence and won public approval. It was a war to end all wars. But that war was a tragic ending to the glory and greatness of Athens.

Today, the arts face a coming tragedy on world stage. Nations build technologies with great pride and lose all sense of humanity. The story of Pericles is forgotten.⁷⁸

The notion of a mythopoesis is part of the new aesthetics, but the challenge is to translate a story of individual rebellion into a social story of groups and nations. This new story is about organizations -- religious, ethnic, racial, corporate, and national -- struggling with hubris in a global world.⁷⁹

Summary

Critics argue that aesthetics should be eliminated because there are no universal criteria to define the subject. Without universal criteria, there is no subject to teach and no ground for research and no basis for criticism. Aesthetics should be de-centered and localized. The task of the art critic is to deconstruct all pretentious criteria, and rebuke all master narratives.⁸⁰

But the quest for universals is human and natural. Nations, ethnic groups, genders, classes and religions all seek to define themselves inside some universal. Each major group seeks its universal identity; each seeks unity through an ideal. So, we argue that the universal is essential to the new aesthetics because it reflects reality. It recognizes the need to find identity and to build communities.

But notice how the universal works in the new aesthetics. The universal is a principle. It is important in art criticism, not denied or rejected, standing in tension with what it is not.

*Pour the sweet milk of concord into hell,
Uproar the universal peace, confound
All unity on earth.*
Shakespeare, Macbeth, IV, iii, 98.

The alternative perspective we propose for aesthetics asserts that much in the modern critique is flawed. The emphasis that postmodernists give to “plurality,” for example, fails to acknowledge that every group searches for identity in the world. Every group seeks “unity,” not just plurality. The quest for unity is the human quest. The accent on plurality by itself fails to acknowledge its opposite as a principle.

Let us look further. The emphasis that postmodernists give to “difference” fails to recognize the “sameness” in all things. The emphasis on what is “unique” in art fails to recognize what is common.

We argue that all these allied principles -- unity, universal, wholeness, integrity, and sameness -- are important but they stand in tension with opposing principles like plurality, individuality, uniqueness, and particularity. If this tension is not recognized, art and criticism become no more than irony. The search for truth and integrity is lost.

Art criticism is based on the dynamics of opposition.⁸¹

The perspective that we recommend for aesthetics should not be confused with traditional theories. Traditional theories such as realism, idealism, materialism, utilitarianism, socialism, individualism, pragmatism, emotionalism, and existentialism, harbor principles that become incorporated in the new aesthetics. Art criticism becomes tested by its capacity to witness the play, the tension, and the action among principles laced into these old theories. The principles that were played to excess in the old theories, such as the Real, the Ideal, the Material, the Individual, etc. become important in proportion to their opposition as we seek to interpret and understand art today.

A caveat. The set of “abstract principles” in Table 1 guides art criticism but it cannot explain the ground for art in society. The arts are founded in the domain of feeling, emotion, and the human spirit, which are just what they are, not principles. The human spirit cannot be understood through principles alone. But then, no spirit or emotion can stand alone unrelated to principles. So, we stay with this principled perspective as a guide. Principles are a guide against emotionalism, spiritualism, and similar excesses in art.⁸²

Likewise, the concept of evolution should not be elevated to a central theory. A special focus on “evolution” with its principles, like linearity and progress, could become a master theme. If that were to happen, we would call it pejoratively, “evolutionism.” Students should be alert to all-contrary principles and conditions that define art in society.

Traditional theories remain important because each provides a special perspective on art. The pragmatism associated with Charles Peirce, William James, and John Dewey, for example, contributes to deliberations on the role of art in society.

Pragmatists advise us to resist abstraction, stay close to experience, allow for mistakes, admit uncertainty, and look to the consequences of what we believe and do. They respect the practical, accessible, and sensible. But none of these terms can be brought into an absolute position without opposition.⁸³

Art stands in tension of opposites and seeks resolution. But is this search only an endless one, without consummation?

I leave Sisyphus at the foot of the mountain! One always finds one's burden again. But Sisyphus teaches the higher fidelity that negates the gods and raises rocks...Each atom of that stone, each mineral flake of that night filled mountain, in itself forms a world. The struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man's heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy.
Albert Camus⁸⁴

Pragmatists tend to elevate art to a place of “human fulfillment,” as opposed to being merely utilitarian. Fine art is not instrumental, merely a means to an end. It is identified by what philosopher John Dewey called “consummatory values,” the capacity for self-fulfillment, “Art for its own sake.” Art has a value that is complete by its own creation. Art, with its self-fulfilling power, carries its form of beauty, its self-evident peace with no higher purpose.⁸⁵

But of course art can have a hundred purposes, as in therapy, recreation, politics, propaganda, and community making. And we should be aware of how it becomes part of a repressive regime or alternatively, the basis for emancipation.

Art is not simply about people who see no end to their struggle. It is not just the story of Sisyphus who works endlessly with no end in sight. The fine arts live on by their self-fulfilling value even as they serve the ends of society.

In the Divine Comedy, Dante climbs a mountain. He is moving up from Purgatory when Beatrice sees his struggle and wants to help him, but she cannot. Dante has sunk too low for any embodiment of light like Beatrice to reach him. So Beatrice asks Art, who is in the person of Virgil, to guide him out of “this savage place.”⁸⁶

Dante calls out to say that the purpose of art is “to dispose [the] heart with desire of going “up the mountain.” He argues that the true aim of art is to raise human consciousness toward the Divine.⁸⁷

The Divine remains a possibility in the new aesthetics. It stands in tension with what is human. The resolution of this great human/Divine difference would seem to remove all the tensions, all the contraries in life. But too many people do not know that for certain. It remains then the myth with which art struggles in the next stage of history and human consciousness.

When postmodernism began in the U.S. in the late 1970s and 1980s, initially, there were philosophers and literary critics who were firmly drawn to it. It came allied with poststructuralist philosophy and it increasingly gained power within the university. postmodern masters, Derrida,

Irigaray, Lacan, Aronowitz, and others, whose vacuous remarks on quantum gravity and other areas

of science Sokal quotes as if they were authoritative. Sokal makes vague statements implying some

connection between scientific discoveries and the need for vast changes in thinking in other areas. For

instance, Sokal claims that general relativity calls for new ways of thinking about time, space and

causality not only in the physical realm but in philosophy, literary criticism, and the human sciences. After what he presents as a review of research in the field of quantum gravity (and in related areas of

science and mathematics) Sokal goes on to claim that in order to have a truly liberatory science, it is

not sufficient to dispose of the outdated view that there is such a thing as objective reality. Sokal makes the leap from a call for a socially responsible science to a call

for an approach that sets aside questions of truth or falsehood and is driven by already given political goals.

