TIME, BEING, AND THE IMAGE

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ABSTRACT

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The three projects that make up this dissertation try to articulate an ontological idea of art; which is to say, they all approach art, or the imagination (as in project two), from the standpoint of a philosophical question concerning the sense of being. The ontological question is elaborated in terms of a theory of the spatial-temporal structure of the aesthetic or sensible realm. This kind of ontology contrasts with a more traditional metaphysical one, where the sense of being is sought within the purely intelligible realm, a realm that transcends the sensible. In projects one and two, the contrast is developed in terms of the Nietzschean/Heideggerian critique of metaphysics, and through the work of Jean-Luc Nancy, who appropriates this critique. In project three, it is developed in terms of Bergson and Deleuze's critique of objective time, or of any attempt to define being and time in terms of what is static and unchanging. Art is central for the ontology at stake here, and the ontology is one of art, because it is a matter of questioning the spatial-temporal being of the sensible, and not the being of the purely intelligible; and because art (as I try to show) is itself essentially concerned with revealing this ontological dimension of the sensible.

Keywords: Time, Temporality, Being, Image, Art, Ontology, Aesthetics, Sense, Cinema, Avant-Garde, Simulacra, Sensible, Rhythm, Sensation, Difference, Critique, Transcendence, Immanence, Metaphysics, Creativity, Originality.

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Introduction

The three projects that make up this dissertation were not written as parts of a single, unified work. Each project stands on its own, as an independent work, and can be read as such. Nonetheless, they share a common theme, as well as a common theoretical background, which I will try to outline in general terms in this introduction.

All three projects try to articulate an ontological idea of art; which is to say, they all approach art, or the imagination (as in project two), from the standpoint of a philosophical question concerning the sense of being. The ontological question is elaborated in terms of a theory of the spatial-temporal structure of the aesthetic or the sensible realm. This kind of ontology contrasts with a more traditional metaphysical one, where the sense of being is sought within the purely intelligible realm, a realm that transcends the sensible. In projects one and two, this contrast is developed in terms of the Nietzschean/Heideggerian critique of metaphysics, and through the work of Jean-Luc Nancy, who appropriates this critique. In project three, it is developed in terms of Bergson and Deleuze's critique of objective time, or of any attempt to define time in terms of what is static and unchanging. Art is central for the ontology at stake here, and the ontology is one of art, because it is a matter of questioning the spatial-temporal being of the sensible, and not the being of the purely intelligible; and because art (as I

try to show) is itself essentially concerned with the spatial-temporal being of the sensible. [1]

Project one, entitled "The Abyss of the Image, a Study of the Kantian/Heideggerian Imagination," explores Heidegger's reading of Kant in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*. Heidegger's reading hinges on Kant's idea of the imagination as the faculty that mediates between the sensibility and the understanding. Heidegger exploits this idea to critique Kant's residual dualism, and to formulate, through a creative re-interpretation of his work, an ontology that is rooted in the sensible. Project two, "Nancy and the Ontology of Art," draws on the work of Nancy to develop an ontological idea of art that is based on an idea of (sensible) sense. The ontology is pluralist. That is to say, it is based on a conception of the one – sense of being – from within the many, the plurality of sensible beings. The third project, "Time and the Cinema," draws on the work of Gilles Deleuze, principally *Cinema 1, the Movement-Image*, and *Cinema 2, The Time-Image*. The project, which sets Deleuze's ideas to work through an analysis of a number of avant-garde films, aims to theorize the cinema as a site for the revelation of being, or of what Deleuze calls "the whole," *from within* a montage of singular, heterogeneous durations. In what follows I will give a summary of each of the projects, and highlight their common themes.

I have set up the ontological idea of art or of the aesthetic somewhat polemically against what might be called the post-modern discourse of cultural studies. Much of contemporary social and cultural theory, as well as aesthetic theory, draws heavily on

[1] The term ontology of art, in other words, has two senses. Firstly, it is a matter of questioning what art is. Secondly, it is a matter of understanding the meaning of being itself through a concept of art.

the same philosophical tradition that informs my work. However, in these contexts, for many theorists the critique of metaphysics implies a rejection of ontology as such. I argue that, on the contrary, the critique of metaphysics is more fully realized through an ontology of the sensible, or of art. Thus I have set up my reading of Heidegger against the social/cultural theory of Jean Baudrillard, and my reading of Nancy against the post-modern art theory of Rosalind Krauss. I have also tried to indicate that my readings of Nancy and Deleuze, both very popular within the field of aesthetics and cultural theory, differ from the way that they are usually read within these contexts, ontology being the main point of contention. One of the claims that I am making as part of this argument is that cultural and aesthetic theory would benefit from a more philosophical, which is to say, ontological approach to questions of aesthetics.

Project One: "The Abyss of the Image, a Study of the Kantian/Heideggerian Imagination"

The interpretation of Heidegger's reading of Kant, which is the basis of the first project, is framed in terms John Sallis' Heideggerian interpretation of the history of metaphysics, elaborated in his book *Force of Imagination*. Sallis argues that much of modern philosophy can be traced back to Nietzsche's critique of metaphysics, which has its roots in Plato, specifically, in the Platonic dualism of the intelligible and the sensible realm.

"Within the classical philosophical purview," writes Sallis, "things that come to pass (sensible things, as they come to be called) are incapable of sustaining an identity with themselves; they are always becoming other than themselves and thus cannot be things themselves... In the Platonic texts this propriety is identified as the look that shows itself in and through things that come to pass, the look that does not itself come to pass but remains identical with itself. Because it is ever self-same… such a look, an *eidos*, is a thing itself."[2] The classical philosophical purview is also one of representation. The idea provides the representation of what a thing really is, in essence. It constitutes the essence of the sensible thing. Representation is a key concept within metaphysics, because it serves to articulate the relation between the separated realms. The sensible is seen as a copy of the intelligible, which serves as its model. The idea of representation also conditions Plato's negative view of art. Art works are copies of copies, copies of sensible things. This is why they are all the more removed from the truth.

Nietzsche is the first to radically critique this Platonic opposition, arguing that the idea of a purely intelligible world is merely a fable.[3] However, while much of modern philosophy and cultural theory takes up the Nietzschean project of the overcoming of Platonism as its own, Sallis makes a very important point when he argues that this overcoming has been construed in different and conflicting ways. Focusing on the work of Jean Baudrillard, he argues that many cultural theorists present the overcoming as the reign of appearances, freed from any reference to reality, truth or being. Such a

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[2] Sallis, John. 2000. *Force of Imagination*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. 99.
[3] Nietzsche, Friedrich. 1968. *Twilight of the Idols*. Translated by R. J. Hollingdale. Baltimore; Maryland: Penguin Books. 40-41.

construal is one-sided, Sallis argues, and it remains conditioned by Plato's own negative definition of the sensible realm. It fails, moreover, to heed Nietzsche's call, which is to abolish not only the so-called real world, but also the so-called merely apparent one.[4]

Sallis' own proper construal of the overcoming of metaphysics is elaborated in terms of an idea of the imagination, which is deeply informed by Heidegger's reading of Kant. For Sallis, Kant is a precursor to Nietzsche, and this is what Heidegger's reading makes apparent. According to Heidegger's reading, Kant is the first to undermine the duality of the intelligible and the sensible, and to open up the possibility of an ontology of the sensible.

The ontology that Heidegger develops through his creative reading of Kant can be understood in terms of the idea of the "transcendental Aesthetic." For Heidegger, the "Transcendental Aesthetic" implies that transcendence – transcendence to the knowledge of being itself – is to be found within the aesthetic. In other words, it implies that transcendence, which is the freedom to – through thought – go beyond sensible appearances, is immanent to the sensibility, to time and space, outside of which, as Kant insists, there are nothing but "mere concepts" or "metaphysical chimeras."[5]

However, although transcendence is implied in Kant's discussion of the aesthetic realm, for Kant, it belongs more properly to the understanding. Only the pure "I think" can grasp the unity of an object, and/or of the subject, as a whole, because it alone is able to see beyond the limits of time and space. However, Kant avoids being a dualist by

[4] Project one gives a much more a detailed account of Sallis' argument, and it is also elaborated on in project two, in relation to the work of Nancy.
[5] Kant, Immanuel. 1963. Critique of Pure Reason. Translated by Norman Kemp Smith. London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd. 21.

introducing the notion of the imagination as the third mediating term.[6] Heidegger's reading hinges upon this notion of the imagination. It is the idea of the imagination that allows Heidegger to fold the understanding (and the Kantian pure "I think") back onto the sensible, onto the aesthetic. He does this primarily through the notion of temporality, which he more or less identifies with the imagination.

Project one explores the Kantian/Heideggerian imagination and its constitutive temporality in detail. This is done in view of an idea of art. That is to say, the schematism of the imagination, as Heidegger defines it, suggests a certain ontological idea of art, in the sense of an idea of creative imagination. More specifically, the imagination grounds a certain idea of the image, which is not a representation. The (Kantian/Heideggerian) image is self-creating or self-forming. At the same time, through its own self-creating and self-showing, the image reveals the creativity – the inexhaustible source – which lies at the origin of every image. In this way, the idea of the imagination serves to ground the idea of a creative transcendence from within the (Kantian) limits of the sensible.

Project Two: "Nancy and the Ontology of Art"

The reading of the Kantian/Heideggerian imagination (in project one) is framed not only by Sallis' construal of Nietzsche's overcoming of Platonism. It is also framed by Sallis' reflection on sense – in both senses of the word. The word "sense" has (at least)

[6] Kant calls the imagination "the root of the two stems of human knowledge," that is, of the sensibility and the understanding (Kant 1963, 61).

two principal meanings. It refers to sensation, as in to sense something with the senses; and to meaning or signification, grasped by reason or the understanding. In the history of philosophy, thinkers have repeatedly tried to separate these two senses, and to erect the one (the intelligible) as the ground of the other (the sensible). Exploiting the ambiguity of the word, Sallis suggests that the opposition deconstructs itself. He writes,

> "Etymologically, *sense* is linked to the Latin *sensus, sentire*, which translate the Greek αισθησις and αισθηνομαι; in Greek philosophy from Plato on, αισθησις is linked to, as we say, the senses and so is opposed to νόησις, apprehension accomplished not through the senses but through thought, through the power of *intellectus*, of νοῦς. And yet, what is remarkable is the way in which *sense* erodes this opposition, the most fundamental of the oppositions that philosophy would establish, one that other fundamental oppositions more or less just redouble; it is the opposition that first establishes the very concept of ground, of fundament, of fundamental, as well as preparing even the concept of concept, the sense of concept. In itself the word *sense* houses the most gigantic ambivalence, indifferently coupling the difference between what is called the sensible, things of sense apprehended perceptually, *and* signification, meaning, a signified or intended sense."[7]

[7] Sallis, John. 1994. *Stone*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. 13-14.

The Kantian/Heideggerian imagination (as I read it, with the help of Sallis) manifests the same duplicity of sense. This duplicity or paradox of sense is also at the heart of Nancy's reflection on art, which is the subject of project two.[8]

The problem of sense forms a central motif in Nancy's work as a whole. In the third project I focus on his elaboration of the concept of sense in relation to an idea of art, in the essay "Why Are There Several Arts and Not Just One? (*Conversation on the Plurality of Worlds*)," which opens *The Muses*.[9] Nancy starts from a theory of sensible sense, which, he argues, is already in itself paradoxical. It is paradoxical because to sense is to experience the simultaneous intertwining of the act of sensing and the object sensed: the two in one.[10] Like Sallis, Nancy mobilizes this idea of sense against the metaphysical gesture, which consists in isolating *one* sense – the subjective or the objective – as the ground of the other.

For Nancy, sense (sensible sense) constitutes a plurality. By virtue of their intertwining, the sensing (subject) and the sensed (object) perpetually transform one another, such that each is perpetually becoming other, as if it were (always already) an other to itself. This differentiation or multiplication (Nancy speaks of "metamorphosing") of sense takes place within each of the senses (the sense of touch,

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[8] Heidegger's reading of Kant, and his philosophy more generally, is an important reference for project two, because of the influence of Heidegger on Nancy. Nancy's idea of art is developed in dialogue with Heidegger.

[9] Nancy, Jean-Luc. 1996. *The Muses*. Translated by Peggy Kamuf. Stanford: Stanford University Press. 1-40.

[10] As I elaborate in the project, Nancy's theory of sense, which, he argues, erodes the metaphysical opposition between subject and object, is deeply informed by Merleau-Ponty's analysis of sense-experience, particularly of "self-touching."
Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. 1968. *The Visible and the Invisible*. Translated by Alphonso Lingis. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

the sense of sight, etc.). But it also takes place across the different senses, which also intertwine, while remaining heterogeneous, in a kind of generalized synesthesia (Nancy 1996, 1-40).

Nancy identifies the plurality of the senses with the plurality of the arts. It seems that, at least in this essay, if not throughout his work, Nancy operates with a general concept of the aesthetic, taking the conditions of sense experience to be the same as those that constitute a work of art. Art is exemplary for Nancy, because it reveals what it really means to sense. It reveals the essence – the ontological plurality – of sense experience. In this dissertation as a whole I have similarly approached the aesthetic as a category that refers both to our sensuous experience of being in the world (in its fundamental spatial and temporal aspects), and to works of art, which constitute this experience in an original manner.

Nancy argues against the metaphysical gesture which aims to reduce the plurality of the senses to one transcendent origin. However, he focuses this critique on what he calls the philosophical "subsumption" of the plurality of the arts under one so-called essence of art. With this move, which is central in the essay, Nancy turns against the post-Kantian, Romantic/Heideggerian tradition, which informs much of his work. He develops the argument as a critique of Heidegger's distinction between *poiesis* and *techne*, arguing that it is another version of metaphysical dualism. For Heidegger, *poiesis* names the essence of all the arts. Within Heidegger's discourse, Nancy argues, *techne* stands on the opposite side, designating the plurality of the different techniques of the arts. The critique of the philosophical subsumption of art is thus elaborated as a critique

of the subsumption of *techne* by *poiesis*. However, I argue, against certain readings of Nancy, that despite this critique he still remains committed to an ontology of art. The ontology is perhaps more pluralist than that of Heidegger, and it gives more weight to each individual sense or sense-experience; but it is nonetheless an ontology. This argument is framed in terms of Sallis' construal of the Nietzschean overcoming of Platonism. That is to say, the argument is that Nancy does not leave us with a mere plurality of senses, unchained from any common sense or sense of being in common, which would constitute what Sallis calls a one-sided construal of the overcoming.

In the project I also position Nancy against Rosalind Krauss. In her influential book, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*, Krauss critiques what she calls the Modernist art discourse, which is centered on the notion of radical originality.[11] The notion of originality, which Modernism inherits from the Romantic tradition, rests on the idea of an autonomous, self-creating subject. Drawing on the texts of post-structuralism, Krauss sets out to prove that this idea of the subject is nothing but a myth. She introduces a concept of repetition, and argues that it is the condition of any creative act. The notion of repetition is in fact a notion of temporality. The argument is that there is no such thing as a pure present, no "creative instant" of the kind often invoked in the texts and artworks of Modernism, which is not conditioned by the past. She also introduces a concept of plurality or multiplicity, which she invokes against the pretention of absolute singularity, that is, of the uniqueness of the artist and

[11] The terms Modern or Modernism, and Postmodernism, are not key terms in this dissertation, as none of the major thinkers that I draw on are particularly invested in them. These terms are invoked only as they are used by Rosalind Krauss, whose position serves as a contrast to the work of Nancy.

his work. There is no such thing as an absolute singularity, argues Krauss, because every subject exists, not in isolation, but in relation to a plurality of others.[12] Both the notion of repetition and that of plurality are conceived in terms of a concept of technology. Modern technologies, especially technologies of the moving image, exemplify a kind of mechanical repetition, and they produce a plurality of copies, none of which are endowed with features of singularity. This is why Modernist artists often opposed art or creative imagination to technology. Accordingly, Krauss aims to deconstruct this opposition. She does not negate the idea of singularity, creativity, and originality altogether. But she does try to severely temper the notions, emphasising, through a general concept of technology, the culturally conditioned nature of artistic production.

The work of Nancy shares many parallels with that of Krauss. Nancy also critiques the notion of a self-creating subject, of the artist-genius, as it is celebrated in the texts of Romanticism and Modernism. Moreover, Nancy's critique, which is also informed by post-structuralism, seems to take a similar form. At the heart of his work stands a concept of plurality, which he invokes against the idea of a self-standing, self-creating subject, arguing that every being exists in relation to a plurality of others.[13] Temporality is also a fundamental notion for Nancy. For Nancy, there is no such thing as

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[12] Krauss makes her argument in terms of Saussure's structural linguistics: the sense of every signifier is constituted in relation to the multiplicity of other signifiers within a given language. She invokes this argument against the Modernist notion of a self-referential work of art, a work that is said to signify nothing but itself. This is discussed in detail in the introduction to project two.
Krauss, Rosalind. 1985 *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.

