

**Authenticity**  
**Painting Ontologies & the Threatening Image**

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Submitted as partial fulfilment for the award of  
Doctor of Philosophy

Royal College of Art

July 2019

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## **Dedication**

To my Mother

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank my supervisor, Jonathan Miles, for believing in this project and seeing potential in it from its early beginning. My second supervisor, Dr Jesse Ash, for his generosity and for being critical yet very supportive. Dr Ian Kiaer for always challenging me and holding a critical stance towards both my theoretical research and studio practice for the two years he supervised my project.

I would like to thank Luc Tuymans for being my external advisor, for his time and his invaluable feedback.

I would like to thank Ulrich Loock, Pascal Gielen, Steven ten Thjie and, once more, Luc Tuymans for allowing me to interview them.

I would like to thank Sam Preutz for proofreading the thesis, and Kirit Singh for his assistance with this.

Last but not least, I would like to express my gratitude to my brothers, Alexandros and Kostis, for their constant moral support, and especially to Henriette for being always by my side.

## **Declaration**

This thesis represents partial submission for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the Royal College of Art. I confirm that the work presented here is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

During the period of registered study in which this thesis was prepared the author has not been registered for any other academic award or qualification. The material included in this thesis has not been submitted wholly or in part for any academic award or qualification other than that for which it is now submitted.

**Signature:** G. Kontis

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## Abstract

The making of art comes along with a sense of repetition; instead of a *Tabula Rasa* there is a confrontation and an endeavour in dealing and being in a dialogue with the past and the spectres that come along with it. The past as both heritage and burden, and a repetition that is inevitable yet impossible as well; the work of art rooted in tradition, yet an ever changing one with a sense of its aura being constantly redefined. Formalism after semiotics, and a sense of materiality that become questioned and explored; expanded forms of painting in an endeavour to trace their relationship and continuity with the past, as well as with the present that hosts and witnesses that and is itself flexible and in a state of flux.

The matter here is not a case of medium specificity, it is rather a state of flux of the aesthetic function of the work of art and how the latter is intertwined with the cultural context and the conditions that surround its making; a relationship between the work and its ground, whatever this may be.

Authenticity is a charged notion that has often led to misunderstandings due to the different ways it has been addressed and used in the past. It is a notion that has been linked, amongst others, to religion, to spirituality, to the pursuit of a profound truth, and even to totalitarianism. The question of authenticity becomes a challenge regarding what can be the *New* in relation to the already existing and regarding a form of making which can produce this. When addressed besides simplistic allegations on the handmade nature of the artwork, the question of authenticity opens into the following three components; the *author-maker*, *his/her authority* upon their act, and how the *act/making* can be seen in contemporary art and practice, particularly, in painting.

What becomes fundamental in this process is the notion of the *Image* along with its function and the way it relates to both its maker and beholder. The image seems to take a more active role than plainly having a passive stance as in a mere semiotic function; it moves beyond the role of the signifier and rather than just being looked at, looks back at the viewer gaining its own gaze and agency. It takes, in this way, an emancipated form and becomes animated. Through the autonomy that the image gains the making of it takes the form of an encounter with it, an encounter which decentres the maker from their dominant position rendering thus their authority upon the image threatened.

The struggle of the artist to redefine their identity and role within the existence of the language of their medium and to utter an individual *logos* becomes proliferated through the constraints of the cultural and sociological context that surrounds them. A struggle that has become further intensified in the recent years where a language that stems from a corporate or financial world seems to dominate and become implemented on any endeavour to find a personal language or voice; a multilayered hindrance that demands to be the centre of one's attention, condemning functions as daydreaming or wandering to be wasted time; functions that are essential for one's thinking and being, as well as for the making of art.

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## Introduction



Figure 1.  
Bronze statue of Poseidon or Zeus, National Archaeological Museum Athens, about 460 BC (Detail)

In *Antigone*<sup>1</sup> the homonymous character and one of the protagonists of the play, has a dispute with the king and defies his authority with an act that eventually led to her death; an act that has become an emblematic one of resistance. Sophocles' play is particularly interesting because of the way the dialogue unfolds and the arguments take place and, also, the way the *chorus*, that represents common sense or the public opinion, reacts to the arguments, highlighting a whole construction based upon a form of a debate. Through the play we gain an insight into the society of the time and particularly into how a citizen was regarded in it, in what is now seen as the beginning of a liberal and democratic form of society; an emancipated form of a free individual in this first instance of a democratic society, without which the paradigm shift in art that the step in the photograph signifies would have not been possible.

The argument here is the basic one that the artist is inextricably connected to his time, he is more than influenced by it to the point he is called a child of his era. The sociological and political conditions as well as tradition and the cultural context become very important factors in this relationship since they provide the artist with knowledge as well as with the designated field within which he can act. Yet, the question that follows is to what extent this influence takes place and whether what we perceive as a free individual or an emancipated artist, is

eventually an outcome of these conditions. This seems to eventually question any idea of a sovereign, authentic self, as how can I claim that I am an individual with free will when I, after all, seem to be a construction of the conditions that surround me?

The artist is primarily a construction, we may even say an outcome, of his heritage; of the cultural context in which he emerges. The dwelling in a certain cultural context designates his place in it as well as his form and function. If the artist, for instance, does not come close to the defined figure of what an artist is or how an artist functions in this specific context, he might not be regarded as one but rather as something else. The cultural context, which can be cultural heritage, tradition, and factors that become characteristics of a society and time, form the artist and, in a way, impose upon him the way in which he functions; the guidelines of his activity. Such forms and functions eventually change along the route of history as the artist may be considered a historical subject changing according to the different eras.

We take pleasure and enjoy ourselves as they [man] take pleasure; we read, see, and judge about literature and art as they see and judge; likewise we shrink back from the 'great mass' as they shrink back; we find shocking what they find shocking.<sup>2</sup>

Do we therefore make art as *they* make art, do I paint as *they* paint? To what extent is it possible to say that I, as an artist, act on my own will or on my own authority when the way I am made as a cultural construction follows a pre-given form? In fact, how is it possible to even consider any notion of authenticity in my work, as my work and activity is a process that is more or less imposed on me?

In this regard it is inevitable when thinking on authenticity not to deal with the figure of the author, as well as with what signifies individual creation and constitutes identity or the self; notions that have been extensively addressed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and are related - amongst others- to matters of consciousness, linguistics, and to being with Others. In poststructuralism, subjectivity became further challenged as the author was not regarded to be using language as an autonomous individual but instead it was language which was using him. Michel Foucault proposed in his *What is an Author?* essay that all discourses would develop in the *anonymity of a murmur*, and we would no longer hear questions as 'who really spoke? Is it really he and not someone else? With what authenticity or originality?'<sup>3</sup> Any notion of authenticity became in this way challenged, the *Death of the Author* was proclaimed<sup>4</sup>, and the question arose of who is the one speaking, writing, acting and on whose authority? Is it language, and authors are plainly vanished in the murmuring of it? In what has been called the 'linguistic revolution', man can no longer be conceived as the subject of his works, as it is not man as a conscious subject who thinks, acts or speaks, but the linguistic unconscious that

determines his every thought, action and utterance. Individual freedom and subjectivity are notions that can no longer be<sup>5</sup>.

The author thus besides being an outcome of his heritage and surroundings, and besides functioning in their *enframing*, becomes also used by language having his individuality and subjectivity rigorously questioned. This comes in contrast to the existentialist model of the liberated, emancipated man with free will, as besides how he seems to be formed in a certain pre-given way having, through this, his free will and decisions challenged; his individuality becomes once more diminished through the arguments of the linguistic revolution. With the author/artist and any authority of his, upon his acts, denounced, authenticity becomes a term that doesn't seem to have any relevance or place in contemporary aesthetics and discourse.

The proclaimed death of the author is, though, contrasted to the author's hand which eventually does the writing, and even though Barthes argues that the hand becomes in a sense detached from the head through his example on automatic writing<sup>6</sup>, it is still the hand that we can imagine writing as Blanchot often describes. The non-existence of individuality comes to a very interesting paradox with the fact that we still refer to individual writers and authors rather than referring to literature or language as a whole. We still name individual writers, refer to their work, quote or critique them, and despite the profundity of the poststructuralist arguments, we refer even to poststructuralist writers with their individual names. Every reference, thus, to the name of an author is rather a celebration of their individuality instead of their death. It is still the hand of the writer that writes and it's worth taking a thorough look at the authority of who it is that is writing: is it language? Is it the anonymity of a murmur? Is it individuality and the writer's idiom? Is it perhaps both?

The hand signifies a *Praxis* which for Agamben is necessary in order for *Poiesis* to be completed. For Agamben, *Poiesis* (*poiein*, *ποιεῖν*, stands for 'to pro-duce' in the sense of bringing into being) is a function enclosed in its self and in order to be completed it requires an act that will take it beyond its threshold, thus, *Praxis* (*prattein*, *πράττειν*, for 'to do' in the sense of acting) comes as a completion of this function. Agamben explains, in regard to this, that the etymology of *Praxis* is linked to *πέρα* (beyond), *πόρος* (passage, door) and to *πέρας* (limit), which suggests *passing through*, a passage that goes up to the *πέρας*, to the limit. An English word that, for Agamben, corresponds etymologically to it, is *experience*, *ex-per-ientia*, which contains the same idea of *going through*<sup>7</sup>. *Praxis* and the artist's hand become a prerequisite for the making of art, for language to be uttered, and for *Bildung* (putting-into-form) and *Gestaltung* (production, formation). Hence, the author/artist and language are bound together in a tandem of existence, as the artist's hand requires language in order to exist, and language requires the artist, his hand and *Praxis*, in order to be uttered.

Language expands beyond mere speech to any form of utterance, and inevitably takes place in any form of the making of art. In the case of painting the image takes a function similar to language and as such becomes autonomous and eventually emancipated. The argument that is formed in the text is that this becomes enhanced with the dimension of the *Eidolon* that the image takes, and that the image moves beyond the world of passive signifiers to the taking of an animated form. Through this, the image comes in place to gain its own gaze and to look back at its maker and beholder. A gaze that becomes able to dislocate the maker and beholder from their dominant position and becomes threatening towards such a position and relationship. Do images then function as language and are they meant to be read? How are we -as both makers and beholders- meant to look at and approach images?

This realm which is ruled by gazes and seeing; which operates with a sense of an ellipsis and in relation to the artist/author's hand, seems to be a matter of painting ontologies. Ones that come in place to undo the maker and beholder, challenge the authority and authenticity of the artist yet, through being in a tandem of existence with the artist, create the possibility of their reconstitution.

## Note to the Reader

I would like to believe that the works of Jean-Luc Nancy and Werner Hamacher have informed my view of writing and on the sense of autonomy that language takes within it. But to claim that the writing of this thesis is an outcome of this would be somewhat of an exaggeration.

The ambition of this thesis, in terms of its form and structure, has been the incorporation of an elliptical gesture that would allow space for language to unfold on its own and the poetic forms that result from this. An elliptical gesture through which a lateral impartation of meaning is envisaged which allows things to be said without necessarily addressing them directly; in which both a sense of silence and a sense of reconciliation with language might be able to take place; where the authorial 'I' may be dispersed, yet, reinvent itself. In this dispersal, the voice of the author merges with those of other writers reflected by the alternation of genre and pronoun; from the third person, to 'I', to 'we'.

The use of 'we' resembles in parts the *chorus* of Ancient Greek theatre, hence a voice with a two-fold character, one of public opinion or common sense, and the other its counterpart of the potentially precarious utterances of the faceless crowd.

As I use the figure of 'She' in the third chapter I decided to use the pronoun 'he' for the third person throughout the text. The use of 'they' was becoming too confusing for this text (as well as using 'He' in the place of 'She') and this decision was eventually taken in order to avoid such confusions. Particularly for the examples that relate to the figure of the artist or author, the use of 'he' is certainly not an endorsement of the view that such figures should signify a male form. On the contrary I would like to ask the reader of my thesis to see these pronouns as being genderless.

*The Emancipated Image*



Figure 2.  
Photoreportage K. Kourmpetis, Hellenic Photographic Agency, 1946

Athens, 25<sup>th</sup> of March 1946. In front of the Greek Parliament a military parade celebrating the nation's resurrection and independence takes place. The flags in the photograph that lead the parade have come with the troops returning from defending the country on the northern front at the break of the Second World War, just a few years before this photo was taken. This epic and heroic resistance became legend as Greek troops repelled the attack of the invading forces of the Axis against all odds. The soldiers acted under the mandate of *Fight for the Motherland, your wives, your children, our holy traditions. Now, above all, fight*, a mantra originating from the ancient times of the battle of Salamis as a plea for the soldiers to fight for the protection of their beloved ones and their homes, a desperate call akin to the *save our souls* signal, underlining the fear of obliteration and the urgency of fighting for survival. The whole nation united to defend the country at any cost and the soldiers, as those who fought in the battle of Salamis, gave their lives for the ideal of living a free life and so exchanged death for glory. The photograph is taken almost two years after the end of the Second World War and marks a tragic moment in recent Greek history; peacetime was short-lived and soon the country was

drawn into yet more bloodshed; a civil war this time which is remembered by history for its cruelty and atrocities. Tortures, executions, decapitations and brutal retaliations, even amongst neighbours and people of the same village. A sad moment of uncertainty that has haunted the country ever since and continues to polarise the nation to this day. It is inevitable not to think of this when looking at the photograph; a paradox that manages to charge it with an awkward feeling of uneasiness, with underlying tension and aggression.

The faces of the three soldiers, in the middle of the photograph are in the shadows and contrasted to the flags that are laid in the sunlight. In the shadows, as if in Mane's or Goya's paintings, the executioners move beyond anonymity and become faceless. In this case the soldiers are not a firing squad as in the aforementioned paintings but instead heroes. They stand for and represent the heroes that had just given their lives for their country and the feeling of anonymity from the shadow on their faces enhances exactly this sentiment; the *Unknown Soldier*, one of the thousands who sacrificed for this cause. A tragic and innocent figure of the soldier, as a young man offering his life, offering his tender youth, for the freedom of his country, for the freedom of us all. Yet the soldiers might well be not only heroes but also executioners and the firing squad. It is especially likely that the men of this photograph bore both of these functions since the civil war was being fought at the time of its taking. It is a tragic paradox that becomes embodied by the figure of the soldier and a dichotomy that leaves the viewer stale and numb not knowing whether it is pride, disgust or guiltiness he should feel.

The soldiers of the photograph denote this schism; they represent the heroes; they represent the victims; they represent the possibility of being murderers as well. With the shadow on their faces becoming exactly what signifies this dichotomy; a faceless face; the *nobody*<sup>8</sup> that can be anyone; both heroic and horrible. One fighting for liberty and higher values, one who is both praised and blamed, glorified and condemned. A faceless face of both evil and good; the hero, the torturer, the victim, the murderer; a faceless face that seems to blur the threshold between us and the enemy, us and the other.

## *Flags*

The flags in the photograph are tormented by and covered with the blood of the soldiers who defended them. They, as much as the marching soldiers, radiate the sacrifices war demands, and to bear one is a great honour for a soldier. The values that one may die for are also what the flag becomes the symbol and vehicle for; it takes on an emblematic dimension becoming a



symbol of freedom and of the profound necessity of people to not live under occupation and a regime that suppresses their liberty. Yet, the flag also becomes a symbol of what seems to be the cause of such bloodshed; of the desire for power and of what divides people; a symbol under which people will unite or be manipulated to fight wars or commit crimes. The flag comes with a schism like that of the figure of the soldier and bears an analogous dichotomy. It makes you feel pride, it makes you feel a part of something greater or even as though it is a part of you, a part of your identity. It lures and seduces you with the idea of belonging, to the point that you yourself might as well be rendered the hero or the murderer. The flag becomes connected to us, it becomes home, a part of our positioning and placement in the world, or a part of a broader idea of one's self in regard to ideas of nation and the cultural context. The flag is a part of what forms us, of what forms our identity and the way we perceive ourselves, in a manner which may be comforting yet treacherous and precarious.

What comes with the seeing of this image is silence, silence together with an ear buzzing. Like after a pause, after an abrupt, loud sound or a sudden strong storm, or even after a ceasefire where life seems in need to recover and circumstances to be reconfigured and reevaluated. Where things come out of a standstill or perhaps have turned into a standstill, into a sense of a registered moment in time followed by the necessity of a realization of what exactly it is that has just taken place. There is much tension captured in this image, the faces and the body language of the men demonstrate this, their march seems rushed and stretched, it seems electrified and nervous. The positioning of the flags demonstrates this as well since they are not in their normal upright marching display but give rather the feeling of being laid in the air, in a horizontal placement almost touching the ground. They seem to be at half mast, exhibiting, thus, mourning and grief, yet together with pride. There is also a question mark that comes along, a feeling of apprehension or rather suspension of something that has happened and is still not clear enough or of something that is yet to come. A pause; a moment of contemplation. The silence is deafening, it is at diapason. There is tension and nervousness, pain and an irreversible sense of loss that seems impossible to be uttered. A sense of realization comes through the irreversible, of the forever as well as of the never, and, also, of how cruel time can be and how time can eventually reveal that we were perhaps wrong; that we did not, after all, get things right. The silence is guilty. It is guilty because we don't know where our place is or where our place would be. We are not sure about how we would ourselves have acted; this image comes, thus, also with doubt. How would we have acted and which should our reaction now be? Pride, pain, or guiltiness? Would we have the clarity in our mind to have acted wisely? Would we have been overtaken by a sense of duty, overtaken by what would be clear and obvious, yet, only, seemingly?

The flag stands between our world and the one of principles and ideals. Representation is not how this function can be described, nor can it be metamorphosis. The flag becomes more than a symbol, it is iconic, it radiates and becomes the body of what it symbolizes, yet it remains an image as well, an image with the specific function of bearing some certain values and becoming more than their visualization, becoming an embodiment of them<sup>9</sup>. An embodiment also of the dead, of the loss, the grief, the pain and pride, and, also, of history and of us as well. A figure that is familiar and controversial and in this dichotomy includes also us. The flag manages to embrace this duality and paradox in its substance; it is intangible as an idea and an abstraction, yet tangible and concrete in its materiality; it is an image, yet an object and a body. The flag bears this schism in its own presence.

Once the raising song of the flag is heard in the army base all military personnel must cease activities, turn towards the location of the flag and salute it. The flag becomes saluted, carried, hanged and displayed in a manner that becomes processional, ceremonial; becomes gazed at in a way that radiates respect and allegiance. I cannot think of the flag as a cloth, the cloth seems too passive, too inanimate, it feels as too much of a plain element to bear its significance. The flag comes instead in mind as skin, as live tissue that changes, breathes, lives, and is able to host all of its functions. Wounded in the photo and carried in an almost religious way, as sacred relics, remnants of the body of a saint. Debris of a body that cannot be neither alive nor dead, yet an existing body.

I envy the way the flags function, the way they are familiar and close to us, being around and inside us as parts of our identity. I envy as well the simplicity in the way they are mostly formed, almost like minimal abstract paintings and, also, seemingly passive and stale, yet, with a presence that becomes immense and almost menacing. The impact this photograph had on me and the way it prompt me to think of the flags and their function and presence has made me question and wonder about a possible equivalent of them in painting. An utter embodiment; an iconic image that does neither represent nor transforms, but rather is. An image that has become a presence, an animated body with its own trajectory in time and history. Is it possible the painted image to gain such a function and how could this be made? How would this image relate to the beholder -yet to its maker as well- and how could it be approached?



Figure 3.  
Giorgos Kontis, installation view, Royal College of Art London, 2018

## *Image*

The question regarding the way images are seen and approached brings to mind primarily two problematics. One is phenomenology and the way one's individual approach forms or becomes different instances of the same thing. This includes one's own reactions to an individualised or more personal experience and to what is called in phenomenology 'epoché' or 'bracketing'<sup>10</sup>, which is what forms an empirical relationship between the beholder and the image. The second is the way images function in regard to their legibility and to how they generate and radiate meaning or information, and whether they hold certain intrinsic values and how these can be approached – a matter that relates to matters of *schematism* and formalism<sup>11</sup>.

The *legible* of the image and the manner in which images are seen has become a challenging matter in aesthetics in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in which Jean-Francois Lyotard's *Discourse, Figure*<sup>12</sup> holds a central role. Lyotard argues that '*The given is not a text, it possesses an inherent thickness, or rather a difference, which is not to be read, but rather seen ... One does not read or understand a picture*'<sup>13</sup>. He goes on to talk about the eye and seeing, and about what is in regard to this *legible* and *intelligible*. In a text we might identify and recognize linguistic units but standing in representation one seeks out plastic events, *libidinal events*; a picture is not to be read or understood but rather seen. This creates a difference with the way signification or discourse would function where 'since language exists, every object has to be signified and inserted in a discourse'. In the case of art and of the figure what remains is a world of 'sights' and 'visions', and symbols that remain to be 'seen', in what he calls a 'mystery'. The figural is both without and within discourse and the eye is also in speech since there is no articulated language without the exteriorization of a 'visible'. The ground of this becomes the sensory and what speaks must remain outside of language as a system.

Silence is the result of two ripping-apart that allows discourse and its object to stand vis-à-vis each other, and the work of signification to begin; it is the result of the tear, integral to language, where the work of expression occurs. Such violence belongs to the depth of language. It is its starting point, since one speaks in separation and the object must first be constituted as lost for it to have to be signified.<sup>14</sup>

A 'tear' that is integral to language for expression to occur and 'violence' that becomes a starting point; adding to these the aforementioned mystery, makes one feel that Lyotard charges the figural with an almost occult function. Yet, he doesn't place it outside of discourse, he instead removes it from semiology and argues for a different way of understanding through the eye. This eventually brings, through both language and --- the possibility of the overtaking of language, the question of truth and the construction of a body of knowledge in a rather Nietzschean function. Lyotard argues that there is no *arché* and that one never touches the

thing itself but only ever metaphorically, and that 'this laterality is rather that of the unconscious or of expression, which in the same movement offers and holds back all content. This laterality is difference, or 'depth', that 'unitary discourse is a trap one may fall into' and that 'meaning is present as absence of signification'<sup>15</sup>; building meaning is never anything other than deconstructing signification. Although he seems to follow a phenomenological approach through his focus on the sensory, he also critiques it as for him what is faithful to the Western philosophical tradition remains a reflection on knowledge and cannot possibly reach the 'bestowal', the 'event'.

Phenomenology cannot possibly reach the bestowal since, faithful to the West's philosophical tradition, it remains a reflection on knowledge, and the purpose of such a reflection is to absorb the event, to recuperate the Other into the Same.<sup>16</sup>

What comes closer to a phenomenological approach is the manner Georges Didi-Huberman deals with the image and the seeing of it in *Confronting Images*<sup>17</sup>. Didi-Huberman discusses a sense of withdrawal<sup>18</sup> and holds his approach back from the image, applying it instead to the way the image builds a relationship with the beholder, inserting precisely a phenomenological perspective in what takes the character of an experience; 'a phenomenology of gazes and touches, a phenomenology that is always singular, borne of course by a symbolic structure, but always interrupting or displacing its irregularity'<sup>19</sup>. He names this an 'event' and refers to the 'symptom, the visual, the virtual'<sup>20</sup>, and eventually questions a certain history of art that relates amongst others to iconography and iconology, idealism and schematism. Didi-Huberman writes about the function of the image as 'rend' and about seeing and looking, about 'an event of the gaze, ephemeral and partial' and describes that 'the image is rent between representing and self-representing'<sup>21</sup>.

Let's also remember that other –and so beautiful- statement by Panofsky: "The relation of the eye to the world' is in truth a relation of the soul to the world of the eye." Let's remember its irreplaceable critical value –the positivist hope of grasping the real here being rent right through- but let's rend it in our turn, as one would rend the synthetic unity and the transcendental schematism inherited from Kant. For the "relation of the soul to the world of the eye" is none other than the *non-synthesis* of an insistence that is itself torn between consciousness and the unconscious, and of a "world" that coheres only up to a point, beyond which logic reveals its flaw, its constitutional flaw. If we want to open the "box of representation", then we must make a double split: split the simple notion of image, and split the simple notion of logic.<sup>22</sup>

This becomes an extra layer, yet an illuminating one, on the difficult matter of the function of the image, and also becomes related to the questioning of formalism and the possibility of images bearing certain qualities or values and whether these have the ability to take a concrete character. The latter becomes, accordingly, a question of structuralism and the function of the

signifier, as through phenomenology an opening or dispersion of this function occurs due to each individual perception having the potential to undo the function of the semiotic sign. An undoing that relates to seeing; to the visual and its relationship with the beholder<sup>23</sup>. A dispersion and critique which is also one of the arguments of post-structuralism on the non-certainty of what can be signified, and this common ground makes for an interesting comparison between phenomenology and post-structuralism despite their differences. Furthermore, the multiple possibilities that this opens up and the way it expands in post-structuralism questions formalism and by extension any system that aims to 'decode' and explain such a function. It is worth noting that formalism has been undermined by the emergence of post-structuralism in a number of ways. Formalism attempts to establish specific criteria through which art can be approached, and asserts that form functions as sign, which in turn signifies content or meaning. The endeavour of finding a measure or a system of logic regarding how images and art function can, of course, be traced back further, for example the question of what can be regarded as beautiful and sublime in Kant and Jena Romanticism, Kant's transcendental aesthetic and schematism, or the relation of matter and spirit in German Idealism, as well as with Hegel's seeming proclamation of the end of art and his seminal suggestion for 'intellectual consideration'<sup>24</sup>. The non-certainty and the way the function of the signifier may be in a state of flux regarding its time, regarding *différance*<sup>25</sup>, and the individuality or psychology of the viewer or matters that are also parts of the aforementioned phenomenological bracketing, bring in mind Jacques Ranciere's 'aesthetic regime'<sup>26</sup> with its sense of an ever-changing nature.

Ranciere expresses his disagreement with a sense of incommensurability that comes with the relation between the *sayable* and the *visible* or the gap between material presences and meanings. It risks, he argues, making us indifferent to the relevance of judgement, one even in place to denigrate the Other and generate the dementia of extermination<sup>27</sup>. He talks about a rather long genealogy, regarding this incommensurability, that relates to the sublime and Hegel, to Benjamin and Adorno, and, eventually, to what he calls 'the pathetic version evinced by Lyotard's last books'. What he stresses is in essence the fear of having memory erased through the absence of any common measurement, what he calls 'the common factor of dis-measure or chaos that now gives art its power'<sup>28</sup>.

Finally, we have the pathetic version evinced by Lyotard's last book. The Absence of any common measurement is here called catastrophe. And it is then a question of contrasting not two separations, but two catastrophes. The separation of art is in effect assimilated to the original break of the sublime, to the undoing of any stable relationship between idea and empirical presentation. This incommensurability is itself thought as the mark of the power of the Other, whose denegation in Western reason has generated the dementia of extermination. If modern art must preserve the purity of its separation, it is so as to inscribe the mark of this sublime catastrophe whose

inscription also bears witness against the totalitarian catastrophe –that of the genocides, but also that of aestheticized (i.e., in fact, anaestheticized) existence.<sup>29</sup>

He proposes a term of measurement that he calls the ‘sentence-image’, in which the sentence is not the sayable and the image is not the visible, instead it is the combination of the two functions to the end of ‘undoing’ the ‘representative’ relationship between text and image. What gives flesh or substance in this order is that of the great passivity of things without any rationale, it is the image that has become the active, disruptive power of the leap –that of the change of regime between two sensory orders; the power of the sentence-image is that of a ‘paratactic syntax’, one that may also be called ‘montage’<sup>30</sup>. Ranciere talks about the relation between what is seen and what is said, a matter of ‘logos’<sup>31</sup> and ‘pathos’, one equivalent to the relation between seeing and what is legible in Lyotard, yet he keeps his distances from anything that can come close to the sublime<sup>32</sup> and criticizes Lyotard for ‘posing the stamp of the sublime, producing the triumph irreducible to any logos, a pathos that in the final analysis is identified with the power of God himself calling Moses’<sup>33</sup>. Like Didi-Huberman he refers extensively to Freud yet criticizes him as well for focusing too much on the ‘old representative logic’, that of privileging well-ordered plots and pathos of knowledge to the point that he approaches a psychoanalysis of the artist and the characters that appear in the work. Ranciere also levels criticism at Freud for focusing his interest on the artwork’s ‘subject-matter’<sup>34</sup>, on the intention that is expressed and the content that is revealed, rather than their formal perspective. Ranciere proposes instead another model, ‘which no longer sees the ‘insignificant’ detail as a trace that allows a process to be reconstituted, but as the direct mark of an ‘inarticulatable truth’ whose imprint on the surface of the work undoes the logic of a well-arranged story and a rational composition of elements’<sup>35</sup>. A ‘sensible materiality’ and a ‘mute speech’, awaiting to be deciphered and rewritten through a labour of linguistic signification, and also lurk behind any consciousness and any signification; the sensible part that seems to bring pathos and logos, what is said and what is seen, together.

What seems to become most important for Ranciere is what he calls the ‘aesthetic regime’; a method of defining aesthetics through their spatio-temporal context where forms or things remain in a sense of a mute speech, bearing immanent and latent meaning, waiting to be deciphered in a manner that relates to the sensible. The aesthetic is not a matter of taste or a theory of sensibility, rather ‘the aesthetic state is a pure instance of suspension, a moment when form is experienced for itself’<sup>36</sup>, yet it is not either a matter of formalism or schematism as it becomes related to its temporality or even to ‘heterogeneous temporalities’<sup>37</sup>. Ranciere is wary of his approach bordering the Sublime, and states that the aesthetic regime is not a matter of the ‘unpresentable’ or the ‘unredeemable’, it is instead the way through which form

creates a relationship with its significations, the regime in and through which it becomes formulated time and again; a contradictory conjunction between speech and silence, logos and pathos, not equivalent to the Freudian unconscious or other later interpretations. The aesthetic regime finds itself in a state of flux, not having a solid form but rather forming a temporality in relation to the specific time and the conditions surrounding it. Yet, how can this temporality and its inevitably non-permanent character function against the possibility of an eventual loss of memory, or against the aforementioned incommensurability, something for which he accuses postmodernism and Lyotard's analysis on the Kantian sublime? Does that not become eventually inevitable? The extent to which this becomes answered is something that, for my part, remains somehow open in Ranciere's work.

It is worth noting that in the *Is History a form of Fiction?* chapter Ranciere approaches fiction from an Aristotelean point of view regarding *mimesis*, arguing that poetics is not a simulacrum but 'a play of knowledge that is carried out in a determined space-time'. A process that makes the poetic function one that does not necessarily follow and mimic something else but is rather a fiction that functions within its own rules and logic. The matter of logic and facts is what becomes important here as Ranciere talks about the blurring between the logic of facts and the logic of fiction in what becomes 'a new mode of rationality that characterizes the science of history'<sup>38</sup>, a blurring between reality and fiction, empirical succession and constructed necessity which becomes an apparatus necessary even for history to be written; 'the real must be fictionalized in order to be thought'<sup>39</sup>. 'Politics and art, like forms of knowledge, construct 'fictions', that is to say material rearrangements of signs and images, relationships between what is seen and what is said, between what is done and what can be done'<sup>40</sup>. This fiction which blurs the threshold between facts, logic and empirical succession, and which is not a simulacrum but rather something that functions on its own rules, terms and rationale is what seems to come close to Ranciere's approach on the image; one that creates its own relation between logos and pathos and works through seeing and through the sensible.

For Jean-Luc Nancy the image is always sacred, though to avoid the religious connotations of the word Nancy replaces 'sacred' with 'distinct'; the image is something distinct that is 'making what is not of the order of presence come to presence'<sup>41</sup>. 'Presence', according to Nancy in the sense of 'how it looks like', plays a significant role as 'the obviousness of the distinct, is its very distinction'<sup>42</sup>. The 'frozenness', in the way Nancy describes it, is the 'selfsame' of the image as it does not contain its meaning but rather is what it contains, the appearance of it is simultaneously its deeper substance –its presence is its content; thus content and form are one and the same.



The image suspends the course of the world and of meaning—of meaning as a course or current of sense (meaning in discourse, meaning that is current and valid): but it affirms all the more a sense (therefore an “insensible”) that is selfsame with what it gives to be sensed (that is, itself). In the image, which, however, is without an “inside,” there is a sense that is nonsignifying but not insignificant, a sense that is as certain as its force (its form).<sup>43</sup>

The image, in this way, is its traits, it is the same as the attributes it bears. It is its appearance, and the way it looks like cannot be separated from what it is; its appearance bears, but simultaneously *is*, its essence. Its ‘frozenness’ is the becoming of its traits into an image, their enclosing or enframing into a certain form or entity that can also be seen in relation to time. The image ‘contains the index of its frozenness (its form, its present, its representation) and at the same time the index of movement (force, appearing, disappearing). That is also why it engages both the indefinite proliferation of images as well as each image’s isolation and enframing, [its being hung on the wall]’<sup>44</sup>. The frozenness becomes thus a unique moment in time bearing a sense of a momentum rooted in its specificity yet susceptible to change through the possibilities of different meaning and readings, and this is perhaps the reason why Nancy refers to the proliferation of images and to isolation, the image, thus, can be seen also as an instance within the context of a certain discourse that surrounds it and becomes enclosed in it. What makes the image sacred or distinct for Nancy is its distance towards us, the image always feels as it is from another order of things, and besides being distinct is distant as well. It is worth citing here the following two extraordinary excerpts from the beginning of *The Ground of the Image* to give a sense of the importance Nancy charges the image with whilst also eschewing any elements of religiosity, and demonstrating the distance between the sky and the heavens.

The image is always sacred—if we insist on using this term, which gives rise to so much confusion (but which I will use initially, and provisionally, as a regulative term in order to set into motion the thought I would like to develop here). Indeed, the meaning of the “sacred” never ceases to be confused with that of the “religious.” But religion is the observance of a rite that forms and maintains a bond (with others or with oneself, with nature or with a supernature). Religion in itself is not ordered by the sacred. (Nor is it ordered by faith, which is yet another category.)

[...]

The image always comes from the sky—not from the heavens, which are religious, but from the skies, a term proper to painting: not heaven in its religious sense, but sky as the Latin firmamentum, the firm vault from which the stars are hung, dispensing their brightness. (Behind the vault are the gods of Epicurus—to mention him again—indifferent and insensitive even to themselves, therefore without images, and deprived of sense.) The painted sky contains within itself what is sacred in the sky insofar as it is the distinct and the separated par excellence: the sky is the separated. It is first of all

something that, in the ancient cosmogonies, a god or a force more remote than the gods separates from the earth.<sup>45</sup>

Does this dimension of the image remain plainly a remnant of religion or is there something else besides it? How should images be approached, confronted or made? Another reason for the distance of the *distinct* might be that images always try to somehow 'speak' to us, to radiate something -which though might not be different from how they simply are- this perhaps creates a sort of a dynamic which brings us automatically to the position of the beholder, of one awaiting to receive some information or message, or even one expected to understand something. Furthermore, the image comes with an awkward non-legible besides any religious remnants this might be bearing. The image, hence, challenges the beholder with how it can be 'read' and with the sort of a *distinct* –or rather occult- presence it tends to get. The maker faces the two-fold challenge of how the image can be made and how to handle the sense of autonomy the image has through its *distinct* function, its language and presence. This two-fold question becomes a matter of aesthetics, which stands for the relation to the sensible; how can thus the image be made in a way that will render it legible, and in a manner that this legibility can be approached and managed? One may find himself lost in a maze of signs and signifiers, and in the threatening dimension of a language that is seemingly absent, and where the visual and sensible take the leading roles. It becomes a challenge the meaning or content of the image to be uttered or generated in a way that can be legible or intelligible through the retinal and through the senses, and this in the terms set by the *aesthetic regime* that surrounds it and has itself a flexible character. The image becomes an apparatus that creates its own terms and bears its own heritage, functioning in its own realm/context/*regime*. An apparatus whose substance and content are communicated through the retinal and the sensible; through a play between the sensory and the intelligible,, between seen and read, and between what is knowledge and non-knowledge.



Figure 4.  
Giorgos Kontis, Installation view, Bow Arts, Ian Kiaer's studio, 2017

The image hence as tear, as rend, as violence, as *distinct* and as the *selfsame*, that contains both pathos and logos, the sayable and the non-sayable. The image is rather seen and not read yet is read exactly through this seeing even if that occurs in its own distinctive manner, through the sensory and through aesthetics which, in its turn, finds itself in its own *aesthetic regime* and in a state of flux. The image -like the flag- becomes an embodiment, it becomes also a presence, and is in place to undo us. It becomes an *event* and the seeing of it, accordingly, becomes an event as well. Both the image and seeing become in this way dispersed and their dynamic changes and becomes reciprocal as the image seems to be setting the rules of our relationship with it. In addition to these, the image is delivered to us, in many of its instances, with the mystic veil of an eidolon<sup>46</sup> which further perplexes the encounter with it. It hovers between a mere representation of something, a presence functioning on its own terms, and the form of an occult entity which somehow looks back at us as both makers and beholders.

How much space do images take? Are paintings stale surfaces hanging on a wall or they create a relationship with the space and become a part of it? Is there a sculptural dimension in painting, a way it forms and rearranges space in the way images become a presence? I feel my images and works as a site, as a stage and a theatre of things that are happening in time present and have happened before. Props and presences that form a narrative, that make a story. My work as a story; my images as a story; a story ongoing; a story without beginning or end; a story that resists my own definition as it has started before me and functions besides me. My work as both presence and environment. A theatre in which the story becomes evident; one that doesn't unfold or present something; it makes (or becomes) a presence and communicates things exactly through this presence and through the way this applies to the sensory. It becomes for a moment, forms a dynamic in an instance and then everything continues their being -or rather their becoming- again. The same and not.