See, for instance, Judith Butler, "Contingent Foundations: Feminism and the Question of Postmodernism", 3-21, in *Feminists Theorize the Political*, ed. Judith Butler and Joan W. Scott (New York: Routledge, 1992)

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Interest in postmodernism grew in the 1980s.

James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), Donna Haraway, *Primate Visions:*

Gender, Race and Nature in the World of Modern Science (New York: Routledge, 1989),

Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical*

Democratic Politics (London: Verso, 1985), Jean Beaudrillard, *For a Critique of the*

Political Economy of the Sign (St. Louis, Telos Press, 1981), Jacques Lyotard, *The*

Postmodern Condition (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984)

postmodernists could see nothing but

instability, and that a new set of values was being established without ever being acknowledged,

according to which the shifting and unstable was always preferable to the unified or integrated.

Despite the brilliance of much of the literature there seemed at times to be a kind of flatness of vision,

a tendency to insist on one set of qualities while refusing to recognize their necessary counterparts, as

if one could have up without down, hot without cold. There seemed to be a celebration of the

fragmentation of self and society that ignored the need for balance, for new level of coherence. Not

that all writers who addressed the questions posed by postmodernism fell into this trap. But on the whole those who escaped it were those who addressed questions raised by postmodernism rather than adopting it as their own perspective. THERE ARE strong and weak, or more ambitious and more restrained versions of it. According to the strong version, there is no such thing as truth. Because all perception of reality is mediated, because what we regard as reality is perceived through discourse, there is no truth, there are only truth claims. Since there is nothing against which these claims can be measured, they all have the same standing. Another way of putting this would be that there is nothing prior to interpretation or theory, nothing that stands outside of interpretation and can be taken as a basis for judging its validity. Those of us who disagree with the strong postmodernist position do not object to the premise that our perception of reality is mediated. What we object to is the leap of logic between this premise and the conclusion that there is no truth, that all claims have equal status. We would argue that although we do not possess ultimate truth and never will, it is nevertheless possible to expand our understanding, and it is worth the effort to gain more knowledge -- even if that knowledge is always subject to revision.

An even more extreme example of strong postmodernism is Judith Butler's argument, in her book

Gender Trouble,¹¹ that sexual difference is socially constructed. Butler accepts Foucault's now widely accepted view that gender is socially constructed; she goes beyond this and criticizes Foucault for his unwillingness to extend an anti-essentialist perspective to sexuality itself. She argues that not only gender but sex itself, that is, sexual difference, should be seen as an effect of power relations and cultural practices, as constructed "performatively" -- that is, by acts whose meaning is determined by their cultural context. Butler argues that the conventional view of sex as consisting of two given, biologically determined categories, male and female, is ideological, and defines radical politics as

consisting of parodic performances that might undermine what she calls "naturalized categories of identity." Her assertion that sexual difference is socially constructed strains belief. It is true that there are some people whose biological sex is ambiguous, but this is not the case for the vast majority of people. Biological difference has vast implications, social and psychological; the fact that we do not yet fully understand these does not mean that they do not exist. Butler's understanding of radicalism shows how the meaning of the word has changed in the postmodernist arena. It no longer has to do with efforts to achieve a more egalitarian society. It refers to the creation of an arena in which the imagination can run free. It ignores the fact that only a privileged few can play at taking up and putting aside identities. .Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

There is a weak, or restrained, version of postmodernism which is much more plausible than the strong version described above. This version argues that language and culture play a major and often unrecognized role in shaping society, that things are often regarded as natural which are actually socially constructed. This is a valid and important perspective. Those of us on the left who criticize postmodernism reject the strong version, not this more restrained approach.

Terry Eagleton, in his article "Where Do Postmodernists Come From?"¹⁶ argues that left intellectuals in the U.S. have adopted postmodernism out of a sense of having been badly defeated, a belief that the left as a political tendency has little future. Terry Eagleton, "Where Do Postmodernists Come From?" *Monthly Review* Vol. 47, No. 3, July-August 1995, Special Issue: "In Defense of History: Marxism and the Postmodern Agenda," pp. 59-70.

he logic of the market is not a new presence in the American academy, but it now seems to be sweeping all other values and considerations aside. There has been a dramatic increase in the pressures toward intellectual specialization and a frantic pace of publication. There is intense competition between and within fields. On a deeper level the problem is

that postmodernism is a stance of pure criticism, that it avoids making any claims, asserting any values (or acknowledging its own implicit system of values, in particular its orientation toward sophistication and aesthetics).

¹ Susan Feagin and Patrick Maynard, "Introduction," eds. Aesthetics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 3. They note that the word aesthetics comes from the Greek term aesthesis, which means sense experience.

² Carl Sagan, Cosmos (NY: Random House, 1980) p. 233.

³ Werner Heisenberg, Physics and Philosophy (NY: Harper & Brothers, 1958), p. 102.

⁴ Wheeler was one of the first prominent physicists to propose that reality might not be wholly physical. In some sense, he says, our cosmos might be a "participatory phenomenon," requiring the act of observation -- and thus by some measure conscious itself. Wheeler began to draw his colleagues' attention to intriguing links between physics and "information theory," which was invented in 1948 by the mathematician Claude Shannon. Just as physics builds on an elementary, indivisible entity--namely, the quantum, defined by the act of observation, so is information theory. Its quantum is the binary unit, or bit, which is a message representing one of two choices: heads or tails, yes or no, zero or one.

⁵ The fine arts are thought to be superior to the crafts, but this can be misleading. Fine art is usually measured by the degree to which qualities in the work stand by themselves as opposed to the work's usefulness. A fine art is not normally "used," as in a kitchen utility. A fine work of art is judged for qualities that illumine our field of perception.

⁶ In theoretical aesthetics, we take the argument one step further. The "aesthetic" is by nature in the life of everyone. Let me condense the philosophy of this point.

The subject of art is who we are. And we are only beginning to objectify who we are. We are the subjects of the universal. All objects of art are in us, potentially, as "We." The "I" evolves and is preserved when it becomes an integral part of the We. The art of becoming the "We" is then to preserve the essential "I," transformed. The "I" does not lose its identity completely in the transforming process. The "We," i.e. who we are and what we are, is in a state of evolution, retaining the "I." The dialectic between the I and the We, at this stage of evolution, is the subject of the general aesthetic.