[13] In the project I elaborate on Nancy's critique of art through a look at his critique of the avant-garde in *Being Singular Plural*.
Nancy, Jean-Luc. 2000. *Being Singular Plural*. Translated by Robert D. Richardson and Anne O'Byrne. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

a pure present, no possibility of being wholly in the present, and correlatively, of being present to oneself without the mediation of an other, notions often invoked as central to the creative act within the Romantic discourse of Modernism. Lastly, the ideas of temporality and multiplicity are also linked to a concept of technology (this is the case in the opening essay from *The Muses*). Nonetheless, in the work of Nancy, the deconstruction of these Romantic notions does not lead to the kind of rejection of creativity and singularity that we find in Krauss. This is the central argument in project two: that Nancy allows us to rethink the ideas of creativity and singularity, in relation to the notions of repetition and multiplicity. He thus allows us to rethink an idea of art, while subjecting it to a radical critique.[14]

At stake in this staged polemic between Nancy and Krauss is – once again – the question of the ontology of art. The Modernist discourse that Krauss opposes is based on the idea of a subject that is able to transcend its social and cultural context in and through the act of creation. She argues that this is a metaphysical notion. The artist-subject is the absolute origin, a time-transcending, god-like figure. The fact that, within Modernism (as within Romanticism) the origin is conceived as originality, and as the uniqueness of each individual subject or work, does not make it any less metaphysical. It

[14] Temporality is a fundamental concept for Nancy's understanding of art and the arts. Time is the thread that connects each of the senses to the other, not in reference to a transcendent ideal, but in terms of a transformation of each one by the other. Time is also the thread that connects the three projects of the dissertation. For while Nancy departs from Kant and Heidegger (as does Deleuze), Heidegger's deconstructive reading of the metaphysical tradition, his elaboration of a theory of the temporality of the sensible in the book on Kant, resonates deeply with Nancy's reflection on the sense of art (as well as with Deleuze's reflection on the cinema).

is the idea of the creative essence of art, expressed in and through each individual "great" work, that Krauss objects to.

For Nancy, the artwork is a creative singularity, and also a kind of origin. Every artwork, worthy of the name, transcends what is already present at hand in the world. However, the originality of each work is not conceived in terms of the metaphysics of the subject. It is conceived as a creative act that takes place *from out of* one's being with others, as a transcendence that is immanent to one's being with others. Every work, just like every subject, exists in a field of relations. But Nancy understands relations not, as Krauss does, in terms of reproduction and derivation, but as mutual transformations. Relations, co-existences, pluralities, thus become conditions of creativity and singularity. The very thing that binds each work to an other, or to a plurality of others, enables it to exist as a singularity, as an origin. It is along these lines, that is, according to the logic of what he calls the singular/plural of being, that Nancy develops an ontology of art. I present this ontology as an alternative to both the Romantic/Modern metaphysics of art, and its postmodern negation.

Project Three: "Time and the Cinema"

Project three draws on the work of Gilles Deleuze to explore the cinema in relation to the question of time. Generally speaking, this project shares a similar philosophical Kantian/Nietzschean background with the other two. Deleuze situates his two volume study of the cinema in relation to the Kantian revolution in philosophy. For

Deleuze, modern cinema, like modern philosophy, is defined by the discovery of temporality. Like modern philosophy, modern cinema does not define time on the basis of what is static and changeless, but explores and affirms it for itself. He argues that modern cinema repeats in a much shorter time span the history of philosophy, when it breaks away from what he calls classical cinema, in which time was not yet an original and autonomous category. It is as if all of modern cinema is, for Deleuze, in a general sense Kantian.[15]

However, Deleuze develops the distinction between classical and modern cinema by drawing on the work of Henri Bergson. The starting point for Bergson's philosophy is the distinction between our lived experience of time, which he termed duration, and conceived as a creative force of life, and objective notions of time, which, he argued, have more to do with the abstract frame through which we measure time, than time itself. Duration, Bergson argues, is a flow, wherein each moment blends with the other, and each constantly changes in relation to the other. From the standpoint of objective time, which he called "spatialized time," the time theorized by classical metaphysics and science, moments are juxtaposed like objects in space or stations of rest.[16] This distinction is at the basis of Deleuze's distinction between classical and modern cinema.[17]

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[15] Deleuze, Gilles. 1989. *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*. Translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. xi.

[16] *Time and Free Will*, Bergson's first work, serves as the starting point for his philosophy as a whole. It is there that Bergson first develops the distinction between our traditional understanding of time in terms of spatial dimensions and duration.
Bergson, Henri. 2001. *Time and Free Will*. Translated by F.L. Pogson. Dover Publications, INC.

[17] The Bergsonian distinction between spatialized time and duration informs Deleuze's distinction between the two principle types of cinema, but it is not exactly identical to it. There is more complexity

Deleuze defines classical cinema in terms of what he calls the movement-image.[18] The movement-image belongs to a type of film which has an underlying unity, and which presents the world as having such a unity. Deleuze speaks of this unity as the image of a whole, the whole of being (Deleuze 1986, 16-17). Although the distinction is not clear-cut, in classical cinema, the image of the whole is one that transcends the individual images, serving as their common point of reference. Modern cinema, in contrast, is defined by the liberation of the shot; that is, of each individual image, each singular duration. But modern cinema also establishes a new idea of the whole, a new sense of the unity of a film, and, correlatively, of being. This new sense of the whole is one that is made from within the singular, heterogeneous durations (the individual, independent, shots). It is a whole understood from within time, which is to say, it is a whole that is perpetually made and unmade, as if it were in a permanent state of creation and renewal. Thus the distinction between the two types of cinema is a distinction between two different ways of construing the whole. We could say, even if Deleuze does not use these very terms, that one is more metaphysical, as it defines time in reference to a seat of permanence that transcends it; and the other is more

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here. The complexity is there in Bergson's work, as it develops. The original distinction (first introduced in *Time and Free Will*) between spatialized time and duration, undergoes a mutation in *Matter and Memory*, which is Deleuze's main source for the cinema books. In this later work, Bergson argues that there is no such thing as a purely spatialized time, a time made up entirely of points of rest. He introduces the category of movement, as that which tends towards spatialization, but never reaches it completely. The main distinction is then developed as that between movement and time, and it is this distinction that serves to distinguish the two types of cinema, according to Deleuze. These points are developed more in the introduction to project three.
Bergson, Henri. 1962. *Matter and Memory*. Translated by N.M. Paul and W.S. Palmer. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd.

[18] Deleuze, Gilles. 1986. *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*. Translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

ontological (in a similar sense to that in which this term is used in the other two projects) since the only permanence it discovers lies within time itself.

The third project differs from the other two in that it forgoes a more detailed textual exegesis in favour of exploring ideas by way of analyses of art objects. Deleuze's ideas of time and the cinema are set to work through three case studies, three avant-garde works: Christian Marclay's film *The Clock*, Dan Graham's video-installation *Present Continuous Past(s)*, and Michael Snow's *Wavelength*. Both the work of Marclay and that of Graham exploit the relation between the time registered by the camera and the time of projection, which is also the present time of the viewer. The works con-fuse these two registers, thereby undermining the distinction between reality and image, the object filmed and its projected image, the world and the subject. Both works allow the question of the relation between reality and image, subject and object, to be developed in terms of a notion of temporality. That is to say, the unity of subject and object, which constitutes the unity of the works, and correlatively of being as a whole, is developed in Deleuzian terms as the coexistence of past and present, the coexistence of heterogeneous durations.[19]

Michael Snow's *Wavelength*, the last film that is explored, initially presents itself as having a linear (teleological) temporal form, and thus as a kind of meta-commentary on the linear nature of narrative time. However, I argue that the film actually reverses

[19] In the dissertation the terms film and cinema are used interchangeably and are understood in terms of a concept of time. The claim is that the cinema is essentially a time-based medium, or that the medium of cinema is time (hence the expression cinematic time, or time of the cinema). It is this idea of temporality (as the medium of film) that also allows me to discuss video and film installations as part of the same tradition, and as speaking to the same problem of temporality. I address this issue in more detail in what follows.

and undermines linear, chronological time, by re-projecting the past into the future and by folding the future back onto the past; in other words, by making beginning and end meet. It thus creates an anachronic temporal form, wherein future and past coexist; that is, wherein the future appears as already having been, and the past as still to come. This coexistence of past and future implies a time that is continuous with itself only in the sense that is it always already other to itself. It thus reveals the unity of time as a unity of incessant transformation, as the constant opening of the past to the future.

With all three works, the cinema is presented not as a mechanism of representation, but as a site for the creative revelation of the whole of being – from out of singular, heterogeneous durations.[20]

[20] The cinema occupies an important place with regard to the first two projects as well. Both Baudrillard and Krauss appropriate Benjamin's theses outlined in the essay "Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." In the essay, Benjamin argues that technologies of mechanical reproduction, of which he considers photography and the cinema to be paradigmatic, erode the distinction between original and copy, by producing innumerable copies that are indistinguishable from their models. For both Baudrillard and Krauss, the pervasiveness of these technologies renders the both the notion of reality and that of the original artwork obsolete. For Krauss, it is as if technologies of mechanical reproduction revealed, albeit in an unprecedented way, what had always been true: the fact that every artwork is always already a reproduction, itself susceptible of infinite reduplication. The cinema thus plays a key role in the undermining of the Modernist discourse of the originality of art.
Benjamin, Walter. 1968. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." In *Illuminations*, translated by Harry Zohn, 217-253. New York: Schocken Books.

This way of thinking about the cinematographic image, of technology and of the image as such, or of the image in the age of technology, is not far removed from the abyss that Heidegger discovers in the Kantian imagination. In the essay from *The Muses*, explored in project two, Nancy also speaks of technology as marking the "obsolescence of the origin and end" (Nancy 1996, 26). However, for both Heidegger and Nancy, albeit differently, the image's lack of origin has a different meaning. For Krauss appropriating Baudrillard, the obsolescence of the origin leaves us with copies, and copies of copies, with what she calls "a bottomless system of reduplication" (Krauss 1985, 161). For Heidegger and for Nancy, on the other hand, the absence of the origin is interpreted as a condition of creation. It is the withdrawal of the origin that grants the possibility of things emerging – as if out of nothing.

Project One:
The Abyss of the Image,
A Study of the Kantian/Heideggerian Imagination

Preface: from metaphysics to the "culture of the image"

Since the early years of the twentieth century, social theorists have not ceased to describe our culture as one whose sense of reality is increasingly destabilized by the ubiquity of the image. "A culture of the image," a "Society of the spectacle," a "Disneyland" or a "Matrix," are just some of the titles that serve as an index of the present. At a time when every minute of the day; every (even the most remote) place in the world, seems to have been photographed; when the world as a whole seems covered over – the city plastered – with its photographic double; there may arise a dream-like confusion of reality and image. This experience, as those that have tried to understand it would suggest, takes the ground out from under our feet. It makes it difficult to say, either in everyday speech or in a theoretical register, what is real. In the face of it, terms like nature, being, presence, which might have once suggested some un-fabricated seat of truth, appear to no longer hold sway. But what also threatens to become obsolete, as a result of the effacement of the difference between reality and image, is the idea of the imagination, as a source of creativity or transcendence. This is a familiar picture. What is perhaps less familiar, at least in the field of cultural studies, is the fact that this predicament, despite its distinctively modern technological aspect, is incomprehensible without reference to philosophy, specifically the history of metaphysics. The problem of the relation between reality and image, like that of the relation between subject and object, goes back at least as far as the Platonic distinction

between the intelligible and the sensible realm. Heidegger is one of the first to show, initially with *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, that the fundamental metaphysical distinction between reality and appearance is unstable, more of a problem than a hard set theory; and even anticipates its own deconstruction.[21] For Heidegger, the meta-physical relation between reality and image is a kind of *aporia*. It leads thought to an abyss. Kant, he argues, is the first to bring this *aporia* to light, to show the abyss. The *Kantbuch* (as Heidegger called it) an early instance of his "de-structuring" of metaphysics, does more than simply bring the *aporia* to light, however. By allowing us to make sense of it, the work reveals a way out; even if, as we shall see, the "way" compels us to plunge more deeply into the *aporia*, the abyss of the image. This is why the *Kantbuch*, a work little known outside of the field of philosophy, deserves a closer look.

John Sallis, the first interlocutor in this engagement with Heidegger, helps us to frame Heidegger's work in a way that shows how it illuminates the contemporary *aporias* of the image. *Force of Imagination* is deeply informed by the idea of the imagination, and the corresponding idea of the image, developed in the *Kantbuch*; even if Sallis hardly mentions it; and even if he goes beyond that early work, engaging,

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[21] *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* along with *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (originally projected as the second part of *Being and Time*) begin Heidegger's project of de-structuring the history of metaphysics.
Heidegger, Martin. 1990. *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*. Translated by Richard Taft. Bloomington; Indiana: Indiana University Press.
Heidegger, Martin. 1988. *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*. Translated by Albert Hofstadter. Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

amongst other things, Heidegger's later thought.[22] In a chapter entitled "Duplicity of the Image," Sallis describes the current historical moment by an incredible inflation of the sense of the word image. He writes, "today the word *image* has become so inflated that its sense is extended to cover all things; that is, all things can now be designated as images, and yet precisely as a result of this extension they are effaced as things, as things themselves in distinction from images" (Sallis 2000, 80). Sallis argues that this inflation, whereby the difference between reality and image, model and copy, comes to be effaced, is inextricably linked to modern technology. Technologies of mechanical reproduction create images that are indistinguishable from their corresponding models. Such images constitute simulations of reality, which become the "basis" of further simulations, and so on, *ad infinitum*; forming a circuit of simulations (simulations of simulations) which have only an imaginary reference to the real. Sallis turns to Baudrillard to paint this hallucinatory picture. He cites *Simulacra and Simulations*, where Baudrillard writes that "one must conceive of T.V. along the lines of DNA as an effect in which the opposing poles of determination vanish, according to a nuclear contraction, retraction, of the old polar schema that always maintained a minimal distance between cause and effect, between subject and object…" (quoted in Sallis 2000, 81). For Sallis, Baudrillard's theoretical discourse is exemplary. It is there that the word image takes on an unlimited extension; so much so that, as Baudrillard argues, it no longer makes sense to speak of images per se, but of "simulacra," a term he popularized as an index of our historical present. The simulacrum is the photographic, televisual, cinematographic, or

[22] Sallis, John. 2000. *Force of Imagination*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

digital image, which duplicates reality so perfectly that it cannot be distinguished from it. It is both copy and model, image and thing, subject and object. Confusing the two, the simulacrum puts reality, as the French say, "*en abyme*."[23] That is to say, the simulacrum covers reality over so thoroughly that it comes to take its place; such that whatever appears to be real turns out to be an image of a thing that is itself an image, a reproduction of a reproduction... Reality is replaced by what Baudrillard calls a simulated "hyperreality," a sort of perpetual hallucination of reality. But at the same time, as Sallis reminds us, the reign of "simulacral hyperreality" leaves no room for the imagination (Sallis 2000, 82). It leaves no room for a notion of the image that would be more (creative) than a reproduction.[24]

Baudrillard's thinking, which, for Sallis, is exemplary of a more prevalent discourse, only seeks to expose today's hyperreality for what it is: "confirming everything that would have prompted one to doubt whether the image revealed something originary or only concealed the void on which it was cast" (Sallis 2000, 83).[25]

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[23] The French term "*mise-en-abyme*" (literally "placed into abyss") refers to what is also known as the "droste effect," which describes the experience of standing between two mirrors, and seeing an infinite reproduction of one's image. In art, it describes a painting which contains a smaller copy of itself, in a sequence that appears to recur infinitely. The term has been given a great deal of significance by various cultural theorists. Baudrillard uses it to describe the effect of simulacra.
Baudrillard, Jean. 1994. *Simulacra and Simulations*. Translated by Sheila Faria Glaser. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

[24] As Sallis points out, Baudrillard marks a kind of return of the imaginary, "but one that would represent only a futile attempt to conceal and deny the reign of simulacral hypperreality" (Sallis 2000, 83). For example, Baudrillard writes: "Disneyland exists in order to hide that it is the "real" country, all of "real" America that is Disneyland (a bit like prisons are there to hide that it is the social in its entirety, in its banal omnipresence, that is carceral). Disneyland is presented as imaginary in order to make us believe that the rest is real, whereas all of Los Angeles and the America that surrounds it are no longer real, but belong to the hyperreal order and to the order of simulation. It is no longer a question of a false representation of reality (ideology) but of concealing the fact that the real is no longer real, and thus of saving the reality principle" (Baudrillard 1994, 12).

[25] Baudrillard writes: "The simulacrum is never what hides the truth. It is truth that hides the fact that there is none" (Baudrillard 1994, 1).

As such an exposing of the illusion of reality, the discourse presents itself as an overturning of Platonism. Affirming the collapse of Plato's hierarchical opposition of image and reality, it celebrates the loss of reality; the loss of Truth, Being, and the Idea; the fall of metaphysics as such. However, Sallis makes a convincing Heideggerian argument that Baudrillard's discourse remains implicitly governed by metaphysics. He argues that it is, in fact, pre-figured in Plato.