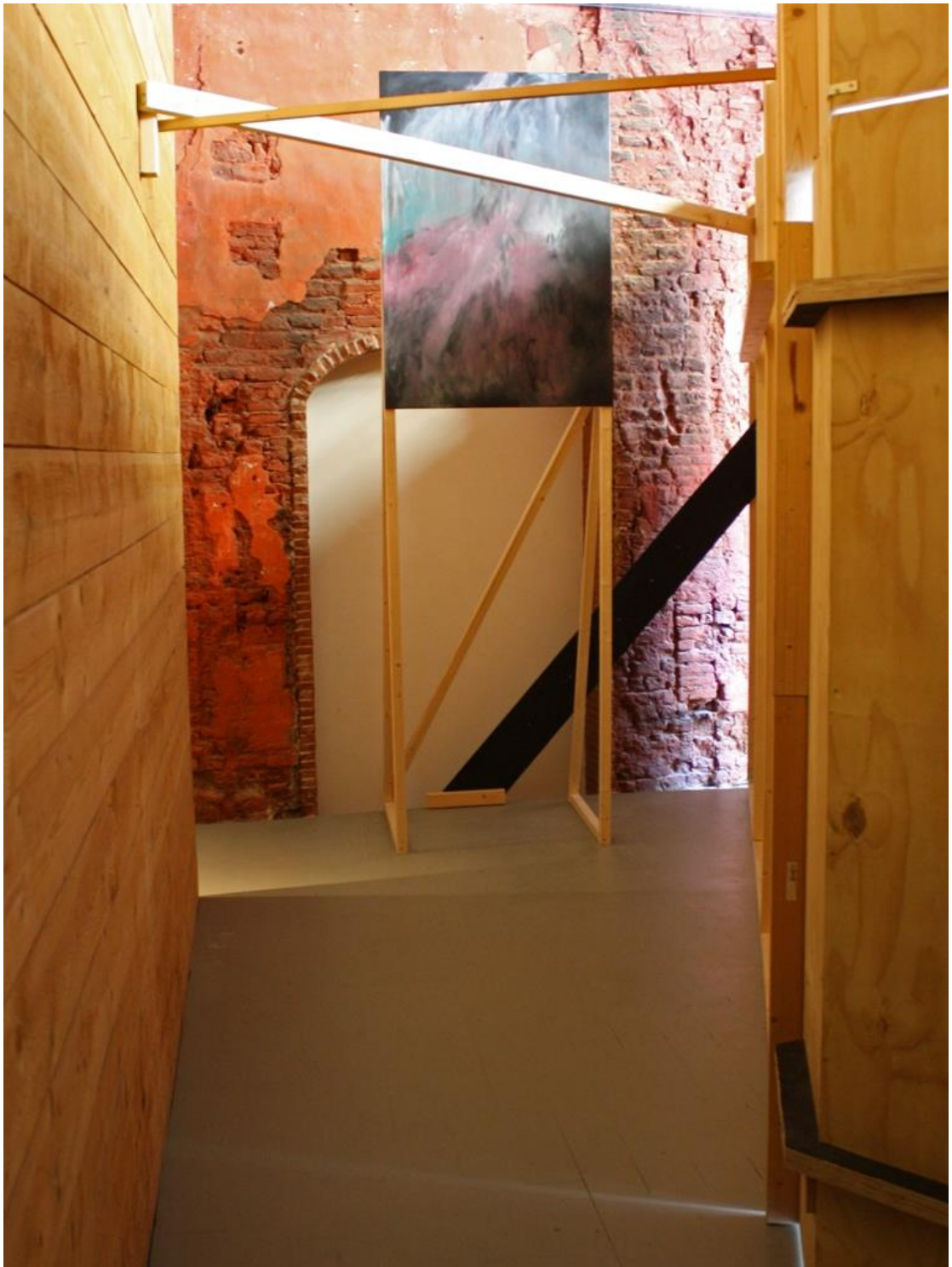


Figure 5.  
Giorgos Kontis, Installation view, *Ruimte Caesuur*, Middelburg, Netherlands 2014

## *The Image as Eidolon*

*Teucer: . . . in sea-girt Cyprus, where it was decreed  
by Apollon that I should live, giving the city  
the name of Salamis in memory of my island home.*

.....

*Helen: I never went to Troy; it was a phantom<sup>1</sup>.*

.....

*Servant: What? You mean it was only for a cloud  
that we struggled so much?*

Euripides, *Helen*<sup>47</sup>

On the journey to Cyprus, exiled by his father for failing to avenge the death of his brother *Ajax*, *Teucer* finds himself upon Egyptian shore, and there greets him an unexpected revelation. He finds on the beach *Helen*, the legendary woman for whom the *Trojan* war had recently been fought, that cried to him it was not her who was in Troy. This all takes place in *Helen*, the antiwar drama of Euripides, in which *Helen* --- reveals to *Teucer* that she had never been in Troy, but that she was instead kept in Egypt as the Gods wanted, and all the bloodshed of the *Trojan* war was in vain. What was in Troy was in truth an *eidolon* of *Helen*. Two great armies were thus fighting for ten years, *Scamandros* -the river of the city- was swelling the blood of the soldiers, the great city of *Troy* was seized and burnt to the ground, and all this for what? ...for an *eidolon*.

The *eidolon* can be the same as the real object or person, something that resembles it; it can be, as well, an image of it and even its reflection in a mirror; an effigy, a phantom image, which is mostly attributed with a magical, mystic, divine dimension. *Teucer* and the servant are shocked with *Helen's* revelation, they cannot understand that so many lives were lost and that they were fighting for ten years in vain; for an entity which seemed to be *Helen*, an entity which seemed the same as her, though was not her. A phantom image of *Helen* which had seemingly become something autonomous in its own being and presence. An entity which, in the first place, might had been originating or stemming from something else, from what it was resembling, and which eventually was in place to stand on its own and in a parallel relationship to its prototype. Hence, the *eidolon* as becoming an existence besides its origin, as being a besides-existence.

Euripides' play is an antiwar drama through which its author provokes us with the paralognism of war and its insanity. The *eidolon*, for the example he uses, is a challenging figure

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<sup>1</sup> *Eidolon* used in the original.

that one may find encountered with in different ways. It is therefore not a coincidence that Euripides chooses to use this as a figure, especially given the mystic nature it bears such that it is a suitable conduit for the desires of the gods. Eidola have been key figures in religions, attributed with divine or sacred aspects and powers that render them objects or images of worship, love, hate, desire, and trigger people's reactions towards them. From ancient Greece to Byzantium and Christianity, to paganism and folk traditions, from Byzantine Iconolatry and Iconoclasm to Aniconism in Islam, cultures are full of eidola or remnants and even denials of them. Eidola are a characteristic of past eras, yet continue to persist even today. The power of eidola, or perhaps the immense presence they may take in one's faith, can be testified through the way this has several times led to the destruction of eidola of one religion by devout believers of others. Christians destroyed ancient Greek temples and statues for perceived blasphemy, and accordingly Christian churches and Icons were destroyed by Christians of differing denomination accused of Iconoclasm, as well as by the Ottoman empire and Islam. These are, of course, just a few of the numerous examples one can find throughout history, but the latter instance in which the desecration of icons was pointed on the defacing of the depicted figures is worth closer examination. The defacing of the figures and, more in particular, the gouging out of their eyes takes a distinctive character as it seems that the figures on the frescos or icons were taking a much stronger dimension rather than being plainly depicted and painted. What has taken place there is not plainly an attack on the surface or the depicted image but rather an effort to hurt the figure as if it were a real person. It is not the painted images that become scratched or erased, it is the figures on them that are hit with the weapons and swords in what seems to be an endeavor to wound or murder them, and the gouging of the eyes enters into an emblematic dimension. It is not the hands or the genitals, or any other body member, not even the weapons and arms and the symbols the figures might be carrying. Amongst all these, it is the eyes of those figures that are destroyed, that are rendered blind, unable to look back. Perhaps their gaze was becoming unbearable for the ones who were desecrating them, as are martyrs who stand passively, unable to defend themselves and simply look back at their persecutors, enhancing the feeling of this shameful act and haunting them with their gaze. Or, as being eidola of another religion, foreign gods that look back at their attackers and silently promise revenge or punishment; a threatening gaze that drives the assailants to blind them<sup>48</sup>.

This act takes a symbolic and significant dimension as despite the gaze being innocent or menacing what matters at most is that it, primarily, is present. Those depicted eyes bear one, and this occurs exactly because they move beyond the realm of depicted images to the dimension of being eidola, of becoming occult individual presences. The eidolon moves



beyond the plain function of a symbol to the taking of a more emancipated form and to the becoming of an individual entity; accordingly the image also assumes this function. This dynamic is perhaps one of the fundamental attributes of an image and is directly related to the subconscious presence it takes when we are confronted with one in religion, art, and even in encounters with plain, trivial photographs. The mystical power of images still takes place in everyday daily life and the trite example of how today we would handle a photograph of a person beloved by us is illuminating<sup>49</sup>. Would you, for instance, not be reluctant to cut the eyes out or pin holes on a photograph of your mother?<sup>50</sup> This is something that even today, despite the overcoming of superstitions or religious prejudices, one would deeply hesitate to do. In the same manner that eyeless Byzantine icons are not just painted but have instead an occult presence, the photograph of a beloved person becomes much more than a plain image. It becomes much more than a visualization or a symbol, but rather a matter of embodiment and of the forming of an eidolon as an individual entity, eventually revealing a dimension that becomes present in all of our encounters with images.



Figure 6.  
Desecrated Byzantine Icon



## *The Distinct Paradigm*

The image is usually regarded as a representation of something other and thus takes the marginal role of giving form to something else or the function of symbolizing and depicting it –even if it is abstract in its form. It is through this rendered a plain surface that simply hosts an event foreign to it and so becomes detached from its own self as well as from any meaning it may be carrying and its own language -the way it functions- as it primarily serves the purpose of the imitation of something other or of a subject. To view the image differently is to see it as its own self rather than as standing for something else, and to see that there is no other language registered on it but its language is instead its own the body, the image itself; the aforementioned *selfsame* in the words of Jean-Luc Nancy. The image is its language and instead of bearing and signifying some foreign to it meaning, is itself what it renders legible. Its content, its meaning, therefore, does not originate from or stand for something else but from its own self. The image should be seen as detached from its subject matter and not necessarily holding the function of a representation of it, and even in cases where it comes close to a function of representation it should be seen in a sense of a particular, and autonomous fiction, in the way this was earlier addressed through the work of Jacques Ranciere. This narrative can be taken a step further and form the argument that the discourse on the image should be on the ground that it is neither a representation nor metaphor, nor a symbol or an allegory, and not even a metamorphosis since this as well links the image to something else -to a sense of origin- from which it stems. The image becomes autonomous and eventually an entity, a presence of its own, standing beside and in relation to its subject matter, if there has been one in the first place. Rather than representation this becomes a matter of *presentation* (*Darstellung*), as well as of a *putting-into-form* (*Bildung*) and *formation* (*Gestaltung*)<sup>51</sup> in a manner that besides the autonomy of the image, inevitably, incorporates the question concerning the artist-maker and his role in this process (a position that Phillippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy deal with in their study on early German Romanticism, *The Literary Absolute*<sup>52</sup> which will be further analysed in the next chapter). The *putting-into-form*, the *production*, is what begins to specify subjectivity and brings the Subject in the making of art; the artist -the Subject- is envisaged as an operator, or as operation itself, through which the constitution of the form takes place; “The formation of form is its access to beauty: “All beauty is a self-illuminating [Selbsterleuchtetes], completed individual,” says one of Novalis’s fragments. Thus, in the epoch of romanticism, the Subject passes from art to the fine arts (die schöne Kunst, as Kant said), and from the fine arts to art taken absolutely and in all senses<sup>53</sup>. Besides this being one of the first instances of the birth of the artist, the formation or

presentation of the work, enhances it as well with a sense of autonomy as an operation that functions on its own ground and terms.

A form of the autonomy of the image is what Maurice Blanchot argues for in his seminal essay *Two Versions of the Imaginary*<sup>54</sup>. Blanchot writes about a form of 'disembodied resemblance'<sup>55</sup> and questions the nature of the representational function of the image. He argues that even though the image exists or comes after the object, as might be the usual analysis<sup>56</sup>, it can as well be a 'neutral double of the object'<sup>57</sup>. Besides that, 'the image can certainly help us to recapture the thing in an ideal way', as in classical art, it can also be the present in the absence of the thing. Distancing and ambiguity play a significant role in Blanchot, as does to let oneself be taken by the image. The image in this essay might be remaining related to the *thing* as a means for Blanchot to question representation and resemblance, though it is also related to the 'event', to the 'noncontemporary', to the 'ungraspable', to the reflection of the object that always seems more spiritual than the object itself. It is related to a sort of identity the image takes, for the example of the cadaver he uses. The cadaver is no longer he – 'he' for the deceased person, the cadaver is what he has left behind, and both he and the cadaver don't belong to this world any longer. This distinction and the form of autonomy the cadaver takes is enlightening in regard to the image; the cadaver is of another world and, respectively, the image as well. Both are he, but at the same time are not; both are the thing, yet primarily something else – which is themselves; a thing or presence existing on its own.

Let us look again at this splendid being from which beauty streams: he is, I see this, perfectly like himself: he resembles *himself*. The cadaver is its own image. It no longer entertains any relation with this world, where it still appears, except that of an image, an obscure possibility, a shadow ever present behind the living form which now, far from separating itself from this form, transforms it entirely into shadow. The corpse is a reflection becoming master of the life it reflects -- absorbing it, identifying substantively with it by moving it from its use value and from its truth value to something incredible -- something neutral which there is no getting used to.<sup>58</sup>

Even in instances of mere representation, and besides any simplistic approach towards its resemblance to the depicted thing, the image holds its distance from it as what is discussed and looked at is not the mere thing but rather the image itself. The image becomes isolated from the thing or from what prompts its creation in the first place and enters the realm of images and visibility as an individual element and presence. The image of something is not merely this thing itself, it is rather an element that belongs to a different realm and discourse, which finds itself in relation to the represented thing, being yet distinct and distant from it. This relation of affinity yet distance as well and the sense of an origin perhaps matter only as a

starting point and then become something other and even almost irrelevant to this starting point. This sense of affinity and distance, and the relation between origin and isolation comes close to the way Giorgio Agamben approaches the function of the paradigm in his *What Is a Paradigm?*<sup>59</sup> essay; a very intriguing approach to such a challenging problematic.

The use and function of the paradigm becomes, through Agamben's approach, enlightening in regard to questionings of representation and relations between objects. The word paradigm means *example* and Agamben, in his 2002 lecture at EGS in Saas-Fee in Switzerland, explains that the paradigm of the table is not the table itself but is or becomes something else besides the table. He draws a line between these two and addresses them as entities whose relation is not a given but needs rather to be seen and analyzed. The paradigm does not form an archetype of the table but remains in a function besides it as the etymology of the word indicates as well; paradigm comes from Greek and means *shows besides itself* (*para-deiknymi*). Even though the paradigm might originate in relation to the table, the latter is not necessarily the *arché* (beginning, origin, authority) of the paradigm. The paradigm can, for instance, already exist in a different function, pre-existing to its use as such, and make intelligible a new ensemble by exhibiting its own singularity as Agamben describes. In this manner it becomes or forms an *arché* first and foremost for itself, and thus forms a new type of an archetype; an archetype though of its own self and not of the table. The originating from or relation of the paradigm to the table does not threaten the sovereignty of the paradigm as this does not necessarily turn it into a product or outcome of the first, as mentioned above it may as well have been plainly chosen to function as such, thus, already existing as a singular case or in a different context prior to its use as a paradigm. Agamben explains the Aristotelian positioning towards the relation between part and whole, where Aristotle describes that the paradigm doesn't function as a part *μέρος* of a whole *όλον* in the sense of it being a sample of something bigger. The relationship between those two is rather as part *μέρος* to part *μέρος*, and the paradigm stands through this in a relation that allows it to be seen individually; 'the paradigm is defined by a third and paradoxical type of movement, which goes from the particular to the particular'<sup>60</sup>. Through this, the independent presence of the paradigm becomes enhanced and a sense of autonomy of it emerges and becomes evident. In Agamben's words:

Paradigms obey not the logic of the metaphorical transfer of meaning but the analogical logic of the example. Here we are not dealing with a signifier that is extended to designate heterogeneous phenomena by virtue of the same semantic structure; more akin to allegory than to metaphor, the paradigm is a singular case that is isolated from its context only insofar as, by exhibiting its own singularity, it makes intelligible a new ensemble, whose homogeneity it itself constitutes.<sup>61</sup>

Considering the relation of the paradigm as a part to other parts and its relation to the possibility of a greater whole, as well as that it might be stemming from something else and it eventually stands on its own and becomes autonomous, the paradigm comes close to the function of the image. Another reason for this is the 'besides' positioning the image may be taking that renders it a besides-entity in regard to representation and to the depicted thing. The image has the character of a parallel-entity as at the same time it might be stemming from or being linked to a thing remains something other than it; it is linked to it and, yet, it may as well not. It might be related to this something but at the same time being distanced from it to the point that it becomes detached and something else; an entity functioning in its own terms and its own realm of language. As such, we might say that the image simply lends itself to us in order to make intelligible a new ensemble of things which occurs through its own singularity and through the image coming from a different context, *from a different order of things* or *from the skies but not the heavens* -to repeat Jean-Luc Nancy's phrases used earlier. Besides the notion of the image, there are other instances that may function in a similar manner to the paradigm, for instance writing. What may thought be what differentiates and makes challenging the relation of the image to the paradigm is its function as the *distinct*, it is this *sacredness* of the image that renders it unique and the way it addresses, and creates a relationship with, its beholder. Anything can perhaps have a similar function to the one of the paradigm, though what it is that perhaps brings the image closer to such a function is its character of radiating itself through having of character of the *selfsame* and this exhibiting and showing of itself makes a relation to the showing -the *deiknymi*- of the paradigm; the image holds a close function with the *deiknymi* and may even itself be seen as such. Hence, an affinity occurs between the besides-showing of the paradigm and the laterality of the image and the way it becomes legible and generates meaning in its own particular manner, one that addresses the sensory through a sense of an ellipsis. Adding to its relationship with the paradigm, which enhances it with a sense of autonomy, the function of the image as an eidolon and as being *distinct*, the image takes the form of a *distinct paradigm*.



Figure 7.  
Male torso C. 480-470 BC, Miletus, Louvre Museum

*We cannot know his legendary head  
with eyes like ripening fruit. And yet his torso  
is still suffused with brilliance from inside,  
like a lamp, in which his gaze, now turned to low,*

*gleams in all its power. Otherwise  
the curved breast could not dazzle you so, nor could  
a smile run through the placid hips and thighs  
to that dark center where procreation flared.*

*Otherwise this stone would seem defaced  
beneath the translucent cascade of the shoulders  
and would not glisten like a wild beast's fur:*

*would not, from all the borders of itself,  
burst like a star: for here there is no place  
that does not see you. You must change your life.*

Rainer Maria Rilke, *Archaic Torso of Apollo*<sup>62</sup>

## *A Gaze without a Head*

In the *Gaze in the Expanded Field* Norman Bryson gives the example of three models in regard to the notion of the gaze. The first one is the most anthropocentric of the three, and is a narrative of Jean-Paul Sartre walking in the park and observing his surroundings, thus having the feeling of being in the center of his visual field and of his world. Soon after, this feeling becomes disrupted by the sense of someone else entering the park and, accordingly, his visual field. Here Bryson is referring to what Sartre mentions in his *The Look* section from *Being and Nothingness*<sup>63</sup>, specifically his example of the man in the park which illustrates how the presence of someone else changes the balance between looking and being looked at. The look or the gaze is significant for Sartre and existentialism as the act of looking and being looked at may contribute towards a sense of our existence in the world. What the example of the park is attempting to demonstrate is the occurrence of a significant difference as Sartre is dislocated from the center of his world, and rather than being the one who is observing becomes, instead, observed. This dislocation, besides rupturing his protagonist role, brings him to the position of the objects he was previously observing and renders him a part of the visual field from which, until this change had occurred a few moments ago, he had felt detached. The second example Bryson uses is an experience Jacques Lacan had in the open sea of Brittany with a group of fishermen. One of the fishermen addressed Lacan whilst pointing to a sardine can which was floating on the surface of the sea with a remark that struck Lacan. The fisherman asked Lacan if he could see the can but instantly exclaimed himself that the can couldn't see him back; a remark that disturbed Lacan as he sensed in it a perspective that was untrue –'the world of inanimate objects to some extent always looks back on the perceiver'<sup>64</sup>. What becomes disruptive, in this instance, is not another person entering our visual field and world but the Signifier, and through that, the intelligible of what we see. The gaze becomes caught in a net of signifiers and signs that stand between the subject and the world; a world which turns it into a screen of signs built into the social arena. Bryson's third example is of Nishitani relating visibility to the 'sunyata', translated as emptiness, nihility, and radical impermanence. Nishitani, like Sartre and Lacan, aims to dismantle the anthropocentric form, and the viewer in *sunyata* cannot be strictly defined and cut out as everything seems to be in a constant flux 'as soon as the frame is withdrawn, the object is found to exist as part of a mobile continuum that cannot be cut anywhere'<sup>65</sup>.

The poem that opens this chapter is about the archaic torso that Rilke saw during a visit of his at the museum of the Louvre, possibly after Rodin's –for who he was working at the time- suggestion to go out and look at things<sup>66</sup>. The archaic torso, allegedly of *Apollo*, is stripped of all its traits and attributes; a body that is severed from its members and its head. It

is a remnant, debris of a body, a cadaver from an era almost 2,500 years ago. However, rather than being forgotten the torso becomes even more vibrant and has such immense presence that Rilke ends his poem with the mandate 'You must change your life'<sup>67</sup>. What is it that enhances this torso with such power, and makes it look back at the viewer in such a dynamic way that it creates such a demand? Why is this torso empowered rather than disarmed? The torso functions as an *anamnesis* (memory, recollection) of itself, a memory and an image of what it was, so creating the possibility of what it could have been and is thus delivered to us with this question mark and possibility. It is rendered a mythical image of what it once was and as such gains a mystic presence. The torso has a similar function to the sardine can from Lacan's anecdote and along with been caught in a net of signifiers it carries its heritage, as well as the cultural context in which it is situated. It is inevitable not to think of the ancient Greek statues, temples and Gods, and how time has rendered them monumental and occult ruins, fragments of a past era charged with memory and history. The torso gains a second identity when functioning in this context, becoming the body of an ancient god, it is situated within the mythology that surrounds its time, and as such becomes animated and looks back at the viewer. The difference with the sardine can is that the torso takes possibly, as well, the form of the aforementioned eidolon and this form or aspect of it seems to be, paradoxically enough, enhanced through its destroyed and mutilated character. The difference between the destroyed form of the torso and its more intact one is that its current destroyed form bears the traces of time, and so the torso seems to have survived and lived all of this time. Instead of been delivered to us from another era, it seems to have endured through this time, to have witnessed and experienced time and bear the marks made out of it. We now find it standing in front of us in the form it has after all these centuries, wounded from all these centuries, and carrying the memory of the time it has lived. It is thus not plainly an archaic torso but is now turned into a body. Allegedly of Apollo or perhaps of a young Athenian or Miletian man, who possibly was at the Trojan war, who could have been at Pericles' golden age, who listened to Socrates or Aristotle, who eventually went through Byzantium, through the Ottoman empire, and has reached us today in the form it now has. Mutilated and wounded, yet lived. It is not a piece of marble, it bears wounds, memory and time; it has become animated.

The animated image is what W.J.T. Mitchell is occupied with in his *What Do Pictures Want?*<sup>68</sup>. Mitchell describes a form of the image as an autonomous presence which moves beyond a mere iconological analysis or a semiotic function of it. An image that becomes animated and starts making demands of its maker and beholder rather than holding the passive stance of plain signifier in a semiotic discourse. The animated image is like a living organism, and living organisms have desires and demands, they want things<sup>69</sup>. For Mitchell, we



never went beyond the animate object and this remains an incurable symptom, 'in short, we are stuck with our magical, premodern attitudes toward objects, especially pictures, and our task is not to overcome these attitudes but to understand them, to work through their symptomatology'<sup>70</sup>.

The image as tear and as rend which holds a function of its own, hovering between what is sensed and what can become legible. The image does not represent, nor does it show or depict; it rather becomes, presents and puts-into-form. It becomes a body with its own history and trajectory in time, becomes a presence of its own; autonomous and with a sense of distance from us. Distant and distinct as something which comes from an elsewhere, from another order of things; from the skies, yet not from the heavens. Non sacred and non-religious, yet occult and surrounded by superstitions, in such a way that it imposes and dictates the rules of its seeing.

The image as an eidolon, as a body which has become animated and gained its own gaze, one that demands and desires, in a manner that changes the dynamic of its relationship with me as both its beholder and its maker. Neither I simply look at it -I rather become looked at by it- nor am I the maker of it and in a position that I am able to fully control its making. Its gaze comes in place to, once more, undo me. In the way that the image becomes dispersed and disperses my gaze and the seeing of it, I, consequently, become dispersed as well.

The image as a form of language which has become emancipated, and instead of being used by me, it uses me, in what seems to be even a process of self-formation. A form or possibility of a use of me by it which renders me disarmed, it decenters and overthrows me from the dominant position of maker and eventually questions my authenticity upon this making. The making of the image becomes rather an encounter with it, hence rendering the image threatening.



Figure 8.  
Giorgos Kontis, Untitled [*Wir sind im Bilde (We are in the Image) series*], 2015

*Neither Innocent nor Guilty*

Image not available due to copyright restrictions

Figure 9.  
Zoe Leonard, *Untitled Aerial*, (1989/2008)

## *Daydreaming*

Every time I find myself in an airplane there is a distinctive feeling that overwhelms me of being detached from the world and thus of being an outsider. A nostalgic sentiment of not being within the world, not being a part of it, but rather being distant and foreign to it. The world seems both small and faraway like an image of a map of which I am able to have a clear view, perhaps a desired overview of what I cannot normally see, a view of a world that is familiar but strange and a world that also resembles myself. The houses, the streets, the rivers and mountains that lie down there are not just them by themselves, it is my life there as well and along with the distance comes also the feeling of having been offered a unique chance to have this overview of both the world and of myself. Perhaps this is also related to the fear of death, to the underlying persistent thought and question of whether the airplane will indeed reach the ground safely or this will, be the end. This end and the completeness of the circle that will then form the whole of my life and will make it something rather concrete and specific instead of a bundle of possibilities, desires and questions. Along with this completeness, an almost clinical measurement and evaluation will come of what it is that has been done, after all, down there, not so far but indefinitely. The possibility of this sense of completeness and of the end becomes enhanced with the broader view that the ascent into the sky offers, the distance plays a significant role in this as does the transformation of everything into a picture which includes in it myself as well; time stops, falls in a pause as if in a standstill and I am finally able to look at this strange form of geography that surrounds and forms my world and life. The fear of death and of the end become entwined with this form of geography and the act of looking at the world, with observing the world as if I am already not a part of it, and both the distance and the possibility of the completeness conclude in the feeling of a detachment from myself and to a bird's-eye view upon me.

The awkwardness of this bird's-eye view comes with a warm feeling of sweetness and a childish curiosity, like the one of a *flâneur*. Thinking, observing, trying to figure out, making stories, daydreaming and imagining things that might be happening down there or those that might happen later on, that the future might possibly bring; dreams, ambitions, desires and everything one wishes for or is afraid of. Being an observer of the visible world, as well as of another one, the world of memories, of imagination and myths. Being in a mode of suspension and anxiety, apprehended apprehensive and nervous of something yet to come, distanced and estranged even from my own self.

As a child I remember loving the road trips with the car; family holidays and excursions, sat on the passenger's seat and observing, being sucked in, by the landscape.

Driving through the dry land and daydreaming, submerged in the comfort of a mood where the visual world becomes combined with stories, with imagination and history, and with anything that could become a part of this arbitrary narrative. How did the Athenian army cross these fields and how did the Attic landscape look back then? How did the Macedonians descend through this dry land? They all must have had settlements, and it probably took weeks or months to cross such a distance, how did this look? Passing by memorials and ruins, remnants of other worlds that stand there in front of me and look at me with their famous inscriptions, their famous heroes, surrounded by myths and spectres; a world into which I long to delve and which is theirs yet mine as well. A world into which I seem to gain access to through my daydreaming. Poets, wanderers, travelers have all crossed these fields and left their mark as well, at least in my memory and imagination, in a manner that brings all of these elements together in an ageless totality where time seems to be of lesser significance.

The ground and the landscape have witnessed all that has taken place there, have listened to all the sounds, the songs, the footsteps, the screams. They bear all these memories as a body bears its memories. I am overtaken by this feeling which cannot be exactly explained and defined but in fact makes my body feel empty and whole as well, connected to the earth and to the memory it carries, to the memory my body itself carries. I feel distant from my body but closer to it than ever. Disconnected, yet more connected than ever. Such a paradox. My body, perhaps through daydreaming and its abstract approach to memory, tries to remember, tries to recall. The old man in T.S. Eliot's *Gerontion* was not at the *Hot Gates* yet he lives in the presence of a historical time, he lives in historical time as he has experienced it and been there. There comes a play of in and out of a world to another one, bearing the question of which world is which; from the real landscape to the daydreamed one, from time present to time past, and from myself and my memories to history and the memory the landscape bears. Dream, reality and imagination, with the boundaries between them blurred. Making up stories and trying to imagine, or perhaps trying to remember, to recall. Which memory is mine and which isn't? It feels as though my body finds roots in a sense of time and space and expands, it becomes the landscape and I become Eliot's *Gerontion*, lost and present in different times and presences, where time seems not to have a linear form but rather is repetitive or in a constant recurrence as in the poetry of Parmenides. I was not at the *Hot Gates* yet, I was. I did not fight in the *warm rain* or *knee deep in the salt marsh* yet, I did. I did, but this belongs to another time and now I live in the post-historical era of those events, me as my own shadow as if I am this *decommissioned old man* in the *decayed house*, living in his glorious past and his empty present—a seemingly empty present. Living in a gap between time which simultaneously contains a sequence of historical time and events, a coexistence that takes the form of a

repetition. Parts that belong to the past and eventually become a part of me; a rather broader sense of this 'me' and a sequence that is linear though abstract as well.

*I was neither at the hot gates  
Nor fought in the warm rain  
Nor knee deep in the salt marsh, heaving a cutlass,  
Bitten by flies, fought.  
My house is a decayed house*

T.S. Eliot, *Gerontion* (excerpt)<sup>71</sup>

There is seemingly a constant loop, a recurrence and coexistence of times and presences, in which I dwell and which to an extent defines and forms me. It slowly becomes almost a ritual, as if there is a rhythm, a repetitive sound of a drum the uncanny beat of which I start recognizing inside myself. There lies another paradox; daydreaming offers the distance, helps me to achieve this sense of a bird's-eye view over myself, yet, at the same time, unites me with and connects me to something else that is a wider version of my own memory. It becomes a gateway that allows me to penetrate and connect with a sense of a broader self, one I cannot exactly define or get the whole picture of and one that might belong to the world of dreams and of faded, questioned memories. 'It is all one to me where I begin; for I shall come back there again in time'<sup>72</sup>. It is as if going back to images imprinted in my mind and memory –not sure if I should even say 'my' memory- that are not clear, that are not something certain and specific. Vague, abstract images seemingly from my childhood that are, after all, not images at all but rather solid pieces of emotions, of experiences, that eventually form myself and my world. Presences that form my presence. Yet, those images come not only from my childhood with a dominant 'my' hovering above it, they can also stem from a historical, primordial childhood that existed before or besides me; seeds that have been planted in another time and which to an extent form and define who I now am.

I am thinking of the necessity and urge to unite and connect, to become one with these memories and experiences, they feel so foreign yet so close. Perhaps death can utter this connection, can be the solution for their unification, and, perhaps, art as well. Maybe art is, or through art it is, the way we strive to achieve exactly that; to feel our completeness, or rather to feel completeness itself. It is the need to unite, the need to connect with what lies beneath, and with a sense of a root and desire to find a small personal space, a tiny space perhaps in place to offer us some comfort, some relief; a refuge of a self or perhaps an illusion of a self. George Seferis in *Mythistorema* presents a wandering, a quest amongst different places and

times, in which the present unfolds together with the past. This quest becomes also a necessity for a tiny space in between everything, in between the impossibility of an elsewhere, where it will be possible for the poet to find or locate himself, or locate the question of who he is, of how he could be defined. This quest seems to take the form of a journey, of a small *Odyssey*, in order this tiny space –perhaps an *Ithaca*- to be found, in which it might be possible for himself to exist as well as for his poetry. An *Odyssey* in this ageless time, among broken statues and ancient columns and in a constant dialogue with a broken marble head. Broken statues, scattered ancient pieces, fragments of lives and times, as well as of time and memory. A coexistence and a continuous quest for life and for a position and function within the world. A journey which, parallel to its existential questionings, also questions artistic creation and the way the latter becomes a fundamental part of the poet's -and ours- quest and life.

*What are they after, our souls, travelling  
on the decks of decayed ships  
crowded in with sallow women and crying babies  
unable to forget themselves either with the flying fish  
or with the stars that the masts point out at their tips;  
grated by gramophone records  
committed to non-existent pilgrimages unwillingly  
murmuring broken thoughts from foreign languages.*

*What are they after, our souls, travelling  
on rotten brine-soaked timbers  
from harbour to harbour?*

*Shifting broken stones, breathing in  
the pine's coolness with greater difficulty each day,  
swimming in the waters of this sea  
and of that sea,  
without the sense of touch  
without men  
in a country that is no longer ours  
nor yours.*

*We knew that the islands were beautiful  
somewhere round about here where we grope,  
slightly lower down or slightly higher up,  
a tiny space.*

George Seferis, *Mythistorema* (excerpt)<sup>73</sup>



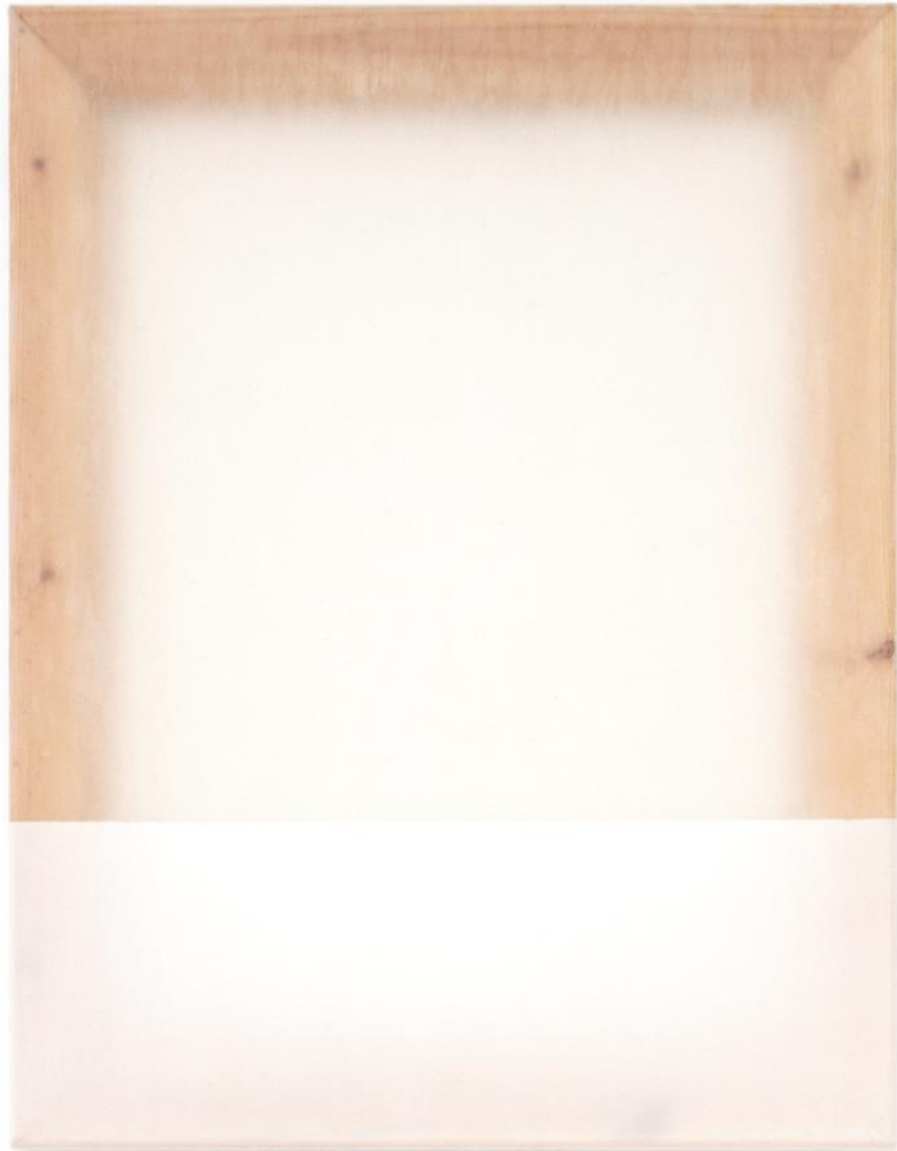


Figure 10.  
Giorgos Kontis, Untitled, 2019

## *Repetition*

*Pierre Menard*<sup>74</sup> has rewritten Cervantes' *Don Quixote* three centuries after the original text was first written, and he did that in a better way than Cervantes did himself. *Menard* has used the knowledge that time and history has offered him, has used the distance to clarify the image, though, to make it a personal case again; through time, repetition, distance, and the experience and knowledge these might be in place to offer us. Borges writes that *Menard* did not want to copy Cervantes' text, rather he aspired to write it again; to write it afresh and even better, even though it is the same text. *Menard* has tried to forget the historical period from 1602 to 1918 but his work is a masterpiece exactly because he didn't, he rewrites the text but without being Cervantes. He rewrites it in the same way, though, after Shakespeare, Baudelaire, Mallarme, Valery and Poe's ejaculation 'Ah, bear in mind this garden was enchanted!'<sup>75</sup>. How could possibly this text then be the same. It is the same and not, it is itself and its effigy, its ghost. *Menard* is the writer of his text, yet he isn't. *Menard* may be Cervantes himself, three centuries later, though he isn't either. His text was there, but is made again, it is a repetition and simultaneously something new. What makes it important is that he chooses to write it again, and what makes it different is that it is written in another time. It is a repetition, a recurrence, in different terms and conditions that change the substance of the text and make it different even though it is the same. A repetition that cannot occur and the *Same* that is impossible to be the same. As the seminal fragment of Heraclitus has it 'You would not step twice into the same river'<sup>76</sup> so demonstrating the impossibility of the repetition of the very same thing. Even within the constant loop and recurrence each instance marks a unique moment, nothing can be the same but finds itself in an ongoing becoming and time becomes perhaps the most important factor in this. Yet, for Parmenides, past and future are alike meaningless and the only time is a perpetual present time.