⁷ In theoretical aesthetics we consider the relationships between all the fine arts. We are interested in the art of the universe and how it becomes fine and finer, subtle and subtler. We look at all the mistakes, the faults, the imperfections, and blemishes along the way. As we track new levels of consciousness about who are, we need new metaphors for those types of consciousness that go beyond convention.

⁸ The parallel to the metaphor of poetry is in science the term "meme." A meme is like a unit of imitation (e.g. R. Dawkins, The Blind Watchmaker. London: Penguin, 1988) and The Extended Phenotype. Oxford: Oxford University Press.). See Nick Rose,

Controversies in Meme Theory, http://www.cpm.mmu.ac.uk/jom-emit/1998/vol2/rose_n.html#18.

⁹ For a bibliography on the metaphor in all subjects, see "Online metaphor in different subjects," <http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/metabiblio.htm>. Science today classifies discrete categories seen as empirically separate. (E.g. Two frogs and two molecules cannot exist in the same place at the same time.) But quantum physicists are beginning to argue that different things can exist in the same place. A Nobel Laureate in physics discusses advanced physics for lay people. Louis De Broglie, Matter and Light (NY: Dover, 1937). Since his work, the literature on this point has grown quite large. Fred Alan Wolf, Star Wave: Mind, Consciousness, and Quantum Physics ((NY: Macmillan, 1984).

¹⁰ The philosopher John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) goes further:

All poetry is in the nature of a soliloquy. It may be said that poetry, which is printed on hot-pressed paper, and sold at a bookseller's shop, is a soliloquy in full dress, and upon the stage. But there is nothing absurd in the idea of such a mode of soliloquizing. What we have said to ourselves, we may tell to others afterwards...John Stuart Mill, "What is Poetry?" in Essays on Literature and Society, ed. J.B. Schneewind (NY: Collier Books, 1965), p. 103-17.

¹¹ Melville Cane, Making a Poem (N.Y.: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1962). Albert Rothenberg discusses this poem in the terms that I am using here. He describes "homospacial modes" expressed in writing poetry by analyzing the remainder of Cane's poem. See Albert Rothenberg, The Emerging Goddess. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 307.

¹² This is my summary from Richard Brown, A Poetic for Sociology (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 85.

¹³ Albert Rothenberg also discusses the creative process on such terms. For more on the discussion, see Michael Michalko, "A Theory About Genius: Part Two, Innovation, issue #XXVI, September 1999, http://www.innovating.com/page_29.html

¹⁴ Nietzsche goes on to say that we are not aware that we are using metaphors when we speak to one another and that scientific terms represent the last stage of a "mummification of language." Scientific terms pretend to express reality, he says, stating facts exactly and completely, but in fact, they are the "residua of metaphors." Richard Brown makes this reference to Nietzsche's Joyful Wisdom (N.Y.: Ungar, 1960.) and points out the parallel in the work of Benjamin Whorf, Merleau-Ponty, and others. Ibid. p. 87.

¹⁵ Joseph Campbell, editor, Spirit and Nature, Papers from the Eranos Yearbooks, Vol.1 (Princeton, NY: Princeton University Press, 1972), Walter Wilie, "The History of the Spirit in Antiquity," [1945] p. 103. Wilie speaks of epiphanies that were in the literature of antiquity.

¹⁶ Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) was a remarkable woman, a "first" in many fields. Christina Lerman says that at a time when few women wrote, Hildegard, known as "Sybil

of the Rhine", produced major works of theology. When few women were accorded respect, she was consulted by bishops, popes, and kings. She used the curative powers of natural objects for healing, and wrote treatises about natural history and medicinal uses of plants, animals, trees and stones. About one of her visions, she wrote,

And it came to pass ... when I was 42 years and 7 months old, that the heavens were opened and a blinding light of exceptional brilliance flowed through my entire brain. And so it kindled my whole heart and breast like a flame, not burning but warming... and suddenly I understood of the meaning of expositions of the books...

On her life and work, see Lerman,

<http://tweedledee.ucsb.edu/~kris/music/Hildegard.html>.

Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius was born near Rome around the year 480 A.D. On his life and work, see <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/latin/boethius/boebio.html>.

Walter Wilie, professor of philology at the University of Berne, felt that the fine arts had a high purpose. He wrote of the "countless forms of the logos are no mere logical exercises but partake of primal experience, the pneuma mysticism of Philo and the Gnostics, the logos doctrine of Clement of Alexandria, and the hierarchy of angels and devils." These forms are not just matters for the historian of religion and for the theologian to examine, he said, but for all of us to explore.

¹⁷ I am aware of the current controversy over "androgeny." The popular issues involve the changes in lifestyles between men and women that relate to trans-sexuality. George Gilder, Men and Marriage (Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing Company, 1987). The philosophical issues remain on the inner unity that I mention here, where the power of each gender is latent in the opposite gender.

¹⁸ This notation is made on the basis of an excerpt originally published in James Joyce's Stephen Hero, edited by Theodore Spencer (New York: New Directions Press, 1944). It is reprinted from a new edition, eds. John J. Slocum and Herbert Cahoon (New York: New Directions Press, 1959), by permission of The Society of Authors as the literary representative of the Estate of James Joyce, the executors of the James Joyce Estate, the editor, and Jonathan Cape Ltd. The following excerpt is drawn from the words of Stephen Hero.

By an epiphany is meant a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself... It is important to record these epiphanies with extreme care, seeing that they themselves are the most delicate and evanescent of moments... No esthetic theory is of any value which investigates with the aid of the lantern of tradition... You know what Aquinas says: The three things requisite for beauty are, integrity, a wholeness, symmetry and radiance... You recognise its integrity... That is the first quality of beauty: it is declared in a simple sudden synthesis of the faculty which apprehends... The mind considers the object in whole and in part, in relation to itself and to other objects, examines the balance of its parts, contemplates the form of the object, traverses every cranny of the structure. So the mind receives the impression of the symmetry of the object... Now for the third quality. For a long time I couldn't make out what Aquinas meant. He uses a figurative word (a very unusual thing for him) but I have solved it. *Claritas* is *quidditas*. After the analysis which discovers the second quality the mind makes the only logically possible synthesis and discovers the third quality. This is the moment which I call epiphany. First we recognise that the object is one integral thing, then we recognise that it is an organised composite structure, a thing in fact: finally, when the relation of the parts is exquisite, when the

parts are adjusted to the special point, we recognize that it is that thing which it is. Its soul, its whatness, leaps to us from the vestment of its appearance. The soul of the commonest object, the structure of which is so adjusted, seems to us radiant. The object achieves its epiphany.