Despite its distinctively modern aspect (stamped with the seal of technology) the simulacrum has, Sallis argues, its prototype in Plato's image of the cave, and the accompanying figure of the line. The line is meant to trace the ascent out of the cave, where simulacra reign, towards reality itself. But Sallis insists that the Platonic division between reality and image is complicated because of the fact that it is by way of the image that one goes beyond it. In other words, one recognizes a "beyond" of the image only because the image – a shadow play – seems to reflect it. The image is thus somewhere in-between reality and image. This split or "dyadic structure" of the image is most clear at the lowest segment of the line, "the doubled vision of the just released, still caverned prisoner," which is the only part that Plato designates literally as image: *eikonia* (Sallis 2000, 80). According to a more classical reading of Plato, in the succeeding stages of the line the image, with its duplicity, is transcended in favour of the Idea: the real thing in itself. But, as Sallis puts it, "there are unmistakable indications that the dyadic structure of image and original are determinative at all points of the ascent," *including* "that at which it would come to its end" (Sallis 2000, 80). Not only does every step along the line out of the cave appear in the form of an image; or as a movement

towards the original *through* the image; when pressed to speak of the terminal point, Socrates also speaks in terms of images. Setting aside the good itself, Socrates argues only "to tell what looks like a child of the good and seems most similar to it" (Sallis 2000, 81). It is as though even the "original of originals" could not but appear in the guise of an image.[26]

From this point of view, Plato's line looks more like a vicious circle, leading the prisoner back to the cave with each step that he takes out of it. According to Sallis, what Baudrillard describes as the void or *mise-en-abyme* of the image; whereby the image appears to be *of* a reality that turns out to be just another image…; is simply the inverted figure of Plato's ascent. Moreover, the inversion (the descent) is already at least implicitly outlined in Plato's text. Sallis' analysis suggests that Plato's move, which has been repeated throughout the history of philosophy, to separate reality from the image, inverts itself, leaving us with mere images, a loss of reality, "the reign of simulacra." This is why what presents itself as an overcoming of Platonism, and as a radical break with metaphysics, is in fact "pre-programmed" by it.

It was Friedrich Nietzsche who first announced overcoming Platonism as the task of modern philosophy. The overcoming, Nietzsche argued, is realized by undermining the opposition between the true and the apparent world. It begins by recognizing that there is no purely intelligible world; that the notion of an eternal being lying behind the ever-changing play of appearances is an illusion; and proceeds by tracing the history of

[26] This reading owes a lot to Heidegger's book *The Essence of Truth*, in which he gives a detailed analysis of Plato's parable of the cave.
Heidegger, Martin. 2002. *The Essence of Truth*. Translated by Ted Sadler. London; New York: Continuum.

this idea, the history of "how the 'real world' at last became a myth."[27] However, for Nietzsche, as Sallis insists, the overcoming of Platonism is accomplished only when the so-called "apparent world" is abolished along with the true intelligible world.[28] The idea of a world of appearances; of images, and images of images, only concealing the void on which they are cast; is a corollary of the idea of a transcendent, original reality. They are like two sides of the same coin. Sallis' deconstructive Heideggerian reading of Plato's parable of the cave demonstrates the intrinsic connection between these seeming opposites. It shows how the idea of a transcendent reality produces and turns into its opposite, the idea of a world of mere images. It shows, conversely, that the idea of a world of mere images or simulacra remains governed by a reference to the inaccessible transcendent realm; which it confirms, unawares, by way of negation. Sallis writes:

> "The overcoming of Platonism can be construed as simply a matter of denying the original and of promoting the mutation of all images, released from every bond to an original, into simulacra. But such a construal is one-sided: it fails to observe that this very outcome is already programmed precisely by Platonism - that is, it construes the

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[27] Nietzsche, Friedrich. 1968. *Twilight of the Idols*. Translated by R. J. Hollingdale. Baltimore; Maryland: Penguin Books. 40-41.

[28] "We have abolished the real world: what world is left? the apparent world perhaps? … But no! *with the real world we have also abolished the apparent world!* (Mid-day; moment of the shortest shadow; end of the longest error; zenith of mankind; INCIPIT ZARATHUSTRA.)" (Nietzsche 1969, 41).

For Sallis, "the imperative [which has imposed itself at least since Nietzsche] is to abandon the "true world" that has finally become a fable, to turn away from the intelligible … to the sensible. By cancelling the subordination of the sensible to the intelligible, this turn also abolishes the character of the sensible as appearance... the turn twists the sensible free and releases it to itself." He adds, however, that "with the abolition of the intelligible, it cannot be merely a matter of then abandoning the intelligible. For the turn is not itself simply locatable within the sensible or sensibility, but rather, responsive to an imperative, it takes place primarily in the form of speech" (Sallis, 2000, 32-33). In other words, the turn takes place in the register of *logos*; or rather, it takes place, as we shall see, in-between reason and the sensibility.

> overturning in a form that remains under the control of precisely what it would overturn, failing to carry out a displacement or reinscription that could erode the very schema of the opposition within which it turns. If one would decisively overturn Platonism in this regard - overturn it in such a way as to turn away from it - what is required is that the reiterated turning of original into image be interrupted."[29]

Finding a way out of Platonist metaphysics, and out of the *aporia*, the abyss of the image, that it spawns, is no clear-cut task. Sallis, following Heidegger, suggests that one gets out of metaphysics by going back to it, and turning it on its head, so to speak. Rather than simply negating the idea of transcendence, and of an access to the real, it is a matter of understanding how transcendence to the real is possible from within the apparent world, from within the senses. Neither opposing reality and image, Idea and sense, nor simply confusing the two, it is a matter of seeing them as simultaneously joined and separated. Along these lines, one might "twist free" of metaphysics, and of the abyss that opens in its place.

For Sallis, Kant is the first to broach this path. He claims that Kant's notion of the image takes us beyond philosophical dualism. Kant allows us to think the image as both subjective and objective, image and thing itself, neither opposing nor conflating the two. With the notion of the imagination, Kant shows how the image opens onto the real;

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[29] On the same page, as another example of this discourse of the simulacra, Sallis cites Deleuze, who writes (in *Difference and Repetition*) that "overcoming Platonism means denying the primacy of original over copy, of model over image; glorifying the reign of simulacra and reflections" (Sallis 2000, 84). Deleuze identifies this thought of the simulacra with Nietzsche's notion of the eternal return. However, Sallis insists on a different reading of Nietzsche, which he finds in Heidegger.

without being simply determined by it, as a mere copy; and without being simply "imagined," as a mere "mental" fiction.[30] However, as we shall see, Kant shies away from this idea of the imagination, which remains highly paradoxical, if not *aporetic*, abyssal. It is only developed retroactively in Heidegger's reading of Kant, which informs much of Sallis' work.

Sallis is not the only one who helps us to understand the relevance of Heidegger's *Kantbuch* for thinking about the image today. In a chapter entitled "*Image et Art*," included in his *L'art, L'éclair de L'être*, Henri Maldiney, our second interlocutor, argues similarly that in the *Kantbuch* Heidegger introduces a new way of thinking about the image, which overturns traditional metaphysics and the *aporias* that it spawns. Maldiney reminds us that, traditionally, modern philosophy discusses the image solely as a psychic reality of consciousness.[31] The image is understood as constituting a purely mental register, a kind of psychic receptacle, which "contains" the world, or what we know and see of it. The problem is that the interposition of a representation, *produced* by the mind, which is, at the same time, determined by sensations of the external world, simply begs the question as to how (where and when) these sensations, which have their source in the world, and the images, which have their source within consciousness, could ever meet. To put it differently, the idea of representation implies a correspondence of image and thing, subject and object; but it is not clear how the correspondence could ever be established, or made comprehensible, if one begins by

[30] As Sallis reminds us, in his critique of both idealism and empiricism Kant argues "that the consciousness of my existence is at the same time an immediate consciousness of other things outside me," since "the determination of my existence in time is possible only through the existence of actual things that I perceive outside me" (Sallis 2000, 89).

[31] Maldiney, Henri. 2012. *L'art, L'éclair de l'être*. Paris: Cerf. 218

opposing them as two separate realities. This is consistent with Sallis' argument, which states that the opposition of image and thing itself, which is meant to determine the image in reference to the thing itself, as a copy in reference to a model, undermines itself, leaving us with a world of empty images. Moreover, Sallis traces the modern philosophical "psychologist" theory of the image, and the difficulties it creates, back to the Platonic distinction between the Idea and the sensible thing, by way of Cartesian dualism.[32] Maldiney argues that Husserlian phenomenology, following a Kantian inspiration, first makes this problem of the relation between reality and image apparent. It tries to overcome it by understanding what things are in terms of how they show themselves to us; the proper task of phenomenology consisting in, as Maldiney puts it, "unveiling the being of phenomena on the basis of the phenomena themselves" (Maldiney 2012, 219). From Husserl's standpoint of intentionality, the perception of something is neither simply our ("subjective") image of it, nor an independent object, but the object *of* our activity, the object directing the intention that shapes it.[33] Maldiney suggests that in the *Kantbuch* Heidegger tries to push this sort of thought

[32] Sallis not only traces the modern philosophical theory of the image back to Plato through Descartes, he also argues that it is this theory that "provides the theoretical figure that comes to be translated as the "reign of simulacra." He writes: "Once it is declared [as it is with Berkeley] that there are only ideas and no objects beyond them, not even a corporeal substance (a "supposed I know not what")... then the very words *idea* and *image* undergo a certain slippage as a result of the loss of the dyadic structure that would otherwise make them ideas *of* something, images *of* an original." For Berkeley, what still made the ideas or images refer to something real was the belief in a divine author, who "imprints" them on our senses. However, as faith in the divine author wanes, as, as Sallis puts it, the "mourning sets in... what were called ideas are stripped not only of their imaginal reference to an object but also of that identity with objects that, with Berkeley, still came to legitimate them. Now they are neither images of objects nor images as objects but only simulacra" (Sallis 2000, 89). Without reference to this philosophical history, the discourse of the simulacra remains incomprehensible, and its critique without basis.

[33] Here Malidney is in agreement with Sallis once again when he writes: "[for Husserl] in the perception of an object, the intentional act is directed, not at some image in consciousness, but rather at the object itself…"
Sallis, John. 2012. *Logic of Imagination*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. 171.

further by folding conceptual representation onto the sensibility, imagination onto sense-perception, as though what showed itself immediately through the senses and our image or representation of it were inseparable. Heidegger argues that Kant understands the image in this way; that is, as somewhere *in-between* conceptual representation and what is immediately *given* to the senses.

However, Maldiney argues that it is not enough to simply identify image and thing, as Heidegger does initially, in order to understand how they are connected. Malidney claims that with this initial move, which Heidegger later supplements, an *aporia* emerges in his text, without him explicitly spelling it out. It is the very *aporia* that photography and the cinema have brought to the fore of contemporary theories of "the culture of the image." It emerges not only in reference to the definition of the sensible image, but between it and its double, the photographic image, which Heidegger analyses in an original way. Maldiney argues that it becomes difficult to distinguish the one from the other (the model and the copy) given Heidegger's description of both, and perhaps in spite of his intention to do so.

Maldiney elaborates on this modern aporia, as it surfaces in Heidegger's text, with the help of Roger Munier's text "L'image fascinante." Munier writes that the photographic image establishes a new rapport between man and world, which is predicated on the abolishment of the distance between subject and object. Due to its objective character, he argues, one cannot even call it an image. "Originally, the word [image] signified imitation, copy" (Maldiney 2012, 225). Munier writes that there is always an interval between an imitation, no matter how faithful the drawing, and the

represented object. It disappears completely with the photograph, which is the thing itself.[34] The photographic image coincides with the given to such a degree that it destroys itself as image. It is "no longer a copy but an enunciation of the world that speaks itself through it."[35] The image is no longer an image, Maldiney affirms, when it is no longer an image of something ("image de quelque chose") (Maldiney 2012, 226). It is this sense of an absolute proximity between self and world that makes the photographic image "fascinating," a word that implies precisely the abolition of the distance between oneself and a captivating object.

For Munier, because it adds movement to the photograph, the cinema is simply the perfect form of l'image fascinante. He reminds us that a real leaf trembling in the wind has to wait to be signified ("by my gaze") in order to appear as a leaf trembling in the wind. In contrast, "in the cinema the leaf trembling in the wind pronounces itself" (Maldiney 2012, 228). The cinematographic image redoubles the object in such a way that it is already signified, already seen; since it is simultaneously an object and a gaze, thing and image, perception and signification. In thus abolishing the gap between reality

[34] Of course, as Maldiney later points out, every image, including the photographic, remains different from the thing itself, because it is two dimensional, and we cannot walk around it. The thing as we encounter it in the world offers itself to view through profiles, or sides, which imply other sides, and a whole surrounding space in which each profile is embedded (Maldiney 2010, 227, 231-233). The real thing is thus never exhausted in any one of its appearances. There is a gap between the appearance and the thing, a gap through which the appearance opens unto something – the real in its alterity – which transcends it. By means of mechanical reproduction, Maldiney argues, the photographic image automatically effaces this gap, presenting the real as if it were objectively (and integrally) in the image. This proposed objective identity of image and thing is what distinguishes the mere image from the real thing (for "the real is not the objective"). In contrast, images that do not operate like photographs, but rather expose the gap that separates them from the object, can, paradoxically, bring us closer to the real. To be sure, they do not achieve this through greater verisimilitude, but through the mediation of artistic form. However, Maldiney's idea of art falls beyond the purview of this paper (even if it informs it).

[35] "L'image photographique n'est plus copie mais énoncé du monde même qui se dit en elle…" (Maldiney 2010, 226).

It is difficult not to notice the similarity of this analysis of the modern image to that of Baudrillard, despite the great difference of philosophical orientation between the two thinkers.

and image by way of technologies of mechanical reproduction the "culture of the image," as Maldiney calls it, is left with images that cannot even be called images (simulacra?) because they are of nothing. They do not refer to, or open out onto, anything real.[36]

Like Sallis, Maldiney claims that while this aporia of the image has a distinctively modern technological aspect, it is rooted in metaphysics. However, Maldiney suggests that it has another, deeper origin, in sense-experience itself. The con-fusion of reality and image, which Heidegger identifies at the level of empirical intuition, is a familiar, if not universal, experience of the image. "At times, he writes, the world takes on the appearance of a world of images" (Maldiney 2012, 225).[37] The captivating force or lure of the image, which has made it the object of so many religious and philosophical denunciations, consists in its power to present itself as though it were the thing itself. Sallis makes a similar claim, arguing that there is an essential duplicity of the image. Since Plato, philosophy has tried to overcome this duplicity by opposing and subjugating the image to the "thing in itself;" only to have this opposition collapse, the repressed image returning, as it were, with a vengeance.

For Maldiney, Heidegger's thinking in the Kantbuch does not resolve the aporia of the sense-image per se, which is also the aporia of metaphysics that technology

[36] The cinematographic image is both subjective, because it is taken from a particular point of view (the point of view of the camera), and objective, because this point of view is an exact reproduction of the object. When we look at a cinematographic image, we assume the point of view of the camera, a point of view that presents itself as being the object itself. In this way, that is, by identifying our gaze with the object, the cinema does not leave us any room to form an image of the object for ourselves. The object has already been seen, it has already been signified, as if of its own accord. As a result, reality disappears as well. It disappears with the effacement of the gap between seer and seen (Maldiney 2010, 231-233).
[37] "Ce monde a parfois l'allure d'un monde d'images" (Maldiney 2012, 225).

accentuates in an exceptional manner; especially if resolving implies establishing a clear-cut distinction between image and thing. Heidegger's thinking remains abyssal. It affirms the duplicity, the interlacing, of reality and image. Nonetheless, it is a way of thinking that allows us to distinguish between an image that touches on the real, and a *mere* image, or a mere dream (a simulacrum). However, like Sallis, Maldiney does not provide a close reading of the *Kantbuch*. He focuses more on the later Heidegger, and on developing his own (Heidegger-inspired) idea of art. But, like Sallis, he suggests that the seed of Heidegger's later thought, which constitutes a new, "other beginning," beyond the dualities of metaphysics, is to be found in the *Kantbuch*, specifically in the idea of the imagination.

Introduction: Kant and the problem of meta-physics, finitude and transcendence

For Heidegger, the Kantian revolution consists in the idea that the questions of metaphysics have to be rethought on the basis of the finite "sensibility" of the human being (Heidegger 1990, 18). At first sight, Kant's doctrine of the faculties seems to reproduce the traditional metaphysical dichotomy between the sensible and the intelligible. According to this division, sensible beings are passive, in the sense that they are subject to change within time. Passivity is the mark of their finitude, their contingency and their perishability. The intelligible being, on the other hand, is self-determining, in the sense that it is not affected by anything external. Consequently it does not change, but maintains itself as eternally self-same. It is the eternal "thing in

itself." The latter is the realm of truth; the former, the realm of images and illusions. In a later essay, "The Word of Nietzsche: 'God Is Dead,'" Heidegger describes this oppositional structure, and the way that it has reigned from antiquity to modernity:

> "God is the name for the realm of Ideas and ideals. This realm of the suprasensory has been considered since Plato, or more strictly speaking, since the late Greek and Christian interpretation of Platonic philosophy, to be the true and genuinely real world. In contrast to it the sensory world is only the world down here, the changeable, and therefore merely apparent, unreal world. The world down here is the vale of tears in contrast to the mountain of everlasting bliss in the beyond. If, as still happens in Kant, we name the sensory world the physical in the broader sense, then the suprasensory is the metaphysical world."[38]

In Kant the distinction is between the faculty of the sensibility, which he also calls the intuition, and the faculty of the understanding, or reason.[39] However, the originality of Kant, according to Heidegger, lies in his effort to overcome this duality, by trying to understand the intrinsic connection between the intelligible and the sensible.