There cannot ever have been a time in the past, nor will there ever be a time in the future, when the statement *ἔστι* is anything but true. It follows, therefore, that past and future are alike meaningless, the only time is a perpetual present time, and Being must of necessity be both uncreated and imperishable. Parmenides actually adds in the course of this argument that Being must also be both *ατρεμέζ*, 'immovable', and *έν, συνεχές*, 'one, continuous'; but unless each of these epithets is interpreted (not very plausibly, since *συνεχές* unquestionably refers to space, not time, in 348 1. 25) to mean only that Being exists unalterably in one continuous present, then he is here anticipating –for 'it is all one to him where he begins' (343)– conclusions which he does not establish until later in the present fragment.<sup>77</sup>

The temporal inhabitant seems to be of minor significance as the process is ongoing and eternal. Perhaps we deal with the same matters, time and again, though just in different

terms. Then it is just time that changes, but simultaneously remains the same as it includes all that has already existed and is included in the future as well. A present that is ruptured and corrupted by past and future and cannot be interpreted as a procession of presences.

Can this repetition, or continuous being, be seen as difference or does sameness lie somewhere within it? And how would this relate to Nietzsche's *eternal return*? The way Gilles Deleuze approaches Nietzsche in *Difference and Repetition* in regard to repetition and the *Same*, to difference and identity, is enlightening. The eternal return constitutes repetition and becoming but also identity exactly through becoming and through repetition.

The eternal return does not bring back "the same", but returning constitutes the only Same of that which becomes. Returning is the becoming-identical of becoming itself. Returning is thus the only identity, but identity as a secondary power; the identity of difference, the identical which belongs to the different, or turns around the different. Such an identity, produced by difference, is determined as "repetition". Repetition is the eternal return, therefore, consists in conceiving the same on the basis of the different'.<sup>78</sup>

It is the returning that constitutes the same, yet a *Same* which finds itself in difference, and becomes identity; a *Same* that is impossible to be the same and through that becomes identity; identity, thus, through the returning and through repetition. Difference does not occur through the negative space or through contradiction (it is rather *heteron*, not *enantion*<sup>79</sup>), difference as such is not the other but is instead affirmation. It is not opposition, but it is the same, it is through the same, and we can only think of the same if we think of difference. Deleuze also argues against representation, as its prefix demands a sense of imitation and a relation between a primary original and a copy.

*Re*-petition opposes *re*-presentation: the prefix changes its meaning, since in the one case difference is said only in relation to the identical, while in the other it is the univocal which is said of the different. Repetition is the formless being of all differences, the formless power of the ground which carries every object to that extreme "form" in which its representation comes undone. The ultimate element of repetition is the disparate [*dispars*], which stands opposed to the identity of representation".<sup>80</sup>

Everything becomes, eventually, a simulacrum in a world where one can no longer point to the existence of an original or a copy; a sub-representative domain where the simulacrum includes a difference within itself and it is this difference that matters more than the identity of representation. If representation has identity as its element and unit of measure, the unit of measure of the simulacrum is the '*disparate*'. Everything is thus in a state of a simulacrum, in an eternal return and where no distinction between original and copy can take place, as well as no elevation of the primary original to the position of the sublime.

This becomes a serious challenge for the notion of authenticity to be approached and one which will be further analysed in the next chapters. Authenticity addressed through its

annihilation and approached on the basis of its non-possibility; authenticity as *sous rature*<sup>81</sup> and as a concept that can neither exist nor non-exist and hovers between this absence and presence. Creating in this manner the necessity of it to be reinvented or seen otherwise. A question of authenticity that takes place in a world of simulacra though without denoting a state of subordination beneath something primal, as well as a matter of identity and difference within the *Same* and within the ongoing becoming. It is exactly this matter of subordination<sup>82</sup> that becomes liberating in regard to addressing such a matter besides any endeavour for it to come close to anything sublime or to any entrenching of a dominant self. It becomes a way of seeing authenticity besides any sublimity, which has caused much confusion and has brought it in a precarious vicinity to a sense of the absolute that renders it almost totalitarian and hostile. A manner of addressing authenticity through a dispersal of the dominant self and through the assembly of one's different selves or the different sides of them; through neither an annihilation nor any entrenching of the individual agency, but rather through the realization of an 'I' in an expanded form of it.

In regard to the endeavour to reach the absolute and to the pursuit of a profound truth the case of German Romanticism becomes emblematic. In regard to the way the desire to reach the sublime, if taken the wrong way or become misunderstood, may lead to totalitarian outcomes and doctrines, as well as to how mythicising and absolutising is possible to take a precarious form. The affiliation with the sublime may lead to a sense of belonging which, as much as it can offer the warmth of being a part of something greater, can also become hostile and function in the opposite manner. Besides the elitism that the affiliation with the sublime can lead to through a sense of belonging to a clan or a privileged group, or a brotherhood or alliance, also lurks the distinctive feeling of being special or distinguished above the rest. Or, more severely, a manner of interpreting authenticity as a separation between the 'authentic' and the 'inauthentic'<sup>83</sup>. The affiliation with, and the pursuit of, the sublime and the sense of belonging that accompanies it maintain this precarity as their logic is unavoidably binary; it is belonging somewhere or not and as much as this can include so it will inevitably exclude, indicating a threshold beyond which lies Otherness. Another reason for this is the character of a higher cause such a pursuit holds and the inclusiveness in a rather militant manner that it often comes with. As well as one's givingness and an almost religious devotion that is required. The sublime and the sense of belonging, in relation to it and to a special circle, become alluring in a manner that becomes precarious.

*Ten-hut! Present, Arms!\**

*Straighten your body, straighten your back.*

*Stand upright, push your shoulders back and bring your chest forward. Tighten your stomach.*

*Be serious, yet expressionless. Don't look angry or intimidating, neither smiling nor happy.*

*Give yourself in, give all you've got. Try to use your body as an instrument and to show, to exhibit, even through its posture, pride and morale. To radiate discipline, obedience and devotion. And a givingness of your body to a purpose, an offering of your body to a cause.*

*What matters is that you radiate power and self-confidence, that you become yourself the visualisation of it and of values that become higher.*

*What matters is your conscience.*

*You are an instrument, ready to be uttered, ready to be used for any cause, at any cost.*

*You are special and this is why we have chosen you*

*You are one of us. You are one of us*

*You are special. You belong to us*

*What a feeling. Such a distinctive sense of fulfilment both to the body, as that which would offer it the inspiration to be used even as an instrument for a higher cause and be able to overcome its limits, and to the mind, as a feeling of being at home and a sense of belonging.*

*What a feeling. Something which is able to offer you this great thrill, which becomes overwhelming but also alluring.*

*There is no hesitation, there is no doubt. There is only resolution and perdurance as we need to get further up, we need to get higher.*

*He cannot any longer wait for us, He needs to advance and we must rush to follow Him.*

*There is no tiredness and pain, pain is for the weak and we are not of that kind. We are made from divine material and know not of any fear or anything else that may obstruct our way to our cause.*

*He cannot any longer wait for us, He needs to advance and we must rush to follow Him.*

*He is heading to the stars, He is heading to the Sublime.*

*He is the Sublime, He is the Übermensch.*

*We must Follow Him. We must follow Him  
He is our Leader, the Übermensch. He is the future, our Leader  
He is heading to the stars and He cannot wait  
we must rush, we must rush*

\*National Service is still mandatory in Greece and as a Greek citizen I was obliged to enlist in the Army after the completion of my undergraduate studies. For various reasons I had then decided to join the Hellenic Paratroopers Corps which is renowned for its tough and demanding training as well as for attracting people from the far right political sphere (needless to say I don't identify myself with such political beliefs). What was characteristic for me during this period -which I now regard almost as field research- was the enhancing of a specific sentiment common between the military Special Forces of being 'special', of being the least 'non ordinary' but instead a member of a club, leading in this way to a distinctive feeling of belonging. We would constantly hear there that this place is not for the weak and that as a member of the Special Forces it is a given that you will overcome your fears and move beyond your limits. This was something I found very interesting in regard to how it would work on the psychology of the soldiers and make us all push our limits in a manner that would enhance our self-confidence and boost our morale; a pumping up unheard of for me at the time. One can of, course, imagine that this comes as well with its precarious side, as a difference from 'all the rest' who would eventually be looked down and even mocked.

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Figure 11.  
Caspar David Friedrich, *Wanderer above the Sea of Fog*, 1818

## *Das Erhabene*

*Poetry and philosophy are, depending on one's point of view, different spheres, different forms, or simply the component parts of religion. For only try really to combine the two and you will find yourself with nothing but religion.*

*God is everything that is purely original and sublime, consequently the individual himself taken to the highest power. But aren't nature and the world also individuals?*

Ideas fragments 45 & 47<sup>84</sup>

*Spirit is like a music of thoughts: where soul is, there feelings too have outline and form, noble proportions, and charming coloration. Temperament [Gemüt] is the poetry of sublime reason and, united with philosophy and moral experience, it gives rise to that nameless art which seizes the confused transitoriness of life and shapes it into an eternal unity.*

Athenaeum fragment 339<sup>85</sup>

The role of the sublime in early German romanticism (or Jena Romanticism), loosely defined as the presentation of the beautiful and of the unrepresentable, points to a divinity which although not directly linked to a deity remains related to an abstract sense of a godlike figure and consequently to a form of religion. In the same way that religion may offer a refuge or provide one with some sort of comfort yet also be something which may overtake one and eventually restrict or diminish any individual freedom he may be having, the sublime can take an equivalent function. It may offer the feeling of a *great thrill*, a sensation of fulfilment or *catharsis* that borders on the divine but, at the same time, be having a twofold character as the authority it may gain engulfs potentially the danger of rendering it into an absolute; the desired absolute of romanticism may be having its political analog in totalitarianism<sup>86</sup>. The sublime becomes something that is not from the order of this world but rather something higher, almost sacred and religious. A goal to be reached and a dreamlike purpose, one that may offer the feeling of something to strive for or even an illusion of some sort of meaning in life, yet it may come as well with the problematic of incommensurability that Ranciere points out. Something in which we may give ourselves, potentially surrender to and be overtaken by it, becoming eventually empowered with a sense of authority upon us and gaining the ability of even a calling into arms -with all the precarity that this signifies.

Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, in writing about German romanticism and Idealism and their relation to ancient Greece, mentions that in what seemed to be a quest for a nation's identity there is a German tradition of thinkers including Goethe, Hölderlin, Hegel, Nietzsche, the early romantics and eventually Heidegger, who regarded the Greeks as their predecessors. A relation that seemed to address directly a sense of a source avoiding any deviation that may



have alienated or misinterpreted this source such as the Romans. Ancient Greece thus took on a monumental dimension and became exemplified to hold a rather mythical role, and the way this affected Germany and became related to National Socialism is a matter that Lacoue-Labarthe deals with in *Heidegger, Art and Politics*<sup>87</sup>.

What the German *imitatio* is seeking in Greece is the model -and therefore the possibility- of a pure emergence, of a pure originality: a model of self-formation. [...] All in all, Germany, in its attempt to accede to historical existence and to be, as people or nation, 'distinguishable in the world's history' quite simply aspired to genius. But genius is by definition inimitable. And it is therefore in the impossibility of this imitation of genius that Germany literally exhausted itself, succumbing to a sort of psychosis or historico-spiritual schizophrenia, of which certain of its most highly regarded geniuses, from Hölderlin to Nietzsche, were the heralds (and premonitory victims). And besides, only a schizophrenic logic was capable of allowing that unthinkable event, the Extermination; and the present division of Germany is virtually a symbolic outcome of that process. Germany still does not exist. Except in the distress of not existing.<sup>88</sup>

'Heidegger,' he writes 'following Hölderlin's practice directly, 'invents' a Greece which has never actually seen the light of day: repetition in the Heideggerian sense, is repetition of what has not occurred, and that is, moreover, why it is idle to use the terms 'strategy' here'<sup>89</sup>. Greece was seen as 'the very home of *techne*', of *poiesis*, the land of 'the genius of a people'<sup>90</sup>, what seemed to be setting the measurement in a manner that if approached from a certain perspective could turn to be almost dangerous. What may have been projected from and eventually invented on the basis of this image when taken to a further extent may lead to an exemplified absolute; one that might form a canon and be the model one should follow but which was formed in the first place from a possible misinterpretation. An exemplification that leads to a mystification and borders with a precarious absolutisation. It is exactly this mythologising in the search for an absolute that renders such an enterprise precarious and the pursuit of the sublime becomes an intrinsic part of it, furthermore, there is a parallel to this with the notion of authenticity and the way this may as well be seen as an absolute form and a prism through which everything is endeavoured to be seen and measured. A figure through which things either belong or do not, and are accordingly categorised by a form of an elitism that creates boundaries and thresholds.

The turning to the Greeks by the early romantics was a discovery akin to the *Holy Grail*, the ultimate source and a cradle of light and truth to which one could refer without any reservations; perhaps an answer to the quest for the sublime and for belonging. An enchanting, fragmented world of ancient ruins, inhabited by legends, gods and heroes, which would become mythical and full of splendour and grandeur. The land of philosophy, of ancient poetry, of wisdom and democracy, open to forms of interpretation and meanings with which anyone could identify and project his own image on. The aesthetic dimension is also of much

importance as everything would come in the form of ancient temples, fragments and ruins, remnants of a glorified world, allowing yet each individual's imagination to complete the picture for himself. A fragmented, mythical and poetic world open to one's projections and interpretations. Greece became the homeland of the sublime, an idolised and exemplified world which, through its misinterpretation, inspired an aestheticized form close to the *Gesamtkunstwerk*. One which, through the aestheticisation of a form such as the *Wagnerian Gesamtkunstwerk*, would even lead to the aesthetics -and the incorporation of the epic and the obnoxious grandeur- of the third Reich.

The political model of National Socialism is the *Gesamtkunstwerk* because, as Dr Goebbels very well knew, the *Gesamtkunstwerk* is a political project, since it was the intention of the Festspiel or Bayreuth to be for Germany what the Greater Dionysia was for Athens and for Greece as a whole: the place where a people, gathered together in their State, provide themselves with a representation of what they are and what grounds them as such. Which does not merely mean that the work of art (tragedy, music, drama) offers the truth of the *polis* or the State. But that the political itself is instituted and constituted (and regularly re-grounds itself) in and as work of art.<sup>91</sup>

The *Gesamtkunstwerk* as a political project, or as a form of an *aestheticisation of politics* which did not belong to ancient Greece in the first place but to forms that relate more to the spectacles of the Roman Empire.

The historical coincidence is of much interest as parallel to the philosophical rebirth of the German nation on the basis of the affiliation with Greece and to the fascination with it of the Romantic movement in a wider European scale, the Greek nation begun its struggle for independence from the Ottoman empire at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Artists and poets, numerous young men and women, philhellenes from all over Europe –among who Lord Byron as well- joined the nation's struggle against the threat of its obliteration by the forces of the Sultan; many of who even physically fought and gave their lives upon the battlefield for this cause. A coincidence as perhaps a historical paradox which took the form of a higher cause and eventually motivated European governments as well to contribute to it by all means and which eventually resulted to the country's resurrection and independence. An actual rebirth of Greece along with the aforementioned 'rebirth' of Germany through the ideals of the former's ancient past. A liberation of a country that was supported to a large extent due to the fascination with it of an artistic movement, through its mythicising and the way it seemed to have resembled a land of *techne* and poetry, a place of origin. Yet, a mythicising which, as has been later understood, had its part in the rise of the absolute which led to forms of totalitarianism and is an example of the precarious twofold character the sublime, and the feeling of belonging it offers.

## *Motherland (Greece I)*

*You owe your existence to the Romantics  
you owe your existence to those who believed in you  
to those who died for you  
and lived for you  
through you  
breathing  
you and through you.  
Their most tender youth,  
breath of fresh air  
spring blossoms  
hope and belief, yet vanity and despair*

*They came and saw you  
they came and fought for you,  
for you and your ancient language  
your dying children, your treacherous ruins, your glorious past  
who lured them into believing that you were the Mother,  
that the world would have not been possible without you.  
The cradle of democracy, the place where fulfilment was still alive  
where senses lived alongside the deepest thoughts  
and amongst glory  
where all would imagine themselves having lived  
in between your greatest moments, your legendary history  
a sense of belonging for those who were seeking a refuge  
a sense of belonging that was deceitful.  
Exactly as a dream may be  
anticipated yet elusive*

*Your myths became a veil that covered us all  
rendered us unable to understand your decay, your hidden dangers  
Blinded, thus, we saw that a world without you were not possible  
had never been possible.  
And we all became your children*

*and died all for you  
in the search of finding you.  
We were scattered and we were lost,  
left only with an image of yours  
most likely an effigy  
from something that perhaps never existed*

*The image led us  
became our flag  
we believed in it  
and we believed in you  
for centuries after centuries*

*It is true that you were heroic  
no one will ever take that from you  
no one can ever take that from you  
It is true you are our mother  
yet we have never met you, we have never seen you  
lost and abandoned  
we, your children are  
wandering around in search of a destiny.*

*Byron met you  
He came and saw you  
without your fancy ancient dresses  
in all your misery  
with all your lies and cunning tricks  
to get some pennies or a jug of wine  
He didn't, though, despair  
he wasn't frightened  
nor did he lose his faith  
He saw through you  
and kept believing in you  
He saw in you  
and died for you*

*in your arms  
amidst your plots and intrigues*

*You owe your existence to the Romantics  
to those who saw in you your effigy  
your possibility  
of, yet, another glorious self  
but you betrayed them again  
You didn't stand tall  
You didn't deliver  
as was required,  
as hoped  
nor did you meet  
the expectations  
You failed  
us*



Figure 12.  
Giorgos Kontis, *Untitled (Authority Objects series)*, 2019 (detail)

## *Greece II*

*Your language is an ancient language  
we are trapped in it  
we are trapped in its beauty and in the heaviness of it  
the heaviness is pulling us  
its weight is overpowering,  
is exhausting us.  
It's dragging us down, deep*

*Deep in the long lasting presence of it  
that spreads in centuries and thousands of years  
and renders it archaic  
Its presence is overwhelming.  
It devours us.  
It has been sculpted throughout the centuries and the different ages  
in a way that makes it impossible to adjust  
non-flexible  
The centuries have layered it with several coats  
sedimented it with authority  
one that makes the encounter with it  
overshadowing  
us*

*Stiff,  
like a corpse.  
Is it dead?  
Is it too old and rusty to be flexible?  
Have we been stranded here,  
with this old, dead language,  
a burden that is drowning us?*

*Suffocation.  
How can we endure this,  
how long will we be able to endure this?*

*This language does not belong to this time  
this language cannot any longer be used  
this language has now become an existence of its own  
it cannot any longer be used  
it cannot deliver;  
efficiency.  
This language is threatening  
us*





Figure 13.  
Giorgos Kontis, Untitled, 2018

### *Auto-formation and Individuation*

Perhaps the best known genre of the romantics' writing is the fragment. The fragment was a style of anonymous writing in collective publications -most notably the *Athenaum*- which was comprised of aphorisms and maxims, reminiscent of the writing of ancient philosophers, specifically the Presocratics, and the fragmented manner this had been delivered to the modern era. Shards of written word, characteristically short in their length and often enigmatic in their utterance resembling the obscurity of some of the Presocratics and signifying simultaneously a sort of glorified wisdom their texts were attributed with. A form of shattered *logos* stemming from the ancient world and that were worshiped as a conduit of truth originating directly from the source, in a similar fashion to the way the ruins of this historic era provide us with a glimpse into the mystery of their time. The way the ancient fragments were imbued with unchallenged, almost divine, authority and subsequently mythicised is analogous to the form of the fragments of the romantics or the way these were perhaps envisaged to function; as shards of wisdom and parts of a word the authority of which would become similarly unquestioned. A form of writing that would be impersonal and would give the impression of originating from the depths of time signifying wisdom and truth; fragments without claimed authorship by their writers but aspiring instead to be parts of a greater, non-personified and divine *logos*. A function similar to the Byzantine icons and the way they were often claimed to be *acheiropoieta* -objects not made by the human hand but due to divine intervention or one's deriving directly from God, hence unquestioned bearers of His speech. This comes seemingly in contrast with the characteristic figure of the romantics, that of the genius, which rather than having its individuality dissolving in this sort of collective writing one would imagine exactly the opposite; an iconic figure of a man, standing singularly in relation to nature and to the world, embodying and radiating uniqueness, originality and individuality. Yet, 'the fragment functions simultaneously as a remainder of individuality *and* as individuality, which also explains why it was never defined, or why attempts at its definition were contradictory', it is simultaneously a part and a whole in the logic of the hedgehog and it exists in its totality rather than singularly<sup>92</sup>. The plural totality of fragments does not make up a whole but replicates the fragmentary itself in a manner that brings a function of organicity – one in relation to the individual.

The exposition cannot unfold on the basis of a principle or foundation because the "foundation" that fragmentation presupposes consists precisely in the fragmentary totality in its organicity. The fragment thus constitutes the most "mimological" writing of individual organicity.<sup>93</sup>

Although the fragment maintains a sense of authority through its relation to the ancient fragments or its *acheiropoieton* form, its organic totality can lead to collective forms such as 'symphilosophy' or 'sympoetry' and becomes a 'method' that leads in turn to discourses, to active exchange between philosophers, and to dialogue.

The blurred boundaries between the part and the whole and the approach to imitation or 'mimetics' seem to create the necessity for a model to be found for the subject and, as is mentioned in Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy's text, this cannot be the Fichtean model of an infinite approximation of the three fundamental thetic judgements: I am; man is free; this is beautiful; nor can it be the Cartesian subject. Although romanticism has no predecessors, Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy argue that it seems it is Immanuel Kant who has opened up the possibility for its birth<sup>94</sup> (even as a reaction against Kant as in the following citation by Beiser), and romanticism stands in a close relation to philosophy as well as to changes that have occurred after the Enlightenment. Hence, questions regarding the subject arise together with matters related to self-consciousness, and an interesting relationship occurs between absoluteness and an open form of the subject that incorporates logos and organicity; the System-subject<sup>95</sup>.

Another important respect in which we must revise our understanding of *Frühromantik* concerns the purported distinction between *Frühromantik* and idealism. I think that there are some perfectly sound points underlying such a distinction: we cannot assimilate the epistemology and metaphysics of *Frühromantik* to the subjective idealism of Kant and Fichte, which all too often has been taken as the foundation of *Frühromantik*. It is indeed correct that romantic epistemology and metaphysics is better understood as a reaction against Kant's and Fichte's idealism, and that it must not be conflated with the grand speculative systems of Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel. It does not follow from these points, however, that *Frühromantik* is a rejection of idealism *tout court*. Indeed, given the Platonic legacy of *Frühromantik*, it is possible, even necessary, to regard it as its own form of idealism. Following the usage of Schlegel and Schelling, we could call it an *absolute* or *objective* idealism. It is idealism not in the sense that everything depends on some self-conscious subject, but in the sense that everything conforms to the idea, the purpose, or the *logos* of things.<sup>96</sup>

What becomes central in early romanticism is literature in which the process of Auto-formation and the literary genre take a hugely significant form and seem to become divine; the literary absolute. The genre is literature itself, is what cannot be defined –a way for things to move on by themselves;

The auto-movement, so to speak -auto-formation, auto-organization, auto-dissolution, and so on- is perpetually in excess in relation to itself [...] the romantic kind of poetry is still becoming; that is its real essence, that it should forever be becoming and never be perfected, No theory can exhaust it, and only a divinatory criticism would dare to characterise its ideal.<sup>97</sup>

A making that unfolds on its own, an ongoing dialogue, an ongoing presenting -Darstellung- which may be seen as an entity functioning on its own, creating a question mark on the role and function of the subject. This may come close to the later use of *logos* by Heidegger and the way, through poetry and his work on Hölderlin, it takes as well an exalted, yet, also an elitist dimension. If the divinity becomes removed from it, the process of auto-formation may come close to the description of the function of language in the twentieth century as language being the place of dwelling and existence, and, moreover, close to post-structuralism considering the way the subject is dissolved in it. The dissolution of subjectivity alongside the ongoing becoming and mimetics of romanticism bring back to mind Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition*, as well as Parmenides' and Heraclitus' thinking, regarding how identity exists within the sameness of the romantics and how difference occurs in this repetition especially in the presence of the incommensurable of the sublime. It is exactly this relation between the matter of organicity or of an ongoing presenting and what can be constituted as the subject that becomes interesting in the case of the early romantics and what makes them so relevant to current discourse on contemporary art and aesthetics.

A motif which appears repeatedly in the 'Ideas' chapter of the book, in regard to the divinity of romanticism and its artistic subject, is the necessity of a secret 'alliance' of artists, a 'League' like the medieval *Hansa*, a sort of a 'Masonic' *Bund*. Schlegel reserved the name 'cleric' [Geistliche] for the 'initiatory' artist who is –as an absolute figure- the Subject himself in the possibility of his own infinitization. An absolute mediator who 'perceives the divinity within himself', as 'the God within us' who is charged with 'revealing', 'communicating' and 'presenting this divinity to all mankind in his conduct and actions, in his words and works'<sup>98</sup>. Yet, at the same time that Schelling and Schlegel propose 'art as religion', or in any case a heightening of art to the point of religion, they conjointly attack that religion which completes itself in aestheticism. What they 'claim as their own –and which is also presented as religion- is nothing other, in keeping with the same paradox, than what speculative metaphysics itself is aiming at, but in art and in form. Religion, in other words, is art itself, but art henceforth thought as the (absolute, remainderless) *Darstellung* of truth'<sup>99</sup>. Does this then enter romanticism into a religious dimension? Does the artist become the mediator between the absolute or a deity and the world? The aforementioned figure of the artistic genius and the function of the artist as a mediator does indeed remain particular and distinctive yet keeps its distance from theology, and the 'traditional religious figure of the mediator'<sup>100</sup> has been secularized by Friedrich Schlegel, following Spinoza. The artist is someone who needs no mediator and what seems to become very important is the mediation or the imitation not to

be passive but initiatory. 'Mediation [...] actually means exemplarity', which in its turn instead of signifying simple imitation is, on the contrary, 'appropriation'<sup>101</sup>.

Contrary to what the customary banalizing imagery might lead one to believe, romanticism effectuates the Subject's decisive break with all "naturalness"; even if the production of the work is always thought according to the archetype of natural organic engendering, what now begins to specify subjectivity is production as such, the *producere*, outside any natural given, of that (the one) which produces itself by itself. And this production is always the institution and constitution of its form, its putting-into-form, its *Bildung* or *Gestaltung*.<sup>102</sup>

The putting-into-form, the production, is what begins to specify subjectivity and brings the subject in the making of art. This seems to relate more to *Bildung* or *Gestaltung* than *Darstellung* and brings to mind the *Poiesis and Praxis* essay by Giorgio Agamben, as well as the recurrent figure of the hand that writes in the work of Maurice Blanchot, which will be discussed in the next chapter. The artist -the Subject- is envisaged as an operator, or as operation itself, and is brought into the production of the work, or becomes the agency through which the making will take place. Yet, the artist is not just distinguished as an operator but, as is mentioned above, also as one who is related to matters such as self-consciousness, exemplarity and appropriation; notions that will follow aesthetic theory in the twentieth century and have as their origin Kant and the *Aufklärung* (the Age of Enlightenment)<sup>103</sup>. Following this, criticism becomes, a very important factor for romanticism and seems to become the basic feature of individuality and subjectivity since it is the subject that conducts critical operation that becomes key, and where *Witz* (wit) and irony play an important part as well.

A character, or a character sketch, is a subject produced through *mimesis*, and capable (undoubtedly for this very reason) in its presentation or staging of reproducing or reconstructing the Subject, a Subject that is auto-constituting, auto-mimetic, auto-ironic, or in short, auto-fantastical in the sense of *Phantasie*, a Subject whose idiom is Phantasm –and that auto-imagines, auto-*bildet*, auto-illuminates itself: the Subject-Work. Such a Character owes nothing to the imitation of the "real" –or owes it only what it needs in order to be a reconstruction, on the basis of an interior more interior than any psycho-sociological interiority, of the Figure absent from all figures.<sup>104</sup>

Hence, a subject founded on critical thought, which incorporates *Witz* and irony and thus comes in place to distinguish itself from and within the mimetic process. An individual who is self-conscious, in place to have authority upon his acts, and to find his identity through exemplarity and appropriation even within the repetition of a process such as the auto-formation. A celebration of individuality through its initial dispersal and one which is in reconciliation with the loss of its boundaries and the suffusion of itself in the realization of a greater common making. One, within which artistic genius finds its place in the control the

artist gains through notions of criticality and self-consciousness; forming and becoming, through this, an interesting question on the function of the artistic agency as well as the making of art, *praxis*, and its production in terms of *Bildung* and *Darstellung*.



Figure 14.  
Giorgos Kontis, Untitled, 2019

## *A Perpetual Possibility*

Memory, history, spectres of the past, and a coexistence with them in a sense of a time that is circular and haunting. Within this circular movement and repetition is the necessity of something distinctive to be found, the tiny space, in which a personal mark might be differentiated; allowed to unfold and take its place as the figure of one's self. Throughout the sameness comes the desire identity to be found and perhaps with it a mythicisation of the personal space, one that may lead to its own entrenchment and to the allure of reaching something profound and higher, something sublime. This world is one of coexistence and of a shared memory and past that shape us all and become us all; this world is inhabited by spectres that haunt us and become us; a personal space that is communal as well, where the figure or refuge of the self comes perhaps as a desire for isolation, a desire for a *know thyself* within coexistence and its togetherness.

A *topos* for this repetition, for the ongoing becoming and making, is the painted image, as well as for the non-possibility of solitude. Everything created on it seems to be in relation to and in dialogue with the past and with the heritage that precedes it. In this *topos* of the Same, the artist's challenge to create something original becomes proliferated since every form, gesture or element of the image becomes related to something else that has preexisted and bears, accordingly, various significations and connotations. A semiotic maze and a relationship through which any notion of original creation becomes challenged and questioned as the pictorial elements, instead of being directly created, are rather re-used, selected, appropriated or, schematically speaking, stolen. They become bits and parts of a greater picture, abstract in its form or time, echoing their presence in it and taking the form of an old experience or memory. Faded and old memories perhaps forgotten and also questioned, memories of others hovering between fiction and reality. Experiences that after a point cannot be individually separated as they become parts of a common, collective memory or subconscious<sup>105</sup>.

The white canvas stands metaphorically for the point of departure in painting, as painting traditionally begins from it. It stands for the place where something new will be created, where the new work will be commenced. Parallel to this the white canvas enters the dimension of a highly challenging surface, asking for what it is that will be created on it, to be something original and authentic, and so becomes the embodiment of this endeavor. White stands for blankness; for many it is not even a color, or alternatively phrased, it is the absence of any color. White is synonymous with) blankness and non-existence, and this might be the reason it has been used to symbolize purity and innocence, as something that is yet untouched and does not bear any trait –a *tabula rasa*, the blank slate upon which nothing exists.

However, this introduces a complication, as white is not necessarily a *topos* of absence. In terms of light, for instance, rather than being the absence of any other colored beam the white light is the sum total of them all. Respectively, the white canvas is the opposite of the absence of anything as it is delivered to us with a significant heritage within a long pictorial tradition that spans the centuries. Instead of conceiving the white canvas as a blank slate one stumbles upon this heritage, and instead of starting afresh one starts rather with a debt; hence the place of the *tabula rasa* shoulders this curious burden, one of a multiplicity of voices echoing in a seeming emptiness. Rather than being empty the white canvas seems to contain everything and so to know everything, seems to know all the problems and questions, and perhaps the answers to them as well. The white canvas has witnessed everything, has borne everything within its own skin, on its own flesh. It has been related to every painter, has known their fears, ambitions and loves; their passions and desires, in all their ways from their beginnings to the way they were finally uttered; time and time again. A repetition of desires, processes, and lives, that leaves its traces on its body; invisible, absent, yet ever-present, residues and marks that one finds himself confronted with as both its maker and beholder. Remnants of lives and loves, in a sequence of lives and people in which one finds himself feeling only temporary. The white canvas as a cadaver dragged through the centuries full of wounds and caresses, but also as a living body, a living cadaver surrounded by ghosts and specters. One, which like the torso of Apollo, looks back at us with a gaze that becomes threatening.

The non-existence of the *tabula rasa* and the repetition it signifies render the painted image a form of a palimpsest; a body, on which a different making or presence becomes registered time and again. The palimpsest, fragmented into a replicative form, functions as both a part and a whole, as both singular and plural, close to the organicity of the romantic fragment in which the individual parts introduce a form of a relation and dialogue; a *topos* of an eternal recurrence that is located within the presence of the ongoing imagery and its making, being in a dialectical relationship with it. The palimpsest, through its own proliferation and repetitive form, becomes itself a testimony of each of its unique instances in time and space and comes close to the idea of the dialectical image; one that relates both to its ever-present character, through repetition, and to its singularity as a continuous ever-changing and re-formed instance, unique in its time and utterance; a singularity within its multiplicity and a multiplicity that becomes difference and identity.

Is the knowledge of the past an obstacle we should stumble upon and a reason to believe there can be no such thing as original creation? T.S. Eliot describes that no poet, nor artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone, and that they all stand in relation to their past or tradition. This is a diligent process for the poet to delve into, requiring much



concentration, and the meaning of poetry is not to be personal but rather to be conscious<sup>106</sup>. Jan Verwoert describes that to call up a spectre will require active negotiation to accommodate it and proposes invocation rather than appropriation<sup>107</sup>. Yet this has been an important case throughout the history of painting, besides the focus on notions such as appropriation in the late twentieth century, as coexisting, being influenced and copying have always been integral parts of its history. Indebted, therefore, does not necessarily signify and bear feelings of guiltiness<sup>108</sup>, since this whole process and fermentation seems to be a matter of coexistence, awareness, or reconciliation with what has already have existed or been created. It is also a matter of a handling of this debt and a stance and positioning towards it, in the sense that it is not necessarily something other and foreign to the maker but rather a part of an 'I' in an expanded form. Hence, dealing with one's past that spreads besides him, as the entity of an artist should perhaps be seen; with loosened borders of individuality. It is, also, a plain matter of process in the act of painting and a broader conception of creating, not necessarily through a strict manner of making or producing but rather through actions that move beyond the materialistic dimension of the works and relate more to notions such as appropriation, self-consciousness, decision and selection. This is also a perspective through which the matter of authenticity should be approached; something that does not strive to reach an original making or a source in in a manner bordering the sublime but rather as what can trace or find a sense of originality in repetition; as what may be in place to form identity within the Same.

*SHE*

1.

2.

3.

4.

---

1. Philology is not a theory in the sense of an insight into that which is. Nor is it a praxis that is led by a theory or that has a theory as its end. It is –if it *is*- the movement of attending to that which offers itself to this attending and which slips away from it, encounters or misses it, attracts it, and, attracting it, withdraws from it. It is the experience of drawing into withdrawal. The movement of a search without predetermined end. Therefore without end. Therefore without the without of an end. Without the without of ontology.

Werner Hamacher, *Minima Philologica*, Fordham University Press, New York, 2015, p.20

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2. This should be impressed upon anyone who might read these pages thinking they are infused with the thought of unhappiness. And what is more, let him try to imagine the hand that is writing them: if he saw it, then perhaps reading would become a serious task for him.

Maurice Blanchot, *Death Sentence, L'arrêt de mort*, Station Hill Press, New York, 1978, p.81

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3. By undermining the specific manner in which meaning is delivered through simple predications, Heidegger is able to show not just other ways in which meaning emerges, but something more significant: the possibility of meaning itself as the *way* of language. This is the work of language, which is Heidegger's overriding concern in this and in other essays from his later period.

William S. Allen, *Ellipsis*, State University of New York, 2007, p.88

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4. The conception of language as an instrument of information is today pushed to the extreme. The relation of man to language is understood in a transformation whose range we still estimate. The course of this transformation can also not be immediately arrested. Moreover, it is fulfilled in the *deepest silence*. Indeed we must admit that language in its daily usage appears as a means of comprehension, and these means are used for the usual relations of life. Only, there are still other relations than the usual ones. Goethe calls these other relations *deeper*, and says of language:

*In ordinary life we scarcely get by with language because we only indicate superficial relations. As soon as speech is made from deeper relations, another language immediately appears: the poetic.*

Martin Heidegger, from the documentary *Im Denken Unterwegs* (On the Way to Thinking), by Walter Rüdell and Richard Wisser, 1975, Südwestfunk (SDR), Neske-Produktion [Online]

Available (in German) at:

<https://archive.org/details/Martin.Heidegger..Im.Denken.Unterwegs.Philosophie> (excerpt in English available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7-P00IDJpvg>)



Figure 15  
Giorgos Kontis, Untitled, 2017

## *Logos*

Writing in such a way that questions the sovereignty of the agency that writes.

I, is another; I, is a multiplicity, and it is challenging to find a person, a pronoun, a manner of writing, through which this uncertainty is made evident. There comes the necessity of a methodology or a genre to be found and developed.

Is it I who is speaking or it is we? How can this be approached? Which Authenticity and whose authority lies there, and through whose and through what sort of agency does this become approached?

(The first approaches that come to mind are the Platonic dialogues which enables one to speak through others, and the extensive use of reference which enables others to speak through myself and create, thus, a multiplicity in writing.)