For more, see <http://theliterarylink.com/joyce.html>

¹⁹ Music works powerfully in the life of a nation, for example, often more powerful than its leading ideas. Political scientists talk about a nation's virtues, speak about constitutional principles with eloquence, but when the national anthem is played, everything in the mind goes into its path of sound. Great minds in every nation tune to the sound of their anthem as the heart beats in its rhythm. People are touched by that familiar sound, tears flow with pride. All thought is forgotten.

²⁰ Elmer and Alyce Green, Beyond Biofeedback (NY: Bantam ?, 1977, p. 125).

²¹ Music is not as frequently representational as it is in painting. (Exceptions in the classical tradition might be Haydn's The Creation, Beethoven's "Pastoral Symphony," Delius's On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring, Strauss's Sinfonia Domestica.) But all representational music, like painting, is an interpretive "re-presentation" of the original. Nature's sounds (e.g. a brook or a waterfall) are irregular, different from the sustained notes of definable pitch that forms music. This is why the sounds of music are referred to as "tones" in the Western tradition. They are separate units with constant auditory waveforms that can be repeated and reproduced.

²² The current positivistic paradigm in musicology emphasizes score editing and structural analysis, a fairly limited canon of music. Writers in the latter half of the 20th century have made a critique of this paradigm and called for the study of different issues. New ventures in music criticism, music-culture studies, and analysis of popular music are needed for thinking about music in the new aesthetics.

²³ Britten won a triumph in 1945 with his opera Peter Grimes. In the opera, social pressures and sheer chance in life frustrate the aspirations of fisherman Peter Grimes. The drama is set against the background of the sea, summarized by various moods in the Four Sea Interludes that form a part of concert repertoire.

²⁴ Scientific studies on electromagnetism and the body are extensive, but underreported. See Robert Becker and Gary Seldon, The Body Electric: Electromagnetism and the Foundation of Life (NY: William Morrow, 1985). The authors point to studies on how the entire nervous system is "electrically polarized."

Let's take the notion of "resonance" in music one step further because it applies to understanding a different type of causality from that customary to science. Causality is closely associated with the eyes rather than ears, which locates music. Resonance in our hearing means that things respond to each other in a nonlinear fashion. Resonance can give a small physical sound a great deal of additional energy. For example, a singer sounds a pitch that resonates with the unique acoustic characteristics of a room, and that special environment amplifies the energy. This is a different type of causality.

Furthermore, resonance is just one quality of acoustic space; another one is simultaneity. While visual space emphasizes linearity, acoustic space emphasizes simultaneity -- the condition in which many events occur at once in the same zone of space-time.

²⁵ Barbara Brennan, Light Emerging (NY: Bantam Books, 1993), P. 12-113.

²⁶ The four interludes are titled 'Dawn', 'Sunday Morning', 'Moonlight, and Storm.' The 'Four Sea Interludes' are an extract from the work, but the atmosphere of the pieces prepares the listener for Britten's own story of an outsider [homosexual] rejected by his local community.

²⁷ The vibrations that cannot be measured by scientific instruments, yet, their effects allegedly can be measured. Sheldrake describe the parallel in culture. People inherit the whole English language with all its habits, its turns of phrase, its usage of words, its structure, its grammar. We don't invent the English language, he says. There is a residue of memory upon which we call upon, unconsciously. We don't have to think when speaking. It just happens, and the same is true of physical skills, like riding a bicycle, or swimming, or skiing. Sheldrake describes these forms of energy as "fields of information," a type of energy detectable only by their effects on visible systems. Morphic fields are a subtle form of energy that have too high a vibration to be detectable by scientific instruments, perhaps connected with quantum matter fields. (A New Science of Life, p. 245) (The Presence of the Past, p. 120).

²⁸ Rupert Sheldrake is a biologist who studied natural sciences at Cambridge and philosophy at Harvard, where he was a Frank Knox Fellow. He completed his Ph.D. in biochemistry at Cambridge in 1967 and was a Fellow of Clare College, Cambridge, where he was Director of Studies in biochemistry and cell biology until 1973. As a Research Fellow of the Royal Society, he carried out research at Cambridge on plant development and the aging of cells. From 1974 to 1978 he was Principal Plant Physiologist at the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) in Hyderabad, India, where he worked on the physiology of tropical legume crops, and remained Consultant Physiologist until 1985. He is the author of more than fifty papers in scientific journals, including A New Science of Life: The Hypothesis of Formative Causation, (1981), The Presence of the Past: Morphic Resonance and the Habits of Nature (1988) and The Rebirth of Nature (1991).

²⁹ The study of the harmonious movement among schools of fish or flocks of birds is still under investigation. Some biologists say that the movement may be due to a "twofold adaptation process." First, individuals adapt their movement to that of their neighbors, called alignment. Second, individuals within a moving group adapt their speed to the speed of the group. Several models for the collective behavior take the form of systems of "nonlinear partial differential equations." Professors Stephen Morse and Peter Belhumeur, in the electrical engineering department at Yale University received a \$2.6 million grant from the National Science Foundation to develop mathematical models of

the coordinated motion of fish schools and to build robotic "fish" that swim in groups. Yale News, October 19, 1999, <http://www.yaledailynews.com/article.asp?AID=2448>.

Robin Maconie, Professor of Performing Arts at Savannah College of Art and Design, Savannah, Georgia, writes about it as a general phenomenon. He describes how harmony arises from the "spontaneous obedience to natural impulse" such as the behavior of a flock of birds or shoal of fish moving as a group and avoiding collisions, or alternatively from collective uniformity to an orchestra under a conductor. Robin Maconie, The Science of Music (NY: Clarendon Press, 1997).

³⁰ Larry Dossey, M.D. describes how many great musicians have had clairvoyant experiences. For example, concert pianist Lorin Hollander tells of the rich visual imagery he experiences on playing the work of the great composers. These images, he says, take the form of highly complex geometric designs. Dossey reports how Hollander was astonished at one point when he discovered that many forms he had visualized were identical to many of the beautiful tile designs on Islamic mosques in the Middle East. Furthermore, Dossey notes how the pentagonal and hexagonal shapes that are in these designs show a strong similarity to the way DNA is represented in two-dimensional chemical notation. Larry Dossey, M.D. "The Body as Music," Don Campbell, ed. Music and Miracles (Wheaton, IL: 1992. For more on clairvoyant reception, see Rosemary Brown, Unfinished Symphonies, (NY: William Morrow, 1971). See" Gopi Krishna, The Wonder of the Brain (F.I.N.D. Research Trust; and Kundalini Research Foundation 1987.