Kant begins by affirming the irreducible finitude of the human being, arguing that there is nothing beyond the limits of the sensible. But he does not turn away from metaphysics as such. Heidegger argues that Kant critiques only the facile "overstepping"

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[38] Heidegger, Martin. 1977. "The Word of Nietzsche: 'God Is Dead.'" In *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, translated by William Lovitt. New York: Harper & Row. 61.

[39] Kant distinguishes reason and the understanding as two distinct faculties. However, Heidegger downplays the importance of this distinction.

of the sensible ("of what experience can offer of the particulars") and the positing of a *purely* intelligible realm, which consigns metaphysics to "a random groping among mere concepts" (Heidegger 1990, 6).[40] For Kant, it is possible to transcend our finite sensible nature and accede to the knowledge of being itself. But what needs to be demonstrated is the possibility of transcendence *from within* the finite sensibility. Kant elaborates this as the question of the unity of the two faculties; that is, the unity of the active and the passive, the original and the derivative, the eternal and the temporal.

Heidegger introduces his reading of Kant in this way by focusing on Kant's distinction between human and divine intuition (Kant 1963, 90). Kant writes that human intuition is "*intuitus derivativus*," in the sense that it derives its representations from beings that exist in their own right. Thus existing in relation to things, the human intuition is affected to change within time. It is always becoming other to itself, and thus is never a thing in itself, nor does it yield knowledge of things in themselves. Divine intuition, in contrast, is *"intuitus originarius."* It is creative, originally forming itself and its world. Unaffected, impermeable to change, it is, and has knowledge of, the being itself. But Heidegger formulates what he calls Kant's question in a way that shows that what is at stake is the overcoming of this duality. Heidegger writes,

> "So the question… narrows down to this: How can a finite creature, which as such is delivered over to beings and is directed by the taking-in-stride of these same beings, know, i.e., intuit, prior to all (instances of) taking the being in stride, without being its 'creator?' In

[40] Kant, Immanuel. 1963. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Translated by Norman Kemp Smith. London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd. 21.

> other words, how must this finite creature be with respect to the constitution of its own Being so that such a bringing-forward of the constitution of the Being of beings which is free from experience, i.e., an ontological synthesis, is possible?" (Heidegger 1990, 27).[41]

Heidegger's reading hinges on Kant's suggestion that the imagination is the third basic faculty, which mediates between the sensibility and the understanding. Often citing Kant's claim that the imagination is "the root of the two stems of human knowledge,"[42] he emphasises its centrality. The imagination, Heidegger argues, is able to connect the sensibility and the understanding, neither opposing nor simply conflating the two, through the images that it forms. The imagination has the receptivity of the sensibility. It has the ability to let itself be affected by the things themselves, prior to any act of will or cognition. But this receptivity, this letting, is at the same time a creative activity, which brings the freedom of the understanding into play. "Imagining" (or "imaging") is a *creative forming of that which gives itself*. It is thus through the idea of the imagination, as that which mediates between the understanding and the sensibility, that the problem of the relation between image and reality, copy and model, will be developed.

The Kantian/Heideggerian image and its double

[41] Alternatively, "the problem of the transcendental, i.e., of the synthesis which constitutes transcendence, can also be put in this way: How must the finite being that we call "human being" be according to its innermost essence so that in general it can be open to a being that it itself is not and that therefore must be able to show itself from itself?" (Heidegger 1990, 30).

[42] "There are two stems of human knowledge, namely, *sensibility* and *understanding*, which perhaps spring from a common, but to us unknown, root" (Kant 1963, 61).

In the first *Critique*, the chapter on the schematism of the imagination occupies a central place. For Kant, the schematism is the form, or the art, through which the imagination connects the understanding and the sensibility – by way of images. Through the schematism the ideas are made sensible. However, the chapter has been called obscure. Heidegger's interpretation of it, which I will read closely here, is no less controversial. Particularly strange are the opening passages of Heidegger's "Image and Schema," which is where the interpretation begins (following a brief introduction). It is there that Heidegger approaches the Kantian schematism through a number of strange examples; notably, the example of a photograph, and that of a death mask. Even more strange is the fact that Heidegger does not return to these images later in the book. The discussion seems out of place, almost a digression. This has made some of his readers (especially Jean-Luc Nancy) speculate as to what tempted Heidegger to look at the image from such a perspective, and what compelled him (perhaps the revelation of something uncanny?) to then shy away from it.[43] However, even if the discussion is a bit out of place, it is incomprehensible without reference to the main problems of the book; upon which it, in turn, sheds light. Moreover, the examples help us to make a bridge between Heidegger's analysis of the schematism and theoretical considerations of the image in the field of culture, which we mentioned in the introduction.

[43] Nancy, Jean-Luc. "Masked Imagination." In *The Ground of the Image*. Translated by Jeff Fort. New York: Fordham University Press.

Heidegger begins the discussion by considering the image as it presents itself to empirical intuition. He calls this the common (familiar) sense of the image. Originally, he writes, at the level of empirical intuition, or of the "sensibility" (Kant uses the words interchangeably) we do not distinguish between the object and its image. Rather, what we see is the "look" offered by what is present.

> "The expression image [*Bild*] is to be taken here in its most original sense, according to which we say that the landscape presents a beautiful "image" (look)... First of all, image can mean: the look of a determinate being to the extent that it is manifest as something at hand... The best known way of creating a look (giving an image) is the empirical intuiting of what shows itself. That which shows itself here always has the character of the immediately seen particular ('this-here')." (Heidegger 1990, 64-65)

Heidegger uses the word "look" (*Anblick*) in both the active sense of looking, as well as the passive sense of the look of something, its outward aspect (*Aus-sehen*), folding the two senses into one.[44]

Maldiney suggests that Heidegger's starting point is similar to that of Henri Bergson in *Matter and Memory*. Bergson also begins by asking us to consider the image as it presents itself immediately. He argues that originally, for the one who is neither a philosopher nor a scientist; in other words, for the one who experiences the image

[44] In the word *Anblick* we should perhaps also hear an echo of *Augenblick* (the German word for moment, literally "blink of an eye") by which Heidegger characterises original temporality in *Being and Time*. But this connection will only become apparent later.

without the mediation of a pre-established conceptual framework; the image is neither a reality of consciousness nor the quality of an object. At the level of sense-experience, it is both subject and object, mind and matter, *at the same time*.[45]

We are used to thinking of images as representations, objects which show something, the "thing itself" behind the appearance, the significance behind the sign. Alternatively, we think of images as perceptions derived from the "mind" of a subject, external manifestations of an interiority. In contrast, Heidegger claims that the image presents or shows itself. It shows its own showing. Its being lies in its appearing. Because it is not an image *of* something external to it, the sensible image is creative. It forms itself (*sich-bildet*), images or imagines itself.

Perhaps the best way of understanding Heidegger's sensible image is through Sallis' notion of the "sense-image." The sense-image is duplicitous, writes Sallis, because it is both "of the object" and "one's own," at the same time (Sallis 2000, 95). It makes the thing present to us as it makes itself present. He writes: "In the dyad of prehending sense (sensing) and prehended sense (sensed) what occurs is a presence of sense to sense; or rather, within the limits of the sensible, what primarily occurs (even if redoubled in another register) is that something sensible comes to be present to the senses. Such sense comes to be present to sense in and as an image, a sense image"

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[45] Bergson writes, "We will assume for the moment that we know nothing of theories of matter and theories of spirit, nothing of the discussions as to the reality or ideality of the external world. Here I am in the presence of images, in the vaguest sense of the word, images perceived when my senses are opened to them, unperceived when they are closed. All these images act and react upon one another in all their elementary parts according to constant laws which I call the laws of nature."
Bergson, Henri. 1991. *Matter and Memory*. Translated by N.M. Paul and W.S. Palmer. New York: Zone Books. 17.

Quoting these passages, Maldiney claims that by thus identifying image and thing, Bergson is led to consider the world as if it were made up of images, as if reality were indistinguishable from the image.

(Sallis 2000, 77-78). In other words, despite or rather in and through its duplicity, the sense-image makes the thing present to us by making us present to it (immediately).[46]

Heidegger writes that the idea of the image as a reproduction is secondary. It is a secondary sense, a secondary type of image, derived from the first. The photograph is a good example. Unlike the original image (*Bild*), it is a copy (*Abbild*) formed from or by (*Ab-bildung*) something else. The first image is what the photograph reproduces.

However, Heidegger complicates this distinction between the original and the derived as soon as he makes it. He writes that the photograph, while derivative, also *shows itself*. That is to say, every reproduction *present itself*, "as this thing here," at the same time that it re-presents something else. Heidegger writes, "a photograph … immediately offers a look. It is image in the first sense. But while it shows itself, it wants to show precisely that from which it has taken its likeness" (Heidegger 1990, 66).

Maldiney has pointed out a certain ambiguity in these passages. If the photograph shows itself, while showing the photographed thing, can it be easily distinguished from the first image (Maldiney 2010, 222)? That is to say, if what Heidegger means by the claim that a being shows itself is that it is active and creative,

[46] Heidegger does not use the term "duplicity," nor does Sallis ascribe it to him directly. However, I think it is apt for what is implied. For what is implied, already here with the empirical image, is the idea of the imagination as the third term mediating between the understanding and the sensibility (the two sources of human knowledge). The imagination is a third term, but it is not posited in addition to the two. It does not overcome or reconcile (as in a higher unity) their division. Rather, it is from and within the division that it acts, even as it undermines the division, showing that it is impossible to separate the one from the other. The imagination, the third unity-constituting term, remains two-folded or two-sided, and in this sense duplicitous: a 2 in 1. It functions very much like Heidegger's ontological difference, a relation that *joins while separating*, which he began to develop around the same time. This relational structure is already visible in Heidegger's sensible image, even if it will require the detour through the understanding, and the corresponding three-fold aspect of time (a three that is also, as we shall see, two syntheses folded in one) to bring this fully to light.

that it originally comes to presence, then the ascription of this phenomenon to a photograph is paradoxical. It implies that the copy is not merely a copy, but functions as an original disclosure, at the same time that it reproduces something. In other words, the photograph transcribes what has already made itself present, but it makes it present in a new light, the light of the view-finder. When looking at a photograph (Heidegger is talking about both producing and looking at a photograph) assuming the point of view of the camera, do we not bear witness to a confusion of model and copy, original and derived?[47]

It is by identifying this paradox, which Heidegger does not spell out in the text, that Maldiney is able to connect Heidegger's analyses to those of Roger Munier in "*L'image fascinante*." Munier writes that the photographic image establishes a new rapport between man and world, which is predicated on the abolishment of the distance between subject and object, model and copy, image and thing. Munier's analysis is strikingly similar to that of Baudrillard, who writes that "one must conceive of T.V. along the lines of DNA as an effect in which the opposing poles of determination vanish, according to a nuclear contraction, retraction, of the old polar schema that always maintained a minimal distance between cause and effect, between subject and object…" (quoted in Sallis 2000, 81). If we push Maldiney's analysis, it is as if Heidegger's description of the photograph shows (perhaps without his explicit knowledge) that

[47] Jean-Luc Nancy also traces a similar paradox in these passages. He writes: "Thus is introduced what could be considered a motif of inverted mimetic values: The *Abbild* always shows the *Bild*, while also showing itself as something that shows itself... Thus the copy does not lose the originary monstration: it maintains it and restages it in the ground of its own secondary monstration (Nancy 2005, 86)." This leads Nancy to conclude that, conversely, there is "in the ground of the *Bild*, an *Abbild* of the *Bild* itself" (Nancy 2005, 87).

whatever appears as original reverts into a reproduction, which, in turn, appears as original, only to revert into a reproduction, and so on *ad infinitum*, the image forming an infinite regress or *mise-en-abyme*. It is as if the photograph led Heidegger into Plato's cave.

Through the lens of the photograph, in other words, Heidegger's sensible image turns out to be doubly duplicitous. It seems to show the thing itself, but leaves us with an image of an image. This redoubling, Maldiney suggests, originates in the sensible image, as Heidegger defines it. This would be consistent with Sallis' descriptions. Sallis writes that the original duplicity of the image redoubles infinitely because, as he puts it, "every determination brought forth in the image will, if posited as being a determination of *the thing*, prove to be, also and instead, a presentation that is merely *one's own*" (Sallis 2000, 100). This is what makes one doubt the image, doubt if there is any sense, reality or truth, behind the appearances; at the very moment that it seems to deliver precisely these intuitions. However, if something like a *mise-en-abyme* (which takes us from the thing to the image, and back again, *ad infinitum*) can be seen in his account of the sensible image, Heidegger, unlike Baudrillard, does not leave us with a world in which there are nothing but images, merely masking the void on which they are cast.

Heidegger does not put things exactly as I have, with the help of his readers; nor does he elaborate on these examples. He just sort of drops them, and this, as has been suggested, is what adds to the strangeness of the discussion. He does however use this analysis of the image and its double as a way of introducing the Idea, as that which

shows the thing itself beneath the manifold appearances. Heidegger writes that asides from showing what is immediately present, and what was once present, images can also show what something looks like "in general." He writes:

> "Now the photograph, however, can also show how something like a death mask appears in general. In turn, the death mask can show in general how something like the face of a dead human being appears. But an individual corpse itself can also show this... But what do these 'looks' (images in the broadest sense) of this corpse, this mask, this photograph, etc., now show? Which "appearance" (eidos, idea) do they now give? What do they now make sensible? In the one which applies to many, they show how something appears "in general." This unity applicable to several, however, is what representation represents in the manner of the concepts. These looks must now serve the making-sensible of concepts" (Heidegger 1990, 66).[48]

It appears that if Heidegger shows that every image divides into image and thing, subject and object, forming an infinite regress, this is only to show that images, and images of images, are (or must be) grounded in reference to the ideas. Moreover, by suggesting that it is the idea that constitutes (as Sallis would have Plato say) "the look that shows itself in and through things that pass, the look that does not itself come to pass but remains identical with itself;" Heidegger seems to be operating within the

[48] The discussion of the sensible image thus serves as a circuitous way of introducing the problem of the Kantian schematism, which concerns how the ideas are made sensible. The example of the death mask is given as another example of a reproduction.

classical philosophical purview. Within that purview, because images are rooted in the sensibility, they lack identity, an enduring essence; which only thought can reveal, precisely because it transcends the sensibility through its pure ideas.[49] In other words, it is the idea that will take us out of the cave, where simulacra reign.

However, Heidegger, who will later show that even Plato cannot get back behind the image, has no intention of leaving the apparent world behind. Emphasising the primacy of the sensibility for Kant, his claim that concepts without intuitions are empty, Heidegger will also try to fold the pure ideas onto the sensibility. Thus, if the idea is to constitute the "one" that shows itself throughout the manifold appearances, if it is to show the being itself, it must constitute it as the one that gathers this very manifold, to show the being as it appears, and *not* as a transcendent beyond.[50] The idea, Heidegger cites Kant, must also "be brought into an image" (Heidegger 1990, 72-73).

In order to elucidate the grounding role of the ideas, Heidegger once again turns to experience. He writes that in the perception of an object, a house for example, we never simply find an empirical intuition. The object is never simply present as a naked "this," a unique here and now. "The house offers… this determinate look [the look of something present] and yet we are not preoccupied with this in order to experience how precisely this house appears" (Heidegger 1990, 67). In fact the empirical perception must, in a way, cede its place, withdraw from view, in order for the house to appear as it

[49] Sallis writes, "for something to be itself requires that it sustain a relation to itself, specifically a relation of identity or sameness… Within the classical philosophical purview, things that come to pass (sensible things, as they came to be called) are incapable of sustaining an identity with themselves; they are always becoming other to themselves and thus cannot be things themselves" (Sallis 2000, 99).

[50] In Sallis' words, "If, now enforcing the limit [surely the Kantian limit] now turning to the sensible, one would redetermine, within this limit, what constitutes a thing proper, then it will be imperative to reopen the question of the self-identity of sensible things" (Sallis 2000, 100).

does. What appears is only the "as… (*So-wie*) in terms of which a house can appear" (Heidegger 1990, 67). The "as" corresponds to the idea which allows the house to appear as a house, by defining it as such. The idea is produced by the understanding, which is a different "faculty," in Kant's terms, precisely because it is able to transcend the particular appearances of an object. The understanding transcends the manifold, variable guises of the object and represents that to which they all correspond, that which makes them images *of* an identifiable object – in the first place. This transcendence is rooted in freedom. The understanding is free in the sense that it forms itself, or its own ideas, "from out of itself;" rather than being subject to what presents itself through the derivative, vacillating images of the sensibility. Originating in the understanding, the idea (which includes, for example, "the whole of what is meant by a term like 'house'") goes ahead of the empirical appearance, like a sketch which precedes the fully fleshed out painting. The sensible image traces the portrait, as it were, that the understanding sketches in advance.