*Montage, Dialectical Image, Palimpsest*; figures that involve notions of time and repetition, and exceed matters of individuality and self in a strict sense. Is writing (even if it is 'archi-writing'<sup>109</sup>) an assemblage of different fragments in time, a multitude of times and uttered voices that take a specific form and become something for an instant? And then, this is gone or remains or becomes rewritten, and reused, and reuttered, perhaps as someone else's very personal logos. And yet it may indeed be someone else's very personal logos. A form of a palimpsest that is constantly rewritten yet becomes something concrete, for an instant, for a moment in the ongoing movement of time. A tabula rasa that is never empty; a false start that is just right. An ongoing dialogue, in which I becomes a part, momentarily yet eternally as well.

Writing in a way that questions, or rather does not take for granted the role and function of the writer. Writing with the writer in an identity crisis and with an open and questioned sense of authority.

In his *95 Theses on Philology* Werner Hamacher argues for stillness, silence and waiting; for a different sense of time and through this a different approach to philology. How would it be possible this sense of stillness or waiting to be inserted in writing? And, also, how could one's writing question him as its maker and include the presence of language in it? It is not me who is writing, it is we. Yet, we are included in me<sup>110</sup>.



Writing as logos speaks through me yet realising and accepting that logos (or speech or writing, or language) first needs to exist before it takes a form, utters something or makes any meaning.

Logos exists before and besides me, and through me as well. Logos is Being, yet I am Being as well. Logos exists through me and I exist through logos.

*The end discloses itself in the formula ἄνθρωπος = ζῶον λόγον ἔχον: man, the animal equipped with reason. For the beginning we improvise a formula which at the same time sums up our reflections to this point: φύσις = λόγος ἄνθρωπον ἔχον: Being, overpowering appearing, necessitates the gathering which pervades and grounds being-human.<sup>111</sup>*

Writing as realising that logos is another existence that lends perhaps itself to me or I to Her. A clash or dialogue of agencies, and a reciprocal way to regard writing, the use of logos, and the making of art.

Logos is the Being, it is existence and the ground too.

Yet, logos requires me as well. Inevitably.

We are both trapped in the 'with-world', and in the 'in-the-world' condition<sup>112</sup>.

We are both trapped in the non-existence of an elsewhere. There is no elsewhere.

We are trapped and bound together in a tandem of existence, as in Beckett's *Happy Days* with *Winnie* and the pile of soil.

A need and dependence that might lead to the mutual appropriation and the desired Heideggerian *event of appropriation* (Ereignis)<sup>113</sup>. For Heidegger identity is not derived from repetition but from the *leap* (Sprung)<sup>114</sup>, which may move toward an authentic form of being; an overtaking that may form one's identity.

Language, Logos and poetry, as well as the hand that writes.

Where does this take us?

Logos is the ground and the ground becomes expressed through language and perhaps, more in particular, through poetry.

There is always the presence of the hand –the one that writes. Perhaps the hand is the *thing*, is the necessary *thingly* character of the work<sup>115</sup>. That which will make the work present in the world, and which is as necessary as *Praxis* is for Agamben in order for *Poiesis* to make the *Experience*<sup>116</sup>.

The figure of the hand is perhaps what matters at most here, as it seems to be grounding the logos. The hand is the *in-the-world* for logos, the *in-the-world* for language and writing.

A tandem existence.

Writing as myself being written.

Writing<sup>117</sup> and language as not what is being told but rather as something foreign and exterior to it. Writing as not the meaning of the text but as a way for meaning to be uttered through a mechanism that becomes, and remains, separate.

(Instead of talking about possible forms), how can such writing occur and evolve?

I lend myself, I lend my hand

I need to make peace with language, I need to reconcile.

I need to find a balance where I myself can use language and She can use me. To resist this and entrench myself within me seems to be pointless as I no longer know where I begin and where I end, what it is that eventually defines me.

I need to be detached from myself, I need to cross a threshold -if there is any- and lend my hand to language. Lend myself and allow me to be uttered by Her.

Writing as detachment from the text, not as a form that hosts it but which neither is a foreign body to it. Writing as being in a relationship with the text.

Writing is what brings text or language to existence, is what becomes inseparable from language.

Indeed, how inseparable from language is it? Is it not language through and in conjunction with the hand that writes?<sup>118</sup>

I is another. And, I speak as this other.

I is the voice of the we from which it is formed.

I is a delegation of itself. A multiple singularity.

I is the assembly of all of my selves, of all of our selves.

I is a palimpsest, it has no limits and can be anything; it is everything and just a fraction.

I is a possibility, defined yet by its temporality. An intertwining of the temporal and the eternal, between everything and a singularity.

I is both the poet and the Muse.

\*\*\*\*\*

Writing as a way to come close to Her.

Is it she who is speaking, or it is a narration about Her? Is it us speaking, is it me? She is the Mother, the Muse and the Goddess, She is the Lover, She is Death, She is Being. She is all that life is about, and the provider of life to everything else. She is the one who knows everything; the origin of everything. She is Painting, She is Language, She is Ridicule and Laughter. She is ever present yet absent as well.



Figure 16  
Jacopo Tintoretto, *The Muses*, 1578

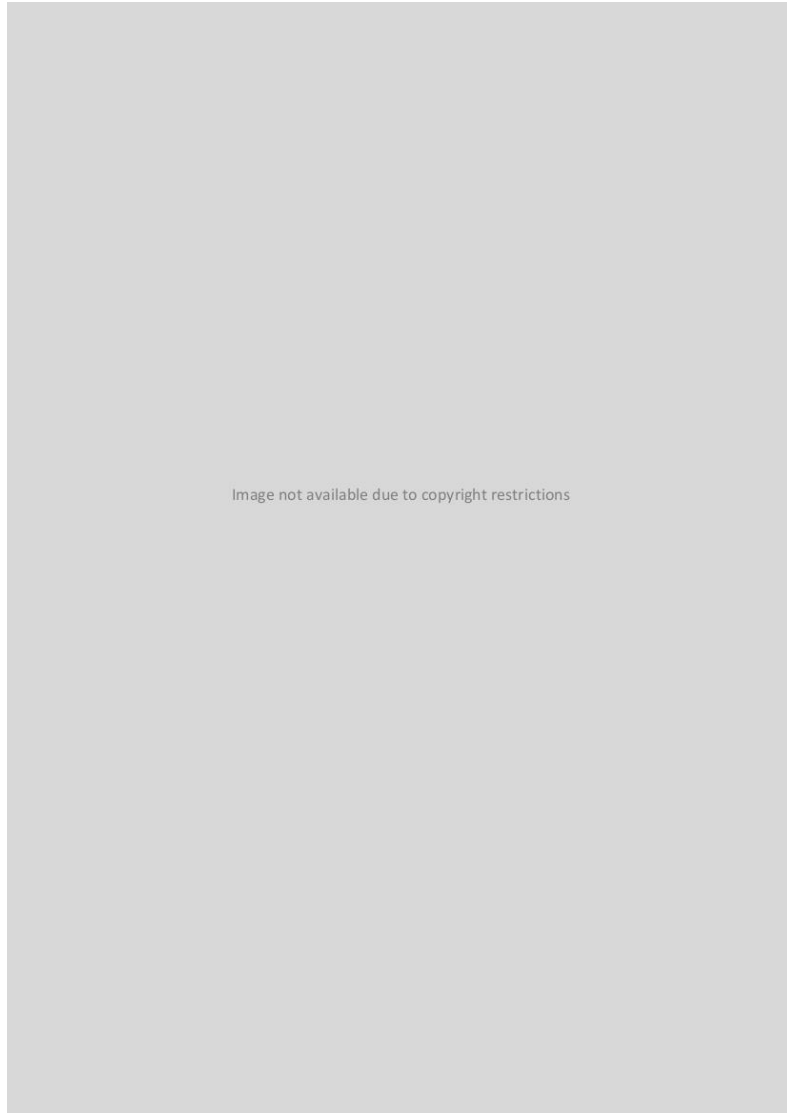


Figure 17  
Erasmus Quellinus II or Jan Erasmus Quellinus, *Jupiter, Semele and Juno*  
Third quarter of the 17<sup>th</sup> century

## *She*

On the advent of Her coming. Always there but yet to come.

She had come in contact with a young boy. She went to his bed, they say in the middle of the night while the boy was still awake. No one knows why the boy was still awake that late, perhaps because he was in disquiet; a rather sudden one for no apparent reason. No one knows, perhaps the boy was in love and could not give his mind some rest, perhaps he was in pain or anguish or simply was making dreams and plans for the future with an excitement that had kept him awake. He never said himself, the only thing he mentioned was that he was listening to music and he was overtaken, it had woken up something peculiar in him that he would remember for the rest of his life. He felt, he said, elevated, lifted over his bed. Yet these could also be young fascinations, exaggerations, an inherent desire to create myths and mystic stories, silly entries in adolescent diaries.

She can never be forgotten. Once you have met Her your life can never be the same again. You will realise that She is there with you with every little melancholic song, every sentimental movie, in any moment that you might feel your spirits lifted, when you take a deep breath and feel an uncanny and satisfying completeness. In any moment of weakness or joy She will be there. She will hurt you as no one else will ever be able to hurt you, She will make you feel pain, make you feel weak and useless, unable to do anything. She will haunt you for ever with Her eyes, Her intense demanding gaze, Her voice, with all of Her mannerisms and the way She moves and behaves. She will never let herself go, She will always be present in Her absence. She will haunt you for ever in a way that you will feel you are overwhelmed, intimidated and blessed.

She is the one who gives birth to you and forms you. Your home and dwelling. The one who puts you to sleep at nights but the one who keeps you awake as well. She is what makes you cry and makes your hair rise from your skin, the one you will instantly think of in difficult times. You don't recall Her, you don't ask for Her to come; She is there for you and with you, always, yet always distant and unapproachable. She may be invoked, yet no one really knows how. Comforting, compassionate, affectionate, understanding, like no one else could ever be. Always forgiving. She is kind yet strict and an eternal point of reference.

She is the embodiment of joy and happiness. She is Beauty, She is walking Magic, a reason for one to live and motivation to become better and better. She will make you feel strong and proud, make you believe in yourself, believe that you are capable of achieving anything. She will make you feel you are a small god, and you might believe this and love yourself to the

point you might be blinded and forget and eventually neglect Her; and you will, you will neglect and forget Her, exactly because this is how you are –perfect as She is. But despite this, She will be there for you, She will never abandon nor forget you, She will never betray you. She will be there by your side, patiently waiting for you to understand her, teaching you in that way simplicity and the depth one may find in it.

She was seen an evening in a remote location, during the sunset upon a small hill next to the sea. In a time of the day that is a time of the night and bears the threshold between light and darkness, a duplicity of being, the schism between two worlds as well as what unites them. She had seemed there lost, not really knowing what She was doing, perhaps enjoying the view – not sure if there was any - or was daydreaming in a melancholy. Perhaps She was in love herself and the beauty of the setting sun comforted her loneliness. She was wandering there perhaps looking for companion or someone to share whatever might have been there to be shared. She was asked but had denied everything, all of the accusations against Her as well as all the compliments and myths. Mere exaggerations She said these were, desires to relate Her to things She wasn't, to people's aspirations and dreams, to a compulsion to believe in greatness. Neither a goddess nor a muse She said She was, nor the great love, or the mother of the great thrills, certainly not catharsis. She denied all divinity and fame. She said it wasn't She who had been in the dreams of the poets, it wasn't She who enters the hearts of those who feel them open and ready to speak, ready to make a bridge to somewhere as if they flourished like a flower in the spring. She said She wasn't the Spring. Perhaps She never existed, perhaps She wasn't even on the hill that evening.

She has always been a woman (and I has remained a man), young, portrayed sometimes as cunning and vulpine, sometimes hysterical, but always full of grace and beauty. She has not always been treated fairly or with consideration, She's been abducted, abused, raped, and denied the chance to utter Her own voice. Her face may resemble beauty and grace, yet also perdurance and patience. She has remained silent or She has lent perhaps Her voice to us, not having been allowed to speak for Herself. She is the face of life and happiness, yet also of grief and pain.

*She is a figure I am using in this text as an arbitrary manner to deconstruct the figure of the goddess or muse. A quasi deity hovering between a goddess and language, as well as a sense of collective memory and unconscious that follows language through its use, through the meaning it bears and what it signifies. As a deity, She has been used to symbolise what provides the artist or poet with inspiration, and an example of this may be the Homeric poems that start with the poet's invocations to a goddess, or Renaissance and Baroque imagery with mythological scenes of muses and nymphs. Yet, She has always remained a woman and the poet/artist a man, showcasing gender inequality and the dominance of a male figure as the creator in arts and, however, the sort of celebration of Hers as a deity her role has remained nonetheless marginalised. Despite the lending or offering of her voice to us, She has remained herself silent, rendered mute in a manner that becomes precarious as the selected imagery may easily turn to scenes of abduction and rape. As mentioned also in the Note to the Reader, the use of the pronouns 'she' and 'he' in my text is not an endorsing of the thinking behind such clichés which can certainly be suppressing and unjust; a thinking towards which the recent #metoo movement has become enlightening. This use has occurred through my aforementioned ambition to deconstruct the figure of the goddess or muse, relate it to language, and form a critical approach towards what may provide the artist with -or be seen as- inspiration.*



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***#fallinglanguage***  
***#failinglanguage***

***#belonging***



Figure 18  
British Army recruitment campaign, *This is Belonging*, 2018

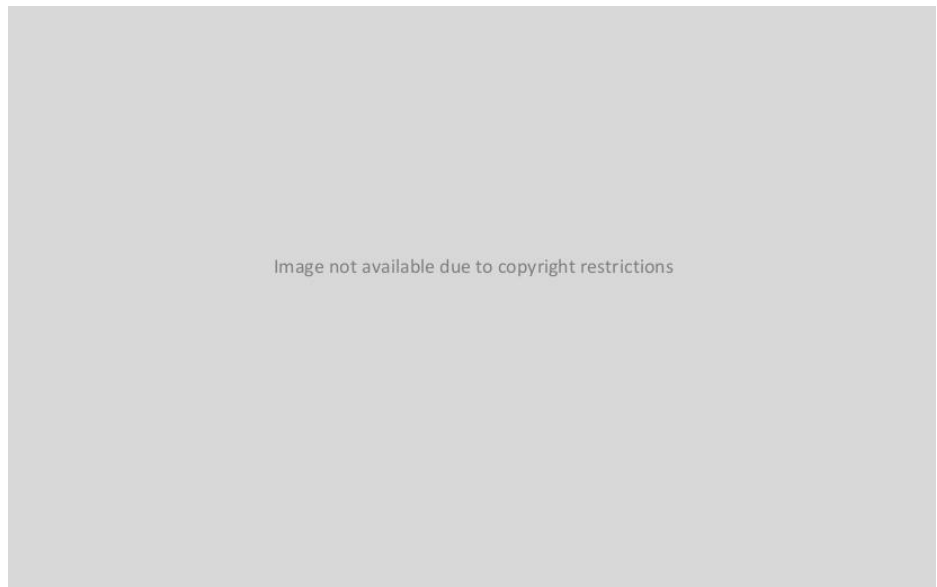


Figure 19  
British Army recruitment campaign, *This is Belonging*, 2018

*The British Army 2018 recruitment campaign was based on the notion of belonging. This is in my view a very interesting phenomenon as it came at a time where notions such as nation and national identity -as well as what it is that forms them- seem to be in need of redefinition. A time of unprecedented levels of immigration (given the refugee crisis, the free movement in the EU, and the flexibility between where to live and work due to post-Fordism and recent advances in technology) in which co-existence and tolerance between people of different ethnicities, background and religion in the same country and under the same flag become inevitable and challenging. Countries of the EU are now considering employing citizens from fellow EU countries in their armies, which until recently were bastions of national pride and a haven for nationalism and even far-right members of the society; a perspective that gained publicity in the German news in December 2018 after considerations of the government to embrace it. The Army campaign seems at first to reply to such matters in an interesting and open way, promising a sense of belonging to people that often feel excluded from society and from the possibility of joining such a traditional regime – people of different ethnicities and colour, of different religion, and of different sexuality. A campaign that does not necessarily promote the manly and aggressive type of usual recruit but rather the one who has been characterised as ‘soft’. Yet the use of such a term as belonging seems to be not as conscious as it should. Belonging is a quite charged term and bears memories that have been linked in the past with historical propagandas and totalitarianism, and one that seems to be used today as a populist device in the upheaval that has given rise to the far-right across the European continent. Signifying exclusion when advocating about inclusion, it is a term that inevitably indicates the presence of an ‘other’ rendering its use in politics precarious especially in an army campaign.*



Figure 20  
Theresa May addresses the Conservative Party conference in Manchester, October, 2017

*This photograph is from Theresa May's speech at the conference of the UK Conservative Party in October 2017. Among other things that did not go well for her on that day, the lettering with the conference's slogan on the scenery behind her started falling. This signified for me a falling and failing language that becomes unbearable even for its own self. A corporate language, hollow of meaning, used most often in politics and which often does not make any sense besides fulfilling its use and purpose to please ears and to give certain impressions. A language not really meant to make any sense but just to deliver specific conclusions, verdicts or beliefs, often misled and through a process that takes in consideration only specific sides of otherwise complex and multifaceted matters. A jargon of technical nonsense, deliberately blindfolded to these complexities through its use and the simplistic character it takes through this. One calculated to say nothing and to hide itself in this nothingness thus avoiding any responsibility. This jargon spreads now beyond politics and the corporate world to all fields and layers of society, becoming, eventually, our home; a construction of a faulty dwelling.*

***#trump***  
***#americafirst***

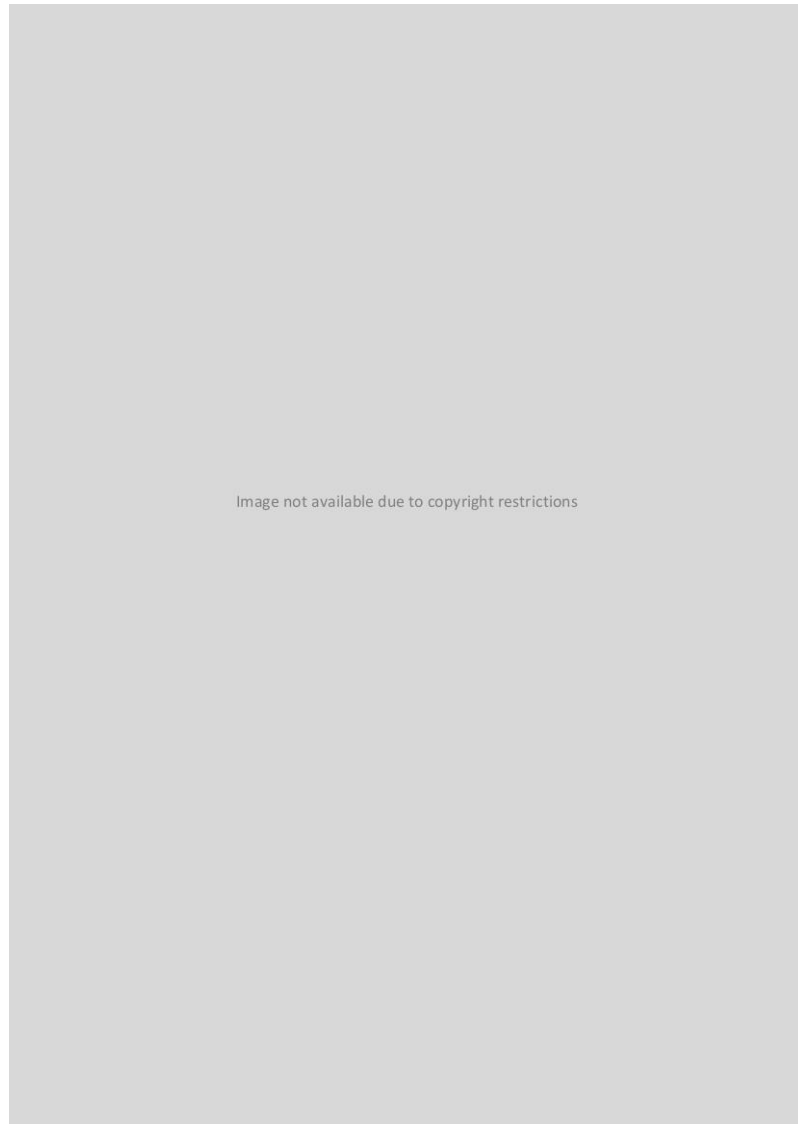


Figure 21  
Ku Klux Klan coin

*The Donald Trump 2015-2016 presidential campaign had extensively incorporated the use of xenophobic and racist language -which Trump has repeatedly denied- and populist views on matters about immigration and transnational trade deals. One of its main slogans has been 'America First', one which has in the past used by the KKK.*



### *Where are we? In what constellation of Being and man?<sup>119</sup>*

We live in the presence of a language of constraint. A language that stems from a corporate world and is beholden to its logic. Dividing, analysing, bringing everything onto one level, equalising and unifying in a simplistic process that diminishes any sensitivity and subtlety. A language that becomes almost mechanic and technological, that maintains a certain rhythm and sets its own tempo, treating everything to a process of generalisation and threatening notions of individuality and difference.

The measurement becomes standardised and specified, the rhythm becomes pre-set and single, non-flexible and not able to alter and adjust. Matters of discrepancy become overlooked by a mentality of generalisation and totalisation; the singular, difference itself needs to become altered and adjusted to fit the pre-cut standardised requirements, despite whether this is possible or not. Altered and adjusted, to fit the *enframing* (Gestell)<sup>120</sup>.

An overwhelming and claustrophobic situation, imposing its own function and meter on everything, and suppressing any other possibility for a different way of things to occur. A language that becomes an environment of constraints that sets a specific norm and becomes a fixed stage where everything seems to have become preconfigured. A set and a play where characters need to follow what is pre-orchestrated, not allowing themselves any space for improvisation or individual interpretation.

There seems to be a dominant vocabulary in which terms such as productivity, efficiency, profit, planning, budget cuts, assessment, evaluation, and ability to deliver, become the prism through which everything is seen or addressed, and which has become further empowered in the recent time of the financial crisis and of all the turbulence and necessities that this has created. An urgency and an alarming condition in which matters of everyday life, such as healthcare and state services, become exigencies that need to be addressed and resolved at any cost, and as such they may as well become marginalised in the dominance of this prevailing narrative; a technocratic language that becomes threatening. Such aspects of everyday life or even intrinsic parts of the society become problems requiring resolution, perhaps because they do not fulfil the criteria, or do not comply with the functions, that have now become the rule or the establishment. Art and culture, educational or cultural institutions, fundamental parts and functions of the society such as welfare, healthcare, and pension institutions, are often under scrutiny as they don't necessarily follow the function of this prevailing system or are not efficient or profitable enough. A system that is now the *New Order* of a specific vocabulary, of a logic and way of things to take place and become addressed.

Within this environment the advent of the 2008 financial crisis has turned this neo-liberal doctrine into an imperative and reinforced its vocabulary with a mentality of 'austerity', 'structural reforms' and 'implementations'<sup>121</sup> that need to take place at any cost and which move against even democratic values and rights established in past decades after long social endeavours. A crisis which beside just financial became, in this manner, also sociological, political and cultural, and in which a polarizing language is often employed without hesitation, especially against weak layers of the society, creating scapegoats and easy targets to be blamed. Eventually, a ground on which populism thrives while further abusing language, distorting its meaning and aspects of reality.

A corporate language stemming from a new doctrine directly related to the current sociological and political conditions, and more in particular to capitalism, to neoliberalism and to the free market, that becomes the measurement for society and for all the various aspects of life in it. A language which becomes unbearable for one to live in, functioning in the shallowness of slogans, technical terms and abbreviations. Simply disregarding or diminishing any other possible aspects of language and condemning facets of life that don't necessarily comply with its logic as being leisure or non-productive time. Everyone seems to be trapped in a world that demands from them to be constantly busy, where this becomes a virtue and the possibility of free time is seen rather as wasted time or loss. A situation that becomes suffocating and claustrophobic, it becomes a ruling that is suppressive and has a totalitarian nature in it, unbearable even for its own self especially in the way it is used as plain speech in politics. A language that has no memory and feels rather detached, empty of meaning or content and far from uttering or proposing a substantial logos in a challenging time in which this becomes, instead, a necessity. On the contrary, it seems to exhaust itself in its plain utilitarian character as a simplistic jargon and in its everydayness, plainly serving a specific cause without any sense of responsibility towards its own self and function. A language that says nothing, aiming to simply hide and entrench itself behind its hollowness and emptiness, behind its function as a tool and its purpose-use character.

As my work has taken a rather subtle and minimal form and there is not much space for 'physical action', a significant part of my art practice is to spend time -perhaps hours- in the studio just looking at my paintings. This becomes very important for my practice as through it I try to build a dialectical relationship with my images and to delve -through seeing- into the visual language of my medium in an endeavour to explore its poetic aspect. A sense of time and productivity that comes contrary to how these are seen today. Besides the context of art and the art world such a practice becomes yet an absurdity and something that for the 'everyday' world does not make any sense and is simply regarded as non-productive and

wasted time, to the point that it becomes interesting for me to notice the reactions of people that are not related to the field of arts every time I need to mention it.



Figure 22

Antonis Pittas, *'montage/ we will do as we have decided'*, *Raccontare in luogo (Tales of a Place)*, 2015

The dominance of this language becomes threatening, as its cheapness pervades all aspects of life and it becomes the prevailing logic and conduit of thought in contemporary society. The society is inevitably ruled by these newly imposed terms and through certain functions of what is regarded as 'productive' and useful-profitable, shaping the perception of the world and of what is seen as production and making in a manner that becomes inescapable. Whatever does not fall in the categories of this specific doctrine is left suspended and becomes marginalised, leading to an inevitable narrowing of voices and possibilities, and rendering the possibility of a polyphony both extinct yet necessary. A trajectory determined by the dominance of this language that ultimately concludes in an absence of this polyphony that thus denies any space for silence or for Goethe's *deeper relations*, which are prerequisites of a poetic form<sup>122</sup>; a form that is perhaps fundamental to one's existence in the world. This gets inevitably deeper as language is simply not just a tool one uses or an instrument of information, it is not just a way to communicate in the everydayness of life, but rather what forms one's ground and what becomes his dwelling. It is logos, as well as rationale and system

of logic, and as such becomes and forms one's thinking and reason, eventually, one's own existence.

How can She live and function here? How did we come to this state and how can poetry find its way? Is this how life is in the technological age, in the *atomic age*? Are we in the eye of a cyclone; a cyclone which has followed the age of mechanical reproduction (and production) that Benjamin wrote of seventy years ago?

## *Acropolis Now*

*Greece has died.  
Time has washed it away.  
She didn't belong to this time  
her once glorified ruins are now debris  
awaiting to be removed  
cleared and disposed  
so that the development will commence*

*Progress needs to be made  
the funds have remained stale too long  
investments need to proceed.  
The assets need to be utilized  
the most needs to be made out of them.  
Progress needs to be made*

*You once showed us the way  
You once showed us the world  
yet time has passed  
changes have taken place*

*Gods and semi-gods, myths and theatre  
no one has time for such stuff  
for such a waste*

*Your services were no longer required.*

*Life is now in a new language  
it's automatic  
far more efficient  
and versatile  
so flexible  
it functions even without us  
so accommodating*

*You were rendered obsolete  
discharged  
your ruins are now a synonym for disaster  
Acropolis Now!\**  
*no longer required.*

*Yet, neither are we  
this language can now function on its own  
We have been rendered obsolete*

*\* At 'Prime Minister's Questions' on Wednesday March 2<sup>nd</sup> 2016 David Cameron, UK's Prime Minister at the time, in mocking the leader of the opposition for hiring Greece's former Minister of Finance as one of his consultants made a parallelism between the country's ruined economy and the Acropolis calling the opposition's financial programme 'Acropolis Now'. Arguing about the importance of the monument and its place in western civilization –even through its ruined form- is for me not necessary, nor is the stating of the imprudence and naivety of such an exclamation, what yet becomes striking is the easiness in the change and selection of the signification even of such a monument which one would consider of maintaining a rather solid character and symbolization.*

## *Technology*

A sense of alienation comes to mind, perhaps inevitable in a rapidly changing world, a sense of shifting ground that has radically departed from what it once was. In *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, published in 1936, Walter Benjamin had used an illustrative quote by Paul Valery to express his concerns regarding the changes that mechanical reproduction -and production too, given his extensive example on filmmaking- may bring: 'Just as water, gas and electric power come to us from afar and enter our homes with almost no effort on our part, there serving our needs, so we shall be supplied with pictures or sound sequences that, at the touch of a button, almost like a wave of the hand, arrive and likewise depart'<sup>123</sup>. Beside Benjamin's remarks on the constituents that outline the uniqueness and genuineness of the work of art<sup>124</sup>, the whole essay has the character of questioning the effect of technological advances and reproducibility upon the work of art, as well as upon its role which may thus be relegated to the character of a commodity. A questioning which becomes less about reproduction and more about the creation or making of the work of art in the first place and the function and logic that take place in this process<sup>125</sup>; something which might be affected, altered or changed by means of reproduction and production, and consequently by technology. This is, hence, not plainly a matter about the distinction between the genuine work and the copy or forgery -as Benjamin's essay is often seen- but becomes rather one on how means of production or technology may change the nature of the work of art as well as the way the latter functions in society. Changes that had occurred, at the time, from a rapidly evolving world due to the technological advances of the industrial revolution; a world which at the same time was on the brink of the Second World War. Conditions that had created the industrial copy and a sense of distancing between it and tradition, or from a more natural -or ritual according to Benjamin<sup>126</sup>- way of things to happen and become. Resulting, thus, in the emergence of the inauthentic which, in its turn, created the question of what the authentic may be<sup>127</sup>.

The emergence of a term such as authenticity which would signify the non-inauthentic, hence, the non-alienated or genuine, has its equivalent in how authenticity becomes widely branded in today's marketing in different fields, from the retail market to the food industry and even to politics. Authenticity as what could indicate an alternative to a world which has been dramatically changed and removed from what it used to be, a world which has lost its origin and become alienated together with its products; 'authentic', organic food, for instance, in the place of the mass produced; the branding of the real and genuine, of the handmade, instead of the industrial copy, as well as 'real' goods in the place of ones of questioned origin

and quality. The question of authenticity as a call for something profound that seems to have been lost in the midst of technological progress, and as a quest for a sense of a ground amidst the values of the modern way of living that have become challenged and questioned. A search for a ground beside the enframing and the standardised everydayness of modern life and society. And, also, a pursuit for something profound in a time that does not easily offer any alternatives, as one seems to have been left alone in the absence of any divinity or higher powers; where God has long since been dead.

We are left stranded in a world which apart from being rapidly changing has become bare from alternatives, and in which a Heideggerian 'thrownness' (Geworfenheit)<sup>128</sup> leaves man confronting Being and his own existence on ground that gradually moves away from him; a ground that is logos and language but which technology threatens to overtake. For Heidegger, we are thrown into the world in a thrownness equal to a sense of an abandonment as there is no elsewhere. There is no outside of this world such as a platonic world of ideas or a possibility of a religious afterlife, and this ties us even more to it. Our presence in it becomes a tandem of existence with it and Being becomes 'Being-there' (Dasein)<sup>129</sup>. We are thrown and left in it and we are thrown and left with it, abandoned in and with it. A matter of presence and existence in the world that cannot but be seen in our relation to the world and with the loneliness of the absence of any God or higher power. A loneliness and solitude that echoes through the sense of helplessness that the absence of an elsewhere reinforces.

The quest for a ground or a sense of a source becomes almost an imperative and often takes place in relation to tradition. Tradition is seen as the ground and a sense of origin, and according to Benjamin the work of art is rooted in its tradition and the historical witness that it bears, in the quintessence of the whole of the constituents around it that form its '*aura*'<sup>130</sup>. The place and rootedness of the work of art might as well be the equivalent of one's place and rootedness in the world, and if for Benjamin tradition is the here and now then this becomes what forms one's ground as well. Accordingly, the here and now of today is the age of the Internet, the digital or post-digital age as it is often called, where the Internet seems to become the ground or the tradition of this age<sup>131</sup> and man is subsequently rooted and formed in it. This is eventually one's enframing which is founded on technology and, more in particular, on its High-Tech form and the direct influence this has on everyday life. During the recent, rapid progress of technology, High-Tech devices and gadgets have been inserted in everyday life in such an extensive way that the impact of it is far from being estimated, and what makes this particularly precarious is the directness it has to people as well as the large extend in which it is incorporated and used in everyday life<sup>132</sup>. The matter of technology and the questions stemming from its wide use today may seem as a nostalgic and even simplistic



tendency, and perhaps may be criticized as such and as being retrogressive, as an anachronistic reaction against the inevitable progress of humanity. It might as well be criticized for being an unfair generalisation that overlooks the benefits technology provides. This critique may stem from the desire for a slower pace and rhythm rather than the frantic one of the modern world. A rhythm that may be more natural and opposed to the ever more demanding world, where so called flexible working and the sometimes precarious easiness of mobile phones and Hi-Tech gadgets have brought a constant connection to emails and extended working hours to private life, blurring the boundaries between labour and free time<sup>133</sup>. In this absence and devaluation of any free time or peace of mind to reflect on things or to simply wander, everything takes the character of a 'ready-to-hand' –an item being used plainly to fulfil a specific utilitarian cause and then replaced or being thrown away. And this comes in a constant consumption of goods without having the chance for a deeper look on what might be 'present-at-hand'<sup>134</sup>. Hence, this critical look related to matters of conscience and resoluteness<sup>135</sup> becomes both rare and desirable; a possibility for a vital awareness amidst today's hindrances of the Internet and social media. A way of living that strives to become perhaps more mindful and self-conscious in this exhausting everydayness which has become overtaken by High Technology. The relation between tradition and technology has been important in the work of both Benjamin and Heidegger, two philosophers that despite the major differences in their work, life and political point of view, seem to share some common ground regarding this matter. Even though Benjamin's disdain for Heidegger and his work was well known (to the point that he said that at the possibility of a confrontation of their thinking 'sparks will fly'), in her introduction to Benjamin's *Illuminations* Hannah Arendt wrote that Benjamin, 'without realising it', had a lot in common with Heidegger<sup>136</sup>. The convergences and divergences of Benjamin's and Heidegger's thinking is yet a far too complex matter to address in this thesis.

Given Aristotle's famous thesis of man being ζῷον λόγον ἔχον, the animal equipped with reason (logos), the aforementioned constraints of technology become further ensnaring as man is both formed from and grounded in logos, in language. This logos becomes one's way of thinking and seems today to be comprised of the corporate, technocratic language, which in its turn becomes one's place of dwelling and enframing in today's world. What occurs is a twofold distancing from what was the ground of man in past times as, first, today's logos and language is the aforementioned corporate and technocratic one and, second, man is rooted in the tradition of his time which today is the Internet and High Technology. The constraints become thus proliferated as the modern man finds himself living in the cheapness of a language rendered mutilated from the financial and political conditions it has emerged from. A

cheapness and mutilation which becomes yet further enhanced by technology and by the changes it brings with its turn to language and, accordingly, to logos and thinking. Hence, an everyday life in the presence of a corporate language and with technology as a fundamental part of it, renders everything to function through it; through its precarious easiness; its gadgets; its imposed system and logic. The enframing becomes, therefore, doubled, and any space for individual reflection or moment of awareness seems to become diminished in the lack of time in this environment of suffocating everydayness, bringing to mind the way Heidegger described technology as a menace<sup>137</sup>.

For Heidegger technology was related to a form of craftsmanship in the ancient times, a sense of knowledge in the way that *Techne* would function.

In opposition to this definition of the essential domain of technology, one can object that it indeed holds for Greek thought and that at best it might apply to the techniques of the handicraftsman, but that it simply does not fit modern machine-powered technology. [...] What is modern technology? It too is revealing. Only when we allow our intention to rest on this fundamental characteristic does that which is new in modern technology show itself to us. And yet, the revealing that holds sway throughout modern technology does not unfold into a bringing-forth in the sense of *poiesis*.<sup>138</sup>

*Techne* would function as *Wissen* (knowledge in German), as a sense of science that occurs through making and through an applied character regarding the use of the object –the example of the chalice he uses is exemplary.

For centuries Philosophy has taught that there are four causes: (1) the *causa materialis*, the material, the matter out of which, for example, a silver chalice is made; (2) the *causa formalis*, the form, the shape into which the material enters; (3) the *causa finalis*, the end, for example, the sacrificial rite in relation to which the required chalice is determined as to its form and matter; (4) the *causa efficiens*, which brings about the effect that is the finished, actual chalice, in this instance, the silversmith. What technology is, when represented as a means, discloses itself when we trace instrumentality back to fourfold causality.<sup>139</sup>

It is worth noting that Heidegger doesn't actually refer to technology as such but instead as the 'technical' (*Technik*). *The Question Concerning Technology* is in German *Die Frage nach der Technik* and Heidegger doesn't mention anywhere in the text the word technology (*Technologie* in German) but instead uses *Technik*. I believe that he does this so that technology is not misinterpreted as a *logos* on *techne* (techno-logy) -a misinterpretation that I have personally witnessed occurring in the academic world- and to signify the difference between the two terms despite the common ground of their origin. Perhaps the term 'technology' is also avoided in order to emphasize the difference between *Techne* and *Technik*, and the irreversible change and departure from what *Techne* was in the ancient times, leading, eventually, to the enframing by the *Technik*. Technology, or the technical for Heidegger, is a

means that eventually reduces 'discourse' (Rede) to 'idle talk' (Gerede), and 'writing' (Schreibe) to 'scribbling' (Geschreibe)<sup>140</sup>, threatening or disallowing poetic forms of language to take place.