³¹ The source of "genius" is still under inquiry. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart at the age of three sat in front of the harpsichord attempting to find harmonic successions of thirds. When he was four, his father began to teach him the elements of harpsichord and the rules of composition, but he reportedly did not need to learn too much. He began producing minuets and other small pieces for harpsichord, and several sonatas for harpsichord and violin. By his sixth year he had produced a many minuets, sonatas, and even a concerto. His "inner ear" could reportedly recognize that the violin of his father's friend was tuned an eighth of a note lower than he himself tuned his own instrument. This sort of "innate ability" suggests that music links through the body in more ways than we now understand, more than the normal modes of scientific research today are able to tell us. Hence, we suggest that electromagnetic fields may be active in the composition of great music.

³² Alan Sokal, "Transgressing the Boundaries: Toward a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity," Social Text 46-47, Spring/Summer 1996: 217-252. His protest against attacks on science and on concepts of truth in the humanities pleased faculties who dissented from the radical posture of postmodernists.

³³ Philosophers have given different answers to the question "what is time?" Plato said time is the circular motion of the heavens. Aristotle said it's not motion but "the measure of motion." Kant said it is a form that the mind projects upon the external things. Scientists today we state that time is a dimension of causality.

³⁴ Historians know that the “past is seen in the present” in one sense. The patterns of the past become repeated, as in perennial warfare. Some historians have written about cyclic behavior, as in the periodic rise and fall of civilizations. So, the past comes back again. Historians have raised questions about history as both a literal (denotative) story and a symbolic (interpretive) story. A discussion of this problem of literal vs. symbolic history is in Hayden White, Metahistory (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1973).

³⁵ I am referring to the idea that music leads some people to a sense of “eternity,” as they would describe it. Gandharva music is thought to be the expression of the “eternal music of Nature.” It is the rhythms and melodies interpreted by Vedic sages or rishis thousands of years ago and put into sound. Gandharva music has its source in the “timeless” Vedic tradition of India. An assumption is made that the cycles represented in nature can be replayed in music and that the body can tune to them as endless rhythms.

Music in India begins with the Vedas, the sacred scriptures of the Hindus, which grew over the millennia from 5000 to 500 BC. There were the Baramasa songs on the cycle of the seasons, for example, which helped people transform their work into a sense of “endless joy.” Reportedly, music for the boatman, the shepherd and the camel driver all have in their songs a pulse that matches the rhythm of their work. In the initial elaboration of the raga as “free melody,” the singer contemplates “the beatitude of timeless existence.” In the later rhythm-bound movements, singers reportedly sense the rhythm of “cosmic evolution.” Indian music has no absolute pitch. The singing is “like the interlude of the world in the eternal existence--which builds up tonal space through melodic elaboration spanning the lower and upper tetrachords and tonal time through the organization of time.”

See Heritage of Music, http://www.geocities.com/Vienna/Strasse/1245/m_herita.html

³⁶ If we were to explore the beginning of the symphony in more detail, we would see that there are regions notable for its origins. For example, features of the symphony can be traced to Italy and the Italian overture of the late 17th century in three movements. Italian opera composers such as Leo, Pergolesi, Galuppi and Jommelli, helped make the movements longer and more developed. G.B. Sammartini was perhaps the first Italian to write concert symphonies; composers of the next generation, such as Boccherini and Pugnani, inherited this essentially lyrical approach, as opposed to the more developed style favored in Austria and Germany.

³⁷ John Russell, The Meanings of Modern Art (NY: Harper & Row, 1974), p. 271

³⁸ In the 17th century the early reference to the “symphony” was made in various senses: for concerted motets (e.g. Schütz’s Symphoniae sacrae), for overtures to operas, for instrumental introductions and sections within arias and ensembles, and for ensemble pieces which classified as sonatas or concertos.

³⁹ This trilogy also developed in the minuet as a fourth movement. The da capo aria was responsible for the principle of recapitulation of the first part following a contrasting middle section. Thus, the symphony developed the common formula, A-B-A. In this

formula, a new sense of music was being tested. The new form had to cultivate an audience to be sensitive to its sound.

Lane notes how the “robust” tutti opening of the concerto and “subdued” solo passages in episodes and ritornels were connected the later concertos of Vivaldi. It was a new aesthetic for music at that time, placing the individual sections in relief while connecting them to bring the two extremes into a new, less casual relationship. Lane says that the symphony’s sharply contrasting rhythmic and sonorous forms were evident in the baroque concerto. Further, “the terrace-like dynamics of the concerto grosso, with its sharp contrasts of forte and piano and its color contrasts of tutti and solo, represent in themselves a “dualism” most suitable for the new aesthetics of pure instrumental music.”

The thematic material of the early symphony was restricted to fanfares in stately rhythm or to dissolved triads, more energetic and rhythmical and this statement was followed immediately by a sequential passage that was usually a crescendo over a pedal point. Now the dominant harmonic scheme developed with many more details. Paul Henry Lang, Music in Western Civilization (NY: W.W. Norton, 1997 [1941]) p. 598.

⁴⁰ Various nationalist composers, including Borodin and Balakirev in Russia and Dvorak in Bohemia, also contributed to building this “symphony.” Bruckner created a special style by basing his symphonies on Beethoven’s Ninth and on a Wagnerian type of orchestration. He continued this dramatic form of themes standing in opposition.

⁴¹ Paul Lane describes how C.P.E. Bach, Johann Sebastian’s second son, for 27 years court harpsichordist to Frederick the Great, developed the sonata form. Haydn and Mozart paid tribute to him, as his sonatas (e.g. opus I [1742] had symphonic like themes, modern harmonic intricacies, developments of a somber intensity and a “disarming bonhomie.” Paul Henry Lang, op. cit. P. 596.

⁴² 1996 TerraQuest. <http://www.terraquest.com/galapagos/wildlife/island/finch.html>.

⁴³ op cit. Lane. Approx. p. 598.

⁴⁴ There are many other principles in this case of the symphony that parallel those in general evolution. We have not referred the principles of attraction and repulsion in natural history, so basic to music and physics. We have suggested that there something of a synthesis happening in music and a resolution, but we have not compared the dissonance of chords as a principle reflecting the dissonance of atoms and molecules. This remains part of the subject of aestheticians who join in a dialogue with physicists.