However, the relation between portrait and sketch (if we can put it this way, and Nancy suggests we can, claiming that what is at stake here is a theory that is highly pictorial or graphic in nature),[51] or the relation between the sense-image and the idea, is not that of container and content, cause and effect, or even one of "subsumption" (as logic defines it). In order for the understanding to determine the appearance of an actual being, it must be able to show that what it represents through the idea, the

[51] "In the end, we have to do with a proposition that could be called profoundly graphic or pictorial: there is a thing only through the design of the thing, and this design gives the thing the contour of a look turned toward our vision" (Nancy 2005, 89).

interconnectedness that it sketches, is the very one that manifests itself with the being as it manifests itself, the one that regulates the look that *it gives*. Heidegger thus writes that the conceptual unity, the rule of identity, is also never meant thematically, as the object of a distinct representation: "Rather… only if we look away from it in its determining of the rule is it then just as substantially the regulation which is determined in the view" (Heidegger 1990, 68).

We look away from the idea towards the thing, and we look away from the thing towards the idea. Or rather, we turn back to what is present, but only from the standpoint, projected ahead, of our own pre-forming vision. What the image of the house reveals is the manner, *the way*, in which the idea is made sensible.[52] We could say that for Heidegger the sensibilization of the idea is the unfolding, the "occurrence," of an encounter, in which the understanding opens to the being given at the same time that the being opens to the understanding. The origin of the image is not simply the idea, since the idea forms itself from out of itself *only* in and through that which is present before it.[53] The origin is this unfolding or enfolding itself, in which the one forms itself through the other. From this point of view, the image is neither simply an idea, an

[52] "The rule [the idea that determines the house as a house] is represented in the 'how' of its regulating, i.e. according to how it regulates the presentation dictated within the presenting look" (Heidegger 1990, 68).

[53] The understanding and the sensibility are "equi-primordial," to use a term from *Being and Time*, which fits aptly here. Heidegger uses it there as a way of articulating the relation between the understanding, which projects its possibilities onto the world, and the facticity of the world, into which we are (passively) thrown. The analysis of the image, and the *Kantbuch* as a whole, is of course rooted in the ontology first developed in *Being and Time*.

Heidegger, Martin. 1996. *Being and Time*. Translated by Joan Stambaugh. Albany: State University of New York Press.

abstract essence, nor merely an empirical thing, a particular here and now.[54] Shifting between what is sensed and its cognitive apprehension, the image is made and unmade, gathering itself into a unity from out of the manifold into which it is dispersed, again and again.

The example shows that the idea is made sensible through a productive operation. Despite or in and through its rootedness in the sensibility, the understanding freely creates the image – from out of itself. Or rather, the idea is the image that forms itself (*sich-bildet*). However, Heidegger claims that this example also does not reveal the origin originally enough. The image of a house is empirical, and like every empirical image, it is the image of something present. It remains bound to something already at hand. Heidegger writes that before something can appear as this or that (as a house, a photograph, or a person) it must have already revealed itself as present. It thus presupposes a creative act, an original making-present. In order for something to offer a look, the self must first turn towards it, and let it make itself seen. This "turning towards" and "making-present" is not simply the projection of the unity of an empirical object, but the original *act* of unification that underlies all the unities, all the objects of cognition. Heidegger, following Kant, grounds it in the understanding, more specifically, in the pure "I think."

The act of transcendence, of going beyond the sensibility, revealed by the idea of the house, also presupposes a more original original. In other words, the original once again turns out to be derived. It is as if the paradox of the duplicity of the image was

[54] "What is represented in the making-sensible is neither the empirical look nor the isolated concept" (Heidegger 1990, 68).

redoubled here in the register of the understanding; leading Heidegger back to the abyss, just as he seemed to be leaving it behind. His thought seems to circle in the same circle. It seems to proceed as a perpetual regression to the origin, of the kind that Plato (according to Sallis' Heideggerian reading) traces in the figure of the line; which takes us out of the cave, only to plunge us back into it.[55] In this way, these passages seem to mirror the movement that cuts through the *Kantbuch* as a whole, which is organized as a series of stages of "the laying of the ground for metaphysics." With each stage, Heidegger reveals a two-fold origin: the "equi-priomordiality" of the sensibility and the understanding; which begs the question of their common root. The common root is the imagination. But the imagination is simply the juncture of the two faculties. It is two-fold, suspended (*en-abyme*) in-between the two. As a result every stage that touches on the essence of the imagination, that elucidates the ground of the image, seems to make it all the more strange and obscure; begging the question again, and requiring another act of ground-laying… Perhaps the imagination, which originally forms the image, is the kind of thing that withdraws as one approaches it; and this is perhaps why Kant called it "an art concealed in the depths of the human soul" (Kant 1963, 83).[56]

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[55] Nancy calls the movement of Heidegger's thought in these passages a kind of archeological regression to the origin. "All the examples exemplify such a movement back toward the eidetic and non-sensible *Bild* of the *ein-bilden*" (Nancy 2005, 90).

[56] Of course, Heidegger is not going in a circle as if he did not know what he was doing. He is not begging the question by positing the origin that he has to prove. Nor is he looking for at the same time as positing a "common root," looking for the One and only ever ending up with two. Heidegger knows from the get-go that there are three, that the imagination is the third mediating term (a three-fold structure that will be reflected in the three syntheses of time, which I will now turn to). But this third, as I mentioned earlier, operates from within the division of understanding and sensibility, rather than "sublating" the two. A "2 in 1," the imagination forms a circular relation, which goes from the sensibility to the understanding, and back again, unceasingly (even if there is a certain unity and a certain eternity at the heart of this movement). It is for this reason that Heidegger will call the imagination an abyss, the unknown (citing Kant: "the root unknown to us") that remains unknown the more we penetrate into it (Heidegger 1990,

All this might suggest the idea that there is no ground of the image; that there are just images, and images of images – only masking the void on which they are cast. But Heidegger will try to grasp the image more originally still. He will try to grasp it in its original withdrawing and springing forth.

Time and the Image

Heidegger's analysis of empirical images showed that they are relative to concepts. What is offered through the empirical intuition is only a particular view. It is *this* look or *that* aspect, the side or the profile, of a being, which is immediately present or manifest. But it is the concept that gathers the particular images, for example the various aspects of a house, or the many images of houses, into one coherent representation. The concept precedes and makes it possible for us to recognize a particular house as a house by determining it as such. However, the analysis has also shown that concepts, which furnish the rules for possible representations, are nothing outside of the empirical images. If they determine what something is in general, this "in general," the being itself or essence of the thing, is nothing outside of the intuited particular being-at-hand. Thus, what Heidegger tried to show is the conceptual rule "in the how of its regulating," in other words, how it appears "within the presenting look"

112-120). (It is perhaps for similar reasons that Heidegger will, throughout his later work, speak of the origin as that which withdraws as it becomes present to us.) It seems to me that the movement of the *Kantbuch*, with its "archeological regression," mirrors this essential structure of the original imagination.

(Heidegger 1990, 68). The regulation of a particular look in accordance with the rule is the making-sensible of concepts.

For Kant, the making-sensible of concepts takes places through the schematism of imagination, and the schematism operates through "schemas" and "schema-images." Heidegger cites Kant, "The representation of a general procedure of the power of imagination in providing an image for a concept I entitle the schema of this concept" (Heidegger 1990, 68). The schema is neither an empirical image, a particular look, nor an isolated, abstract concept. It is that through which the concept is brought into an image. As such, the schema operates through an image, or rather "something like an image," which Heidegger calls the schema-image. The schema-image is not an actual image, but the model or image of the image, which precedes and makes it possible in the first place. In this sense, the schema-image is the schema, schematization or preliminary sketch (the "*Vorblick*," pre-look or schematizing premonition), formed in the mind's eye, which is presupposed by each image (Heidegger 1990, 71). In the example of the house, the schema-image goes ahead and pro-poses (*Vor-stellung*) the general look (*eidos*) of a house, such that, by going ahead and proposing in this way, it allows the house to present itself as it does. It allows it to become sensibly present, as a particular house.

However, as we saw, these examples of schema-images, as images of something present-at-hand, are determined by more original schemas. All images of something present at hand presuppose an original disclosure, an original making-present. This original disclosure takes place through the pure concepts of the understanding, which are grounded in the pure "I think." By turning toward something, the "I think" forms the

possibility of it being determined – or seen – as this or that image. However, even the pure concepts must be made sensible; that is, if they are not *mere* concepts. In other words, the pure making-sensible, the pure opening of the possibility of making something sensible, which precedes any concretely sensible thing, must itself be made sensible. Such pure concepts require their own schema-images. Heidegger writes, "the pure concepts of the understanding, which were thought in the pure "I think," require an essentially pure discernibility;" or a pure "intuitability" [*Anschaulichkeit*]: a pure image (Heidegger 1990, 72).

Heidegger writes that the pure schema-image is time itself. He writes that Kant's Transcendental Deduction (and by this he means his own discussion of it) has already shown that "the pure concepts are relative to pure intuition (time) and vice versa" (Heidegger 1990, 73). However, it is through the schematism that this relation ("between notion and time") is to be fully elucidated.

Of course, temporality was already implied in Heidegger's analysis of the empirical image, which we have just interpreted. The relation between the object sensed and the act of sensing, between the two senses of the look, as well as that between the understanding and the sensibility, which, as we saw, constitutes the image as a vacillation between presence and absence, originality and derivation, is essentially temporal. What we called (citing Sallis) the duplicity of the image is rooted, as we shall now try to make explicit, in the simultaneous becoming past and coming to presence of "the now." That is to say, it is time that divides each manifest object into a multiplicity of views, like a reflection in a hallway of mirrors; or better still, like an image whose

originality and unicity dissipates in innumerable copies through mechanical reproduction. Time itself proves to be the ground of the abyss of the image. However, for Heidegger, as for Kant, time is also that which gathers the multiplicity into a unity. Thus the question of the being of the image, of the idea which brings to light the essence of the sensible, becomes the question of the being of time. It becomes the question of the eternity within time, of the enduring presence of the ever-changing present. Through the schema-image, Heidegger will try to show the temporality that originally constitutes an image as an image, the making present at the ground of the present. However, before turning to Heidegger's analysis of the temporality of the pure schema-image (which is rather cursory) I will provide a close reading of Heidegger's analysis of the three syntheses of time, which comes in a later chapter in the book. Interestingly, the three syntheses replay the paradoxes of the empirical images, deepening the views offered by those images, and grounding them in time.

Heidegger once again begins with the empirical intuition of what is immediately present, the intuition of the "here and now." However, he writes that what is immediately present is never simply *a* presence (*Anwesenden*) or an isolated present (Heidegger 1990, 122); but a manifold, a sequence of "nows." "Indeed, strictly speaking, in the mere taking-in-stride of a 'present moment' [*eines Gegenwartigen*] it is not possible to intuit a single now insofar as it has an essentially continuous extension in its having-just-arrived and its coming-at-any-minute" (Heidegger 1990, 122).[57] Heidegger

[57] In his discussion of the first image, after writing "that which [first] shows itself always has the character of the immediately seen particular ("this-here") (Heidegger 1990, 64-65)," Heidegger adds, "to be sure, this does not exclude the possibility that a multitude of such particulars might be intuited, namely, as a

adds that the intuition must immediately "differentiate time," distinguishing the past from the present moment and connecting the two in the unity of a sequence. This differentiating and connecting implies an act of synthesis, a *looking beyond* the present moment, a retaining of the past and an anticipating of the future, which allows the present to appear as it does; that is, as a present that unfolds in time.[58] What becomes apparent here is that the empirical intuition requires an act that transcends it and grasps it from the standpoint of a larger unity; or rather, that the intuition transcends itself. Looking beyond the particular now, the transcendental intuition forms the look of the now "in general" ("the now that is now in every now"), which serves as the condition of possibility of what is actually present.

Kant thus identifies a transcendental synthesis of intuition, which he calls the synthesis of apprehension. He describes it as "the faculty of taking a likeness [*Abbildung*]" (Heidegger 1990, 122). However, Heidegger emphasises that "the term 'taking a likeness' … does not mean the production of a likeness in the sense of a copy. Rather, it means the look which was itself gathered immediately from the presencing (present) object." That is to say, the intuitive apprehending and gathering into a synthesis is a formative activity: "The forming-from [*Ab-bilden*] does not mean a forming-according-to [*Nach-bilden*], but rather form giving [*Bild-gebend*]" (Heidegger 1990, 123). Only as formative can the intuition look beyond the particular towards the

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richer 'this-here;' for example, this particular totality of this landscape" (Heidegger 1990, 65)." However, as this re-elaboration of the temporality of the image demonstrates, what is intuited as a *representatio singularis* always constitutes a manifoldness or multiplicity.

[58] "In distinguishing time, our mind must already be saying constantly and in advance 'now and now and now,' in order to be able to encounter 'now this' and 'now that' and 'now all this in particular'" (Heidegger 1990, 126).

general. However, this generality – the now that is now in every now – is no abstract concept. If the apprehension looks beyond the particular now, if it anticipates the now that comes before and goes ahead of the present now, it is only in order to make the particular more visible; since the particular is itself a now this, now that… and never simply an isolated instant.[59]

Now, in the synthesis of the present there is a reference to the past, in the sense that each present is already a synthesis of a manifold of moments. A manifold of past 'nows' is always retained and connected with the actual present. However, this implies the possibility of not only retaining but also of reproducing past moments within the actual present; that is, not simply fusing the past with the present (in the unity of the flowing now) but reproducing something *no longer* present. The first synthesis alone cannot account for this possibility of reproduction, because it is oriented towards only the present as such. Therefore, following and re-working Kant, Heidegger identifies a second "synthesis of reproduction," a synthesis of the past.

Heidegger also begins the analysis of the synthesis of reproduction with reference to its empirical aspect. He begins, that is, with the empirical fact that "the 'mind' can represent the being, e.g., something previously perceived, even 'without the presence of the object;'" in other words, to bring this being forth again, to re-present it (Heidegger 1990, 127). However, the empirical act of reproduction presupposes a more general capacity. Before this or that being can be remembered as past, the mind must

[59] Heidegger writes, "pure intuition is original 'receptivity,' i.e. a taking-in-stride of what it, as taking-in-stride, lets come forth from out of itself… What the pure intuiting offering (forming as giving a look) produces is the immediate look of the now… always the look of the actual present as such" (Heidegger 1990, 126).

differentiate an "earlier," must have the general capacity to reproduce something as past, and to make it present again. If the mind did not differentiate the past as such beforehand, if it did not *always already* have a sense of the past, then no particular present could ever become past: "the being experienced earlier would constantly be lost completely with each now, if it were not generally retainable" (Heidegger 1990, 127). Insofar as the mind does not wait for something to become past, but constitutes it as *always already* past, it is productive. That is to say, the reproductive synthesis is in itself productive, productive in its very re-productivity, in the sense that "it forms the possibility of reproduction in general … it brings the horizon of the earlier into view and holds it open as such in advance" (Heidegger 1990, 127).

The idea of a productive reproduction recalls Heidegger's second image (photograph or death mask) the copy which *presents itself* originally. Unlike a photograph, however, the second synthesis is not just an empirical reproduction, but an original re-turning that makes possible every reproduction. Nonetheless, this synthesis of the past, or rather the two syntheses together, replay at the transcendental level the paradox of the duplicity of the image. Like the first image, the first synthesis seems original, in that it originally forms the look of what is present; and, like the photograph, the second seems to reproduce it. However, the reproduction is itself originally productive; while the production of the present remains receptive.[60] The interlacing of the two syntheses articulates the duplicity of the image. That is to say, it makes apparent that the redoubling of each image (into original and derived, subject and

[60] The forming-from [*Ab-bilden*] testifies to a reference to the past at the heart of the intuition of the present, to a passivity at the heart of activity, to an *Abbild* at the heart of the *Bild*.

object, image and thing…) takes place through temporality, through the interlocking of the two syntheses. What is immediately present, the manifestly given, is doubled or divided within itself, because – at once production and reproduction – it is "always already past and just now becoming present."[61] In this way, the analysis of the two syntheses shows the displacement of the origin and of identity that affects whatever becomes present in time.

Like the gaze of Plato's caverned prisoner; like Heidegger's first and second image; as well as the images that give the look of what something is "in general" (the look of the *eidos*); each of the syntheses points to a ground of the image, of being and of presence, which turns out to be an absence, as though it never was where it seemed to be. Heidegger introduces a third synthesis in order to, paradoxically, understand this withdrawal of the origin more originally, to grasp the ground of this groundlessness.[62]

For Kant, it is only the third synthesis that is the proper function of the pure "I think." Only a faculty which is pure, in the sense that it is not within time, and as such is not determined by a prior instance, can serve as the original ground of time. The pure understanding is able to establish the unity of an object – or of the subject itself – across time, by recognizing it as the same throughout its manifold guises. In this way, it

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[61] If the two syntheses reveal that presence is already absence, the present already past, and vice-versa, this is because of a third *connecting* synthesis, which is already implied in the two, and which we shall now consider.