Heidegger seems to not accept the nihilism that the absence of God or any other essential figure brings, despite it being a deity or not. God might be dead, but Heidegger seems to substitute this with the will towards something else that may take the form of an absolute, whether this be the notion of truth (aletheia), or the notion of authenticity, the *leap*, *Dasein*, or Greece -forms that take eventually an almost sublime dimension. What seems to occur through this tendency for absolute figures is his fascination with National Socialism through which different facets of his thinking (and perhaps inner thoughts as the Black notebooks have recently revealed) had the chance to find their place. This includes his ambition to do changes to the German University by assuming the rectorate of the Freiburg University and, more in particular, in the way science was regarded and taught. In his *Rektoratsrede* he mentions that 'God is dead', wanting to stress through this that the German people need to take their fate into their own hands; he speaks about a historical 'mission' and argues about the self-assertion of the German University in a different relation to science, perhaps one through philosophy. As he argues in his defence in the *Der Spiegel* interview, until that moment he wasn't really involved in politics nor was he very much aware of the inner-workings of National Socialist Germany, in fact he argues that his enthusiasm for National Socialism was the mainstream reaction at the time all over Europe. What followed was a breach with the third Reich and a silence which lasted until the end of his life, despite the revelations of the Holocaust and the numerous related atrocities (even the *Der Spiegel* interview was agreed with the term that it would be published posthumously and he would reserve the right to edit it). Along with this breach came his resignation from the rectorate in 1934 as well as what seems to be a disappointment that followed the initial feeling of enthusiasm about what this 'new era' could possibly bring. What comes consequently after this is Heidegger's deep concern with technology and language, as a further step in the general shift in the focus of his thinking and philosophy in what Heidegger himself christened as the 'turn' (Die Kehre), and which took place roughly in the period after *Being and Time* to the 1947 *Letter on Humanism*, with his 1942 lecture on Hölderlin marking a significant moment in it<sup>141</sup>. What becomes central there, besides technology and language, is a poetic form of the latter and, also, art. Figures that remain present in his work for the rest of his life.

On 23 April 1934, following various disputes with his colleagues over the political direction of the institute, Heidegger resigned the rectorship of Freiburg University. That summer he had been scheduled to teach a course entitled "The State and Science," but on the first day of the course, at the beginning of May, Heidegger arrived and

announced that he would be teaching a course on logic. This turnaround led to a further and more radical development, for on the last day of the course, after examining the nature of logic and its relation to the essence of language, history, and people, he ended his course by declaring, by way of a conclusion on these interconnected themes, that “the original language is the language of poetry”. In doing so, Heidegger was not only setting out his position by re-establishing the terms of his philosophical work after the failure of his political engagements during his rectorship, but also was announcing the concerns of his next course in which he would examine Hölderlin’s hymns “Germania” and “The Rhine”. This turning to the language of poetry was no arbitrary choice arising from his disillusionment with the language of politics, but a deliberate move that would guide his thinking for the rest of his career.<sup>142</sup>

Although the last sentence of the citation indicates otherwise, I believe that this signifies a reaction to the disappointment of Heidegger with the Third Reich, and that the outcome of this is the founding of a sense of a new system of belief. A system regarding the use of a poetic language which through its deeper relations might be able to reveal –or perhaps rather *unconceal*- what in the everydayness of language remains hidden. But, is this then a circular and repetitive movement? Is it yet again an almost religious tendency to approach something absolute, to approach something almost sublime? Has this poetic form of language now substituted the pursuit of authenticity or *aletheia*? What is it that makes Heidegger so sceptical towards technology and its enframing to the point that it becomes a menace to him? Did he perhaps invest so much into what this ‘new era’ could possibly bring to the point that this had taken a subconscious counter-form against nihilism?

Bernard Stiegler has worked extensively on both Heidegger’s philosophy and the matter of technology, and argues for a different approach on the latter. Technology, rather than a menace, becomes for Stiegler a means for information to be recorded and passed onto future generations, hence a means for knowledge, past, and memory to be preserved. As such it becomes very important for man’s existence and identity, for language, and for what differentiates man from animals. ‘The past is Greek. Because technics is Greek. My past is inherited. For me to inherit a past, that past must be preserved and recorded in technical supports. If I can say I have a great-great-great-grand-father, Mr Stiegler, it is because there are archives which preserve the trace, and which permit him to pass on his name. I have a name, I am called Stiegler. But the bird on that tree has no name. The tree has no name’.<sup>143</sup>

If Heidegger’s approach is followed, the urgency today is not in the budget cuts and the financial reforms but is instead in finding a different function of language; in breaking away from the suffocation of the enframing –of this double enframing. The urgency is in the possibility of the *leap*. It is in finding a possibility of a poetic language that would allow silence as well as poetry to take place and which would serve as a way to reach its *deeper relations*. Yet, a poetic language which, in its turn, could possibly bring to mind the distinction between

averageness and authenticity for which Heidegger has been so often criticized<sup>144</sup>. How and where can such a language and function be possible, is it through art, is art the answer to this? And if art is the answer (or one of the answers) or a possibility of a different way of thinking, how then would it be possible to have it take a wider character than being closer to a sense of an elitism that stems from the distinction between everydayness/averageness and a higher poetic form? A character besides the precarious categorisation of authentics and inauthentics?

What occurs is a plea for autonomy yet not one in the sense of an individual consumerism that in its turn becomes fulfilled through the construction and consumption of bespoke 'special' products or the market-emerged 'authentic', organic, or 'real' goods. A plea for autonomy and for daydreaming as a necessity to have the time to reflect and understand rather than just fulfilling the several required tasks of everyday life; a time necessary for the possibility of thinking and consciousness. Daydreaming as recollection and connection to memory -personal yet, also, collective-, and, more importantly, as thinking, as a form of thinking that may allow some space to move beside the enframing. The importance of this does not lie in any function of daydreaming as escapism or isolation, it rather lies in the possibility of offering a chance for a sense of distancing, a sense of space that might allow for a bird's-eye view towards the world and towards one's self. A sense of a gaze turned towards one's own self that might be able to allow him to realize and reconfigure his position within the world as well as his relation to it. Becoming thus a sense of a grounding as well as a quest for it. A sense of a grounding that renders autonomy being not a matter of individualism but one that is related to the world and to the others; a sense of autonomy -as well as of authenticity- that becomes embedded in the world rather than entrenched in itself; grounded in the world and in the relation to it and to the others.



Figure 23  
Giorgos Kontis, installation view, Royal College of Art London, 2018

## *Zu Beiden Händen*

In his lecture *To Auto, The Same, -- (Celan with Parmenides and Heidegger)*<sup>145</sup> Werner Hamacher focuses on Celan's poem *Zu beiden Händen* (On Both Hands) and makes an astonishing reading and analysis of it through Parmenides and Heidegger, as the title of the lecture suggests. Hamacher mentions that Celan had noted Heidegger's phrase 'Where are we? In what constellation of Being and man?' on his own copy of *Identity and Difference* and suggested that the poem might be an answer and reaction to this question.

The Same, in Celan's poem for Hamacher, finds itself distributed on both hands. It is experienced in losing and forgetting as in the last four verses of the poem and determines itself as what holds together. The Same does not speak as an *I* but as where, as where the stars have grown to it. Its topos is the interval, not just between two firmly established points but between farness and nearness. It's a cleaving and not a creation, and this cleaving is the world itself. The world becomes voiced through its *opening together*, it opens and appears. What speaks in the poem for Hamacher is no entity but the emerging of the *minimal condition* of a being at all. The emergence of time, of the world, and language.

Celan's poem corresponds to Heidegger's demand for a leap from the representation of man and Being as the established instances of a presence that is grounded in itself. It speaks the language of neither modern anthropology nor occidental ontology. It speaks indeed the leap that leaps away from both and opens their constellation to what is not contained or determined by it.

[...]

Differently than Heidegger's leap, the leap of Celan's poem does not lead to a more initial event of mutual appropriation between man and Being, and thus to a more foundational or abyssal constellation. It ushers to an uncoupling of any copular that holds this pair together into the disbanding and unjunction.

[...]

To Heidegger's question *Where are we? In what constellation of Being and man?* Celan's poem answer: Through! With every constellation and out what; where none is, nor we, nor our, nor where. It answers with other words, and other than words, endwo where silent world and silence remains. If what remains of the Same are these two dashes and the gap that holds them asunder, then they are an abbreviation for the movement of the entire poem.<sup>146</sup>

ZU BEIDEN HÄNDEN, da  
wo die Sterne mir wuchsen, fern  
allen Himmeln, nah  
allen Himmeln  
Wie  
wacht es sich da! Wie  
tut sich die Welt uns auf, mitten  
durch uns!

Du bist,  
wo dein Aug ist, du bist  
oben, bist  
unten, ich  
finde hinaus.

O diese wandernde leere  
gastliche Mitte. Getrennt,  
fall ich dir zu, fällst  
du mir zu, einander  
entfallen, sehn wir  
hindurch:

Das  
Selbe  
hat uns  
verloren, das  
Selbe  
hat uns  
vergessen, das  
Selbe  
hat uns --

*Paul Celan, Zu beiden Händen. The poem is from the lecture's leaflet and the translation is the one that Werner Hamacher read in his lecture.*



*ON BOTH HANDS, there  
where the stars grew to me, far  
from all heavens, near  
to all heavens  
How  
it awakens there! How  
the world opens itself to us, through  
our midst!*

*You are,  
where your eye is, you are  
above, are  
below, I  
find a way out.*

*O this wandering empty  
hospitable Middle. Separated,  
I fall to you, you fall  
to me, fallen  
from one another, we see  
through:*

*The  
Same  
has lost  
us, the  
Same  
has forgotten  
us, the  
Same  
has us --*

## *Through!*

We are with the Same, that has lost and forgotten us, far from and close to Heavens, with a wandering emptiness we fall into each other, and, on both Hands where the stars grew to us.

Among and despite the technological language, the constraints and the double enframing, the stars will always be there. And they will find the chance to open themselves or open the world to us; through our midst; through us. Through the gaps and the intervals the *leap*<sup>147</sup> will find the chance to take place, to become, to move beyond the enframing through its cleaving and the undoing of us; despite whether or not it makes the desired *event*. The *Same* will be there, unchangeable, yet never the same. As well as *poetry*, and *silence*, and the *deeper relations* of language.

We are scattered and we are lost, suppressed and suspended in the enframing; suppressed and suspended by this foreign language that suffocates and mutilates us. What is desired is our consciousness, what is desired is the responsibility; of us to lead our own lives; of us to set or see the ground. There is a necessity for light, a necessity to have -to achieve- a gaze, to utter a gaze and be able to see, for a moment. A moment of awareness. An awareness that becomes mythical, one that sets or relates to the ground; ground upon which She can live.

I close my eyes, take a deep breath and try to feel my body in its wholeness. As long as we breathe our breathing can ground us. As long as there is breath, there will be ground as well. The constraints and the layers of hindrance might be many, but the stars will always be there. They will signify the distance, between farness and nearness, and the cleaving, which is us; as the minimal condition of a being. As long as they are there we will be safe. It will only take an instant, a moment of weakness, and She will find her way to come to us. There may not be heavens, yet there are skies, and there are stars as well, and they may be in place to undo us. She might not be coming from the heavens, yet She comes from the skies. Perhaps it doesn't even take the Heideggerian resoluteness or perdurance, perhaps this doesn't need to be anything grandeur but just an undoing where all that is required is sensitivity and simply love; as She needs to be loved.

As long as there are skies there will be stars, as long as there is breathing there will be ground, and She will be able to find her way. And, as long as She can find her way, poetry will emerge; poiesis will emerge.

The Same has lost and forgotten us, yet the Same has us. Through us. --



Figure 24  
Giorgos Kontis, Untitled, 2019

## *Parenthetical*

The sunset is a time of the day that is a time of the night as well, both a beginning and an end, a duplicity as well as an interval. A time that feels stale yet passes very quickly and one that is so often celebrated by poets and romantic lovers; celebrated for its transcendence, its ability to be a no time and to make an affinity with something that might be beyond the mere everyday world. A bridge between two different worlds or simply included in just one, marking yet a significant moment in it, unveiling perhaps an aspect of it not often or easily seen. The sunset comes with a calmness and quietness, it feels as if the earth slows down for the night to come and the day to make its account, a report of what has happened in it, of how things have so far gone and how they might proceed. The sea contributes to this as well as the wind, as both start at this time to be calmer and to get in a different function. A calmness that along with the reduced light create an introverted feeling that becomes perhaps more prominent in the proceeding of the night when it is enhanced by the quietness of it. The night feels then as a different zone and this is perhaps what makes the feeling of the sunset so distinctive, the fact that it is a no zone. It is a passage, an opening to different worlds and one even bearing a feeling of a mystical transcendence, yet holding at the same time a sense of autonomy in what it is; an interval, a time contained in itself, in between other times yet without necessarily bearing any links to them or to anything else. Self-contained, a cluster of a time that is free and detached from any other one, with no sequence or precedence apart its own repetition that seems to somehow become ritual. A cluster of time within time, a repetition within continuity and sequence, a sense of freedom that stems from its detachment from the before and after.

In suspension and with a sense of imminence, the interval might be figured as a coiled spring, seemingly in stale time and inertia, and with a pregnancy that doesn't necessarily relate to the time before and after. The interval is a threshold, a moment of stillness, a time with a distinctive sense of finitude that renders it a cluster within time with a paradoxical sense of autonomy. It is a time of anticipation and it is the feeling of waiting that becomes characteristic in it; an absence that becomes present and something yet to come that remains always elusive.

A self-contained time in between times, a no-time that becomes the ground for a different function of things to take place. In the interval, in parenthetical time, things may be on hold yet they are still able to move without necessarily the directness toward a specific purpose, and in a manner that becomes able to form its own figures; a mixture of boredom and fascination. It is there where language seems to find a ground to function beside prosaic constraints –does the same happen with painting as well? Sideways is perhaps a way this could

be approached; on the margin and with the flexibility this may offer, beside any constraint or heaviness of a need to follow a dominant, pre-set narrative. Seemingly purposeless and rather pointless, without this though suggesting that what takes place there is meaningless or of less importance, with the pointlessness exactly being a part of its function and identity. Gestures and movements that are made and taken in a sense of stillness and inertia, become liberated from causality, with the elusiveness of things that move, occur and happen within the gaps; in stale time and with the flexibility offered by it.

The interval, a stale prolonged moment, perhaps of anticipation yet more likely of boredom might be what can bring us close to the elusive. Through this sense of time that feels to be in a pause, both continuous and repetitive, unimportant and boring, we might be able for an instant to wonder what it is that is being waited for. What it is that remains to be answered. She lives in the interval, Her kingdom is the gaps and the margins, where She will find you defenceless and unable to recognise Her.

## *Authenticity*



Figure 25  
Francis Alÿs, Untitled, 2013

## *Dispersal*

*I* becomes dispersed in we and in 'they'. The subject becomes dispersed in language and likewise becomes dispersed in its cultural context and tradition. *I* becomes distanced from any sublimity, incapable of any original creation and placed in a state of subordination, where the *leap* seemingly has no place. In the absence of any tabula rasa, everything exists in repetition, yet (as has been mentioned in the second chapter) difference can occur in repetition and, with difference, identity can occur as well. The primal form, the blank slate, may be a non-possibility in repetition and within the *Same*, yet identity may become constituted in repetition through difference -through the disparate. Hence, identity through difference, within repetition and recurrence, and, most importantly, in a state of subordination as what bears the non-possibility of being primal, of being the first instance of something. Identity through difference and as a form of a sovereign self which has been washed away but eventually remains, a form of a palimpsest in the place of a tabula rasa which becomes remade and reused instead of created afresh, and within this reuse and recurrence identity becomes constituted time and again. In regard to addressing this in terms of the individual maker, it takes the form of the return of the author after his initial death<sup>148</sup>, and along with the figure of the author the notion of authenticity returns as well. Hence, authenticity as *sous rature*, absent yet present, questioned and seemingly obsolete yet still non-dismissible. In addition to this, authenticity besides the pursuit of the original creation, of the sublime, besides the primal absolute figure of the dominant maker, but, instead, seen and addressed in its dispersal and within its undoing.

The matter of identity has so far been approached in this text, in regard to philosophy, through Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* and Heidegger's *leap* in *Identity and Difference*. These two theses stand at a distance from each other; where Heidegger's *leap* takes the character of a heightening and elevation, Deleuze's position cannot be related to any form of sublimity and is instead grounded on the simulacrum. In other words, identity in Heidegger does not occur through repetition and his *leap* is not related to subordination but, to the contrary, is a leap from it. Yet, although these theses seemingly stand in opposition, they don't necessarily exclude each other. Where Deleuze grounds difference in repetition and recurrence and thus forms identity, Heidegger's identity comes through being in the world, through the relation between Being and thought and through their *belonging together*.

The principle of identity itself gives it to us, if we listen carefully to its key note, if we think about that key note instead of just thoughtlessly mouthing the formula "A is A." For the proposition really says: "A is A." What do we hear? With this "is", the principle tells us how every being is, namely: it itself is the same with itself. The principle of



identity speaks of the Being of beings. As a law of thought, the principle is valid only insofar as it is a principle of Being that reads: To every being as such there belongs identity, the unity with itself. [...] We must acknowledge the fact that in the earliest period of thinking, long before thinking had arrived at a principle of identity, identity itself speaks out in a pronouncement which rules as follows: thinking and Being belong together in the Same and by virtue of this Same.<sup>149</sup>

This is not an easy matter according to Heidegger as identity takes the form of an individuation of Being through thought and becomes a given in regard to one's existence in the world. Yet, besides this first layer of identity, *belonging together* becomes more complex as it is through it -and through decisiveness and resoluteness- that the aforementioned *leap* towards the *event of appropriation*<sup>150</sup> is able to take place; a matter that becomes very important in Heidegger's work in general and is something that, as has also earlier been mentioned in the text, can function against the *enframing*.

The relation of the self with the world and with the others in Heidegger is rather complex and contradictory as the self who is in a relation of a 'with' to the Others becomes, at the same time, also threatened with alienation by them. Heidegger uses his wordplay 'They-Self', for the self that becomes influenced and alienated by the crowd, by 'They'<sup>151</sup>. For Heidegger the 'Self', along with the 'I' and the 'subject', is the answer to the 'who', and 'Who?' is a definite kind of 'Being' which *Dasein* possesses. *Dasein* is addressed as being 'in' the world by way of 'Being-in-the-world', and the world of *Dasein* is consequently a 'with-world'<sup>152</sup>. He addresses this contemplation in terms of *existence*, as existence in the world<sup>153</sup>. The whole contemplation though of an existence that bears the fear of alienation, contaminated by the Others, presupposes that such existences stand in autonomous and to a degree independent from each other and not in a 'with', or that the individual existence stands in its autonomy towards a general 'they'. Isn't yet this a paradox, given Heidegger's 'Being-in-the-world' and 'with-world?' How can 'I' be, at the same time, a 'Being-with' Others and, yet, alienated by the Others? The fear of alienation seems to be less a matter related to the 'Being-with' the Others and more one to a 'Being-thrown' in the world as an almost foreign part to it. Just the differentiation between 'I' and the Others, or existence in the world, should signify identity - with 'I' being what is disparate, or with just being in the world- which then makes the *leap* not merely a matter of identity but one that incorporates an ecstasis, thus, the *leap* as a possibility of an authentic self.

The Heideggerian mutual appropriation between man and Being is related to thought and occurs through thought, and as such may be what can lead to authenticity and to *ownness*. This does not necessarily exclude Deleuze's identity, as Deleuze's identity may be what the *ownness* can be built on, yet the difference is that what is aimed for in Heidegger's

case is the break-through from the 'they' and from 'inauthentic everydayness', from what may be seen as subordination in Deleuze.

For Heidegger my selfhood depends on how I conduct myself. I become an authentic self by pulling myself together, by 'self-constancy' or 'anticipatory resoluteness' (BT, 322). When I relax I revert to the They-self. It may be objected that even in the depths of average everydayness we retain a minimal self-awareness, such that e.g. if I hit my thumb with a hammer I know that it is I who feels the pain, not my assistant. Heidegger might reply that this is because we never relax completely, always retain a modicum of self-constancy, and thus do not fall entirely and irretrievably into the They. A self or an I, at whatever level, is not a thing or substance that acts, but a type of activity with no inert substratum, an activity that ranges out beyond the here and now into the world and into the past and future. This is one reason for Dasein's 'nullity', *Nichtigkeit* 'Dasein constantly exists along this edge of the Not [Nicht]' (XXVII, 332).<sup>154</sup>

This form of identity through being in the world and through belonging together is present yet doesn't seem to be enough, rendering it a basic form of identity as mere presence. Instead, another form of identity needs to come to presence, and this is an 'active nature of identity' and as property of the event of appropriation can lead to ownness and authenticity.

The question of the meaning of this Same is the question of the active nature of identity. The doctrine of metaphysics represents identity as a fundamental characteristic of Being. Now it becomes clear that Being belongs with thinking to an identity whose active essence stems from that letting belong together which we call the appropriation. The essence of identity is a property of the event of appropriation.<sup>155</sup>

Hence, lead to a break-through from this primal form of identity, which is a fundamental characteristic of Being, through this active nature of identity and towards the form of an authentic self –one, which, nonetheless, signifies various problematics in Heidegger's thought that have been addressed in earlier chapters.

### *Eigentlichkeit*<sup>156</sup>

Contrary to the figure of the authentic self lies the state of subordination, which although does not necessarily exclude a subject from becoming emancipated, remains an example of a subject that is rooted in its ground and in the 'we'. Bernard Stiegler argues in *The Ister* documentary that one needs to adopt his name, to adopt and accept his inheritance and past, even a past that he hasn't lived himself<sup>157</sup>; he argues for choice and appropriation, one of our own self. This appropriation of one's own self does not necessarily have to bear the almost religious Heideggerian rhetoric and can even be seen as an endeavour for an *examined life*<sup>158</sup> or for criticality in the Jena Romantics; a matter of choice that becomes a matter of consciousness as well as of responsibility, and is a *decision of existence*<sup>159</sup>. The argument here

is that such a decision is based on identity yet becomes an adoption and appropriation of identity without this necessarily taking the character of the *leap*; hence, I choose to be this instance I am, I can deny this or change it; I therefore adopt and appropriate my own self. This appropriation is not Heidegger's mutual appropriation between Being and man that may stem from identity yet elevate and strengthen it as well, it is an appropriation of one's own identity and self, and becomes a matter of *ownness* of one's self in its dispersal. An *ownness* of a self and an endeavour, and decision, to accept and adopt it along with the realization of its multiplicity, as if the *ownness* of one's self is not a given and as if the self is another; an *ownness* of the assembly of the constituents and times that conclude to one's self.

The use of *ownness* is enlightening in relation to authenticity as it becomes fundamental regarding one's authority over his own self. It becomes, actually, related to the etymology of the word as authenticity comes from the Greek *αυθεντικότητα* which derives from *αυθέντης* (authentēs, *αυτός-έντης*, autos [self] - hentes [doer, maker]), and has the meaning of one acting on one's own authority<sup>160</sup>. Hence, authenticity as a matter of *ownness* besides the reification of the subject and the entrenchment of the self towards a form of a hyper-individualisation, but as an endeavour towards one's authority upon his own self and acts. A matter that is not only seen as one of identity but as one of the adoption and appropriation of one's identity, regarding the consciousness, awareness and responsibility that this signifies or requires. Hence, authenticity as the adoption and appropriation of the self, the adoption and appropriation of identity, and as the decision for this act. A question of authenticity that addresses the self in its multiplicity, in its dispersal and repetition, with its subordination as a given and without the mythicisation of the authentic self and the *leap* towards this. What occurs through this is the necessity the figure of the author/maker to be seen in this open multilayered form, the opening of the term in the following three components, as well as the challenge of addressing them. First is the figure of the artist/maker, namely the author; second is what can be seen as the act of making especially in painting and contemporary art; and finally the authority of the artist/maker upon his own acts. Hence, the question of authenticity becomes a question upon one's act triggering questions of what this act can be and, in regard to this, how can one's -the doer's- authority be approached and dealt with –a doer who simultaneously is a multiplicity. As a consequence, such a question becomes removed from the object or artwork and is instead focused on the maker and his acts.

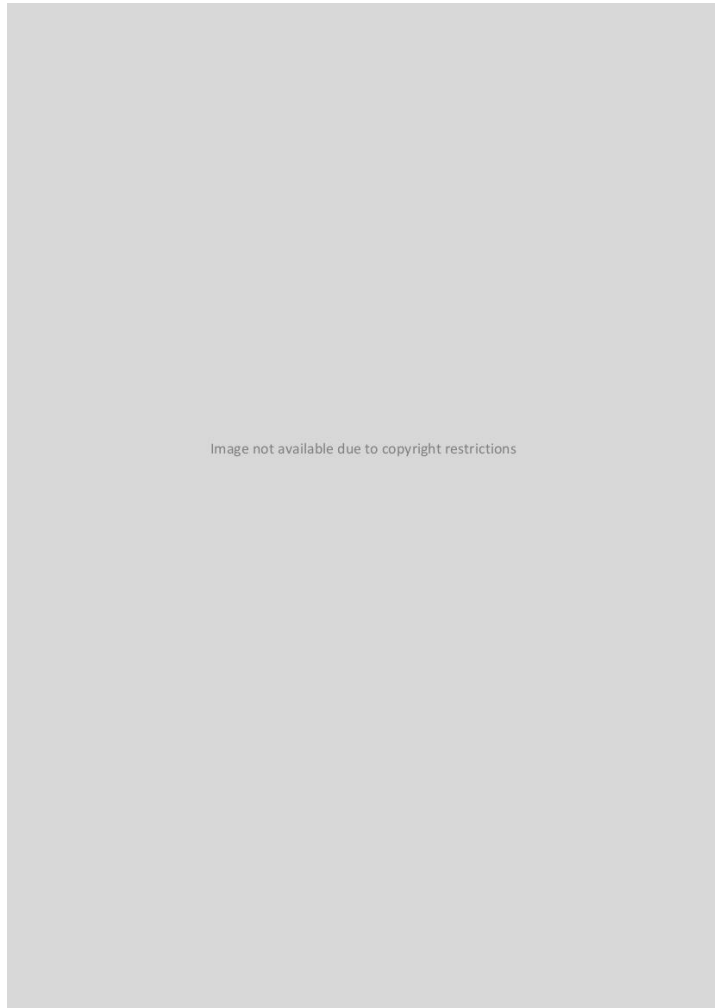


Figure 26  
Marcel Duchamp, *Fountain*, 1917

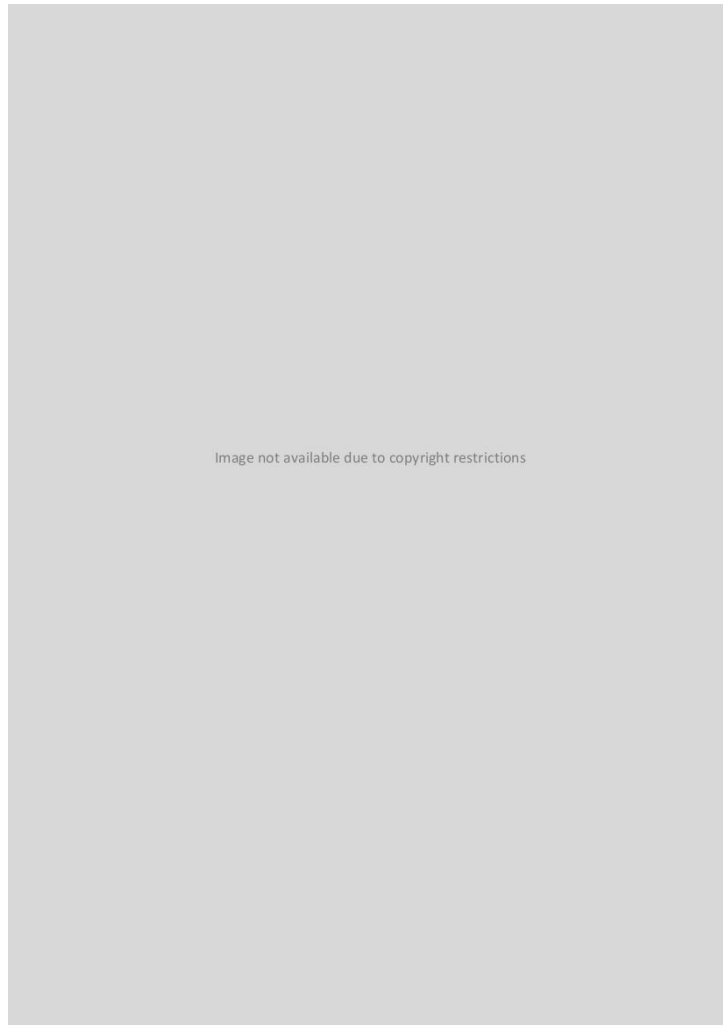


Figure 27  
Richard Serra *Verblast*, 1967–68

*Serra famously said, "Drawing is a verb." In Verblast, he compiled a series of what he called "actions to relate to oneself, material, place, and process." Serra has talked at length about the central place this language-based drawing occupies in the development of his early sculptural practice. This work on paper suggests a common ground underlying Serra's practices in all mediums—from early sculptures to later monumental works, which not only twist and curve but also enclose, surround, and encircle. It shows Serra's debt to action painting and his proximity to Conceptual and performance practices; the list was published in the journal *Avalanche* in 1971 and testifies to the artist's close relationship to dancers like Yvonne Rainer and Simone Forti, with whom he shared not only a milieu but a commitment to carrying out verbs.*

The work description is from the MoMA website.<sup>161</sup>

## *The Death and Return of the Author*

Through *ownness* the artist/maker becomes constituted as a conscious subject, dispersed in and through language yet immersed from it as well, and grounded in language and in tradition in the way the latter becomes flexible and susceptible to change. A subject similar to the one described by the early romantics and one which rather than entrenching itself in its hyper-individuality opens instead in forms that become more collective. Despite this openness, the subject becomes eventually reconstituted in the case of the early romantics and if this takes place in their instance through irony, wit, and criticality, in contemporary art then by analogous logic such a stance becomes exhibited also through criticality and through authorial intention. Yet, if the early romantics employed different writing genres for the function of their subject to take place, and approached the matter of making through *Gestaltung* and *Bildung*, namely through the invention and incorporation of a form of *praxis* as a way the individual character, genius, or idiom to take place, what is today's respective function to approach a subject and making? Or, how can the act of making be seen in contemporary art and how can the artist's own authority –or individuality after its dispersal- be addressed in it?

The most common manner to address this is through the relation of making to the past and to the prevailing ways the making becomes (and has become) used, and this comes in dialogue with tradition where the latter takes, inevitably, the character of a point of reference and measure. As was mentioned in the previous chapter, tradition can for Benjamin be seen as the ground on which one may stand or find himself, and may also function against alienation. Although tradition and the cultural context may be the artist's heritage and what provides him with the context within which he can exist and act, they can also take the character of the 'they', of what may define a certain way of an activity to take place, hence the character of an enframing. A reversal, thus, of the function of tradition from being what can offer a refuge from alienation to what may itself alienate through the formation of a canon. Tradition functions in this manner as both heritage and burden, as at the same time it places the artist within a certain context and provides him the tools to work with, it restrains him with them as well. The heritage may become the paradigm to follow but also what simultaneously binds him to a certain function. A constraint through which the challenging question occurs of how it is possible to create the new when there already is a pre-set path to follow and a designated area within which one should operate<sup>162</sup>.

The relationship with one's heritage, with tradition, and what can be the new in relation to it, is a question that Boris Groys has addressed in his *On the New work*<sup>163</sup>. For Groys 'The new is in relation to the old, to tradition' though 'The new is inescapable, inevitable,

indispensable. There is no path leading beyond the new, for such a path would itself be the new<sup>164</sup>. In Groys' writing lies once more the very interesting paradox of the creation of something new based on what preexists and as a continuation of a certain tradition, hence creating the new from the non-existence of any tabula rasa and while any notion of original creation is denounced. Groys poses the question of what constitutes innovation, and in relation to the cultural context in which this act is situated he argues that innovation is the revaluation of values<sup>165</sup>. In this regard he uses the example of the readymade and the way it is taken from its profane realm and becomes valorized in the cultural context. The radicalness, or originality of the new, or its '*pursuit of newness for newness' sake*' became in modernism, for Groys, a criterion of its authenticity<sup>166</sup>. He manages an interesting distinction in this work as he separates the new and the connotation this bears of the authentic from the materially new work, and transfers it to a matter of decisions and, particularly, as a play with and a direct reference to tradition. His example of the valorization of the profane is exemplary because it illustrates that the new can be the very same thing, used in a different way or just placed in a different context. This example also illustrates aptly the way the cultural context instead of constraining the individuality of the artist can eventually provide the basis for it through it being used and appropriated by him. The new, in this way, is not necessarily a product of the truisms of original creation, as this has been manifested in certain modernist tropes, and we could even say that it is not even something that needs to be created in the traditional way of making or producing. Rather it can be created through a reciprocal and dialectical relationship between the artist and the cultural context in any manner this might occur through the artist's individuality and one's personal idiom. Tradition and the cultural context don't necessarily restrain or threaten the artist in this way but offer him instead the field to implement his idiom, to unfold his inventiveness and subjectivity, and rather than a burden they become his field of action and playground.

The use of the readymade is a good example of this exactly because it poses the question of which this act of creation can be and how, through it, the new can be created. In Duchamp's case the urinal is plainly an industrial, mass produced copy that has not been through any sort of process or alteration from the artist so that something new would have been created out of it, yet the *Fountain* is a newly created work of art. What has taken place in this instance is a radical change in the very same object without any physical process or act on it in a manner that may, at first, seem as a paradox. The act of Duchamp that has brought such a change to the urinal is far from any traditional and simplified way of regarding original making and creation, thus, challenging them to become in this way opened to the point that an example like Richard Serra's *Verb List* may become expanded to anything one may think to

employ. A challenge that in the case of Duchamp's *Fountain* becomes enhanced through the further layers of signification it bears of being a mass produced product, a copy rather related to mechanisms of alienation and to mass low culture as an outcome of the industrial revolution and the technological advances of the time, and one far from anything that could be regarded as an artwork or artifact –given as well the profanity of its use. This prompts a thinking on different ways regarding what an act and making of art can be, and on the role and function of the artist which respectively changes from the one of the physical maker or producer to someone operating a multilayered and complex function even in a remote manner<sup>167</sup>. Duchamp's *Fountain* is a very good example also for the reason that it illustrates simply and clearly that the question of the authenticity of a work of art which does not revolve around its physical aspect and the way it is physically made but around a broader function and operation of the artist regarding it. This, eventually, becomes illuminating regarding the simplistic tendency to attribute authenticity to a work due to its handmade nature, a feature that may in some instances bears a dose of truth but is, in general, far too simplistic in relation to such a complex matter.

The verification of the authenticity of an artwork through its physical making has most commonly its roots in mastery, in the general perception of the artwork as the product of an artist-master, one having the ability to create something exceptional through an extraordinary skill that becomes an almost divine privilege. Such a figure of the artist and of the making of art stem from a tendency to create myths and mystified veils around art and is a tendency that bears an almost religious hue. Art has, amongst others, been related to mysticism, to spirituality, to higher powers, and the artist has, respectively, taken in different instances the role of a shaman, a genius, a master, of a mediator or conduit between the mere world and the sublime (or Being in Heidegger's case<sup>168</sup>), and has even had healing powers attributed to him. Such tendencies, as well as the creation of myths that surround the artist and artisthood, is what the Dutch art critic Camiel van Winkel deals with in his work *The Myth of Artisthood*<sup>169</sup> in which he argues that such myths have their origin basically in three components: the romantic conception of art where the work of art functions as a direct reflection of the soul of its maker; the artist of modernist artisthood as a self-aware and independent individual; and notions related to the classical Beaux Art model such as mastery and *métier*<sup>170</sup>. For van Winkel 'such commonplaces are the most resilient of all' and 'a complete demystification, assuming it were possible, would also herald the end of artisthood –and thus the end of art'<sup>171</sup>.