⁴⁵ If we were to discuss more particulars in the history of the symphony, we could find the subject fascinating by itself, but we would also open new questions to explore that explains this development explain. For example, as I read the work of music historians, many composers of the symphony were active in London, Paris, north Germany and elsewhere. The main centers were Vienna and Mannheim. In about 1735, the Viennese symphony, drawing on the opera overture and chamber music, began to establish its own independent course, notably in the works of Monn and Wagenseil. They continued to

prefer this three-movement form, but with four gifted composers - Hofmann, Dittersdorf, Vanhal and Michael Haydn - the four-movement symphony, with minuet and trio preceding the finale, became the norm. Their works represent the highest achievements in the Viennese Classical symphony apart from Joseph Haydn and Mozart. At Mannheim, where the electoral court assembled a concentration of talent. The virtuosity and discipline of the court orchestra then led to new developments in orchestral style, particularly ones involving the striking use of the stylized melodic figures. J.W.A. Stamitz provided the model; his associates included F.X. Richter, Holzbauer, Antonín Fils and the next generation, Toeschi, Cannabich, Eichner, Beck and Stamitz's son Carl. The question for music aestheticians in the future is how did less known-figures provide the social foundation for developing the symphony? We know only a story of the elite.

In other words, many questions can be raised from a sociological perspective. Music historians place the achievements of Haydn and Mozart far above any of these local groups, but that fact may not make them any less important for establishing the foundation for the symphony. We know that financial endowment and royal support is a big factor in the advance of a major music form like the symphony, but there is also a larger social ground providing support in the organization of musicians. See The Grove Concise Dictionary of Music, edited by Stanley Sadie © Macmillan Press Ltd., London.

⁴⁶ Again, the study of each “particular” of course requires categories (principles) that in new combination yield a different perspective on history. But if we tried to reduce everything to particulars, we would need to call that history “particularism.” Keep in mind that the details and the principles are both involved in learning about the nature of music. We have said that they are symbolically linked, but only in principle through philosophy. What would happen if we pursued more of the particulars in a music production?

I think, for example, the libretto of Mozart's *The Magic Flute* could be examined carefully for its connection to Freemasonry. If we saw some validity between Freemasonry history and music history, we would have a different story. A focus on that “particular” fact could invoke a whole new explanation of music. Certain scholars like Otto Erich Deutsch would disagree. See H.C. Robbins, Mozart's 1791 Last Year (NY: Schirmer Books, 1990), p. 136.

⁴⁷ Carol Ember and Melvin Ember, Anthropology (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1993), P. 438. General aesthetics has its music history like general biology has its natural history. The details of music history are as important. We learn from inquiries into the particular lives of people who helped the symphony evolve.

⁴⁸ The conclusion of the symphony is still debated. Beethoven still typifies the early 19th-century symphony. His first two symphonies were a significant departure from Haydn's, no.3. The period of 1901-18, when composers Mahler, Sibelius, Elgar and Nielsen were active, seemed to bring the symphony to a climax; some writers reported that the symphony form had ended. But Sibelius's innovations pointed forward. Then,

Shostakovich wrote symphonies that carried new themes. So, today the symphony remains as a major form of orchestral composition. For more details, see The Grove Concise Dictionary of Music, edited by Stanley Sadie © Macmillan Press Ltd., London.

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The subjective vs. objective debate became fixed on the great polarity of Mind vs. Matter in the 19th century. This polarity continues in music studies today. The problem is how science, designed to investigate the material (objective) world, could ever explain music that is a part of the conscious (subjective) world.

⁵⁰ Recall that we described “consciousness” as a stage in evolution beyond (and within) the brain with its own autonomy. It transcends the brain as a new stage of evolution even while it remains rooted in the brain and the body as its foundation. Dilthey argued that science by its nature must make an “object” of everything but consciousness is not an object. Consciousness does become an object to itself in human beings as the social philosopher George Herbert Mead said, but that is different from understanding it as a subject, which music in particular evokes. Music as a subject transcends objects.

⁵¹ Wilhelm Dilthey, Einführung in die Geisteswissenschaften, 2nd ed. 1923. Here quoted from T.A. Hodges, Wilhelm Dilthey: An Introduction. London: 1944. And quoted in Paul Honigsheim, *ibid.* p.5.

⁵² The connection of this “objective side” requires symbolizing the “feeling side” and finding the connection. Wilhelm Dilthey, Der Aufbau der geschichtlichen Welt in den Geisteswissenschaften. Leipzig: 1927, p. 223. Quoted in K. Peter Etkorn, “Introduction,” Music and Society: The Later Writings of Paul Honigsheim (NY: John Wiley, 1973), p.5.

⁵³ A cognitive scientist Francisco Varela, in The Embodied Mind writes about how to observe what one's mind is doing as it does it, to be directly present with the mind. Participant observers explore their “immediate apprehension” of feeling, reflecting on a world that Verella says is “not made, but found.” The method has affinity with philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty as it opens up a new space between the self and the outside world. For our purposes, it connects what is instantaneously felt with studies of rhythm, tone, pitch, etc. See Francisco J. Varela, The Embodied Mind (Publisher 1996, p. 23).

See also: http://ensemble.va.com.au/enslogic/text/smn_lct01.htm.

⁵⁴ Paul Honigsheim, Music and Society (NY: John Wiley, 1973) p. 188.

⁵⁵ Theodor W. Adorno, Aesthetic Theory (tranl. Robert Hulot Kentor, 2001 []. Adorno (1903-1969) was the leading figure of the Frankfurt school of critical theory and authored more than twenty volumes, including Negative Dialectics (1982), Philosophy of Modern Music (1980), Kierkegaard (Minnesota, 1989), and (with Max Horkheimer) Dialectic of Enlightenment (1975).

⁵⁶ Attali argues that this prophetic vision is true of other fine arts. He finds the vivid images in Pieter Brueghel's painting *Carnival's "Quarrel with Lent"* heralding a revolutionary change in society. For Attali, Brueghel's painting is a metaphor for his book on *Noise*. Its figures, he says, enact a "symbolic confrontation between joyous misery and austere power, between misfortune diverted into festival and wealth costumed in penitence." Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1977.)

⁵⁷ Robert Hughes, *The Shock of the New* (NY: Harper & Row, 1974), p. 271.

⁵⁸ Sister Wendy Beckett, *The Story of Painting* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1994). Rubens' *Descent from the Cross*, on p. 186; Durer's *Four Apostles*, p.154; Holbein's *The Ambassadors*, p. 161.