[62] Heidegger does not develop the connection between the analysis of the temporal syntheses with the analysis of the image in "Image and Schema," or with the notion of an infinite regress, in the way that I have here. I have established these connections with the help of Heidegger's readers (Maldiney, Sallis, and Nancy). Like Heidegger's own reading of Kant, my reading is not simply trying to convey what the text is saying explicitly, but to develop some of its larger implications. Nonetheless, insofar as for Heidegger time, which he identifies with the imagination, is an abyss, in the sense of *Ab-grund*, groundless ground (a point to which I will return later), I argue that this reading is consistent with his thought.

constitutes the unity of the past and present, the unity of the first two syntheses. Heidegger writes that this unifying third synthesis is implied in the first two. He writes: "At the ground of both syntheses, and directing them, a unifying (synthesis) of the being with respect to its sameness is already found. This synthesis of the same, i.e., the holding of the being before us as one which is the same, Kant calls – and justly so – the synthesis 'in concepts,' for the concept is indeed the representing of the unity which as self-same 'applies to many'" (Heidegger 1990, 130).[63] But the question is: are the ideas themselves temporal, when they are said to be un-changing? Is not temporality a force of division and fragmentation, which goes against the unifying role of the ideas; or does it reveal the unity within multiplicity itself? To put it differently again, is the pure "I think" still pure if it is affected by time? It would seem, as Heidegger acknowledges, that Kant wants to separate a transcendental form of cognition from the empirical, which takes place *in time* (if he does not want to separate the understanding from the sensibility as such). Nonetheless, Heidegger will insist that the true meaning of Kant's philosophy, at times – like the essence of the imagination – hidden from Kant himself, lies in the inner connection between the pure "I think" and temporality (Heidegger 1990, 134).

For Heidegger, as for Kant, the pure "I think" forms itself and whatever it encounters creatively, spontaneously, from "out of itself." It is "the original turning toward" that first allows what is present (subject or object) to present itself; the letting

[63] This synthesis must already be there, in-between the first two, for "when the mind returns from its going-back into the past, when it returns again to the directly present being in order to set the former in unity with the latter… [someone or something must then tell it] that this being which is now present is the same as that which it previously abandoned, so to speak, with the fulfillment of the visualization" (Heidegger 1990, 129).

"stand against" that first lets something stand against.[64] This letting, turning or opening toward, is an act that precedes the empirical apprehension of an object. But Heidegger understands its originality in temporal terms. What "goes before" the object is an anticipation. The anticipation holds in view not something present, but the *not yet* realized possibility of it becoming present. This possibility lies at the origin of the present. In other words, the future – formed or projected as a possibility by the understanding – precedes what becomes present. It "goes before" or "goes ahead" as the constant possibility, grounded in the free "I think," of making the present differently. In this way, Heidegger interprets Kant's synthesis of recognition, through which the understanding first identifies itself or its object, as the synthesis of the present from the standpoint of the anticipation of the future. In other words, he interprets it as a synthesis of time, suggesting that this temporal sense is implied in Kant's description.[65]

However, the free "I think" is not original in a way that would make it invulnerable to being affected by things from the outside. If what is projected is not an abstract possibility, a mere concept, something must, after all, resist it. Something must announce itself and stand against in the pure letting stand against. This is the constraint

[64] In German there are two different words for 'object' and their distinction is important for Kant: Gegenstand, literally "what stands against," and Objekt. "A Gegenstand is a thing in space and time that is encounterable by the senses, while an Objekt is an object of thought… only a perceivable object, a Gegenstand… can 'stand in opposition to' (entgegenstehen) a being" (Heidegger 1990, translator's notes, 224). Heidegger plays a lot with the etymology of Gegenstand. He complicates the distinction, by arguing that every object, even the object of pure thought, "stands against" (and stands before) in the sense that it appears in space and time. However, he will try to show that there is a pure, *a priori* form of "letting stand against."

[65] "Kant gives this synthesis of identification a most appropriate name: its unifying is a reconnoitering. It explores in advance and is "watching out for" what must be held before us in advance as the same…" (Heidegger 1990, 130).

that Kant imposes on thought: that ideas – even those that spring from the pure "I think" – must be made present in sensible forms. Thus if originality as undetermined activity is possible, it must be possible within the limits of the sensible. In other words, the self must *be able to let itself* be affected. It must be able to experience affection as the internal condition of its own free activity. The expression "from *out* of itself," by which Heidegger defines the formative activity of the self, articulates this paradox. The self forms itself by going out-side of itself; it forms itself by way of an other; just as it originally forms the object by allowing itself to be affected by it. The "I think" thus experiences its own activity as an affection. It experiences it as though it were the activity of an other (an other within); hence Heidegger's term "self-affection."[66] "Self-affection" (or auto-affection) implies that what is given *beforehand* as a thing that affects us, is never simply objectively given, but is the opening of a possibility for action; and what the subject anticipates as its own possibility can never be traced back to an inner "subjective" space, because it is at the same time an opening to the outside.

The notion of self-affection articulates a circular temporal relation, whereby the self goes outside of itself, creatively projects itself, at the same time that it retrieves or returns to itself, as though its own activity (its own being) were given to it, from the outside. Heidegger writes that the looking towards which first allows things to become present is *at the same time* a looking back (*zurückblicken*). This is because the free

[66] In *Difference and Repetition*, Gilles Deleuze argues that with the notion of time as self-affection Kant discovers that the "I is an other," because it "experiences its own activity as that of an other." For Deleuze, the notion serves as the basis of the third, ultimate, synthesis of time; in a reading that clearly owes a lot to Heidegger's *Kantbuch*.
Deleuze, Gilles. 1994. *Difference and Repetition.* Translated by Paul Patton. New York: Columbia University Press. 85-91

possibilities projected by the understanding confront us as past the moment they are realized. They are *always already* becoming past… only to be retrieved again as new openings, new possibilities. In this turning and re-turning, whereby future and past perpetually transform into one another, the present is formed as a moment that is (to use an expression by which Heidegger characterizes original temporality in *Being and Time*) "always already not yet itself." In other words, through the temporality of self-affection, the self is forever returning to itself as to a new possibility; forming a future for itself from out of the past.[67]

The future, grounded in the pure "I think," lies at the origin of time in the sense that it is that to which the present returns, and out of which it emerges, again and again. The future – *not yet* given possibility – precedes the reproduction of the past, as well as the emergence of the present. It precedes them as a perpetually renewed origin. The origin, in this sense, is not within time, because it precedes what is or has been present.

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[67] What follows the discussion of the three syntheses is the chapter "Time as Pure Self-Affection and the Temporal Character of the Self," in which Heidegger articulates the relation between the "I think" and time in terms of the notion of self-affection. Heidegger describes time as a kind of circle, whereby the "I" projects a possibility, freely images something, "from out of itself," in such a way that what is projected comes to *present itself*. What is freely formed by the "I" comes to offer itself as an object that affects it from the outside (Heidegger 1990, 132). In other words, the freely projected future is always already – instantaneously or in the blink of an eye – becoming past, a past that, in the same blink of an eye, presents itself as *to be retrieved* for the sake of new possibilities, new images. Heidegger writes, "sie [Zeit] ist gerade das, was uberhaupt so etwas wie das 'Von-sich-aus-zu-auf…' bildet, dergestalt, dass das so sich bildende Worauf-zu zuruckblickt und herein in das Vorgenannte Hin-zu…". The Richard Taft translation has: "it [time] is precisely what in general forms something like the 'from-out-of-itself-toward-there…' so that the upon-which looks back and into the previously named toward-there…." (Heidegger 1990, 132). This essential passage is rendered more comprehensibly (though less literally) by the older James S. Churchill translation: "it [time] is that in general which forms something like a line of orientation which going from the self is directed toward … in such a way that the objective thus constituted springs forth and surges back along this line" (Heidegger 1962, 194). This projecting (from out of itself toward) and surging or looking back along the line, which takes place in one two-folded moment, is the self-forming or temporalizing of time, which forms the essence of the self.

Heidegger, Martin. 1962. *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*. Translated by James S. Churchill. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

The original third synthesis is “time-forming,” recreating the present, making it pass, from *out of* the future. But this origin is not beyond the present. It is what makes the present present, by making it pass. As Heidegger puts it, with the third synthesis, Kant allows us to grasp time in its original “springing forth.”

The third synthesis also allows us to grasp not only the origin but also the unity of time. It shows the unity of past and present, the unity of the first two syntheses. It is, in a sense, the synthesis of the first two syntheses. In Heidegger’s words, it is the place where past and present meet, as the one is transformed into the other. This place is the future, a future perpetually reforming itself from out of the past (Heidegger 1990, 129-130). The place where the past becomes present and the present past is the moment that is “always already not yet itself.” This moment forms the bridge between the two syntheses. It forms the thread that binds one moment to the next. However, unity understood in this sense is one that is being constantly undone and remade. In other words, the unity lies in the interval that *joins and separates* past and present at the same time, prolonging one instant by transforming it through the other.

The third synthesis shows that the unity of the “I think” resides within time itself. This means that there is nothing, no unity or permanence, that would transcend time. What is “always already not yet itself” is always becoming other to itself, and as such, it lacks a stable identity, at least of the kind that traditional metaphysics identifies within the ideas. However, if time is, in this sense, a radical form of change, this form does not itself change. To put it differently, time is passage, but this passage does not itself pass.

It is continual. There is an eternity at the heart of this becoming, a permanence at the heart of change.

The schema-image as image of time (or time-image)

> "Time, as pure sequence of nows, is always now. In every now it is now. Time thus shows its permanence. As such, time is 'immutable and lasting,' it 'does not itself pass…' Time, however, is as sequence of nows precisely because in every flowing now it is a now, even another now. As the look of what lasts, it offers at the same time the image of pure change in what lasts." (Heidegger 1990, 76)

With these claims, Heidegger concludes the analysis of the transcendental schematism, of its pure schema-image, which is time itself.[68] The detour that we have made through the analysis of the three syntheses has placed us in a better position to fully understand what is at stake here. For the schema-image – the original, creative image – is the image of original temporality. It gives the look of the eternity of time, coupling reason and the sensibility, reflecting the one in the other. However, it remains for us to ask: what kind of *image* is the schema-image? What kind of look is "the pure

[68] Here Heidegger is talking about the schema of Substance, and of its schema-image (the schematization through which it becomes visible). This is presented, in the concluding part of the schematism chapter, as one example of the making-sensible of concepts through time. However, for Heidegger, every concept is made sensible in and through time. The schematism is time itself. Therefore the example is universally valid. It shows "the how" of every schematization of concepts. Moreover, the example of Substance is not innocently chosen. Substance is the category of the being which underlies (sub-stance: literally "stands under") the appearances as their ground. Nonetheless, as Heidegger will say, this example cannot advance into the more original structures of being and time (Heidegger 1990, 76). It is for this reason that we supplemented the reading of the schematism with the analysis of the three syntheses.

look of pure change?" To put it differently, what exactly is the relation between the image and time? How can the "pure now" be made visible?

If we take image in its broadest and most common sense, with which Heidegger begins, as the manifestation of what is present-at-hand, than we would have to say that time cannot be brought into an image. "*Le temps vu à travers l'image est un temps perdu de vue*," writes René Char; adding, "*l'être et le temps sont bien différents*."[69] If we understand being in the last line in terms of objective presence, then the fragment suggests, consistently with Heidegger, that the ordinary empirical image, understood as the manifestation of a being at hand, cannot make time visible. By trying to make it visible, the image reduces time to something that *is*… identical and unchanging, rather than something that is constantly changing, eternally becoming. Through the image a being apprehends itself, its own coming to presence, as though it were the reproduction of something already present. It apprehends its own temporality as though it were the reproduction of a being which maintains itself as the same throughout successive changes. Time in itself, the present which is always already not yet itself, is lost from view.

It is precisely in order to understand how time in itself does after all become visible, how it becomes sensible, that Heidegger develops the Kantian idea of the pure schema-image. As I mentioned earlier, the schema-image is not exactly an image. More and less than an image, it is nonetheless "like an image." It is less than an image because it is merely a "schema," in the sense of a sketch or preliminary outline: an image that is

[69] Char, René. 1962. *Fureur et mystère*. Paris: Gallimard. p 88.
"Time viewed through the image is a time lost from view. Being and time are quite different."

not yet formulated, but merely traced. It does not represent anything, anything present. It shows what is not yet present, makes visible what is not yet visible: the invisible or "*imprevisible*." The pure schema-image is the type of image that shows itself emerging from the past and just now opening to the future. It shows this opening itself. It thus appears fleetingly, as a sudden flash of light, a scintillation. In this way, however, the schema-image is also much more than an image. In showing less, it shows the invisible (*imprevisible*) source from which every image emerges and into which it returns. It shows it, or it *is* it; for it does not represent some other being. It is the self-imaging or self-presenting of the originary moment.[70]

The schema-image is the image of a glance, which looks at things obliquely, as it were, not looking straight at but away from them, and thereby seeing what they might still become. A swiftly cast glance, it surprises things, catching them before they have fully presented themselves, or catching itself at the moment when it turns to face them.[71] Earlier I mentioned that in the German word for look, *Anblick*, there is an echo

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[70] This might seem like a far cry from the more Kantian examples cited by Heidegger; for example, the schema of the number five, and its schema-image, the five dots. But Heidegger's intention is clearly to ground all ideas, including the mathematical ones, in time and the sensibility. When he insists, with and against Kant, that there is no ideal triangle, that we cannot think a triangle (or anything for that matter) without already envisioning its schematisation in a possible image, he is insisting that there is no essence outside of appearance (Heidegger 1990, 69). The analysis of time shows how the ideas are formed within time, which is to say, how they are perpetually un-formed and re-formed in the passing present.

[71] This interpretation of Heidegger's schema-image is inspired by Sallis. In the concluding paragraph of the chapter "Duplicity of the Image," he writes: "in catching a glimpse of the image, one will enact the very duplicity that belongs to the image, redoubling it in its very apprehension. Catching a glimpse is not an inferior mode of seeing that one would wish, in this instance, to replace by another if it were possible (for example, by a mode to which the image would be simply, enduringly present). Rather, catching a glimpse is precisely the mode of seeing appropriate to an image; it is that very mode to which an image will entrust its utmost manifestness" (Sallis 2000, 97).

The Char fragment cited above ends with: "L'image scintille éternelle, quand elle a dépassé l'être et le temps" [The image scintillates eternal, when it has transcended being and time]. If we read the transcendence (dépassement) of being and time as the transcendence of their opposition, and of the opposition between eternity and the "scintillating" fleetingness of appearances – a transcendence

of *Augenblick* (literally blink of an eye) the German word for moment, which Heidegger uses to characterize original temporality in *Being and Time*. This connection has now become apparent: the pure look of pure time is a glance that reveals things in their instantaneous fleetingness, appearing and disappearing in "the blink of an eye."

But if the schema-image is defined as the look of the present, what distinguishes it from the empirical intuition with which we began? The difference is not clear-cut, but the two must nonetheless not be confused.

To begin with, the difference is not simply between the cogito and the intuition, or between subject and object. The third synthesis is not only the free activity of the understanding. There is, corresponding to this pure "I think," a pure intuition. By grasping the object not in terms of what it is, but in terms of its future possibility, which corresponds to our ability to determine it differently, the understanding grasps the object as it is in itself. That is to say, by apprehending it as yet to be determined, the subject grasps it before it has been determined – through will or cognition. It is thus at one and the same time that the thing is transcended, grasped as something that we *can* determine differently (as a possibility), and that the thing transcends us, presenting itself as it is prior to having been determined as this or that "image." The self goes beyond the object, apprehending it freely, by going beyond itself, beyond whatever it has been; opening both (simultaneously) to an undetermined future, which is the horizon of determinability. In this sense the pure I think is a pure intuition, a pure "taking in stride," a pure receptivity. This is why Heidegger emphasises the primacy of

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realised in and through the image, – then the much commented proximity between Char's poetry and Heidegger's thought becomes strikingly apparent here.

the imagination, as the third mediating faculty; rather than *either* the active understanding, *or* the passive sensibility.