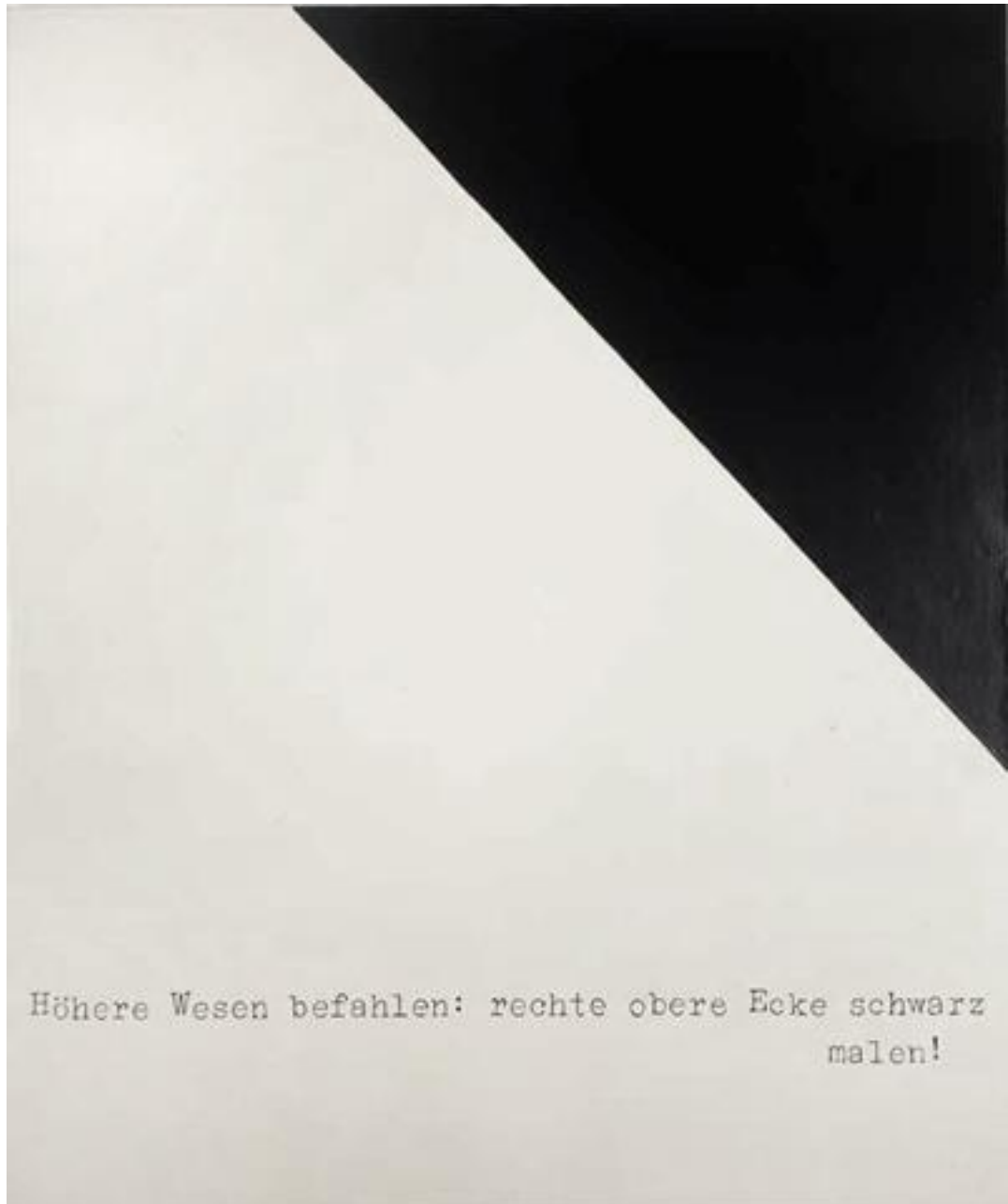


Figure 28  
Sigmar Polke, *Höhere Wesen befehlen: rechte obere Ecke schwarz malen!* (*The Higher Powers Command: Paint the Upper Right Corner Black!*), 1969

*This work by Sigmar Polke is a rectangular, vertical painting. The top right-hand corner has been painted an even black, while the rest of the canvas is a monochrome white. At the bottom of the canvas the following words are spelled out in typed letters 'Höhere Wesen befahlen: rechte obere Ecke schwarz malen!'. Irony and magic are the starting point for Polke's work. His paintings take a look at existing ideas about the origin of artistic inspiration. Is it divine, is it part of the human psyche, or is it located in the chemistry of the human body? Polke believed that when he painted, there was a relationship between the forces on the canvas which he could not control himself and that the painting determined its own destiny.*

*'Höhere Wesen befahlen' is above all an ironic reference to the romantic German tradition in which 'higher things' play an important role. With regard to this theme, Polke produced installations with texts, amongst other things. One of these read: 'I was standing in front of the canvas and wanted to paint flowers. Suddenly I received an order from higher beings: no flowers! Paint flamingos! First, I wanted to paint on, but then I realized that they were being serious.'*

*In 'Höhere Wesen befahlen' Polke parodied the Hard Edge school of painting of artists such as Elsworth Kelly. Polke rejected Kelly's geometric abstract paintings, because his works which consist of even fields of colour placed very precisely next to each other, refer to nothing other than themselves. According to Polke, this starting point is too limited. He was actually interested in questions such as how art and reality relate to each other and what the social significance is of art. What makes an artist an artist? The answers he came up with for these questions were different in every new work, resulting in a very varied oeuvre in which he used many different styles of painting all at once.*

The work description is from the Van Abbe museum website.<sup>172</sup>

In regard to questions of authenticity such mythologies are related to misconceptions around such a complex notion and to the way this has been charged with a spiritual or mystified pursuit. In a similar way to the one Adorno identified the use of terms and words - mainly criticizing the vocabulary used by Heidegger- and described them as the jargon of authenticity that approaches a religious rhetoric, an equivalent vocabulary or logic related to mythologies surrounding artisthood becomes apparent in van Winkel's text. Such a vocabulary includes terms such as spirituality, theosophy, inner expression, purity, sincerity, that stem from or have in their core the idea of the artist in the form of a hyper-individual genius, and charge authenticity with certain approaches rendering it a part of an obsolete discourse. Van Winkel, besides being critical and skeptical of the three components he mentions, he remains critical also towards the figure of the 'post-artist', and towards practices like the ones described in Nicolas Bourriaud's *Postproduction*<sup>173</sup>, as he describes it as a phenomenon of 'the artist without artwork'.

For some time, however, the art world itself has been fascinated by the contrary phenomenon: the artist without artwork. With mixed feelings, observers have characterized this figure as a "post-artist". Post-artists have crossed a final frontier: making art has lost all importance to them and aesthetic questions fail to stir their interest. But they also look with pity at the militant desire of the avant-garde to disrupt and eventually destroy the autonomy of art. Post-artists respond with irony to many of the dilemmas of artistic engagement. It would appear that these decolonized artists have permanently abandoned the belief in the myth of artisthood, even though they seem unable or unwilling to give up the institutional and social privileges that it confers.

<sup>174</sup>

It becomes apparent to his reader that van Winkel's thought is charged with his concerns regarding the mechanisms of the art market, the paradoxes in contemporary art, sociology and politics, and regarding issues related to his questions of the notion of autonomy in art and in its making today. His skepticism regarding 'the artist without artwork' exemplifies these concerns as does the way he uses the artists Cindy Sherman and Jeff Koons as case studies in his work *The Regime of Visibility*<sup>175</sup>, in which he describes Koons supervising and operating the production of his artworks by employed specialized craftsmen and endowing these works afterwards with authenticity following a mythical artist model. Van Winkel denies any notion of authenticity that might be related to the three aforementioned models-components as such an approaches can for him be no more than a fallacy. Van Winkel also denies any approach to authenticity through a model close to the idea of the 'post-artist'; authenticity exists for him only in one's imagination and a basic argument towards this is the non-existence of any tabula rasa and the impossibility of starting afresh. Such a positioning though is based on the notion of original creation, while taking it simultaneously as a prerequisite for authenticity, and is

related to the hyper-individual figure of the artist and the mythologies surrounding him. Yet, what is at the heart of the challenge to authenticity, and is perhaps the most interesting, is how to address this matter through a different model and through different terms, without following the simplistic clichés of the hyper-individual artist and the truisms of original creation. Hence, how can authenticity be addressed in the non-existence of any *tabula rasa* and original creation, within repetition and within the Same? How can it be approached without being charged from the obsolete jargon and myths that surround it, and with the artist not as a hyper-individual but rather in his aforementioned subordination and dispersal?

This is what this text strives to deal with and what its argument is. The necessity of the question of authenticity to be seen and addressed through its plasticity<sup>176</sup>, without the constraints of the myths and prejudices surrounding it, and so to liberate it from the way it has been charged with jargons, notions and mystifying or totalitarian pursuits. This broad and often misled use of the term is something that may distract one regarding questions on such a complex notion. Authenticity is a matter of the maker's authority upon his own acts and practice, and upon his own self, becoming a matter around one's decisions, choices and responsibility. It becomes a question of the extent to which one is in charge of his own acts, besides any simplified approach through authorship and simplistic allegations on the handmade origin or nature of the work. It therefore becomes a matter of *ownness* and what thus becomes a prerequisite is one's awareness and consciousness; namely critical stance and thinking.

This takes place, at the same time, on the basis of an individual who is more than influenced by his surroundings to the point that he is regarded a product of his cultural context or a child of his era, and in relation to tradition as the latter being both a heritage and a burden. A subject which has been defined through a shared past and a collective history and memory, and which operates within a common aesthetic unconscious. A subject that given the arguments of the linguistic revolution and post-structuralism instead of using language becomes used by it and up to a point defined and formed through and by it, thus finding its individuality dispersed and diminished. As such the self becomes situated within multiple contexts, constraints and enframings; within the 'they', within repetition and the Same, in subordination, and in the presence of a corporate language and of technology that seem to dominate everything. In this with-world, co-existence and being-with become a given, and influence and alienation are the common path rather than a threat, and, accordingly, thinking becomes formed by these constituents when it was meant to be what would differentiate one.

Through the several layers that are implemented on -and eventually form- one's existence, what takes place is the change of the entrenched artistic self to the more open and

flexible form of the artistic agency. A self as an agency which rather than the figure of the artist having 'the divine privilege of creating things out of the void'<sup>177</sup> or who submerges into himself in search for his non-alienated spontaneity<sup>178</sup>, takes the form of a multilayered construction, a product of the different constituents and contexts. A construction of which it is not a given that the artist is in control, nor is his authority upon it. The dispersal is inevitable and has always been, and, moreover, the tabula rasa was never a possibility. Yet, as this last chapter has attempted to demonstrate, the new, instead of impossible, is inevitable, creating the necessity of a new aspect of addressing matters of originality and making. On this basis, repetition becomes inevitable but also impossible, as the new will always emerge and manifest itself, and as the Same cannot be the same, and through this identity emerges. Yet, although identity may be a prerequisite for authenticity, it doesn't necessarily constitute it itself. Following this and given that any *praxis* can be legitimate if chosen and decided by the artist (regardless of it having a physical aspect or not), if the artist exhibits criticality and that he is aware of his constraints and context, and that his acts/*praxis* are intentional, then this takes the character of an authorial intention rather than something being imposed on him. Hence his critical stance exhibits his acts and intentions as an emancipated individual who emerges through and is in control of his alienation and constraints, and the acts and decisions of this individual are matters of his own choice, and accordingly his own responsibility. What becomes then the challenge with the question of authenticity is whether one, through *praxis* and authorial intention, comes into the position of having the *ownness* of this multilayered construction which operates within the different constraints and contexts and which is nothing else other than his own self. An *ownness* of a self that occurs through processes such as adoption and appropriation as if the self was an other. This is where the matter of *ownness* becomes important in regard to authenticity and where one's awareness and realization need to be exhibited in regard to his consciousness of the various constraints. Hence, authenticity through consciousness, through authorial intention and critical stance, and not in regard to the dominant figure of the hyper-individual artist in search for truisms of spontaneity and original creation but, instead, as the realization of a multilayered construction which acts in terms of postproduction. A way of addressing this complex notion that eventually becomes related to a figure of the artist which instead of the Caspar David Friedrich *Wanderer* (see Figure 11) takes the character of the multiplicity of the mosaic in the painting of Francis Alÿs at the beginning of this chapter.

The question on authenticity in this text is, therefore, not an argument for the re-establishment of the hyper individual figure in the making of art, it is rather the opening of it to its multitude form and its multiplicity, and whether this can be related to the notion of

authenticity through *ownness* and the authority it may as such be having upon its own acts. Consequently, the argument of this text is that such a relation to authenticity is indeed possible and this takes place through the making, namely through *praxis*, *Bildung*, and *Gestaltung*, in any form these may be uttered, even if this is immaterial and intangible. Becoming thus a conceptual gesture through which the artist comes to presence along with his dispersed and expanded agency; a gesture and operation for which the artist's -author's- hand is a prerequisite in order for it to take place and which, at the same time, brings him back to life.

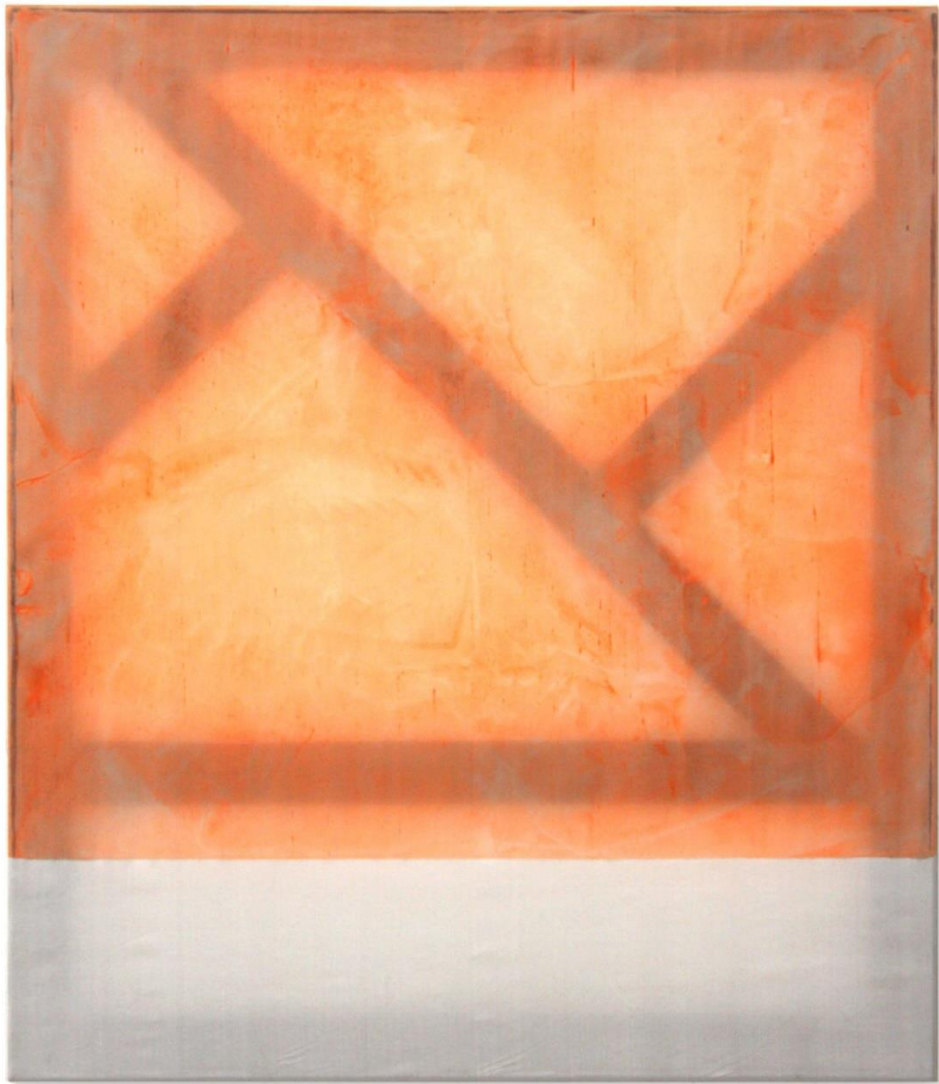


Figure 29  
Giorgos Kontis, Untitled, 2019



Figure 30  
Giorgos Kontis, Untitled, 2019



## *Incommensurability | Groping in the Dark*

*Praxis, poiesis* and poetry, as well as the sense of silence these need in order to take place, become a very important factor in the return of the author along with the hand of the artist and the artist's gesture. The significance of the artist's gesture and hand is not because of their physical aspect and of the verification through them of a handmade quality in the making of the artwork but because they require (yet also signify) the presence of an agency in this making. As such they can be seen even as intangible figures and gestures that denote the presence of the artist/author. Painting comes as both this gesture and *praxis*, through which the artist's idiom may find the chance to emerge and where gesture can itself be manifested. Through the act of painting as one of engaging with the palimpsest character of the white canvas, where emptiness is seeming and non-existing, one confronts the echoing of times and voices on it as well as the realisation of the decentering of the maker this engenders. The maker confronts the painted image which has become animated, having taken the form of an eidolon in front of him, looking back at him and, through this, questioning his acts, role, and authority. Gesture becomes nonetheless manifested -and through this the artist as well- bringing him back to presence, although dispersed and decentered. The tandem of the artist with gesture is fundamental and the same as to the one between *logos* and the subject who utters it; gesture requires the artist in order to come to presence and the artist/author becomes himself manifested and comes to existence through the manifestation of the gesture. This operation takes place on the white canvas and the painted image that become the theatre of this and eventually agencies with a timeless dimension.

Painting comes as the *topos* of the interval, as a language that may require a sense of silence to find its function. It comes as seeming emptiness which includes the echoing of other voices and, through this, memory. A way meaning to radiate through ellipsis and through seeing -becoming activated through seeing- through the incorporation of a gaze that becomes eventually palindrome and reciprocal. Painting as a gesture that veils yet unveils as well, and as one through which the individual becomes dispersed yet celebrated, becomes lost yet comes to presence.

The subject becomes eventually reconstituted and the author returns, though, the challenge is not there, rather the challenge is in the incommensurability thus the absence of any measure and in the eventual loss of control and of memory. How can one claim any *ownness* when he doesn't seem to have any control over what he utters, a matter of control not over one's own acts (nor on one being used by language instead of using it) but as a matter regarding the signification and possible meanings of one's utterances, when living in the absence of any measure? What seemed to be a simple operation of correspondence between signifiers and meaning in structuralism, has been torn apart with deconstruction and post-structuralism, with *différance* and deferral, as well as with the relativity of different contexts. Even when the artist may be eventually reconstituted and re-established as an emancipated individual, conscious and aware of his multiple singularity and multi-layered form, how can he claim any control and authority upon his own acts and works and the meaning produced by them when they all seem to be in a state of flux. How can one operate, utter *logos* or gestures and claim any authority upon them within this state of flux? Especially in painting and in the signification of images as in this complex relation, based on seeing and incorporating the function of the eidolon, the non-certainty in what may be communicated seems to become

proliferated. This accordingly undoes or places a very challenging question mark on the function of formalism as the forms instead of being pure are rather impure and full of ever-changing meaning<sup>179</sup>.

Formalism has taken a similar function to the mythologies that have been mentioned earlier as a harbour and bastion for certainty regarding specific criteria in the use of art. A certainty in formalism as a material language which one may be in place to possess and use after mastering the technical and material side of the type of art he works with and the content this may radiate. A logic that may be trying to keep its distance from mere technique but may as well be regarded as a transferal of the function of mastery of the old masters in modern or post-modern art through the way one delves into his material and gains an insight into a specialized and almost secret language. A logic that stands for a form of a technical specialization, as well as an endeavour to strive, yet again, for the profound and essential. To strive for the pure where this is just another fallacy. Artistic forms, contrary to being empty, are full of signifiers and content since every shape, gesture, alteration in the material, tactility or colour hue create a different relation with the beholder, generating and radiating different signs. This can be approached from the mere material side and the language it creates but, also, from all the different contexts that surround them and project meaning on them such as history and the sociological and political conditions. Is purity meant to work through a bodily relation to the work, through bodily memory and primordial shapes that are imprinted in human brain? Is it because of art history and general human knowledge that every shape or form would signify specific contents? Does this occur through a collective memory and subconscious? In any case the forms rather than blank and empty are full of content – whatever this may be-, and instead of pure they are totally impure, caught in a network of signifiers and becoming a screen for the beholder to further project on them different contents. Furthermore, and as the argument of these last paragraphs states, their content is not even a specific matter but is rather in a state of flux and (as in the case of the aforementioned Lacan's can) the signifiers, rather than passively radiating their content, look back at the viewer and seem to actively engage with him in a reciprocal manner.

Any attempt to set a measure, perhaps an index or vocabulary, and create some sort of certainty through formalism becomes futile, and the act of painting comes through the non-existence of measure as an act in the dark. Besides the aforementioned eventual celebration of the self, painting becomes also a gesture of its annihilation, and eventually a form of a negation and denial of the self. A dispersal of the self, once more, in the acceptance of the non-possibility of any control over the act of painting through the non-certainty of what may be signified. A realization that the painted image may after all function in its own way and beyond the artist's intentions to the point that this questions even one's basic endeavors for expression through it; an act which one is almost impossible to own. As an act in the dark and despite one's endeavours to be conscious, painting becomes an operation beyond control, adrift and suspended in a network of ever-changing significations and memory. An act where one functions in the fallacy of pre-calculating everything or improvising instinctively but, eventually, gropes in the dark in a desperate effort to find a refuge, to find the personal tiny space. A struggle for some sense to be made on the ground of a language that dwells in incommensurability; non-manageable and non-predictable, only perhaps in time, with the bird's-eye view that may be offered by it and with the realization of its inescapable temporality. A view that can only take place in retrospect rendering the act in present time

one in blindfold. The *leap* does not seem to belong here, it is rather a myth and quixotism, and what this underlines is the stiff temporality of time and the artist's bond with his era, with its temporary memory, its specific features and significations.

The painted image becomes the host of such an operation and an active participant in its absurdity, an operation in blindfold, the uncertainty of which is perhaps the reason why so many times artists have strived to reach an essential truth, a profound measure. An ever-changing context that surrounds the instant of time in the temporality in which one acts. This manifold image consisted of countless temporalities and bearing them all is the dialectical image. It is what brings all of these elements together in a dialogue, yet such a dialogue, given the specific temporality within which it takes place in every instance, becomes different in its own repetition. As such it comes in place to become an archetype in every instance it becomes reconstituted. An archetype which is both temporal and atemporal and which is founded on the multiplicity and co-existence of voices, memories and temporalities, and the relations or rather the dialogue these create. This manifold image is nothing else than the dialectical image which comes inevitably in a state of flux, a groundless ground upon which the artist finds himself and strives to achieve a personal mark, strives to reach a sense of *ownness*. The act of groping in the dark becomes emblematic as it requires reconciliation with the unknown of the darkness as well as with the unknown of language and logos. It becomes emblematic as it is one's endeavour to set a ground and to own this ground. A decision and endeavour to strive for *ownness* in denial, in the uncertainty of this groundless ground and with the reconciliation with one's dispersal; yet this decision becomes fundamental as it is a matter of existence.

## Glossary

### Aesthetic Regime

'The aesthetic regime of the arts is first of all a new regime for relating to the past. It actually sets up as the very principle of artisticity the expressive relationship inherent in a time and a state of civilization, a relationship that was previously considered to be the 'non-artistic' part of works of art (the part that was excused by invoking the crudeness of the times when the author lived). The aesthetic regime of the arts invents its revolutions on the basis of the same idea that caused it to invent the museum and art history, the notion of classicism and new forms of reproduction. . . And it devotes itself to the invention of new forms of life on the basis of an idea of what art *was*, an idea of what art *would have been*.'

Jacques Ranciere, *The politics of Aesthetics*, Bloomsbury Academic, London, 2013, p.20

'The aesthetic regime of the arts does not contrast the old with the new. It contrasts, more profoundly, two regimes of historicity. It is within the mimetic regime that the old stands in contrast with the new. In the aesthetic regime of art, the future of art, its separation from the present of non-art, incessantly restages the past.' Ibid, p.20

'Aesthetic Regime of Art (Le Regime esthetique de l'art)

Although traces of this regime are already to be found in such authors as Vico and Cervantes, it has only come to play a dominant role in the last two centuries. The aesthetic regime abolishes the hierarchical distribution of the sensible characteristic of the representative regime of art, including the privilege of speech over visibility as well as the hierarchy of the arts, their subject matter, and their genres. By promoting the equality of represented subjects, the indifference of style with regard to content, and the immanence of meaning in things themselves, the aesthetic regime destroys the system of genres and isolates 'art' in the singular, which it identifies with the paradoxical unity of opposites: *logos* and *pathos*. However, the singularity of art enters into an interminable contradiction due to the fact that the aesthetic regime also calls into question the very distinction between art and other activities. Strictly speaking, the egalitarian regime of the sensible can only isolate arts specificity at the expense of losing it. DI 21, 88, 120-1, 125-53; FC 14-18; HAS; IE 25-32; LPA; PA 22-9, 43-4; PM 17-30, 43-52, 86-9; WA.'

Ibid, pp.84-85 (Glossary of Technical Terms)

### Aesthetic Unconscious

'Aesthetic Unconscious (L'Inconscient esthetique)

Coextensive with the aesthetic regime of art, the aesthetic unconscious is paradoxically polarized between the two extremes that characterize silent speech. On the one hand, meaning is inscribed like hieroglyphics on the body of things and waits to be deciphered. On the other hand, an unfathomable silence that no voice can adequately render acts as an insurmountable obstacle to signification and meaning. This contradictory conjunction between speech and silence, *logos* and *pathos*, is not equivalent to the Freudian unconscious or other

later interpretations. It is, in fact, the historical terrain upon which competing conceptions of the unconscious have emerged.

IE 41-2, 70-1, 76-7; LPA 20.'

Jacques Ranciere, *The politics of Aesthetics*, Bloomsbury Academic, London, 2013, p.20  
(Glossary of Technical Terms)

### **Archi-writing**

'Arche-writing, movement of differance, irreducible arche-synthesis, opening in one and the same possibility, temporalization as well as relationship with the other and language, cannot, as the condition of all linguistic systems, form a part of the linguistic system itself and be situated as an object in its field. (Which does not mean it has a real field elsewhere, another assignable site.) Its concept could in no way enrich the scientific, positive, and "immanent" (in the Hjelmslevian sense) description of the system itself. Therefore, the founder of glossematics would no doubt have questioned its necessity, as he rejects, en bloc and legitimately, all the extralinguistic theories which do not arise from the irreducible immanence of the linguistic system. He would have seen in that notion one of those appeals to experience which a theory should dispense with. He would not have understood why the name writing continued to be used for that X which becomes so different from what has always been called "writing".

I have already begun to justify this word, and especially the necessity of the communication between the concept of arche-writing and the vulgar concept of writing submitted to deconstruction by it. I shall continue to do so below. As for the concept of experience, it is most unwieldy here. Like all the notions I am using here, it belongs to the history of metaphysics and we can only use it under erasure [sous rature]. "Experience" has always designated the relationship with a presence, whether that relationship had the form of consciousness or not. At any rate, we must, according to this sort of contortion and contention which the discourse is obliged to undergo, exhaust the resources of the concept of experience before attaining and in order to attain, by deconstruction, its ultimate foundation. It is the only way to escape "empiricism" and the "naive" critiques of experience at the same time. Thus, for example, the experience whose "theory," Hjelmslev says, "must be independent" is not the whole of experience. It always corresponds to a certain type of factual or regional experience (historical, psychological, physiological, sociological, etc.) , giving rise to a science that is itself regional and, as such, rigorously outside linguistics. That is not so at all in the case of experience as arche-writing. The parenthesizing of regions of experience or of the totality of natural experience must discover a field of transcendental experience.'

Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1997, pp.60-61

### **Authenticity**

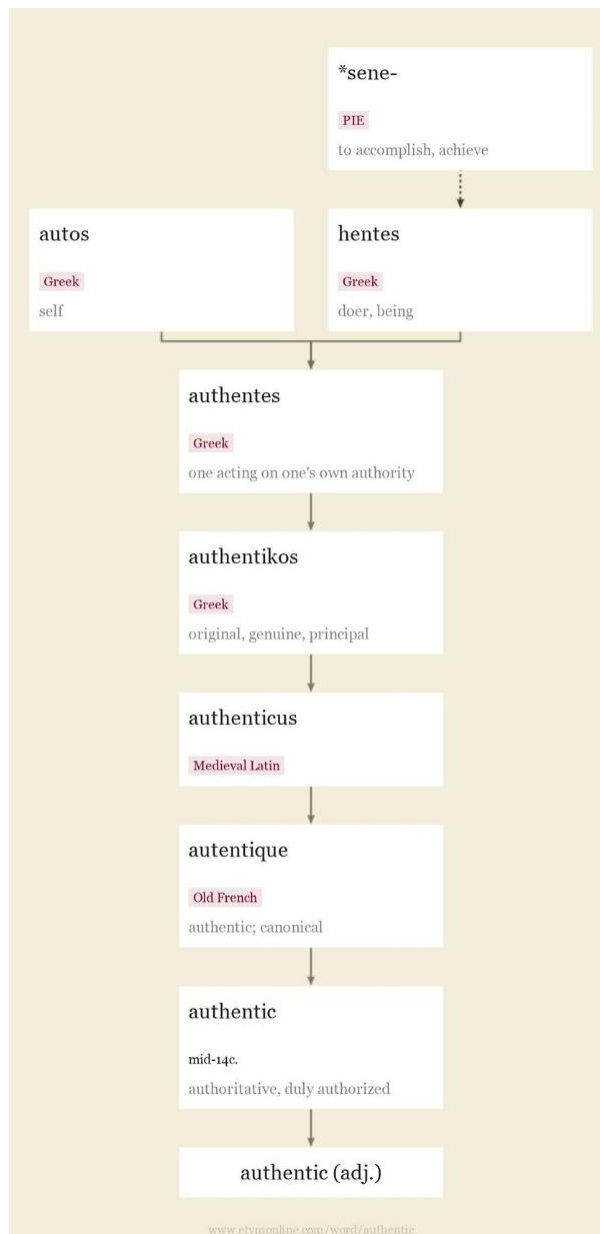
authenticity (n.)

1760, from authentic + -ity. Earlier were authenticity (1650s), authenticness (1620s).

authentic (adj.)

mid-14c., autentik, "authoritative, duly authorized" (a sense now obsolete), from Old French autentique "authentic; canonical" (13c., Modern French authentique) and directly from Medieval Latin authenticus, from Greek authentikos "original, genuine, principal," from authentes "one acting on one's own authority," from autos "self" (see auto-) + hentes "doer, being," from PIE root \*sene- (2) "to accomplish, achieve." Sense of "real, entitled to acceptance as factual" is first recorded mid-14c.

Traditionally in modern use, authentic implies that the contents of the thing in question correspond to the facts and are not fictitious (hence "trustworthy, reliable"); while genuine implies that the reputed author is the real one and that we have it as it left the author's hand (hence "unadulterated"); but this is not always maintained: "The distinction which the 18th c. apologists attempted to establish between genuine and authentic ... does not agree well with the etymology of the latter word, and is not now recognized" [OED].



'Authenticity' & 'Authentic', from Online Etymology Dictionary [Online]. available at:  
<https://www.etymonline.com/word/authenticity> &  
<https://www.etymonline.com/word/authentic>  
(Accessed: 5 June 2019)

## **Bildung**

'But on the other hand, the resolution was envisaged in the *Darstellung* (the presentation, the figuration, the staging -to point to a highly equivocal word) of the never substantial "substance" of the "subject" by means of the *Beautiful* (in art, nature, or culture). Or rather, because we have already intruded upon romanticism in characterizing these three instances as instances of the Beautiful, let us say that the resolution was envisaged in the *Darstellung* of the "subject" by means of the Beautiful in works of art (the formation of *Bilder* able to present liberty and morality analogically), by means of the "formative power" (*bildende Kraft*) of nature and life within nature (the formation of the organism), and finally by means of the *Bildung* of humanity (what we retain under the concepts of history and culture). It is necessary to emphasize the *Bilden*, here, in a more rigorously Kantian manner, in order to underline (1)the solely analogical character of *Darstellung* (analogy having become very distant from its traditional concept, as attested, for example, if one can even call it an example, by the role of the *sublime*, taken as the presentation of the unrepresentable); (2)the strictly unknowable character of life, of the formative power, insofar as for us it has no *analogon*; and (3)the infinite character of the process of human *Bildung* (with which Kant, in the eighteenth century, departing radically from the *Aufklärung*, represents the first view of history that refers its telos to infinity).'

Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Literary Absolute*, State university of New York 1998, pp.31-32

'*Bildung* as completion designates something that is removed from becoming and from the effort of *bilden* itself. In a sense, it constitutes the System as a pure conjunction of form with itself: the *Bild* -or Idea- present at last, and above all present to itself.'

Ibid, p.55

'in contrast to what takes place in the *Fragments* (where *Bildung* is understood as an immediate "putting-into-form"), *Bildung* is conceived as a *process*. *Bildung* is not yet completed, according to the "system" established by the *Ideas*: "As yet," says "idea" 96, "there exist no wholly cultivated human beings." The "society of artists" is thus nothing other than the utopia of completed *Bildung*.'

Ibid, p.69

'*Bildung* means the complete development of all human powers, especially one's powers as a human being, but also those unique to oneself. Now given such a goal, it is obvious that it would be unduly narrow to limit the romantic program to literature alone.'

Frederick C. Beiser, *The Romantic Imperative*, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 2003, p.22

'The German term *Bildung* is notoriously untranslatable. Depending on the context, it can mean education, culture, and development. It means literally "formation," implying the development of something potential, inchoate, and implicit into something actual, organized,

and explicit. Sometimes the various connotations of the term join together to signify the educational process or product of acculturation, or the ethical process or product of self-realization.'

Ibid, p.26

## Darstellung

'As is the case in *The Literary Absolute*, Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy's treatment of this relation between "literature and philosophy" has often involved the problematic of presentation or *Darstellung*. *Darstellung*, which in modern philosophy generally designates the rendering of a concept in terms of sense, or a sensibilization (*Versinnlichung*), has a long and complex history. The term translates the Latin *exhibitio*, which is itself a translation, in turn, of the Greek *hupotúposis*, a sketch, an outline, a draft of a book, a model or pattern. As a rhetorical term, homologous to illustration or demonstration, *hupotúposis* is defined in Quintilian as a figure by which a matter is vividly sketched in words. Above all, *hupotúposis* involves *sensible* presentation, and particularly presentation of a *specular* nature; it speaks to the eye rather than the ear, and forms an "image," a "image," a "tableau," or even a "scène vivante," according to Dumarsais and later Fontanier. In the eighteenth century, Herder and others use *Darstellung* to translate the Aristotelian concept of *mimesis*, and it subsequently plays an important role in the aesthetics of Goethe and Schiller. The term enters modern philosophy when, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.'

Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Literary Absolute*, State university of New York 1998, (in the Translator's Introduction by Philip Barnard and Cheryl Lester), p.viii

'presentation [*Dastellung*] see also ANALOGY, CONSTRUCTION, HYPOTYPOSIS, JUDGEMENT, REPRESENTATION, SCHEMATISM, SYNTHESIS

Presentation is a specific function of determinant judgement which consists in presentation (*exhibitio*) of an intuition which corresponds to a given concept (see CJ §VIII). The nature of presentation is further specified in FI (*First Introduction to the Critique of Judgement*), where it is situated with respect to the 'three acts of the spontaneous faculty of cognition'. The first act is the '*apprehension (apprehensio)* of the manifold of intuition' which requires imagination; the second is synthesis or 'the synthetic unity of consciousness of this manifold in the concept of an object'; while the third is '*presentation (exhibitio)* in intuition of the object corresponding to this concept' (p. 220, p. 24). It is one of a cluster of terms Kant uses to describe the extremely complex relationship between concept and intuition, and which enables their synthesis to take place.'

Howard Caygill, *A Kant Dictionary*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 1995, p.332

## Différance

The difference between *différance* and difference is the letter a in the place of the letter e. A displacement which doesn't become realized phonetically as *différance* is pronounced in French in the same manner as difference, rendering this a matter which occurs only in writing.



This neographism in neither a word nor a concept and Derrida is more interesting in the general system that the economy of this disorder creates and talks about *différance* being a *sheaf*, an assemblage with complex structures of weaving and different lines of meaning.

‘There is nowhere to *begin* to trace the sheaf or the graphics of *différance*. For what is put into question is precisely the quest for a rightful beginning, an absolute point of departure, a principal responsibility. The problematic of writing is opened by putting into question the value *arkhé*.’ (Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, The University of Chicago Press, 1982, p.6)

A semantic analysis of *différance* for Derrida would show that it comes from *différer* (from Latin *differre*), having two meanings in French which are in English two separate words: to defer and to differ. The Latin *differre* is not simply a translation of the Greek *diapherein* as the latter

‘does not comport one of the two motifs of the Latin *differre*, to wit, the action of putting off until later, of taking into account, of taking account of time and of the forces of an operation that implies an economical calculation, a detour, a delay, a relay, a reserve, a representation – concepts that I would summarize here in a word I have never used but that could be inscribed in this chain: *temporization*’ (Ibid, p.8).

*Différance* creates a rupture in the function of the semiotic sign as the latter through *différance* may take the character of an ‘originary’ *différance* and form an *archi*, *telos*, *eshaton* that denote presence, *ousia*, *parousia* –forms that hold a sense of autonomy and cannot, eventually, be related to the function of the sign (Ibid, pp.9-10). This non-accordance of *différance* with the function of the semiotic sign is what has made it a central post-structuralist notion due to the way it does not follow the conditions for signification in semiology. Instead, Derrida proposes a more flexible form for *différance*, one that constantly differs and defers in a way that produces archi-writing and archi-trace, and one that relates to time and to the present, particularly in the form of an interval which ‘is what might be called spacing, the becoming-space of time or the becoming-time of space (*temporization*).’ (Ibid, p.13).

‘The first consequence to be drawn from this is that the signified concept is never present in and of itself, in a sufficient presence that would refer only to itself. Essentially and lawfully, every concept is inscribed in a chain or in a system within which it refers to the other, to other concepts, by means of the systematic play of differences. Such a play, *différance*, is thus no longer simply a concept, but rather the possibility of conceptuality, of a conceptual process and system in general. For the same reason, *différance*, which is not a concept, is not simply a word, that is, what is generally represented as the calm, present, and self-referential unity of concept and phonic material.’ (Ibid, p.11)

The concept and word ‘sign’ and ‘signifier’ must be abandoned for Derrida (Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, The University of Chicago Press, 1980, p.281) and *différance* takes an almost ontological dimension, one that through the *temporality* of the *interval* and the *play*

with the ever-changing relations and conditions in it (rather than the more fixed way that meaning and signification function in semiotics), becomes related to the epochal character of phenomenology.

‘To think the ontological difference doubtless remains a difficult task, and any statement of it has remained almost inaudible. Further, to prepare, beyond our *logos*, for a *différance* so violent that it can be interpellated neither as the epochality of Being nor as ontological difference, is not in any way to dispense with the passage through the truth of Being, or to "criticize," "contest," or misconstrue its incessant necessity. On the contrary, we must stay within the difficulty of this passage, and repeat it in the rigorous reading of metaphysics, wherever metaphysics normalizes Western discourse, and not only in the texts of the "history of philosophy." As rigorously as possible we must permit to appear/disappear the trace of what exceeds the truth of Being. The trace (of that) which can never be presented, the trace which itself can never be presented: that is, appear and manifest itself, as such, in its phenomenon. The trace beyond that which profoundly links fundamental ontology and phenomenology. Always differing and deferring, the trace is never as it is in the presentation of itself. It erases itself in presenting itself, muffles itself in resonating, like the a writing itself, inscribing its pyramid in *différance*.’

(Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, The University of Chicago Press, 1982, pp.22-23)

## **Enframing**

*‘Enframing [Gestell] means the gathering together of the setting-upon that sets upon man, i.e., challenges him forth, to reveal the actual, in the mode of ordering, as standing-reserve. Enframing means the way of revealing that holds sway in the essence of modern technology and that is itself nothing technological.’*

Martin Heidegger, *The question Concerning Technology*, in *Basic Writings*, edited by David Farrell Krell, Harper Perennial, New York, 2008, p.325

“The name for the gathering of this challenge which places man and Being face to face in such a way that they challenge each other by turns is ‘the framework’ [ge-stell]. That in which and from which man and Being are of concern to each other in the technological world claims us in the manner of the framework. In the mutual confrontation of man and Being we discern the claim that determines the constellation of our age. The framework concerns us everywhere, immediately.”

Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1969, p.35

Enframing becomes a key word for Heidegger, especially in the relation of man with technology and language as well as with the ‘they’ (Das Man). Both technology and language are for Heidegger not plain tools but rather form man’s existence and way of thinking. The enframing becomes a central term in this regard as it indicates the conditions that form man’s dwelling in the world, through which he is related to Being in a ‘belonging together’ which may lead to the event of appropriation. Appropriation becomes, in its turn, crucial as through

'resoluteness', 'decisiveness' and 'perdurance' it might become related to the 'unconcealment' and to matters of authenticity in terms of ownness (*Eigentlichkeit*).

### **Epoché (or bracketing)**

'Gradually Husserl began to think that this realm of ideal meanings and meaning-generating acts, and their structures, could be studied independently only through a special method of approach. This method involves 'bracketing' or 'suspending' all our natural attitudes towards the objects in the world and towards our psychological acts, suspending all our theories about these matters, and leading back our attention to these pure essences of consciousness. This led Husserl to postulate a number of *phenomenological* and, later, *transcendental reductions*, according to which all our assumptions and prejudices belonging to our normal worldly consciousness (or 'natural attitude', *die natürliche Einstellung*) need to be bracketed, put aside, suspended, or to use a term taken from the Greek Sceptics, to put under an *epoché* (meaning a 'cessation' or 'suspension'), in order to be led back to the unprejudiced sources of experience. Husserl compared this bracketing with Descartes's methodical doubt in the *Meditations (Ideas I § 31)*. The aim of both is to expose the transcendental structures of consciousness itself. Husserl began to see more parallels between his investigations and Descartes's new science and Kant's critique of pure reason.'

Dermot Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, Routledge, London, 2000, p.136

### **Event of Appropriation (Ereignis)**

'The Belonging together of man and Being in the manner of mutual challenge drives home to us with startling force that and how man is delivered over to the ownership of Being and Being is appropriate to the essence of man. Within the framework there prevails a strange ownership and a strange appropriation. We must experience simply this owning in which man and Being are delivered over to each other, that is, we must enter into what we call the event of appropriation. [...] For in the event of appropriation the possibility arises that it may overcome the mere dominance of the frame to turn it into a more original appropriating. Such a transformation of the frame into the event of appropriation, by virtue of that event, would bring the appropriate recovery –appropriate, hence never to be produced by man alone-of the world of technology from its dominance back to servitude in the realm by which man reaches more truly into the event of appropriation.'

Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1969, pp.36-37

### **Eigentlichkeit**

*Eigentlichkeit* (ownness) is the word Heidegger uses for authenticity -along occasionally with *Echtheit* (realness, genuineness)- and means ownness. Jean-Luc Nancy approaches the use of

these terms by Heidegger in his *The Decision of Existence* (in *The Birth to Presence*, Stanford University Press 1993)

“Ownness” and “authenticity”, no doubt, are not without a certain relation. But, as it happens, thought about the decision of existence proposes, precisely, to make an essential distinction between the two, in spite of this relation. Therefore, translation must not decide on an “authenticity” of meaning by repressing *echt* with *véritable* (Martineau) or promoting *ownness* to *authenticity*. Heidegger himself says that he employs *Eigentlichkeit* and *Uneigentlichkeit* “terminologically”, that is, as technical terms, taken “in their strict sense”. What more there is to say, if not this: that decision-modification must not look to some “authenticity” floating in the air, but rather to the very *ownness* of the ownlessness in which and as which existence exists, each time and constantly.’ p.100

The adjective *eigen*, 'own, separate, peculiar, strange, etc.', was the perfect participle of a defunct verb meaning 'to have, possess', and thus originally meant 'possessed, taken into possession'. *Eigen* gave rise to *eigentlich* 'real(ly), actual(ly), true(ly), original (ly), etc' To say that DASEIN is not *eigentlich* might thus mean that it is not real, or not really Dasein. But Heidegger denies this, and connects *eigentlich* closely with *eigen*: Dasein 'is essentially something that can be authentic [eigentliches], that is, something of its own [zueigen]' (BT, 42). Hence *eigentlich*, when used as a technical term, is close to 'authentic', which comes from the Greek *autos*, 'self, etc' and originally meant 'done by one's own hand', hence 'reliably guaranteed'. Heidegger uses *uneigentlich*, normally 'not literal(ly), figurative(ly)', as the opposite of *eigentlich*. He also uses *Eigentlichkeit*, 'authenticity', and coins *Uneigentlichkeit*, 'inauthenticity'. These do not coincide with 'genuine [echt]' and 'false [unecht]': 'There is a false authenticity, i.e. a false case of Dasein's being-at-home-with-itself [Beisichselbstein], and a genuine inauthenticity, i.e. a genuine loss of itself that arises from the concrete Dasein in question' (XXI, 226f; cf. BT, 146). Primarily it is Dasein that is (in) authentic. Everything else that is (in) authentic - temporality, the future, etc. - is so in relation to Dasein's (in)authenticity. Michael Inwood, *A Heidegger Dictionary*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 1999, pp.22-23

## Formalism

Formalism is the study of art based on the forms of an artwork and its mere physical elements and aspects. An analysis of its formal properties, its material components and attributes. In terms of painting, a formalist critic would focus on the pure visual aspects of the work as, for instance, colour, texture, shapes and forms, brushstrokes, the overall composition, the way the paint would react to light and its glossiness. Maurice Denis' famous 1890 dictum from his *Definition of Neo-Traditionalism* was of great influence for modern art and for formalism: 'Remember that a painting – before being a battle horse, a nude woman, or an anecdote of some sort – is essentially a flat surface covered with colours, put together in a certain order'. Alfred H. Barr Jr, *Cubism and Abstract Art*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1936, p.24.

The equivalent of Formalism in literature is regarded to be New Criticism. Formalism reached its peak in the 1960s where the American art critic Clement Greenberg was its most influential figure, a time where it started becoming challenged by postmodernism, conceptual art, and poststructuralism.

‘So far from forcefully unsettling the tradition of Anglo-American formalism, such a pragmatic gesture serves as one more way of keeping authorial subjectivity in abeyance. What the New Critics called ‘objective meaning’, the poststructuralists ‘textuality’, and Knapp and Michaels’ ‘intention – for all their differences in ethos – serve the common purpose of emptying out the author-problematic.’

Sean Burke, *The Death and Return of the Author*, Edinburgh University Press, (second edition) 1998, p.187

‘Formal properties are those aesthetic properties that are determined solely by sensory or physical properties –so long as the physical properties in question are not relations to other things or other times. This would capture the intuitive idea that formal properties are those aesthetic properties that are directly perceivable or that are determined by properties that are directly perceivable. The only trouble is that some philosophers think that all aesthetic properties are dispositions to provoke responses in human beings, and it is not clear whether any such dispositions would be formal properties on the straightforward account. In order to finesse this difficulty, and in order to keep things as simple as possible, I shall stipulate that the word “narrow” includes both sensory properties, nonrelational physical properties and also any dispositions to provoke responses that might be thought to be partly constitutive of aesthetic properties. The word “broad” covers anything else. So we can blandly say: Formal properties are entirely determined by narrow nonaesthetic properties, whereas nonformal aesthetic properties are partly determined by broad nonaesthetic properties.’

Nick Zangwill, *The Metaphysics of Beauty*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 2001, pp.56-57

### **Leap (Sprung)**

The *leap* is what Heidegger describes in *Identity and Difference* as what is needed in order the belonging of man and Being to be experienced and to, eventually, lead to the *event of appropriation*. This may be as well a way to move beyond the *enframing*.

‘We do not as yet enter the domain of the *belonging* together. How can such an entry come about? By our moving away from the attitude of representational thinking. This move is a leap in the sense of a spring. The spring leaps away, away from the habitual idea of man as the rational animal who in modern times has become a subject for his objects. Simultaneously, the spring also leaps away from Being. But Being, since the beginning of Western thought, has been interpreted as the ground in which every being as such is grounded.’

Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, Harper & Row 1969, p.32

Thus a spring is needed in order to experience authentically the *belonging* together of man and Being. This spring is the abruptness of the unbridged entry into that belonging which alone can grant a toward-each-other of man and Being, and thus the constellation of the two. The spring is the abrupt entry into the realm from which man and Being have already reached each other in their active nature, since both are mutually appropriated, extended as a gift, one to the other. Only the entry into the realm of this mutual appropriation determines and defines the experience of thinking. (Ibid, p.33)

## Logos

'logos (plural: *logoi*) (Greek, 'word', 'speech', 'reason'), term with the following main philosophical senses. (1) Rule, principle, law. E.g., in Stoicism the *logos* is the divine order and in Neoplatonism the intelligible regulating forces displayed in the sensible world. The term came thus to refer, in Christianity, to the Word of God, to the instantiation of his agency in creation, and, in the New Testament, to the person of Christ. (2) Proposition, account, explanation, thesis, argument.

E.g., Aristotle presents a *logos* from first principles. (3) Reason, reasoning, the rational faculty, abstract theory (as opposed to experience), discursive reasoning (as opposed to intuition). E.g., Plato's *Republic* uses the term to refer to the intellectual part of the soul. (4) Measure, relation, proportion, ratio. E.g., Aristotle speaks of the *logoi* of the musical scales. (5) Value, worth. E.g., Heraclitus speaks of the man whose *logos* is greater than that of others.'

*The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy Second Edition*, General Editor Robert Audi, (entry by Roger Crisp), Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp.518-519

'Being becomes present as Λόγος (logos) in the sense of ground, of allowing to let lie before us. The same Λόγος, as the gathering of what unifies, is the Έν. This Έν, however is twofold. For one thing, it is the unifying One in the sense of what is everything primal and thus most universal; and at the same time it is the unifying One in the sense of the All-Highest (Zeus). The Λόγος grounds and gathers everything into the universal, and accounts for and gathers everything in terms of the unique. It may be noted in passing that the same Λόγος also contains within itself the essential origin of the character, of all language, and thus determines the way of utterance as a logical way in the broader sense.'

Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York 1969, p.69

## Plasticity (Catherine Malabou)

'As Malabou explains in note 13 of *Plasticity at the Dusk of Writing* and also in *What Should We Do with Our Brain?*, plasticity's etymology is Greek, *plassein*, which means "to model" or "to mold", and it traditionally means the capacity to receive form as well as the ability to give form to something. In addition –and this is what provides plasticity with the unique significance in Malabou's thought- plasticity can mean the power to annihilate form, as in plastic explosives.' (in the foreword by Clayton Crockett)

In *Plasticity at the Dusk of Writing*, Catherine Malabou focuses on the notion of plasticity as well as on its diverse functions. Plasticity is a notion she has adopted from Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* on which though she does a different reading. Malabou approaches this notion mainly through Hegel, Heidegger and Derrida, and accordingly through dialectics, deconstruction, the function of the trace, and temporality. Besides philosophy, she approaches plasticity also in a scientific manner as the neurons' and brain's ability to adapt rather than having a solid, fixed form, as well as through the meaning plasticity, or plastic, has in French where 'to describe something as plastic is to recognize both its flexibility and its explosiveness, its capacity not only to receive and give form but to annihilate it as well' (from the description on the back cover of the book). Plasticity becomes an argument on flexibility, on the adaptation between meaning and forms that function as hosts, on a general fluidity that takes place in language and signification and the contexts surrounding these; a transformative or metamorphic structure and function which alters with each temporality. The relationship between form and content is a reason why Malabou is critical in this work on the notion of presentation as 'a definition that takes it for granted that the artistic event as thought by traditional philosophers is purely and simply a mode of presentation, that the mission of form would always be to convene the thing to presence, to rip it away from the secret, to make it say or incarnate, to assign it to residence in the light.' (p.55). Instead, she proposes that:

'We must pay our respects here to Jean-François Lyotard for giving both the formal and the figural their true dimension as *discourse events*, in his remarkable book *Discourse, Figure*. Not once in his book are form and figure confused with either beautiful appearance or the presence of beautiful appearance. In short, form and figure are never treated as *modes of presentation*. Both terms refer rather to the *relief of language*. This does not mean that everything is language or that art is dissolved in the linguistic. Rather, it means that art is part and parcel of the depth of language; that is, art is part of the referential function of language. The figural is the referent in as much as it is not present; *the function forms the pure spacing through which meaning is shaped.*' (p.55)

### **Schematism**

'Hannah Arendt, an unlikely reference for the treatment of Deleuze and Guattari, has a succinct formula for the schema. She also provides insight into Heidegger's texts on the issue. Indeed, Arendt, building on Heidegger's own explanation of the Kantian Schema through the concept of the image exemplified in the model of a house, bases her explication of the schema on an architectural example. 'The schema', she writes, 'through imagination, allows for the movement from the intuition to understanding'. In her definition of the schema, Arendt isolates the movement in the device. The schema is a dynamic device, the movement of which covers the terrain between intuition and understanding. The orientation of this movement is

directed from concrete to abstract levels of representation, hence the importance of imagination in concept creation in terms of images: 'And the way imagination produces the synthesis is by "providing an *image for a concept*". Such an image is called a "schema". This image cannot be witnessed empirically: 'it is not given even to "the eyes of the mind".' The schema is not an image as representation, but rather is like an image. It functions like an image; in other words, it is a process. It is not a representation because representation implies a final result; again, the schema is a process. An image then, is figuration, visualization, iconicity –which implies that it is not closed or figurative, it is not a copy or a tracing. But there is another meaning to image: it is a framed totality. It is designated and denominated. In her architectural example, Arendt conspicuously discusses these two levels of representation as either drawing or building a house.'

Jakub Zdebik, *Deleuze and the Diagram*, Bloomsbury Academic, London, 2012, p.127

'The formation of the schema [Schemabildung] is the making-sensible of concepts. How is the look of the immediately represented being related to what is represented of it in concepts?' Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, p.66, cited in Jakub Zdebik, *Deleuze and the Diagram*, Bloomsbury Academic, London, 2012, p.128

'[The image] is a product of the empirical faculty of productive imagination, the schema of sensible concepts (such as figures in space) is a product and as it were a monogram of pure *a priori* imagination, through which and in accordance with which the images first become possible.' (Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 141-2/B 181-2)

The image, is a first step, must then be attached to its concept. It can only be so through the schema. And the schema, at the same time that it connects the image to its concept, opens a gulf between the two that is never fully crossed: an incongruence must exist. The schema opens the rift by drawing attention to it. The gulf is already there. It is part of one matter, which is why it opens and closes at the same time: it is a contraction folding and unfolding instead of cutting and dividing. The schema simply outlines this process. The schema, then, cannot be converted into an image and remains unrepresentable. This unrepresentable state, however, has a shape. It is not the shape of an amalgam of many fragments of a house brought into a totality. The possible shape, if we can imagine, is the shape the synthesis would take if it could be perceived, as it brings the many fragments together.'

Ibid, p.132

'The schematism of judgement 'schematises concepts a priori and applies these schemata, without which no experiential judgement would be possible, to each empirical synthesis' (FI §V). It is a procedure of the judgement which adapts otherwise heterogenous concepts to the spatial and temporal conditions of intuition. As such it is a species of the genus hypotyposis or 'rendering in terms of sense' (CJ §59). Hypotyposis involves the presentation of concepts to intuitions, and it does so in two ways: directly by means of schemas, indirectly by means of symbols.'

Howard Caygill, *A Kant Dictionary*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 1995, p.360

'What all these have in common is that they make a category 'capable of representation only as a determination of time' (CPR A 145/B 184). Schematism and the schemas thus have the



property or 'realising' the categories at the same time as restricting their scope to appearances. They play a pivotal role in bringing together the otherwise empty 'thoughts without content' and blind 'intuitions without concepts' (CPR A 51/B 75). It is through schematism and the schemas that concepts, which are 'merely functions of the understanding', are given meaning in relation to sensibility 'which realises the understanding in the very process of restricting it' (CPR A 147/B 187).'

Ibid, p.361

### **Sous rature**

'In trying to understand Derrida's work one of the most important concepts to grasp is the idea of 'sous rature', a term usually translated as 'under erasure'. To put a term 'sous rature' is to write a word, cross it out, and then print both word and deletion. The idea is this: since the word is inaccurate, or, rather, inadequate, it is crossed out. Since it is necessary it remains legible. This strategically important device which Derrida uses derives from Martin Heidegger, who often crossed out the word Being (like this: ~~Being~~ ) and let both deletion and work stand because the word was *inadequate yet necessary*.'

Madan Sarup, *An Introductory Guide to Post-Structuralism and Postmodernism*, Second Edition, Harvester Wheatsheaf Campus, Hertfordshire, 1993, pp. 32-33

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Retrieved from: <a href="https://www.louvre.fr/en/moteur-de-recherche-oeuvres?page=14&amp;f_search_art=greek+art&amp;nrppage=10&amp;s=artist&amp;dir=a">https://www.louvre.fr/en/moteur-de-recherche-oeuvres?page=14&amp;f_search_art=greek+art&amp;nrppage=10&amp;s=artist&amp;dir=a</a> (Accessed: 21 July 2019)	
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2015	
Acrylic and collage on birch plywood	
27 x 21 cm	



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Zoe Leonard	
<i>Untitled Aerial</i>	
1988 - 2008	
Gelatin silver print	
60.6 x 44.1 cm / 23 7/8 x 17 3/8 in	
© Zoe Leonard	
Retrieved from: <a href="https://www.hauserwirth.com/hauser-wirth-exhibitions/22454-zoe-leonard?modal=media-player&amp;mediaType=artwork&amp;mediald=22705">https://www.hauserwirth.com/hauser-wirth-exhibitions/22454-zoe-leonard?modal=media-player&amp;mediaType=artwork&amp;mediald=22705</a> (Accessed: 21 July 2019)	
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2019	
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1817	
Oil on canvas	
94,8 x 74,8 cm	
Standort, Dauerleihgabe der Stiftung Hamburger Kunstsammlungen, erworben 1970	
Referenz, Inv. Nr. HK-5161	
Department, Sammlung: 19. Jahrhundert	
Copyright © SHK/Hamburger Kunsthalle/bpk Foto: Elke Walford	
Retrieved from: <a href="https://www.hamburger-kunsthalle.de/sammlung-online/caspar-david-friedrich/wanderer-ueber-dem-nebelmeer#">https://www.hamburger-kunsthalle.de/sammlung-online/caspar-david-friedrich/wanderer-ueber-dem-nebelmeer#</a> (Accessed: 26 June, 2019)	
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Untitled	
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Encaustic, oil and acrylic on linen  
46 x 36 cm

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Untitled

2017

Encaustic on linen

46 x 36 cm

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Jacopo Tintoretto

*The Muses*, 1578

Oil on canvas | 206.0 x 310.3 x 4.6 cm (support, canvas/panel/str external) | RCIN 405476

Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2019

Retrieved from: <https://www.rct.uk/collection/405476/the-muses> (Accessed: 23 July, 2019)

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Erasmus Quellinus II or Jan Erasmus Quellinus

*Jupiter, Semele and Juno*

Third quarter of the 17<sup>th</sup> century

Retrieved from:

[https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:Zeus,\\_Semele\\_und\\_Hera.\\_Fl%C3%A4misch,\\_3.\\_Viertel\\_17.\\_Jahrhundert\\_\(Erasmus\\_Quellinus\\_II\\_oder\\_Jan\\_Erasmus\\_Quellinus\).jpg](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:Zeus,_Semele_und_Hera._Fl%C3%A4misch,_3._Viertel_17._Jahrhundert_(Erasmus_Quellinus_II_oder_Jan_Erasmus_Quellinus).jpg) (Accessed: 23 July, 2019)

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British Army Recruitment Campaign 2018

*This is Belonging*

By Karmarama

Video still

Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Jj2Fm8pRBI&list=PLT7MnaHh-LAnuYUleKT6CQSCOqibHSbqO> (Accessed: 23 July, 2019)

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British Army Recruitment Campaign 2018

*This is Belonging*

By Karmarama

Retrieved from: <https://belongingworks.com/2017/01/18/symbols-of-belonging/> (Accessed: 23 July, 2019)

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The wording on a slogan is changed after letters fell away from the backdrop as Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May addresses the Conservative Party conference in Manchester, October 4, 2017. REUTERS/Phil Noble

Retrieved from: <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/theresa-mays-conference-speech-epic-11285903> (accessed: 26 June, 2019)

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1917 (replica 1964), Porcelain, c. 360 x 480 x 610 cm, Tate Gallery, London, UK	
© Succession Marcel Duchamp/ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2019	
Retrieved from: <a href="https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/duchamp-fountain-t07573">https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/duchamp-fountain-t07573</a> (Accessed: 21 July 2019)	
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<i>Verblast</i> , 1967–68	
Medium	
Pencil on two sheets of paper	
Dimensions	
10 x 8 1/2" (25.4 x 21.6 cm) (each)	
© 2019 Richard Serra / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York	
Retrieved from: <a href="https://bodyasform.wordpress.com/2013/03/01/richard-serra/">https://bodyasform.wordpress.com/2013/03/01/richard-serra/</a> (accessed: 26 June, 2019)	
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*Höhere Wesen befehlen: rechte obere Ecke schwarz malen!*  
*(The Higher Powers Command: Paint the Upper Right Corner Black!)*  
1969  
Synthetic paint on canvas  
151,2 x 126,1 x 3 cm  
(artwork © Estate of Sigmar Polke)  
Collection Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, The Netherlands  
Photograph: Peter Cox, Eindhoven, The Netherlands  
Used with the kind permission of the Van Abbemuseum

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Giorgos Kontis  
Untitled  
2019  
Encaustic on silk  
70 x 60 cm

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Giorgos Kontis  
Untitled  
2019  
Encaustic on silk  
70 x 60 cm

## *Word Counts*

Text: 39,823

Endnotes / Footnotes: 9,742

Total Document: 59,624

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<sup>1</sup> 'Antigone is a tragedy by the ancient Greek playwright Sophocles, written around 442 BCE. Although it was written before Sophocles' other two Theban plays, chronologically it comes after the stories in *Oedipus the King* and *Oedipus at Colonus*, and it picks up where Aeschylus' play *Seven Against Thebes* ends. It deals with Antigone's burial of her brother Polynices (Polyneices), in defiance of the laws of Creon and the state, and the tragic repercussions of her act of civil disobedience.'

Classical Literature, *Antigone* [Online] Available at: [https://www.ancient-literature.com/greece\\_sophocles\\_antigone.html](https://www.ancient-literature.com/greece_sophocles_antigone.html) (Accessed: 30 June, 2019)

<sup>2</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 1962, p.164

<sup>3</sup> Michel Foucault, 1969, *What is an author?*, in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, Edited, with an introduction, by Donald F. Bouchard, Cornell University, New York, 1977

<sup>4</sup> Roland Barthes, *The Death of the Author*, in *Image, Music, Text*, ed. and trans. Stephen Heath, Fontana Press, New York, 1977

<sup>5</sup> Sean Burke, *The Death and Return of the Author*, Edinburgh University Press, (second edition) 1998, pp.12-15

<sup>6</sup> 'to go no further than this prehistory of modernity, Surrealism [...] contributed to the desacrilization of the image of the Author by ceaselessly recommending the abrupt disappointment of expectations of meaning (the famous surrealist 'jolt'), by entrusting the hand with the task of writing as quickly as possible what the head itself is unaware of (automatic writing), by accepting the principle and the experience of several people writing together.'

Roland Barthes, *The Death of the Author*, in *Image, Music, Text*, ed. and trans. Stephen Heath, Fontana Press, New York, 1977, p.144

<sup>7</sup> Giorgio Agamben, *Poiesis and Praxis*, in *The Man Without Content*, Stanford University Press, California, 1999, pp.68-74

<sup>8</sup> In the renowned passage from *Homer's Odyssey*, *Odysseus* replies to cyclop *Polypheme's* question of who he is, that he is the *Nobody* (Οὐτις). A pursuit of anonymity and of a seeming absence that would protect *Odysseus*, in this instance, from possible repercussions and punishment and function as a safe passage to freedom. Yet, an act of anonymity which can also take the character of a veil that may cover one's acts and responsibility upon them. An invoking of anonymity that as much as it may protect it can as well be treacherous and a means for crimes to be covered.

<sup>9</sup> In regard to this sense of embodiment of the flag (as well as of the image and its function as the *selfsame* that will be addressed later in this chapter) I became interested in the way David Michael Kleinberg-Levin approaches this term in the introduction of *Gestures of Ethical Life*.

'Deeply indebted to Maurice Merleau-Ponty, for example, I have also been attempting to think the relation between our ethical values, norms, and ideals and the nature of our embodiment –our "human nature". It has, however, gradually become clear to me that this endeavor requires breaking away from the metaphysical picture of the body as substance that has dominated Western thought at least since Plato. Whence my preference for the term "embodiment", with which I displace whenever possible the more misleading term "body", which perpetuates this false picture. This terminological substitution enables us to concentrate on the body as a unified and unifying system of processes and capacities, the medium for the first stage of the function that Kant called "the transcendental unity of apperception".'

David Michael Kleinberg-Levin, *Gestures of Ethical Life*, Stanford University Press, 2005, p.xxxv

<sup>10</sup> (See Glossary) Husserl's epoché marks a significant moment in phenomenology but is just one of the phenomenological approaches. Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* is worth noted alongside, Hannah Arendt's, Gadamer's, Jean-Paul Sartre's, and Levin's approaches, as well as Heidegger's break with Husserl's thought and Derrida's passing from Phenomenology to Deconstruction. Dermot Moran's Introduction to Phenomenology is, in this regard, illuminating.

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Dermot Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, Routledge, London, 2000

<sup>11</sup> Besides the approach on the image in this chapter formalism becomes addressed in the fourth chapter as well. For schematism see Glossary.

<sup>12</sup> Jean-Francois Lyotard, *Discourse, Figure*, University of Minnesota Press, 2011

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p.4

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p.8

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p.14

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p.17

<sup>17</sup> Georges Didi-Huberman, *Confronting Images*, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005,

<sup>18</sup> 'For the "true" portrait –true through its contact, a truth not apparent through its appearance- required the implementation of its *withdrawal*, according to a dialectic that Walter Benjamin doubtless would have called the "aura", and Maurice Blanchot "fascination". Ibid, p.191

This withdrawal is different for the one that is used in Object-Oriented Ontology and is a central term in it. A withdrawal which Graham Harman takes from Heidegger and his tool-analysis of *Being and Time*, 'tool-being does not describe objects insofar as they are handy implements employed by human purposes. Quite the contrary: readiness-to-hand (Zuhandenheit) refers to objects insofar as they withdraw from human view into a dark subterranean reality than never becomes present to practical action any more than it does to theoretical awareness.' (Graham Harman, *Heidegger and the Metaphysics of Objects*, Carus Publishing, Illinois, 2002, p.1) and which he uses to argue that objects exist independently of human perception and are not defined by their relation to humans or other objects as this distorts them.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. p.30

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p.31

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p.156

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p.141

<sup>23</sup> 'What, at bottom, can *symptom* mean in a discipline wholly committed to the study of objects that are presented, offered, visible? This is without doubt the fundamental question. But we should pose the question again on yet another level. How do such categories –the symptom, the visual, the virtual- concern the *practice* of the history of art?' Ibid, p.31

<sup>24</sup> 'Art, considered in its highest vocation, is and remains for us a thing of the past. Thereby it has lost for us genuine truth and life, and has rather been transferred into our ideas instead of maintaining its earlier necessity in reality and occupying its higher place. What is now aroused in us by works of art is not just immediate enjoyment, but our judgment also, since we subject to our intellectual consideration the content of art, and the work of art's means of presentation, and the appropriateness or inappropriateness of both to one another. The philosophy of art is therefore a greater need in our day than it was in days when art by itself yielded full satisfaction. Art invites us to intellectual consideration, and that not for the purpose of creating art again, but for knowing philosophically what art is.'

G. W. F. Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. T. M. Knox, Oxford University Press, 1975, p. 11

<sup>25</sup> (See Glossary)

<sup>26</sup> (See Glossary)

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<sup>27</sup> The fear of incommensurability that Ranciere stresses may at first sound as an exaggeration, yet one may just need to think about the way this becomes used today in politics and how the generalizations or relativizations it can produce seem to have become a method for all sorts of populists or opportunists. An example I recently encountered was particularly interesting as it also included the example of an image. It was a debate in Jeremy Vine's show, on BBC radio 2 (4 April, 2019), and it was regarding a video on social media showing British troops, members of a parachute regiment, firing at a poster of the leader of the Labour party, Jeremy Corbyn. The person who defended them on Jeremy Vine's show (unfortunately, I have not been able to find material of the Jeremy Vine show or names online, so this is only according to my personal memory) used exactly such a method arguing that this was just an image, hence, a plain sheet of paper not having any meaning. He mentioned that images of several people have been used as targets and went even that far to mention that troops were practicing in the past on targets depicting Adolf Hitler. Basically, an utter relativization which equalizes the leader of the Labour party with Adolf Hitler and takes the form of a denial of any common measure or sense of logic, according to which any person could be used on the same target without this meaning anything in particular – could then an image of the Queen be used as well? The question is obviously rhetorical to show the futility of such an argument.

'It's just squaddies doing what squaddies do. Nothing new. The only difference now is it gets filmed and posted on social media.'

Dan Sabbagh and Matthew Weaver, (2019) 'Video shows British troops firing at Jeremy Corbyn poster', *The Guardian*, 3 April [Online]. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/apr/03/video-british-troops-firing-jeremy-corbyn-poster> (Accessed: 19 June 2019)

<sup>28</sup> Jacques Ranciere, *The Future of the Image*, Verso, London, 2007, p.45

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, p.41

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, p.48

<sup>31</sup> (See Glossary)

<sup>32</sup> In the 'Sublime' entry in his *A Kant Dictionary* and in regard to its unrepresentability, Howard Caygill writes that 'the Sublime in nature is nothing more than a reflex of the ideas of reason which we read into it by means of subreption, or the 'substitution of respect for the object in place of one by the idea of humanity in our self' (§27). This unrepresentable aspect of the sublime has made the 'Analytic of the Sublime' extremely significant for the interpretations by Derrida (1978) and Lyotard (1991) which stress the ways in which the critical philosophy is perpetually interrupted by uncontainable moments of excess such as the sublime.'

Howard Caygill, *A Kant Dictionary*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 1995, p.380

<sup>33</sup> Jacques Ranciere, *The Aesthetic Unconscious*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2009, pp.85-86

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, p.54

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, p.63

<sup>36</sup> Jacques Ranciere, "The Politics of Aesthetics", Bloomsbury Academic, London, 2013, p.19

<sup>37</sup> 'The idea of modernity would like there to be only one meaning and direction in history, whereas the temporality specific to the aesthetic regime of the arts is a co-presence of heterogenous temporalities.' *Ibid*, p.21

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid* p.32

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*, p.34



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<sup>40</sup> Ibid .35

<sup>41</sup> Jean-Juc Nancy, "The Ground of the Image", Fordham University Press, New York, 2005, p.34

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, p.12

<sup>43</sup> Jean-Juc Nancy, *The Ground of the Image*, Fordham University Press, New York, 2005, p.11

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, p.98

<sup>45</sup> Jean-Luc Nancy, *The ground of the Image*, Fordham University Press, New York, 2005, p.1 & 5

<sup>46</sup> Eidolon (*Εἰδωλον*) is the etymological root of Idol and means as well an effigy, a phantom image, one that may as well be attributed with a magical, divine aspect.

<sup>47</sup> The introduction from George Seferis' poem *Helen*. George Seferis, *Helen* from *Collected Poems* (George Seferis). Translated, edited, and introduced by Edmund Keeley and Philip Sherrard. Copyright © 1995 by George Seferis. Reprinted by permission of Princeton University Press. poetryfoundation.org [Online]. Available at: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/51361/helen-56d22f0b36c82> (Accessed:11 June 2019)

<sup>48</sup> Blinding is an ancient act of punishment, of desecrating, and of rendering one unable to hit back, to attack or defend himself. Ulysses blinded the Cyclop Polyphemus as a means to render him unable to find and go after him and his comrades and ended in this manner their captivity. By losing the ability to see one was losing the primary contact and relation to the world and was entering a mere isolation; entering a world of darkness where the light of this world was absent, though, an isolation where a divine light could instead be found. The blind prophet –like Tiresias- was in ancient times a figure of wisdom, bearing an insightful gaze that was turned to a deeper, inner world; a gaze that is blind only towards the mere world. Saul was punished to lose his sight, though, through this it is that he found God. Oedipus blinded himself as a punishment of the disgraceful act to marry his own mother, yet it is after he becomes blind that he can eventually 'clearly see' as Sophocles' tragedy has it.

<sup>49</sup> 'Everyone knows that the photograph of their mother is not alive, but they will still be reluctant to deface or destroy it.'

W.J.T. Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want*, The University of Chicago Press, 2005, p.31

<sup>50</sup> This example brings in mind Roland Barthes *Camera Lucida* and the photograph of his mother 'It exists only for me. For you, it would be nothing but an indifferent picture.'

Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, Hill and Wang, New York, 1980, p.73

<sup>51</sup> (For Darstellung, Bildung, Gestaltung see Glossary)

<sup>52</sup> Phillippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Literary Absolute*, State University of New York, 1988

<sup>53</sup> Phillippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Literary Absolute*, State University of New York, 1988, p. 104

<sup>54</sup> Maurice Blanchot, *Two Versions of the Imaginary* in *The Space of Literature*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1982, p.254

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, p.256

<sup>56</sup> 'According to the usual analysis, the image exists after the object: the image follows from it; we see, then we imagine. [...] Here, the distancing is at the heart of the thing. The thing was there, we grasped it in the living motion of a comprehensive action –and once it has become an image it instantly becomes ungraspable, noncontemporary, impassive, not the same thing distanced, but that thing as distancing,

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the present thing in its absence, the thing graspable because ungraspable, appearing as something that has disappeared, the return of what does not come back, the strange heart of the distance as the life and unique heart of the thing.'

Maurice Blanchot, *Two Versions of the Imaginary* in *The Gaze of Orpheus*, edited by Adams Sitney, Station Hill Press, New York, pp.80-81

<sup>57</sup> Maurice Blanchot, *Two Versions of the Imaginary* in *The Space of Literature*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1982, p.262

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, p.258

<sup>59</sup> Giorgio Agamben, *The Signature of All Things*, Zone Books, New York, 2009

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, p.19

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, p.18

<sup>62</sup> Archaic Torso of Apollo, Rainer Maria Rilke, from *Ahead of All Parting: Selected Poetry and Prose of Rainer Maria Rilke*, translated by Stephen Mitchell and published by Modern Library, Poets.org [Online]. available at: <https://poets.org/poem/archaic-torso-apollo> (Accessed: 9 June 2019)

<sup>63</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, Routledge Classics, 2003, pp. 276-326

<sup>64</sup> Norman Bryson, *The Gaze in the Expanded Field in Vision and Visuality*, Edited by Hal Foster, Dia Art Foundation, New York, 1988, p.91

<sup>65</sup> Ibid p.97

<sup>66</sup> 'Just go and look at something - for example, at an animal in the Jardin des Plantes - and keep on looking at it till you're able to make a poem of that'.

Geoff Dyer, *Working the Room*, Canongate Books, Edinburgh, 2010, p.104

<sup>67</sup> Looking at Rilke's beautiful poem and particularly its last verse came after a suggestion by Ulrich Looch when I interviewed him in Berlin, in March 2016. I thank him for that.

*You must change your life*, is also the title of a book by Peter Sloterdijk which begins with the essay *The Command from the Stone* on the poem of Rilke (Polity Press, Cambridge, 2013, pp.19-29).

<sup>68</sup> W.J.T. Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want*, The University of Chicago Press, 2005

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, p.11

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, p.30

<sup>71</sup> T.S. Eliot, *Gerontion*, (excerpt), poetryfoundation.org [Online] Available at: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/47254/gerontion> (Accessed:11 June 2019)

<sup>72</sup> G.S. Kirk & J.E. Raven, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, Fr. 5, Proclus in Parm. I, 708, I6 Cousin, Cambridge University Press, London, 1957, p. 268

<sup>73</sup> George Seferis, *Mythistorema* (excerpt) from *Collected Poems (George Seferis)*. Translated, edited, and introduced by Edmund Keeley and Philip Sherrard. Copyright © 1995 by George Seferis. Reprinted by permission of Princeton University Press. poetryfoundation.org [Online] Available at: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/51457/mythistorema> (Accessed:11 June 2019)

<sup>74</sup> Jorge Luis Borges, *Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote*, in *Collected Fictions*, translated by Andrew Hurley, Penguin Books, New York, 1998, p.88

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid, p.90

<sup>76</sup> 'According to the platonic interpretation, accepted and expanded by Aristotle, Thophrastus, and the doxographers, this river-image was cited by Heraclitus to emphasize the absolute continuity of change in every single thing: everything is in perpetual flux like a river. Plato Cratylus 402 A (218) *Heraclitus somewhere says that all things are in process and nothing stays still, and likening existing things to the stream of a river he says that you could not step twice into the same river.*'  
G.S. Kirk & J.E. Raven, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, Fr. 5, Proclus in Parm. I, 708, I6 Cousin, Cambridge University Press, London, 1957, pp.196-197 ['218' is the footnote on page 197, with the translation of Plato's excerpt]

<sup>77</sup> G.S. Kirk & J.E. Raven, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, Fr. 5, Proclus in Parm. I, 708, I6 Cousin, Cambridge University Press, London, 1957, p.274

<sup>78</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, Bloomsbury Academic, London, 2014, p.52

<sup>79</sup> There is no translation in the original text of these two words but *heteron* ('ἕτερον' in Greek) is mostly translated in common speech as *the other (of two)*, *significant other*, *different*, *other than usual*, and *enantion* ('ἐναντίον') as *against*, *opposed to*.

<sup>80</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, Bloomsbury Academic, London, 2014, p.72

<sup>81</sup> (See Glossary)

<sup>82</sup> I will henceforth be using subordination in this text not in the way Deleuze uses it in regard to representation and with the negative connotation it takes through this ['The prefix RE- in the word representation signifies this conceptual form of the identical which subordinates differences', Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, Bloomsbury Academic, London, 2014, p.70] but in regard to the notion of authenticity and a way of looking at it through the simulacrum and not as an endeavour to find something absolute.