⁵⁹ Sister Wendy describes the painting, saying "a great descent indeed, as the limp body (the only nonactive element in the picture) drops down the whole length of the frame. All the activity is kept central, a thick and vital column of emotion and movement, passion expressing itself physically, all the light kept steady on the deadness of Christ." Ibid. p. 186.

⁶⁰ Durkheim suggests that religion is a transcendental representation of the powers of society. When this is seen to be true, the disappearance of traditional religion need not herald the dissolution of society. All that is required is for people is to realize their dependence on society which before they had recognized only through the medium of religious symbols. He argues that we should discover the rational substitutes for these religious notions that have "served as the vehicle for the most essential moral ideas."

Durkheim argues that collective consciousness is the highest form of psychic life. It is the consciousness of consciousness, placed above individual and local contingencies. It embraces all reality and that is why it alone can furnish minds with the "moulds" that are applicable to the totality of things. Robert N. Bellah, *Emile Durkheim: On Morality and Society, Selected Writings*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 1973; Kenneth Thompson, *Emile Durkheim* (London: Tavistock Publications. 1982).

⁶¹ The "theology" of Bernard Lonergan is one place to begin a dialogue. He defines a methodology that would link all subjects in the university, going behind the procedures of the natural sciences to the "procedures of the human mind." Bernard Lonergan, *Insight* (1957) Another starting point is the work of John Courtney Murray, author of *We Hold These Truths* (Sheed & Ward, 1960), *The Problem of God, Yesterday and Today* (Yale University Press, 1964), and *The Problem of Religious Freedom* (The Newman Press, 1965).

⁶² Ronald S. Miller and the Editors of the *New Age Journal*, *As Above So Below* (Los Angeles: Jeremy Tarcher, 1992) This reference and the quote from the Upanishads is p. xi.

⁶³ Ethnic groups, religious groups, and nations each create “universal criteria” for judging what is valuable. Each group then may then have reverence for the same object for entirely different reasons. For example, Native Americans judge something of great value in their culture (a headdress, a pot or bowl) in a very different way from that of archaeologists who give them high value and want to place them in a museum.

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Defining postmodernism is extremely difficult and is not our mission here. Many of the people who support this field of inquiry refuse to be called "postmodernist" or alternatively "poststructuralist." They do not want their work to be seen limited to these categories. For critiques of postmodernism and poststructuralism, see Brian Palmer, Descent into Discourse: The Reification of Language and the Writing of Social History (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990); Peter Dews, Logics of Disintegration: Post-Structuralist Thought and the Claims of Critical Theory (London: Verso, 1987); Christopher Norris, Deconstruction: Theory and Practice (London: Methuen, 1982); Terry Eagleton, The Illusions of Postmodernism (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996); Somer Broberibb, Nothing Mat(t)ers: A Feminist Critique of Postmodernism (North Melbourne: Spiniflex Press, 1992)

⁶⁵ In such landscape painting we see the dynamic (water, people) and the quiet (mountains, houses) and the whole round of life. See Ted Kaptchuk, The Web has no Weaver (NY: Congdon & Weed, 1983), p. 16.

⁶⁶ George Leonard, The Silent Pulse: A Search for the Perfect Rhythm That Exists in Each of Us (NY: E.P. Dutton, 1986 [1978]), p. 8.

⁶⁷ Aristotle, “Metaphysics,” in The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. By Richard McKeon, book 11, chap. 5, p. 856.

⁶⁸ In one respect “change” is a “constant” for Chinese thought. Yin and Yang produce each other, imply each other, and finally in the Tao, are each other. Chap. 23 of the Tao-te-Ching, in Chan, Chinese Philosophy, p. 151. See reference in Ted J. Kaptchuk, op.cit. p. 139.

⁶⁹ The ancient Greeks claim that their philosophy comes from Egypt, but whether the Greeks traveled to Egypt and whether the Egyptians colonized or visited Greece at some point is difficult to answer,

Heraclitus believes that everything comes from and returns to fire: the universal medium of exchange. “This order of things, the same for all, was not made by any god or any man, but was and is and will be for ever, a living fire, kindled by measure and quenched by measure.” For more on the ancient Greeks see, “Greek Philosophy,” <http://www.wsu.edu/~dee/GLOSSARY/LOGOS.HTM>.

<http://www.ensc.sfu.ca/people/grad/brassard/personal/THESIS/node22.html>

⁷⁰ Reginald Allen, Greek Philosophy: Thales to Aristotle (NY: The Free Press, 1966), p.2.

⁷¹ The development of postmodernism is a fundamental paradigmatic change in the past half-century. It critiques micro- and macrotheory, and has established an intellectual tradition that has challenged many traditions, including Marxism. By arguing for a subjective outlook and microsociological analysis, postmodernists have shifted away from the Marxist tradition.

⁷² Maynard Soloman, Marxism and Art: Essays Classic and Contemporary (NY: Vintage Books, 1974), p. 356. These arguments assume that all art is political, but notice the contradiction that can be interpreted from Table 1. “Art is political” and “Art is not political.”

⁷³ Harry Slochower, “The New Masses,” [1939] in Maynard Solomon, Marxism and Art: Essays Classic and Contemporary (NY: Vintage, 1974. Slochower writes that Kafka’s novels avoid catharsis. He says “...the feeling of dread and anxiety is rarely lifted, and at the close the reader is still in the grip of the modern furies.” It is not, he says, a question of avoiding unhappy endings: “The great classical heritage is mainly that of tragedy...But we are purged of pity and fear partly because the enemy appears in dramatic-sensuous form and can therefore be met. Thus, the interruption of catharsis may inhibit rather than encourage revolutionary action. Harry Slochower, Mythopoesis (Detroit, 1970), cited in *ibid.*p. 359.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* p. 478 Slochower’s interpretation of a universal pattern in myth is a dialectical triad with an epilogue. It begins in a symbolic Eden, is followed by a “crime,” an expulsion and the quest of a hero, and then by reconciliation, a homecoming, and rebirth. The homecoming is followed by an epilogue in which the revolutionary quest begins all over again. The hero recognizes the symbolic values that are present in the very tradition violated and becomes the re-molder of that same tradition through society’s assimilation of the content of his quest. But this mythic transcendence does not allow for a paradisiacal ending. The harmony attained carries within itself the earlier moments of dissidence and contains the seeds of a renewed conflict. From this perspective Slochower criticizes both Marxism and Existentialism.