But the transcendental imagination, to which corresponds a transcendental intuition, must be distinguished from the empirical intuition. By virtue of its originality, the transcendental imagination is able to disclose the eternal aspect of the present, its universal essence, which the empirical intuition cannot, because it is an intuition of the particular. However, the universality disclosed by the transcendental imagination is the universality of the particular. Transcendental imagination reveals the very "this-ness" of the here and now, which escapes the empirical intuition because it grasps the present on the basis of an objective sense of presence. The empirical intuition relates to time as though it contained an unchanging underlying substructure, a constant presence. It fails to apprehend the finite, radically transient nature of time. It fails to give what Heidegger calls the image of pure change (in what lasts). The empirical intuition, in other words, falls short of the universal and the particular: it falls short of the universal because it falls short of the particular. Transcendental imagination shows the two in one. It shows that the only essence is time itself, in its radical finitude: the now that is *always* now.[72]

However, for Heidegger, the essential temporality of the transcendental imagination is not a model that empirical images would copy. The schema is not a transcendent form. The relation between the transcendental and the empirical is not to be understood in the dualistic terms of Platonist metaphysics. Rather, the schema refers

[72] Time, Heidegger writes, is a "unique object" (citing Kant). It is defined by the present, the here and now, which is always singular. But the uniqueness of the present is at the same time its unity; its singularity is its universality (Heidegger 1990, 73).

to the originality of each image. It refers to the activity, productivity, or creativity of each image, each look – to its ownmost coming to presence – which is concealed from it insofar as it apprehends itself, as it often does, as a re-production.[73]

In this way, the transcendence of the empirical image, through the transcendental imagination; and the whole detour that we have traced, through the third synthesis as the image of the pure "I think;" brings us back, full circle, to where we started. It brings us back to what shows itself immediately. For the pure look of the schema-image shows just what is manifestly present. It brings the empirical intuition of the present into sharper focus; paradoxically, by not seeing it fully, but only glancing at it obliquely. As Maldiney puts it, Heidegger's transcendental imagination is like the inner light of the sensibility, of the finite empirical being (*l'étant*), which illuminates it to itself ("*une lumière intérieure qui l'éclaire à soi*") (Maldiney 2012, 223).[74]

If through the schema-image we gain knowledge of the being (origin and essence) of beings, the being at stake is the very being of each individual being. It is the manner (or the way) in which *a* being exists as *this* finite being. To put it differently, being itself is to be understood as a verb rather than a noun (a point Heidegger makes throughout his meditations on the meaning of being). The being of beings is the

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[73] In other words, concealed from the present is the absence that lies at its heart, the nothing that, gnawing at it from within, opens it to an undetermined future.

For Kant, the schemas are simply rules, categories of the understanding. But Heidegger insists that these rules are nothing outside of their applications, outside of the ever-changing "sensible" situations in which they unfold. As such, the rules become schemas of the ever renewed formation of concepts in the field of the sensible.

[74] "Après *Sein und Zeit*, Heidegger en vient à un parti semblable. En reconnaissant à l'étant le pouvoir d'offrir une image de lui-même, lui aussi met l'accent sur la mise en vue. De sorte que, comme Aristote, il intériorise la *phantasia* à l'*aisthêsis*, l'imagination à la sensation, comme une lumière intérieure qui l'éclaire à soi. Mais elle ne s'éclaire elle-même à elle-même qu'en dévoilant l'acte propre par où elle touché à l'être. L'*aisthêsis* ne se manifeste elle-même qu'à manifester ce par où elle a ouverture à l'étant comme tel et qui est l'éclaircie de l'être de l'étant" (Maldiney 2012, 223).

temporality that constitutes a being internally. It names the process of a being's ownmost coming to presence, and not some transcendent point of reference. But the imagination, understood as the internal light of a being, can only reveal itself to itself, as Maldiney puts it, by revealing that from which a being emerges and into which it withdraws in the first place: the act, the opening or clearing (*l'éclaircie*) from which it springs forth. This act, the imagining or imaging of the image through which a being shows itself, is never reducible to what is present at hand, to the interiority of a subject or the exteriority of an object. It is that otherness, the otherness of the future, which affects it from within.

In concluding his reflections on the schema-image, Heidegger writes, "it must at least remain open as to whether this 'creative' knowledge [revealed through the schema-image of the transcendental imagination]… bursts the finitude of transcendence asunder, or whether it does not just plant the finite 'subject' in its authentic finitude" (Heidegger 1990, 87). It seems that the answer for Heidegger, if not for Kant, is clear. This creative knowledge roots the subject in its finitude. It is finite knowledge of finitude itself. In other words, it reveals to the subject the singularity of every moment, the Being of his or her being.

The "Abgrund" or "the unknown root," and the overturning of metaphysics

Heidegger's reading of Kant, which exploits Kant's suggestion that the imagination is the root of the two stems of human knowledge, is original and controversial. As Heidegger acknowledges, "Kant did not carry through with the more original interpretation of the transcendental power of imagination" (Heidegger 1990, 112). He argues that Kant caught a glimpse of the transcendental imagination, when he spoke of "the root unknown to us (adding that "the unknown is not that of which we simply know nothing… it is what pushes against us as something disquieting in what is known);" and initially sketched-out the analytic that would bring its hidden originality to light in the chapter on the schematism. However: "Kant shrank back from this unknown root" (Heidegger 1990, 112).

What is it about the imagination that might have made Kant "shrink back," as it were, in horror? It is the fact that it undermines the authority of the *Logos*, upon which metaphysics, in the entirety of its history, is based. Through the lens of the imagination, reason appears to be dependent on the sensibility.[75] However, it is not a question of a simple reversal of the order of priority. The sensibility does not become the origin to which concepts can be traced back, as effects to their cause; as within an objective empirical perspective. Understood as "the root of the two stems," the imagination is neither subject nor object, reason or sensibility, the ground or what it grounds. This is what makes it so paradoxical, and so difficult – if not impossible – to grasp.

[75] "How is the baser faculty of sensibility also to be able to constitute the essence of reason? Does not everything fall into confusion if the lowest takes the place of the highest? What is to happen with the venerable tradition, according to which Ratio and Logos have claimed the central function in the history of metaphysics? Can the primacy of Logic fall? Can the architectonic of the laying of the ground for metaphysics in general, the division into Transcendental Aesthetic and Logic, still be upheld if what it has for its theme is basically to be the transcendental power of imagination?" (Heidegger 1990, 117).

If the imagination is the origin of reason, then the very idea of origin is undermined. That is to say, the logic of metaphysics, which opposes original and derived, model and copy, Idea and sensibility, and grounds the latter in reference to the former, is "de-structured" or "deconstructed" through the imagination. The analysis of the imagination shows that reason is preceded by the sensibility (affected by it) at the same time that it constitutes it originally (as though it affected itself). It shows that the origin can neither be traced back to the past, to what is objectively given, nor to the present, to what determines itself. From this point of view, the origin is never where it appears to be, or where the "I think" takes it to be. It is always missing from its place. In this sense: the root is unknown.

The disappearance of the origin implies the simultaneous fragmentation of identity. If, by virtue of the hinge of the imagination, the self is reason and sensibility, past and present, at the same time, then it is self-preceding and self-exceeding. It ex-ists outside itself; and the same structure, the same being other to itself, applies to whatever it encounters as an ob-ject. Neither one is a "thing itself," because each is forever becoming other to itself.

This is why Heidegger calls the imagination an abyss. The German word is *Abgrund*. What is lost in the English translation is the connection of the *Abgrund* to the notion of ground (*Grund*), which is essential. When Heidegger writes "does not this ground-laying [*Grundlegung*] lead us to an abyss [*Abgrund*]," he suggests that the imagination "un-grounds" us, that it takes the ground out from under our feet

(Heidegger 1990, 117).[76] In other words, by grounding self and world in the imagination, Kant, according to Heidegger, sees the ground itself as a fundamental groundlessness. This is why he shrank back. “In the radicalism of his questions, Kant brought the ‘possibility’ of metaphysics to this abyss. He saw the unknown. He had to shrink back” (Heidegger 1990, 118).

The shrinking back takes place especially in the second version of the first *Critique*, where Kant actually revised and deleted passages which had emphasised the primacy of the imagination. Ceding its place, in the second version the imagination becomes a “function of the understanding” (no longer a “function of the soul”) (Heidegger 1990, 114). It becomes the means through which the understanding determines the sensibility, subjugating the manifold of sense to the ideas, as so many copies to their model. The authority of the Logos, and with it metaphysics in its classical form, is thus rehabilitated.

But the question is: does not Heidegger also shrink back from the deconstructive power of the imagination, insofar as he sees in it the possibility of a new grounding for metaphysics? Does Heidegger not resurrect the Logos, the subject of reason, with the notion of the auto-affective self, which turns its lack of origin into the possibility of free creation, as it turns its “being other to itself” into a supposedly deeper identity? Such claims, which turn Heidegger’s deconstructive gesture against him, have often been

[76] In his later work Heidegger hyphenates the word, Ab-grund, to make this connection more apparent. Heidegger, Martin. 1999. *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*. Translated by Parvis Emad and Kenneth May. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press.

made, not only in relation to the *Kantbuch*.[77] Following Sallis, we have taken Jean Baudrillard's thinking as a counter-position, which, without addressing Heidegger directly, implies precisely this sort of claim.

For Baudrillard, the image, or the simulacrum, is also in-between subject and object. It is both reality and image, at the same time. But for Baudrillard the duplicity implies that the appearance of reality is only a lure, a deception, of the image. He does not denounce the deception by appealing to some purer reality, but denounces any such appeal; insisting (as Sallis puts it) that images only mask the void on which they are cast. From Baudrillard's point of view, we could say that, with his original schema-image, Heidegger falls prey to the captivating lure of the image (its simulation of reality) by assuming that it constitutes an original revelation of being itself. It is as if with his analysis of the duplicity of the image Heidegger had caught a glimpse of the abyss, the vicious circle that leads from image to reality and back again, *ad infinitum*; but shrank back (in horror?) seduced by the prospect of an end to the regress, a ground at the bottom of the abyss.

Baudrillard's position, construed in this manner, echoes the way that Heidegger is commonly understood by theorists of culture in the deconstructive tradition. One of the goals of this essay is to question this common understanding; thereby questioning, at the same time, a certain understanding of the image, and of the overcoming of Platonism. The first step of this questioning consists in showing how much the discourse of the simulacra owes to Heidegger, particularly to the *Kantbuch* (one of the first

[77] Jean-Luc Nancy makes this sort of gesture in "Masked Imagination," though it is not clear that his way of thinking does not, in a sense, lead back to Heidegger.

instances of his “de-structuring” of metaphysics); a point that is perhaps not stressed enough by theorists concerned with the image in the field of culture. What Heidegger shows us is that the much celebrated undermining of the distinction between reality and image is determined by metaphysics. This is the point that we made in the introduction with the help of Sallis, who, by drawing on Heidegger’s reading of Plato, shows that Baudrillard’s *mise-en-abyme* is prefigured in the parable of the cave. In other words, the notion of a merely apparent world, the world of images – merely masking the void… is simply the negation of metaphysics. As a negation, it remains governed by it, governed by a reference to a lost reality, a vanishing truth. In fact, the notion of the simulacrum as that which deconstructs the idea of a reality beneath the image makes no sense without reference to meta-physics. In the *Kantbuch*, Heidegger shows that the fundamental oppositions of metaphysics, which still operate in Kant’s thinking, deconstruct themselves. He shows that Kant leads metaphysics – as if of its own accord – to the abyss of the image. But Heidegger goes further still. Heeding Nietzsche’s call, he tries to do away with both the real *and* the apparent world.

Heidegger accomplishes this overturning of metaphysics by recognizing that the *Abgrund* offers the possibility of a new sense of origin. The *Abgrund*, the abyss of the imagination, the abyss of time, is defined as the incessant withdrawal of the present. It is defined as the incessant withdrawal of the origin and essence of whatever has presence, the withdrawal of what makes a being be in the first place. But, for Heidegger, the withdrawal is, at the same time, the emergence of the new. Withdrawing at the very moment that it comes to presence, the present, and our sense of presence, lies in a

"state of perpetual origin" (to use an expression of Maldiney's). It is, in other words, the impossibility of tracing the present back to an origin that grants it the possibility of forming itself (*sich-bilden*) originally, again and again. In this way, Heidegger redefines the notion of the origin as that which remains *to come*, rather than as that which is simply given beforehand. It is along the same abyssal lines that he reconceives the notions of identity, unity, or correspondence. If each being is split between itself and its appearance, divided in two, then this split, this gap or interval, is what articulates its unity. As Maldiney puts it, in order for a being to "give an image of itself… it is necessary that this cut (*coupure*) internal to a being be, in itself, posited and transcended" (Maldiney 2012, 222).[78] Following Heidegger, the interval is to be understood as a difference that *joins and separates* each being to itself and to its other, or to itself through the other.[79]

Understanding the abyss of origin and identity as yielding a new, positive sense of both, requires an act of transformation. Heidegger identifies it with an act of projection, the projection of a future from out of the past; the projection of a new identity from out of its incessant undoing. The transformation takes place by turning affection – the very affection that undermines autonomy – into "self-affection;" in other words, by actively "taking things in stride."

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[78] He adds that this notion of identity, of "self-showing," is to be understood beyond the dialectic of opposition and reconciliation: "The error lies in speaking of the rift (*la faille*) as of an interval between two opposites. Rather than looking to reduce it, one should recognize it as an opening…" (Maldiney 2012, 224).

[79] The way that Heidegger understands the relation or the unity between the understanding and the sensibility, image and thing, in the *Kantbuch,* is related to his reflections on the ontological difference – as that which joins by separating, – first explicitly developed in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (Heidegger 1988).

In relation to the discourse of the simulacra, one could say that Heidegger's thought is more abyssal, because it breaks more radically with any binding reference to the (lost) real world, as it is classically, meta-physically, understood. But, at the same time, it shows us how to ground ourselves in the abyss. It shows how to transcend the abyss from within, without shying away from it. It is as though, for Heidegger, the point of the greatest weakness, of the greatest ex-posure to that which divides us from ourselves and from the real, the abyss, becomes the point of greatest strength, providing the firmest ground. As Heidegger puts it, Kant places metaphysics on a firmer ground because he shows how transcendence is possible from within the sensibility, from within time, outside of which there are nothing but "chimeras."[80]

By thus understanding the ground from within the abyss of groundlessness, eternity from within time, being from within appearance, Heidegger goes beyond a mere negation of metaphysics. He overcomes it, standing Plato on his head.[81] From all this it becomes apparent that the way out of metaphysics – is in. It is not a matter of simply rejecting the questions of being, of origin, of essence, and simply championing the play of groundless images. Rather, it is a matter of transforming the sense of these ideas, through a creative retrieval of the past, of the kind that Heidegger stages in his reading of Kant.

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[80] Heidegger argues that Kant is the first to ground "the possibility of metaphysics" by basing it in the "humanness of reason, i.e. its finitude" (Heidegger 1990, 15).

[81] It is, of course, Nietzsche who, as Heidegger himself argues, stands Plato on his head, who first inverts Platonism and "overcomes" metaphysics. This whole reading of the *Kantbuch* has been carried out within the purview of the Nietszchean project as Heidegger formulates in his four volumes on Nietzsche. Heidegger, Martin. 1979. Nietzsche, Volume One and Two. Translated by David Farrell Krell. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco.

Project Two:
Nancy and the Ontology of Art

Introduction: The critique of Art

In the essay "Why Are There Several Arts and Not Just One? (*Conversation on the Plurality of Worlds*)," which opens *The Muses*, Nancy writes that "a formula of the type "art and/ or technics" could in its own way condense the enigma of our time."[82] In the Romantic Modern tradition, a tradition that includes the philosophy of art that stretches from Kant through to Heidegger, the art movements that stretch from the Romantics of Jena to late Modernism, as well as modern art criticism, some version of the distinction between art and technology has been fundamental. More recently (in the last fifty years or so) this distinction has been called into question, in all three fields. Nancy can be seen as a part of this newer trend, which opposes the Romantic Modern valorization of art, and the corresponding denigration of technology. In the essay, Nancy argues that the distinction, which, in Heidegger (one of his main interlocutors) takes the form of *poiesis* and *techne*, has its roots in Platonist metaphysics. He argues that the distinction reconfigures, but does not do away with, the oppositional schema of metaphysics between the real and the apparent, the original and the derived, the one and the many. In the Romantic Modernist discourse, art takes the place of the real, the origin, the being itself, and technology falls on the opposite, under-privileged side. Nancy, like many post-Nietzschean (or post-modern) thinkers, sets out to deconstruct this duality. The duality implies a privileging of an ideal intelligible realm over the ("here and now")

[82] Nancy, Jean-Luc. 1996. *The Muses*. Translated by Peggy Kamuf. Stanford: Stanford University Press. 5.

world of the senses. It thus implies a denigration of art, even in the context of a discourse that celebrates art, because art is always, for Nancy, of the senses. However, the argument that I would like to propose is that Nancy's critique of the privileged metaphysical concept of art does not constitute its mere negation. That is to say, Nancy's critique does not lead to a mere affirmation of technology against art, as it does not lead to a celebration of the proliferation of images (semblances, copies, or simulacra) freed from any sense of truth, reality, or originality. Nancy is not simply a thinker of plurality, but indeed of the singular/plural. He thinks the one from within the many. His thinking of art, I will suggest, can thus best be characterised as a (post-Heideggerian) "poetic/technics," even if he does not use this term. Poetic/technics implies an ontology of art, which is to be distinguished both from the metaphysics of art, and from a certain post-modern pluralism (the two, as I will try to show, being closer than it might seem). My argument is that an ontology of art, understood as a poetic/technics, is necessary in order to fully free the thinking of art from the yoke of metaphysical concepts, and to thereby give art its proper due. I will develop my interpretation of Nancy through a reading of the opening essay from *The Muses*, focusing on Nancy's relation to Heidegger in particular. However, I would like to begin by situating this work in the broader context of Nancy's oeuvre, and by situating Nancy's oeuvre in contradistinction to the post-modern discourse of art, a discourse wherein art cedes its place to a notion of technology. The latter discourse is exemplified by the work of Rosalind Krauss, to which the work of Nancy is so close, yet so far away.