<sup>83</sup> Adorno has rigorously criticized Heidegger on his ideas on authenticity and the respective terms that Heidegger has used, calling them 'The Jargon of Authenticity'. In his work that bears the same title and which is a critique on German existentialism and particularly Heidegger's, Adorno analyzes that Heidegger's jargon gets an almost religious hue and he 'cannot get enough of the ritual preliminaries for the "step into the temple"' (Theodor W. Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, 1973, p.93). As, also, that his rhetoric and jargon bear a totalitarian and fascist sentiment, and he often compares them even with the rhetoric of the third Reich –the use of the words '*commission*' and '*Befehlsnotstand*' he does is exemplary 'It is impossible to forget the image of those SA-men from the early period of Hitler's rule. In them administration and terror found themselves visibly joined; the folder of documents above, and below the high boots. The jargon of authenticity preserves something of the image in words like "*commission*" (P.83), 'That is precisely what came to pass under National Socialism, as the universal *Befehlsnotstand*, that state of emergency which torturers later use as their excuse. Heidegger's sketch of the *They* comes closest to what it is, the exchange relationship, when he is treating averageness" (p.103). Adorno describes that the 'mineness' of *Dasein*, the way through which *Being* –an element of it- is revealed and called *Dasein*, creates an obscurity in the discourse on individuality and the dismantling of the transcendental subject. The notion of consciousness that Heidegger tries to unfold through the awareness and perhaps the responsibility that 'the person owns himself', is interpreted by Adorno in the sense that the profound matter of individuation and 'the Hegelian dialectical unity of the general and the particular is turned into a relation of possession', in this way, 'the subject, the concept of which was once created in contrast to reification, thus becomes reified' (p.113 – 5). Heidegger's narrative creates a distance between *Dasein* and *They*, and particularly with the averageness which is an existential characteristic of the *They*; for Adorno this is an elitist stance and as such 'a manner of elites to claim that "prerogative" for themselves' (p.104).

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<sup>84</sup> *Philosophical Fragments, Friedrich Schlegel*, Translated by Peter Firchow, Foreword by Rodolphe Gasche, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1991, *Ideas Fragments*, p.98

<sup>85</sup> Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Literary Absolute*, State university of New York 1998, p.81

<sup>86</sup> To paraphrase Arthur Danto "The political analog of modernism in art was totalitarianism" Arthur Danto, *After the End of Art*, Princeton University Press, 1997, p.70

<sup>87</sup> Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *Heidegger, Art and Politics*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1990

This is also one of the matters than Frederick C. Beiser deals with in *The Romantic Imperative*. 'The reasons for the neglect of early romantic philosophy have been various. There have been potent *political* reasons. Since World War II, romanticism has been discredited by both liberals and Marxists alike as the ideology of fascism, and not least because many Nazis embraced it as party ideology. There have also been *academic* reasons. Because romanticism is usually understood as a literary and critical movement, it has been made the special preserve of literary critics and historians. Not least, there have been *philosophical* reasons. The growth of analytic philosophy in the anglophone world has led to a skepticism and intolerance toward alternative ways of doing philosophy. Finally, there have been *scholarly* reasons. Some of the most important manuscript materials regarding the philosophy of the German romantics have been published only since World War II. The fragments of Novalis, Hölderlin, and Friedrich Schlegel have been published in critical editions only in the 1960s. While some of this material had been available before, it was not in reliable or critical editions.'

Frederick C. Beiser, *The Romantic Imperative*, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 2003, p.1

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid*, pp.79-80

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid*, p.58

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid*, pp.66-67

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid*, p.64

<sup>92</sup> Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Literary Absolute*, State university of New York, 1998, p.44

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid*, p.44

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid*, pp.29&34

<sup>95</sup> Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Literary Absolute*, State university of New York 1998, p.34

<sup>96</sup> Frederick C. Beiser, *The Romantic Imperative*, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 2003, pp.65-66

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid*, p.92

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid*, p.70

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid*, p.76-77

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid*, p.67

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid*, p.68

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid*, p.104

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<sup>103</sup> Like Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy, Frederick C. Beiser argues that the origin of the early romantics is Kant and the *Aufklärung* and that the way romanticism's 'antirationalism' and 'conservatism' become contrasted to the rationalism and liberalism of the *Aufklärung*, 'like so many generalizations in the history of ideas, this commonplace is a very misleading oversimplification'. The *Early Romanticism and the Aufklärung* chapter in Beiser's *The Romantic Imperative* (Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 2003, pp.43-55) is illuminating in this regard, and where Beiser argues that early romanticism is eventually the continuation of the *Aufklärung*. 'While the older generation of *Aufklärer* attempted to refute the criticisms of Kant and Jacobi, the young romantics felt that they had no choice but to build on them. If the aesthetic program of the young romantics was their solution to the crisis of the *Aufklärung*, then we have no choice but to view *Frühromantik* as both the affirmation and negation of the *Aufklärung*. Like a phoenix, the *Aufklärung* was consumed by its own flames. From its ashes arose romanticism.' (p.55) Also, 'There can be no doubt that some of the young romantics were inspired by Kant's third *Kritik*, which most of them carefully studied in their early years.<sup>19</sup> While they often took issue with Kant, they were also profoundly indebted to him.<sup>20</sup> Kant's doctrine of the autonomy of art, his concept of an organism, his idea of the finality of nature, his definition of genius, and his suggestion that beauty is the symbol for morality were all crucial in one way or another for most young romantics.' (p.79)

<sup>104</sup> Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Literary Absolute*, State university of New York 1998, p.115

<sup>105</sup> Perhaps a common linguistic subconscious close to the 'pervasive anonymity' that Michel Foucault proposes,  
'We can easily imagine a culture where discourse would circulate without any need for an author. Discourses, whatever their status, form, or value, and regardless of our manner of handling them, would unfold in a pervasive anonymity. No longer the tiresome repetitions:  
"Who is the real author?"  
"Have we proof of his authenticity and originality?"  
"What has he revealed of his most profound self in his language?"'  
Michel Foucault, 1969, *What is an author?*, in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, Edited, with an introduction, by Donald F. Bouchard, Cornell University, New York, 1977, p.138

<sup>106</sup> T.S. Eliot, 1919, *Tradition and the Individual Talent*, in *Perspecta*, The Yale Architectural Journal, Vol. 19 (1982), pp. 36-42 [Online] Available at: [https://www.jstor.org/stable/1567048?read-now=1&seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1567048?read-now=1&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents) (Accessed: 23 June 2019)

<sup>107</sup> Jan Verwoert, 2007, *Living with Ghosts: From Appropriation to Invocation in Contemporary Art*, in *Art & Research Journal*, Volume 1 No. 2 [Online] Available at: <http://www.artandresearch.org.uk/v1n2/verwoert.html> (Accessed: 23 June 2019)

<sup>108</sup> Guiltiness and indebtedness are important terms in Heidegger's terminology and, even though, I am not referring to Heidegger in this instance, at least not intentionally, I wanted to use a beautiful short excerpt from an interview of Werner Hamacher in *The Ister* documentary.  
*Guilt as being the reason of a non-being and, in fact, as being the ground of –not only a non-reason- but of nothing. So, the reason of nothing.*  
*We are indebted because we don't own the very ground of ourselves, the very ground upon we walk. Because we don't own what we are, because we don't own ourselves. As we don't own it, we owe it. And this primordial indebtedness, this primordial owing is for Heidegger the existential condition of being exposed to the state -the non-state- of Unheimlichkeit, or Unheimischkeit, of not being at home with ourselves in this world.*  
[Unheimlichkeit means uncanniness, and Unheimischkeit means homelessness, trans. mine]  
Werner Hamacher (interviewee), Daniel Barison and Daniel Ross (Directors & Producers), *The Ister* (Documentary) 2004, [Brooklyn N.Y.] : Icarus Films Home Video

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<sup>109</sup> (See Glossary)

<sup>110</sup> As if me, or I, or the self, is a part or rather an instance of the we and of Being. A temporary dwelling which is always in relation to and a part of the we, a with-world as Heidegger describes and Nancy stresses. His *Being Singular Plural* is a work exactly on this matter –here is a beautiful short excerpt from it.

‘The essence of Being is the shock of the instant [*le coup*]. Each time, “Being” is always an instance [*un coup*] of Being (a lash, blow, beating, shock, knock, an encounter, an access). As a result, it is also always an instance of “with”: singulars singularly together, where the togetherness is neither the sum, nor the incorporation [*englobant*], nor the “society”, nor the “community” (where these words only give rise to problems). The togetherness of singulars is singularity “itself”. It “assembles” them insofar as it spaces them; they are “linked” insofar as they are not unified.’

Jean-Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, Stanford University Press, California, 2000, p.33

<sup>111</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, Translation Ralph Manheim, Doubleday & Co., Anchor Books, New York, 1961. (*Einführung in die Metaphysik*, Max Niemeyer Verlag, Tübingen, 1953), p.170

<sup>112</sup> ‘Heidegger clearly states that being-with (*Mitsein, Miteinandersein, and Mitdasein*) is essential to the constitution of *Dasein* itself. Given this, it needs to be made absolutely clear that *Dasein*, far from being either “man” or “subject”, is not an isolated and unique “one”, but is instead always the one, each one, with one another [*l’un-avec-l’autre*].’

Jean-Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, Stanford University Press, California, 2000, p.26

<sup>113</sup> (See Glossary)

<sup>114</sup> (See Glossary)

<sup>115</sup> In the *Origin of the Work of Art*, Heidegger analyzes the ‘thingly’ character of the work of art, this ‘thingly’ character of the work functions as a substructure, an infrastructure as he names it, into and upon which something else, the ‘proper’ thing is built. These two elements function in an entity, *symbollein* is the Greek word he uses for it, in the meaning of *bringing together*; thus, the work is a symbol, an allegory, which *allo agoreuei* (says something other than the mere thing itself is).

Martin Heidegger, *The Origin of the Work of Art*, in *Basic Writings*, edited by David Farrell Krell, Harper Perennial, New York, 2008, p.145-6

<sup>116</sup> In *Poiesis and Praxis* Giorgio Agamben uses the etymology of the words of the title of his essay and the way these were used in ancient Greece, to explain that *Poiesis* (ποιεῖν, ποιέειν) stands for “to produce” in the sense of bringing into being) and *Praxis* (πράττειν, πράττειν) for “to do” in the sense of acting. Through this, he makes a distinction between creating and the plain making of a work; *Praxis* might be quite significant as through *Praxis* it is that the work becomes completed, though it is *Poiesis* that holds the main role of creating and uttering. Agamben explains that there has been a sort of a misconception of *Poiesis* and that it has been confused with *praxis*, the root of which is in biological existence -in the Aristotelian terms that Agamben uses; will, drive, vital impulse. A misconception based on the interpretation of art as a function of praxis, and of praxis as the expression of will and creative force “The point of arrival of western aesthetics is a metaphysics of the will, that is, of life understood as energy and creative impulse” -the idea of art is the expression of the artist’s creative will. Though this distinction is not a rupture between those two notions and does not isolate them from one another. For Agamben *Poiesis* is a function enclosed in its self and in order to be completed it requires an act that will take it beyond its threshold, thus, *Praxis* comes as a completion of this function. Agamben explains, in regard to this, that the etymology of *Praxis* is linked to *πέρα* (beyond) *πόρος* (passage, door) and to *πέρας* (limit), and through that it suggests *passing through*, a passage that goes up to the *πέρας*, to the limit. An English word that for Agamben corresponds etymologically to it is *experience, ex-per-ientia* which contains the same idea of *going through*. Hence those two notions are not detached from each other and even though it is poiesis where we should be more oriented, praxis should be taken as well under consideration.

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Giorgio Agamben, *Poiesis and Praxis*, in *The Man Without Content*, Stanford University Press, California, 1999, pp.68-74

<sup>117</sup> 'Writing' in this paragraph stands for painting as well, it signifies a form of making and existing with and within language that exceeds the boundaries of a certain form.

<sup>118</sup> Along with the recurrent figure of the hand that writes in Blanchot's writing, Giorgio Agamben illustrates that in a short and indicative manner in his "The Author as Gesture" essay. "Does this mean that the place of thought and feelings is in the poem itself, in the signs that make up the text? How could a passion, a thought be contained in a piece of paper? By definition, feelings and thoughts require a subject to experience and think them. In order for them to become present, someone must take up the book and read. This individual will occupy the empty place in the poem left by the author; he will repeat the same inexpressive gesture the author used to testify to his absence in the work."

Giorgio Agamben, *Profanations, The Author as Gesture*, Zone Books, New York, 2007, p.71

<sup>119</sup> 'Where are we? In what constellation of Being and man?'

Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1969, p.33

<sup>120</sup> (See Glossary)

<sup>121</sup> Terms that have very often been used by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in the case of Greece's financial crisis.

'The program provides both breathing space to mobilize support for the deeper structural reforms that Greece needs to prosper within the euro area, and a framework for Greece's European partners to deliver further debt relief to restore Greece's debt sustainability.'

'The newly-legislated measures broadening the income-tax base and reforming pension spending are critical to rebalancing the budget toward more growth-friendly policies. In the medium run, they will help achieve an ambitious primary surplus target of 3.5 percent of GDP. However, this target should be reduced to a more sustainable level of 1.5 percent of GDP as soon as possible, to create fiscal space for better targeting social assistance, stimulating public investment, and lowering tax rates to support growth [...]

IMF, Press Release No. 17/294, July 20, 2017

<sup>122</sup> As Heidegger's footnote at the beginning of this chapter mentions.

<sup>123</sup> Paul Valery, cited in Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Penguin Books, London, 2008, p.4

<sup>124</sup> See endnote n.130

<sup>125</sup> 'The reproduced work of art is to an ever-increasing extent the reproduction of a work of art designed for reproducibility. From a photographic plate, for instance, many prints can be made; the question of the genuine print has no meaning.'

Ibid, p.12

<sup>126</sup> 'The 'one-of-a-kind' value of the 'genuine' work of art has its underpinnings in the ritual in which it had its original, utility value.'

Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Penguin Books, London 2008, p.11

<sup>127</sup> "'Genuine' was something a medieval Madonna image was not at the time of its making –not yet; that was something it became over the course ensuing centuries, most plentifully, perhaps, in the last [the nineteenth century].'

Ibid, note 2, p.39

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<sup>128</sup> 'This characteristic of Dasein's Being –this 'that it is'- is veiled in its "whence" and "whither", yet enclosed in itself all the more unveiledly; we call it the "thrownness" (Geworfenheit) of this entity into its 'there'; indeed, it is thrown in such a way that, as Being-in-the-world, it is the "there". The expression "thrownness" is meant to suggest the facticity of its *being delivered over*.'  
Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 1962, p.174

<sup>129</sup> See endnote n.112

<sup>130</sup> 'That is its genuineness. The genuineness of a thing is the quintessence of everything about it since its creation that can be handed down, from its material duration to the historical witness that it bears. [...] We can encapsulate what stands out here by using the term 'aura'.  
Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Penguin Books, London, 2008, p.7

'The uniqueness of the work of art is identical with its embeddedness in the context of tradition. Tradition itself is of course something very much alive, something extraordinarily changeable. A classical statue of Venus, for example, occupied a different traditional context for the Greeks, who made of it an object of worship, than for medieval clerics, who saw it as a threatening idol. But what both were equally struck by was its singularity, or to use another word, its aura.'  
Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Penguin Books, London, 2008, p.10

<sup>131</sup> I am following here an argument that Boris Groys made in his *Art Beyond Spectatorship* lecture, based on his homonymous essay, that took place at Bozar in Brussels, in May 2014

<sup>132</sup> I cite two relevant and, in this regard, enlightening articles:

Stuart Dredge, (2018) *Mobile phone addiction? It's time to take back control*, The Guardian, 27 January [Online]. Available at:  
<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2018/jan/27/mobile-phone-addiction-apps-break-the-habit-take-back-control>  
(Accessed: 13 March, 2019)

Paul Lewis (2017) *'Our minds can be hijacked': the tech insiders who fear a smartphone dystopia*, The Guardian, 6 October [Online]. available at:  
<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2017/oct/05/smartphone-addiction-silicon-valley-dystopia>  
(Accessed: 13 March, 2019)

<sup>133</sup> Labour conditions, post-Fordism, the notion of autonomy and the precarity of flexible working are matters that have gained much significance in the recent years in discourses around capitalism and neo-liberalism and especially in their relation with the field of arts. "The New Spirit of Capitalism" by Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello (Verso 2007) has become popular in such discourses, as well as the work of Pascal Gielen. The work of Steven ten Thije is also very interesting in this regard and the relation it has to the thought of Jacques Ranciere; as well as the Autonomy Project that ten Thije is one of the coordinators: <http://theautonomyproject.org/about>

<sup>134</sup> 'The hammering itself uncovers the specific 'manipulability' ["Handlichkeit"] of the hammer. The kind of Being which equipment possesses-in which it manifests itself in its own right-we call "readiness-to-hand" [Zuhandenheit] .I Only because equipment has this 'Being-in-itself'-and does not merely occur, is it manipulable in the broadest sense and at our disposal.'  
'these entities would have to be understood and discovered beforehand as something purely present-at-hand, and must have priority and take the lead in the sequence of those dealings with the 'world' in which something is discovered and made one's own. But this already runs counter to the ontological meaning of cognition, which we have exhibited as a founded mode of Being-in-the-world. To lay bare what is just present-at-hand and no more, cognition must first penetrate beyond what is ready-to-hand in our concern. Readiness-to-hand is the way in which entities as they are 'in themselves' are defined ontologico-categorially. Yet only by reason of something present-at-hand, 'is there' anything ready-to-hand.'



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Martin Heidegger, "Being and Time", Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 1962, p.98

<sup>135</sup> 'Conscience gives us 'something' to understand; it *discloses*. By characterizing this phenomenon formally in this way, we find ourselves enjoined to take it back into the *disclosedness* of Dasein. This disclosedness, as a basic state of that entity which we ourselves are, is constituted by state-of-mind, understanding, falling, and discourse. If we analyse conscience more penetratingly, it is revealed as a call [*Ruf*]. Calling is a mode of *discourse*. The call of conscience has the character of an *appeal* to Dasein by calling it to its ownmost potentiality-for-Being-its-Self; and this is done by way of *summoning* it to its ownmost Being-guilty.'

Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 1962, p.314

'The disclosedness of Dasein in wanting to have a conscience, is thus constituted by anxiety as state-of-mind, by understanding as a projection of oneself upon one's ownmost Being-guilty, and by discourse as reticence. This distinctive and authentic disclosedness, which is attested in Dasein itself by its conscience -*this reticent self-projection up on one's ownmost Being -guilty, in which one is ready for anxiety-* we call "resoluteness". Resoluteness is a distinctive mode of Dasein's disclosedness.'

Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 1962, p.343

<sup>136</sup> For more information regarding this discourse:

Andrew Benjamin and Andreas Vardoulakis (editors), *Sparks Will Fly: Benjamin and Heidegger*, SUNY Press, New York, 2015

Howard Caygill's chapter *Benjamin, Heidegger and the Destruction of Tradition*, in *Walter Benjamin's Philosophy: Destruction and Experience*, Andrew Benjamin and Peter Osborne (editors), Routledge, London, 1994

<sup>137</sup> 'Enframing blocks the shining-forth and holding-sway of truth. The destining that sends into ordering is consequently the extreme danger. What is dangerous is not technology. Technology is not demonic; but its essence is mysterious. The essence of technology, as a destining of revealing, is the danger. The transformed meaning of the word "enframing" will perhaps become somewhat more familiar to us now if we think enframing in the sense of destining and danger.

The threat to man does not come in the first instance from the potentially lethal machines and apparatus of technology. The actual threat has already affected man in his essence. The rule of enframing threatens man with the possibility that it could be denied to him to enter into a more original revealing and hence to experience the call of a more primal truth.'

Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology*, in *Basic Writings*, edited by David Farrell Krell, Harper Perennial, New York, 2008, p.333

'Everything is functioning. That is precisely what is awesome, that everything functions, that the functioning propels everything more and more toward further functioning, and that technicity increasingly dislodges man and uproots him from the earth. I don't know if you were shocked, but [certainly] I was shocked when a short time ago I saw the pictures of the earth taken from the moon. We do not need atomic bombs at all [to uproot us] -- the uprooting of man is already here. All our relationships have become merely technical ones. It is no longer upon an earth that man lives today. Recently I had a long [209] dialogue in Provence with Rene Char -- a poet and resistance fighter, as you know. In Provence now, launch pads are being built and the countryside laid waste in unimaginable fashion. This poet, who certainly is open to no suspicion of sentimentality or of glorifying the idyllic, said to me that the uprooting of man that is now taking place is the end [of everything human], unless thinking and poetizing once again regain [their] nonviolent power.'

Martin Heidegger, *Nur noch ein Gott kann uns retten*, *Der Spiegel* 30 (Mai, 1976): 193-219. Trans. by W. Richardson as *Only a God Can Save Us in Heidegger: The Man and the Thinker* (1981), ed. T. Sheehan, pp. 45-67

<sup>138</sup> Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology*, in *Basic Writings*, edited by David Farrell Krell, Harper Perennial, New York, 2008, pp.319-320

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid*, pp.313-314

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<sup>140</sup> “‘Idle talk’ offers the first form of the everydayness of Dasein. *Das Gerede*: this is *Rede*, speech, as a globality of communication in which we talk “with one another” but still do not “participate” in “the primary relationship-of-Being toward the entity talked about”. [...] This may very well be what is at issue when Heidegger extends –in a way that is rather unexpected (and seemingly unnecessary, at first glance: that is, for the “average understanding” of the “they”, that is, “we”, the readers of the text) – *Gerede* to *Geschreibe* [“scribbling”], the globality of speech to a globality of writing.’

Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Decision of Existence in The Birth to Presence*, Stanford University Press, California, 1993, pp.89-90

<sup>141</sup> “‘The turn’, *die Kehre*, is often used to denote a sharp turn in Heidegger's own thinking that is supposed to have occurred between BT (Being and Time) and LH (Letter on Humanism). There are certainly large differences, of style and content, between BT and his post-war writings. Heidegger often speaks of BT as a work of 'transition [Übergang]' from metaphysics to the 'basic question' about being (LXV, 84, 223, 229, 234, etc.). But the change is gradual, not a *Kehre*. And what Heidegger himself calls a *Kehre* in his thought involves, as he says, no change of 'standpoint'.

Michael Inwood, *A Heidegger Dictionary*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 1999, pp. 231-232

<sup>142</sup> William S. Allen, *Ellipsis*, State University of New York, 2007, pp.7-8

<sup>143</sup> Bernard Stiegler (interviewee), Daniel Barison and Daniel Ross (Directors & Producers), *The Ister* (Documentary) 2004, [Brooklyn, N.Y.] : Icarus Films Home Video

<sup>144</sup> ‘The Phenomena we have pointed out –temptation, tranquilising, alienation and self-entangling (entanglement)- characterize the specific type of Being which belongs to falling. This ‘movement’ of Dasein into its own Being, we call its “downward plunge” [Absturz]. Dasein plunges out of itself into itself, into the groundlessness and nullity of inauthentic everydayness.’

Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 1962, p.223

Besides Adorno’s critique on Heidegger’s Authenticity, mentioned in the previous chapter, Jean-Luc Nancy offers an astonishing analysis on these matters in his *The Decision of Existence* essay (in *The Birth to Presence*, Stanford University Press, California, 1993, see endnote n.159)

<sup>145</sup> ‘Werner Hamacher: Gesture, Performativity, Language’, Royal College of Art, September 2014, seminar and lecture by Werner Hamacher.

<sup>146</sup> Werner Hamacher, 2014 [Download] Available at:  
<https://backdoorbroadcasting.net/2014/09/werner-hamacher-to-auto-the-same-celan-with-parmenides-and-heidegger/> (Accessed: 25 June, 2019)

<sup>147</sup> For Werner Hamacher the *leap* is perhaps the most important term in Heidegger’s *Identity and Difference* -this is what he mentions at the lecture at the Royal College of Art which is cited in the previous footnote.

<sup>148</sup> In his *The Death and Return of the Author* (Edinburgh University Press, second edition 1998), Seán Burke addresses the Death of the Author in poststructuralism and argues for the Return of the Author. ‘The death of the author emerges as a blind-spot in the work of Barthes, Foucault and Derrida, an absence they seek to create and explore, but one which is always already filled with the idea of the author. A massive disjunction opens up between the theoretical statement of authorial disappearance and the project of reading without the author. What their texts say about the author, and what they do with the author issue at such an express level of contradiction that the performative aspects utterly overwhelm the declaration of authorial disappearance. Everywhere, under the auspices of its absence, the concept of the author remains active, the notion of the return of the author being simply a belated recognition of this critical blindness. A similar pattern of inscription under erasure could be assiduously traced in other deauthorising texts.’ P.172

<sup>149</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1969, pp.26-27

<sup>150</sup> (See Glossary)

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<sup>151</sup> 'The Self of everyday Dasein is the *they-self* [Man-selbst], which we distinguish from the *authentic Self* –that is, from the Self which has been taken hold of in its own way [eigens ergriffenen]. As they-self, the particular Dasein has been *dispersed* into the "they", and must first find itself.'  
Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 1962, p.167

<sup>152</sup> '*Being-in is Being-with Others. Their Being-in-themselves within-the-world is Dasein-with* [Mit-dasein]'  
Ibid p.119

<sup>153</sup> 'Yet man's 'substance' is not spirit as a synthesis of soul and body; it is rather existence', Ibid p.118

<sup>154</sup> Michael Inwood, *A Heidegger Dictionary*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 1999, p.105

<sup>155</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1969, pp.38-39

<sup>156</sup> (See Glossary)

<sup>157</sup> 'I have also adopted my name. In saying I inherit the past of my father and grand-father, and of the Germans and so on, I have adopted my name. [...] The family is necessarily an adoption. I want to say that for humans is essential a process of adoption of the past. We need always to adopt technics. The technics is always new, we must always adopt it. We are fundamentally caught in a process of adoption.'  
Bernard Stiegler (interviewee), Daniel Barison and Daniel Ross (Directors & Producers), *The Ister* (Documentary) 2004,  
[Brooklyn, N.Y.] : Icarus Films Home Video

<sup>158</sup> The argument of the *examined life* comes from Plato's Apology and is believed to have stemmed originally from the speech of legal self-defence, which Socrates presented at his trial in 399 BC. Its importance lies in the necessity of an individual to be critical and conscious and on the establishing of this as one's fundamental right in a state, becoming a symbol for a free individual, maintaining the liberty to be able to think for his own self.  
'and if I say again that daily to discourse about virtue, and of those other things about which you hear me examining myself and others, is the greatest good of man, and that the unexamined life is not worth living, you are still less likely to believe me.'  
Plato, 'Apology', Translator: Benjamin Jowett, Produced by Sue Asscher, and David Widger, Release Date: November 3, 2008 [EBook #1656], Last Updated: January 15, 2013 eBook Project Gutenberg [Online] Available at:  
[http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/1656?msg=welcome\\_stranger](http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/1656?msg=welcome_stranger)  
(Accessed: 2 June 2019)

<sup>159</sup> In *The Decision of Existence* (in *The Birth to Presence*, Stanford University Press, California, 1993) Jean-Luc Nancy does a reading on Heidegger's *Being and Time* and analyses key terms in it. The focus is on the matter or question of decision and eventually this revolves around a relation between this term and Being. Inevitably, what becomes addressed is the existence of Being in the world which brings in the text matters of ground and of the 'they'. Existence is the 'they' for Nancy as it is not possible to exist without this condition 'ontical experience takes place at the "they", and nowhere else. Moreover, there is no "elsewhere": that is the meaning [Sinn] of Being' (pp. 82-83). Having this as a basis further questions need to be addressed for Nancy such as Heidegger's disdain on the mediocrity of the 'they' and a clarification of the notion (or the notions) of authenticity he uses. Decision is existence, or the decision of existence, and having this as a starting point, as well as an analysis of *Being and Time* and of Heidegger's thought, Nancy embarks on a very interesting journey. Decision seems at first to have the necessity to 'cut through average understanding, to understand proper' and becomes a critique on the use and disdain of the averageness of the 'they' by Heidegger. A critique and analysis that incorporates the use of Heidegger's authenticity, breaking it eventually to the aforementioned different terms of *Eigentlichkeit* and *Echtheit*, leading to different translations depending on the use and function of each term and avoiding a charged term such as authenticity. Decision continues to become related to exposure and disclosedness as a move away from the certainty of the 'they', as in the 'they' and in its safety Being cannot be disclosed. Nancy very carefully analyses and avoids any distinction between an

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authentic and inauthentic form of being and rather renders this a matter of difference (individual difference) and 'to expose oneself to the undecidability of meaning that existence is'; 'the ownness of a decision in which existence reaches its decision'. 'Decision is nothing but the existing by which existence relates itself to itself, in its ownness', ownness is, in general in Nancy's essay, used as a substitute for authenticity following Heidegger's *Eigentlichkeit*. Decision becomes in this way an 'ego sum, ego existo'. This seems to become also a matter of being determined according to indetermination which seems to be inserting as well the matter of resoluteness. Nancy closes the essay with a phrase about freedom and groundless Being, enlightening in regard to the way this text strives to deal with authenticity. 'This does not mean that thought turns away from action and is hostile or indifferent toward it. On the contrary, it means that thought carries itself in advance of action's ownmost possibility. It does not think action in the sense in which it would subsume action under "theoretical" or "ideal" rules; rather, it tinks, in its ownness, the essential, active decision of existence. Its necessity is also called freedom, and to itself it sounds freedom's most demanding call. But freedom is not what disposes of given possibilities. It is the disclosedness by which the groundless Being of existence exposes itself, in the anxiety and the joy of being without ground, of being in the world.' (pp.108-109) Thus it is a non-certainty of being in the 'they' but difference instead that comes with the anxiety of the groundless Being. A use of a distinction that doesn't function in a disdainful manner against the 'they' but as a sense of a quest for an 'own-making that is each time singular and each time singularly modalized'. An 'in its ownness' rather than a charged quest for authenticity.

<sup>160</sup> (See Glossary)

<sup>161</sup> 'Richard Serra, *Verb List 1967-1968*', MoMA [Online] Available at: <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/152793> (Accessed: 5 June 2019)

<sup>162</sup> An example of this can be the making of Byzantine Icons (one may think as well of other instances such as Chinese and Islamic Calligraphy) where the making of them needs to follow even today the traditional way they have been made for centuries and the process of the making of an Icon remains even today, in Orthodox tradition, a quite precise and strict process that includes even praying in its making. Though, despite the limited flexibility the long and strict tradition offers, individuality is, rather than diminished, often celebrated in the way an individual may be able to master it, and the instances that an individual has managed a rupture in tradition, a new 'scholi' (a word for 'school' in Greek) has been created –meaning a different way of the making of it, namely, a paradigm shift. Hence, a paradox of a celebration of individuality through strict mimesis. Another very interesting example can be the requirements a PhD thesis should follow in order to be regarded as an original contribution to knowledge in the academic field. The candidate is asked to create a body of work in relation to already existing knowledge, perhaps as a continuation of it, but simultaneously differentiated by it. A sort of a paradox once more of creating the new from what already exists. The choice of not using or not being in relation to the already existing, is not actually possible as then the work will be considered out of its specific field or context and is instead asked to exhibit rigorous knowledge of it. Through the use of specific knowledge and resources the possible outcome or form that the new work can take becomes eventually limited; in the same sense that with certain ingredients one cannot expect much of unexpected results but rather remain in a limited context. However, the way the candidate may position himself towards the already existing knowledge and a re-assembling or re-reading of it can be regarded as a new thesis. What is thus required is the awareness and the knowing of the pre-existing knowledge and even a different interpretation of it can be considered an authentic and original contribution to it; 'making a synthesis that hasn't been made before; using already known material but with a new interpretation, bringing new evidence to bear on an old issue [...] [and] adding to knowledge in a way that hasn't previously been done before' (Phillips and Pugh, Open University Press, Philadelphia, 1994, p.61-2). The problematic and challenge is, therefore, how to be differentiated from tradition and heritage, while being a part and continuation of it, and how to evolve as an individual and create something new without being rendered a product of these contexts and constraints; hence a dialectical relationship with tradition without one losing his idiom, or, even further, with one evolving his own idiom.

<sup>163</sup> Boris Groys, *On the New*, Verso, London, 2014

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<sup>164</sup> Ibid, pp.6-7

<sup>165</sup> Ibid p.76 “Innovation is, to sum up, the revaluation of values, a repositioning of individual things with respect to the value boundaries that separate the valorized cultural archives from the profane realm.”

<sup>166</sup> Ibid pp.36-37

<sup>167</sup> In this sense and using appropriation as his example, Nicolas Bourriaud introduces in his work *Postproduction* (Nicolas Bourriaud, *Postproduction*, Lukas & Sternberg, New York, 2002) a form of making of art as ‘Deejaying’, as the act of an artist who makes his work through the use of the works of others. Appropriation was one of the prominent terms in the discourse in art in the 80s and 90s triggering once more questionings on authenticity and originality, though in a rather more simplified way as through the aspect of authorship. The way Bourriaud uses it in *Postproduction* becomes though more challenging as through it, and through the very interesting example of the DJ, he gives to the artist the form of a detached operator. The use of the title for instance and the way he explains it is illustrative. Postproduction is originally a technical term that derives from the process of films and videos which takes place on a meta stage, and as an extra layer after all shooting and filming has been done. It is thus an act after the basic and main one, an operation on this basic act and a process seemingly minor and secondary on which, though, the whole final result eventually depends. What is most interesting with the example of postproduction is the feeling that the artist functions in this meta stage, having at his disposal a timeless net of elements with various connotations and references. He takes in this way the form of an artist – operator with an endless semiotic library in his hands, managing and *deejaying* it and with it also its tradition, heritage and cultural context; an endless semiotic library in the hands of the artist –operator.

<sup>168</sup> In *The Origin of the Work of Art*, Martin Heidegger describes that what happens with the work of art is the disclosure of its truth, of the Being of its being. This he calls *aletheia*, by using the Greek word *ἀλήθεια* which means truth, reality. ‘Truth means the essence of the true. We think this essence in recollecting the Greek word *aletheia*, the unconcealment of beings.’ (Martin Heidegger, *The Origin of the Work of Art*, in *Basic Writings*, edited by David Farrell Krell, Harper Perennial, New York, 2008, p.176), ‘The artwork opens up in its own way the Being of beings. This opening up, i.e., this revealing, i.e., the truth of beings, happens in the work. Art is truth setting itself to work.’ (p.165). What connects the work to the artist is the truth of things, the Being of things. Heidegger describes that the artist is the passageway in order for the work to emerge, to be released to its pure self-subsistence ‘The work is to be released by the artist to its pure self-subsistence. It is precisely in great art –and only such art is under consideration here- that the artist remains inconsequential as compared with the work, almost like a passage that destroys itself in the creative process for the work to emerge.’ (p.166).

<sup>169</sup> Camiel van Winkel, *The Myth of Artisthood*, Mondriaan Fund, Amsterdam, 2013

<sup>170</sup> Ibid pp.19-21

<sup>171</sup> Ibid p.13

<sup>172</sup> ‘Van Abbe Museum, Collection’, Van Abbe Museum [Online] Available at: <https://vanabbemuseum.nl/en/collection/details/collection/?lookup%5B1673%5D%5Bfilter%5D%5B0%5D=id%3AC108> (Accessed: 5 June 2019)

<sup>173</sup> Nicola Bourriaud, see endnote n.167

<sup>174</sup> Camiel van Winkel, *The Myth of Artisthood*, Mondriaan Fund, Amsterdam, 2013, pp. 69-70

<sup>175</sup> Camiel van Winkel, *The Regime of Visibility*, NAI Publishers, Rotterdam, 2005

<sup>176</sup> (See Glossary)

<sup>177</sup> Boris Groys, *On the New*, Verso, London, 2014, p.77

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<sup>178</sup> Another common myth is authenticity and the individual freedom of the artist to be addressed through excessive expressiveness and spontaneity, and the usual victim of this is abstract painting and especially one that incorporates gestural marks. If for Jean-Paul Sartre the visualization of authenticity was a Jazz musician who would exhibit freedom via improvisation yet stand at the same time on the firm ground of the knowledge of his instrument and of musical tradition, abstract painting has taken certainly a respective function. Though, instead of the common belief of the artist being free and authentic when following such a practice, he becomes involved in a mimetic process and simply follows what has been indicated as a spontaneous act and rather repeats this instead of 'originally' creating something. I would say that spontaneity is one of the well celebrated myths I have come across during my research (presumably because of the incorporation of gestural marks and through them to the affinity to the handmade object) and the way it relates to authenticity and originality, and I would argue that the moments we are the least authentic is when we think we are spontaneous.

<sup>179</sup> The most prominent figure regarding formalism in painting has been the American art critic Clement Greenberg (1909 – 1994), particularly known for his views on the 'purity' of the medium and its medium specificity. For the definition of Formalism see Glossary.

'It quickly emerged that the unique and proper area of competence of each art coincided with all that was unique in the nature of its medium. The task of self-criticism became to eliminate from the specific effects of each art any and every effect that might conceivably be borrowed from or by the medium of any other art. Thereby each art would each art be rendered "pure," and in its "purity" find the guarantee of its standards of quality as well as of its independence. "Purity" meant self-definition, and the enterprise of self-criticism in the arts became one of self-definition with a vengeance.

Realistic, naturalistic art had dissembled the medium, using art to conceal art. Modernism used art to call attention to art. The limitations that constitute the medium of painting - the flat surface, the shape of the support, the properties of the pigment - were treated by the Old Masters as negative factors that could be acknowledged only implicitly or indirectly. Under Modernism these same limitations came to be regarded as positive factors, and were acknowledged openly.'

Clement Greenberg, *Modernist Painting*, in *Art theory and Criticism: An Anthology of Formalist Avant-Garde, Contextualist and Post-Modernist Thought*, edited by Sally Everett, McFarland & Company Publishers, North Carolina 1991, pp.111-112