⁷⁵ Harry Slochower, “Existentialism and Myth, from The Function of Myth in Existentialism, *Ibid.*, p. 489-90.

⁷⁶ Recall the opposing principles in Table 2, community vs. individual, which express key issues in the new aesthetics. The principle of the “individual” could stand for a person, but it refers equally to any collective entity, an individual town, an individual church, an individual corporation, and an individual nation. Each community (collective entity) has a “self” where people express their identity. People have a corporate self-interest and a national self-interest. These are “individuated communal expressions” if you will. The unresolved conflict among nations is the tragedy impending today.

⁷⁷ These times require a new outlook on the drama of competing markets and nations. The issue of multinational corporations and competing nations should be the subject of a new aesthetics on world art.

When corporations compete against other corporations to the point of doing harm to themselves and others, they must find a new resolution outside themselves. They find it through a higher community, as in a government, a labor-management agreement, or a trade association. When nations compete with other nations to the point of self-destruction, they must also find resolution through a higher community. The higher community today becomes defined in a regional group like NATO, the European Union. Pressure for still higher resolution between national communities in world regions then falls to the United Nations.

⁷⁸ In the early fifth century, the Greeks managed to defeat the superior forces of the Persian empire. This led a number of Greek cities to join with Athens in a sea league for the purpose of punishing the hubris of the Persians and for their mutual defense, but over time Athens turned the league into an instrument of its own imperial power, enforcing its will upon its allies, and appropriating funds of the league for the creation of great monuments, notably, the Parthenon. This brought about jealousies for the various Greek poleis, and especially for the Spartans.

The "Great" Peloponnesian War was a contest between the naval power of Athens and the military force of Sparta. Pericles decided to fight a war of attrition and then launched the "Sicilian campaign" to force the end the war, but it was so poorly led that the Athenian force was completely destroyed in 413. War ended as a result of the Persians subsidizing the Spartans, which allowed them to build their own fleet. In 405 the Athenian fleet was destroyed at Aegospotami. In 404 the Athenians capitulated after losing control of the sea. An oligarchy (the Thirty) was installed in Athens. The defeat by Sparta brought the Athenians to their knees, wounded their national pride, and caused them to distrust their social and political institutions. Plato was about twenty-three years old at the time and was disillusioned with the Athenian democratic government. The one positive outcome may have been that Plato turned to ideas on social and political reform. He met Socrates and became a philosopher.

See different Internet sources. Professor Nancy Demand at Indiana University
Bloomington. <http://www.indiana.edu/~ancmed/plague.htm>

<http://www.fortunecity.com/tinpan/quickstep/1103/book5.htm>

Christopher S. Mackay

http://www.ualberta.ca/~csmackay/CLASS_110/Pelop.War.html

⁷⁹ Harry Slochower, *Mythopoesis: Mythic Pattern in the Literary Classics* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1970.)

⁸⁰ The historian Hayden White describes master narratives that have prevailed in modern (Western) thought: bourgeois progressivism, Greek fatalism, Christian redemptionism, and Marxist utopianism. But art cannot be judged in any final sense by these limited

fields of thought. Hayden White, The Content of the Form: Narrative and Historical Representation (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987).

⁸¹ All polar principles are concurrent and strain together in the new aesthetics. A denial of the “universal” and excess promotion of the “particular” in art criticism misses the ever-present tension between these two valuable notions. All separate principles stand with a special tension, seeking resolution.

But a key point in the postmodern critique remains. Any “absolute” set forth in politics should be denied as it stands to represent the mantra of a regime. A dictatorship or any absolutist regime fails to accept what might be “different” or “arbitrary” from it and becomes oppressive. But the “absolute” as a principle belongs in art criticism as it stands in tension with the “arbitrary.”

⁸² Table 1 suggests a perspective, not a theory. The principles are not equal to one another in their importance. A careful observer can see that they are not perfectly balanced in their pairs. The Table poses a viewpoint, not a binary system.

For example, we the principle “subject” in philosophy is more fundamental than “object.” But if subject were pursued as a priority, as in a theory, it soon fails. Anyone who would elevate this principle into a master theme loses perspective. The elevation of the subject into a theory becomes subjectivism, losing objectivity. The principle of the “ideal” also has an edge over the “real” as principle, but if that principle were to be formulated as a theory, it becomes idealism, losing any sense reality.

⁸³ For a discussion on pragmatism, see Editor, “Pragmatism: What’s the Use?” in The Hedgehog Review: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Culture, Fall 2002, Volume Three, Number Three.

⁸⁴ Translation by Justin O'Brien, 1955 <http://stripe.colorado.edu/~morrsto/sisyphus.html>

⁸⁵ John Dewey was concerned about the social function of aesthetics. His work on Art as Experience speaks of how art brings significance to people’s lives, setting forth hopes and ideals. Art has “consummatory value” for people. And art has an affinity with everyday life, an alliance with commonplace values that accords to art a special office in clarifying the problems of society. He warns us about the future. If a meaningful life through the arts cannot be realized in society, Dewey says, serious problems arise.

The problem for Dewey in his day was the condition of workers in an industrialized society; the performance of repetitive tasks devoid of personal satisfaction and accomplishment. He argued that the arts should not become distanced from the common pursuits of people. If art were to lose touch with the common life, it will lose its social function. The writings of John Dewey have been edited and published in The Collected Works of John Dewey, edited by Jo Ann Boydston, 37 volumes (Carbondale:

Southern Illinois University Press, 1967-1991).

<http://www.utm.edu/research/iep/d/dewey.htm#Aesthetics>

⁸⁶ The Divine Comedy (1306 – 21) is divided into 3 sections: Inferno, Purgatorio, and Paradiso. Each one of these sections is divided into 33 cantos (except Inferno, which has 34 cantos), which are written in tercets (groups of 3 lines). The number 3 in Dante’s time was significant because it was considered holy—since the Father (God), Son (Jesus), and Holy Ghost comprise the Trinity.

Dante accepts Virgil because “true art” stands between ordinary human nature and that spiritual potential within each person:

Thou by thy words has so disposed my heart
with desire of going.
That I have returned to my first intent.
Now go, for one sole will is in us both:
Thou leader, thou lord, and thou master

⁸⁷ The German economist E.F. Schumacher uses this illustration to explain “divergent theory.” He says that to read the Bible as merely great literature, as though its purpose were only poetry, imagination, and artistic expression with an especially apt use of words and similes, “is to turn the sublime into the trivial.” E.F. Schumacher, A Guide for the Perplexed (NY: Harper & Row, 1977), p.130-131.