In her influential book, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*, drawing on post-structuralist theory, Rosalind Krauss critiques what she calls the Romantic Modernist art discourse, which centers on the idea of the subject. The idea is that of the artist-genius, who creates himself, his work, and his world, *ex nihilo*. "Marinetti thrown from his automobile one evening in 1909 into a factory ditch filled with water, emerges as if from amniotic fluid to be reborn – without ancestors – a futurist. This parable of absolute self-creation that begins the first *Futurist Manifesto* functions as a model for what is meant by originality among the early twentieth century avant-garde."[83] The exceptional originality of the artist-subject is defined in opposition to that of the ordinary crowd-follower, who, in the modern context, is the anonymous face in the crowd, determined by *mechanical* habits. This fundamental opposition, Krauss argues, is linked to a series of others. It underpins the notion of the self-referentiality of the modern work of art, which is the idea that the work is not a representation or reproduction, but delivers a sense of presence and/or of being in the present.[84] The opposition also posits the authenticity and uniqueness of the artist and his work against the indistinguishable series of copies that define the products of popular culture. The Modernist artist, according to what Krauss calls a myth, lives in a kind of perpetual present. He is free of the shackles of tradition, of culture and society, which bind the *many* less courageous.

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[83] Krauss, Rosalind. 1985 *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.

[84] A Modernist painting, as Barnett Newman says regarding one of his works, "represents nothing but itself and it is about itself as a painting."
Google, 2002. "Barnett Newman and the Heroic Sublime." Last modified June 17.
http://www.thenation.com/article/barnett-newman-and-heroic-sublime#

Drawing on the post-structuralist theory of the signifier and/or image, or of the image as signifier, Krauss sets off to deconstruct the Modernist discourse, which elevates art to the level of an absolute, by showing that its defining oppositions are untenable.[85] She argues that the notion of self-referentiality, and with it, the notions of the presence, authenticity, uniqueness, and singularity of the work of art, are myths easily dispelled by the post-Saussurian insight that every signifier is constituted in relation to a multiplicity of other signifiers. It is the relations between words, their similarities and their differences, that make each singular expression, or each singular sense, possible. Every word, for example, is defined by its proximity to and difference from another. The signifier is thus the signifier of a signified that is itself another signifier, and so on, *ad infinitum*. For Krauss, the fact that every signifier is constituted in relation to others implies that it is never self-referential. It implies that each signifier is conditioned by others, and therefore that it is always a re-presentation or a re-production. The emphasis here is on the dependency of every signifying practice on a pre-existing cultural field of available significations; in other words, on the subject's dependent relation to others. The artist and his work are no exception to this societal constraint. The signifiers of a work of art are not absolutely original. They are also signifiers of signifiers, copies of copies, repetitions of repetitions. It is not the case that, for Krauss, a work of art is simply the representation of a pre-exiting original reality. For one, what is represented is itself a representation. Secondly, each act of representation

[85] Krauss draws on the work of Derrida, Foucault, Barthes, and Baudrillard, specifically on their reading of Saussure and of Levi-Strauss' structuralist anthropology. However, I cannot go into her readings of these thinkers, not only because of limited time and space, but primarily because, despite basing her arguments on their work, she does not engage with them in a sustained way.

or repetition reconfigures the past, even as it draws from it. However, she argues that there is no such thing as the radical originality that the Romantics and the Modernists invoked for themselves. What emerges in place of originality, in the light of post-structuralism, is only "a bottomless system of reduplication" (Krauss 1985, 161).[86]

At the heart of Krauss' critique of the originality and singularity of a work of art is a notion of mechanical reproduction, derived from Walter Benjamin. In "The work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," a canonical text for the post-modern discourse of aesthetics, Benjamin argues that technologies of mechanical reproduction, for example, photography and the cinema, undermine the distinction between the original and the derived.[87] Creating images that are indistinguishable from their originals, technologies of mechanical reproduction replace the unique singular work with a plurality of copies: doubles, and doubles of doubles. Krauss generalizes this insight. She argues that while they undermine the sense of originality in an unprecedented way, these modern technologies retroactively reveal that every work has been a reproduction, a reproduction itself susceptible of being endlessly reproduced. In other words, the abyss of reduplication revealed by modern technology is the unacknowledged (or even repressed) condition of the production of works of art. In this sense every work of art is a form of mechanical reproduction, or a technology. Thus in

[86] Krauss goes on to suggest that the discourse of art's privileged originality, shared by artists and the art institution, is ideologically motivated, because the "certification of the original" makes for big returns (Krauss 1985, 162). Krauss' work has played a huge role not only in academic discourse, but also in the practice of art. It helped put the nail in the coffin of the avant-garde. Of course, Kraus did not accomplish this on her own. Her work was part (a central part) of the group of critics associated with the influential *October* journal. One of her fellow critics was Annette Michelson, who applied a similar type of criticism to the cinematic avant-garde, which I address in the third project.

[87] Benjamin, Walter. 1968. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." In *Illuminations*, translated by Harry Zohn, 217-253. New York: Schocken Books.

place of the distinction between art and technology, fundamental to the Modernist discourse of originality, Krauss develops a "postmodern" technological aesthetic. The latter is very much the negation of the former. Its aim is to reveal, within a work of art or through art criticism, the impossibility of originality. However, this does not lead Krauss back to a pre-modernist realist aesthetics, where the ideal artwork would be a faithful representation of a pre-existing reality. Rather, the postmodern aesthetic is defined as in-between realism and modernism (or realism and formalism). It is neither simply reproductive nor originally productive, neither a mere representation or a presence, but (eclectically) in-between the two. Nonetheless, the emphasis falls on the culturally or socially conditioned nature of every work of art, which makes it impossible to privilege it over technological forms of reproduction, particularly those of photography and the cinema, which proliferate in the sphere of popular culture. A praxis like any other, art is not a radical opening of the new and the unforeseen. It is not "avant-garde." There is no such thing.[88]

The work of Nancy has affinities with that of Krauss, and it is often read in a similar (postmodern) context. Both have roots in post-structuralism. Both critique the notion of an autonomous subject, which lies at the basis of the Romantic Modernist conception of art, emphasising the ineluctability of being with others. For both, plurality

[88] "What would it look like not to repress the concept of the copy? What would it look like to produce a work that acted out the discourse of reproductions without originals?" For Krauss, one of the answers is found in the work of Sherrie Levine, whose "medium is the pirated print." "In another series by Levine in which the lush, colored landscapes of Eliot Porter are reproduced, we again move through the "original" print, back to the origin in nature and through another trap door at the back wall of "nature" into the purely textual construction of the sublime and its history of degeneration into ever more lurid copies… Insofar as Levine's work explicitly deconstructs the modernist notion of origin, her effort cannot be seen as an *extension* of modernism. It is, like the discourse of the copy, postmodernist. Which means that it cannot be seen as avant-garde either" (Krauss 1985, 168-170).

is a condition of singularity. For Nancy, as for Krauss, art cannot be opposed to technology, creation to reproduction, at least not in a simple way. Nonetheless, Nancy's work stands in stark contrast to that of Krauss. In his work, the deconstruction of the opposition between singularity and multiplicity, or between creation and mechanical reproduction, does not lead to a negation of the radically creative and critical potential of art. Art, or the originality and the singularity that works of art lay claim to, survives being ex-posed as a repetition, and disseminated as a multiplicity. Is this a contradiction, a residual Romanticism, which we, the more sophisticated Anglophone postmodernists, can reject or ignore, while appropriating his thought to our own "aesthetic" discourses, where art is just another word for "praxis," or an empty signifier? Far from being a contradiction, I would argue that Nancy's deconstruction of art, of the work's claim to originality and singularity, necessarily leads to its affirmation. This is the paradox of his deconstruction, the paradox of the singular/plural, the logic of which I will try to demonstrate in what follows.[89]

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[89] I do not mean to suggest here that Nancy is a Modernist. If modernity is defined by the centrality of the subject, then Nancy can be seen as postmodern, that is, as someone looking for an other beginning, after the death of the subject. Nonetheless, Nancy does have an important relation to modern art and to Romanticism. One could even say that he (like Derrida) comes out of the avant-garde, given his proximity to Bataille and Blanchot, both of whom were involved with surrealism, and both of whom Krauss critiques in her book. Moreover, from his earliest works, Nancy continually returns to Kantian/Romantic aesthetics, from which, he would argue, modern art ultimately derives. Nancy considers the break with representation, the focus on form, style, technique, and the materiality of the work (which, however, he does not understand in terms of the Modernist discourse that Krauss critiques) to be essential for all art. Moreover, as I will try to show, for Nancy, by virtue of the singularity of its material forms and figures, and its paradoxical self-referentiality, art remains a privileged site of creativity, which he distinguishes, albeit hesitatingly, from "ordinary," instrumental forms of activity. All of this sets him apart from the postmodern discourse, exemplified by Krauss, which has dominated the field of aesthetics.

The recent interest in Nancy in the field of aesthetics might suggest the possibility of renewing a discussion on art, on its claim to originality or autonomy. However, Nancy does not seem to be read in a way that would allow such questions to be re-considered. For example, Alison Ross, whose work I will consider in more detail later, as it stands in contrast to my own, argues that the best way of reading Nancy's reflection on art is as a deconstruction of the notion of art's autonomy or originality, upon which

A good starting point for understanding Nancy is Nietzsche's idea of "the overcoming of metaphysics." Nietzsche argued that the task of modern thought is to overcome the metaphysical dualism, passed on from Plato to the modern age, between the real and the apparent world, between the intelligible and the sensible realm.[90] Nancy, like most philosophers engaged in deconstruction, and many postmodernists, takes this project as his point of departure. However, there are debates about the best way to realize this project. In a recent work, *Force of Imagination*, John Sallis argues against what he calls a "one-sided construal" of the overcoming, which he finds in the work of postmodern cultural theorists of the image.[91] Sallis focuses on the work of Jean Baudrillard, taking him as an example of a wider current. According to this trend of thought, the Nietzschean realisation of the inseparability of subject and object, image and reality, implies that there is no such thing as Truth, Reality, Being, or even an "original imagination" as the Romantics conceived it, but only semblances, illusions, *mere* images. For Sallis, this is a one-sided construal of "the overcoming of Platonism,"

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its privilege has been based. She even suggests that Nancy is not entirely consistent with himself when he seems to privilege art over instrumental schemas of habit, "ecotechnics," or "the society of the spectacle." Thus, while Nancy's work was hardly ever invoked by members of the October group, its current Anglo-American reception is aligned with many of that group's major premises.
Ross, Alison. 2007. *The Aesthetic Paths of Philosophy*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

[90] Nietzsche, Friedrich. 1968. *Twilight of the Idols*. Translated by R. J. Hollingdale. Baltimore; Maryland: Penguin Books. 40-41.

[91] Sallis, John. 2000. *Force of Imagination*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. 84.

I have given a detailed account of Sallis' reading of Plato and his critique of the one-sided construal of the overcoming of metaphysics in project one, *The Abyss of the Image, a Study of the Kantian/Heideggerian Imagination*. This project continues the line of thought begun there. I will argue that Nancy's idea of art, which is to be distinguished from Heidegger's philosophy, can nonetheless also be situated in relation to the Nietzschean overcoming, and that Nancy's idea of this overcoming can also be positioned against what Sallis calls its one-sided construal. For this reason, a summary of Sallis' argument is necessary.

firstly, because it is merely its negation. As such, it remains conditioned by what it negates. That is to say, the notion that reality is a copy of a copy of a copy is predicated on the idea of an *objective reality*, which is always fleeing from our grasp. Moreover, Sallis concludes that this "world picture" is pre-figured in Plato. It is prefigured in the image of the cave, and of the line that ascends out of it, to the extent that not only are the images in the cave simulacra (this is originally Plato's term), but the reality outside of the cave can also only reveal itself through images (Sallis 2000, 80). In this way, Plato (knowingly or not) traced the figure of the *mise-en-abyme*, so often invoked by postmodern theorists. Plato's cave of simulacra is the correlate (or the flip-side) of his notion of a transcendent beyond. Sallis argues that Baudrillard's postmodern discourse is in fact deaf to Nietzsche's claim, which is that in order to overcome Platonist metaphysics it is necessary to abolish not only the so-called real world, but also the so-called apparent one.[92] For Sallis, the way out of dualism, and its incessant inversions, lies in understanding that reality is never merely reducible to an image, but neither is it separable from it. He develops this understanding by elaborating a notion of the imagination that is inspired by Heidegger's reading of Kant, and by the Romantic tradition more generally.

Nancy, I will argue, follows a similar path, similar but not the same. Nancy is also committed to the Nietzschean overcoming of metaphysics, which is an overcoming of dualist thinking. However, what distinguishes his project in particular is the focus on the

[92] "We have abolished the real world: what world is left? the apparent world perhaps? … But no! *with the real world we have also abolished the apparent world!* (Mid-day; moment of the shortest shadow; end of the longest error; zenith of mankind; INCIPIT ZARATHUSTRA.)" (Nietzsche 1969, 41).

opposition between the subject and society or community. For Nancy, the deconstruction of the metaphysical duality of being and appearance, of the intelligible and the sensible realm, requires the deconstruction of the opposition between the autonomous subject and being with others.[93] This is why his work on community involves a critique of the Romantic Modern discourse of art, which is predicated on the idea of a self-creating subject.

In *Being Singular Plural,* which is considered one of his most important works, Nancy elaborates the critique of the artist-subject by engaging with the work of Guy Debord. Debord's work is at the basis of the work of Jean Baudriallard, and of that of many of the cultural theorists of the image whose overcoming of Platonsim is critiqued as insufficient by Sallis. However, Nancy finds an insight in Debord's *Society of the Spectacle*, the consequences of which, he argues, have not been fully thought through. Debord's insight (of which I can only give a brief account here, and which is not far from

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[93] This is the focus of the earlier works of Nancy, such as *The Inoperative Community*, which was his breakthrough work and remains one of the most widely read, and *Being Singular Plural*, which critics consider to be his most important work. Focusing on the latter, François Raffoul argues that Nancy's thinking as a whole can be understood as the re-elaboration of Heidegger's notion of "being-with" (*Mitsein*). He argues that Nancy's ontology of the "with" is a radicalizing of Heidegger's fundamental ontology (developed in *Being and Time*). Nancy, according to Raffoul, praises Heidegger for "the recognition that Being-with belongs constitutively to the essence of *Dasein*," but criticizes his failure to "fully draw the consequences of this statement."
Raffoul, François. "The Logic of the With: On Nancy's *Être Singulier Pluriel*." In *Studies in Practical Philosophy* I, no. I (1999): 39.

In *Being Singular Plural*, Nancy argues that Heidegger's notion of *Dasein* already serves to displace the subject, insofar as it implies that the subject is open to a future that it can never simply appropriate. Heidegger goes even further when he argues that there is no self outside of being-with-others. But Nancy objects to Heidegger's privileging of the former over the latter. Heidegger describes the latter in terms of average everydayness, being with "the they," going along with what "they" say... Authentic being-a-self means standing apart from the crowd. The question is: does Nancy's critique of this distinction imply a negation of art's exceptionalism?
Heidegger, Martin. 1996. *Being and Time*. Translated by Joan Stambaugh. Albany: State University of New York Press. IV.
Nancy, Jean-Luc. 2000. *Being Singular Plural*. Translated by Robert D. Richardson and Anne O'Byrne. Stanford: Stanford University Press. 93-99.

the reflections of Benjamin and Baudrillard just mentioned) is that in contemporary society, where we increasingly experience reality by way of its spectacular, mediatized representations, the distinction between reality and image tends to disappear.[94] This is made possible by technologies of the image, technologies of "mechanical reproduction," which blur the distinction between copy and original, subject and object, reality and appearance. However, this experience, whereby the world itself becomes a mediatized spectacle, is not limited to that of watching television. It is generalized, because, Debord argues, in the current stage of market capitalism, economic production is organized around the consumption of images. One does not purchase an automobile, a house, or a toothbrush, so much as an image of owning one, an image which gives one a sense of freedom as well as a sense of social recognition. In this way, Debord argues, the illusion of a community of free individuals takes the place of real symbolic exchange; "taking *symbol,*" Nancy explains, "in the strong sense of being a bond of recognition, an ontological instance of the "in-common," like Marx's bond of "free labor" where everyone produces himself or herself as a subject *with* others and as a subject *of* being-with-one-another" (Nancy 2000, 50).[95]

What Nancy objects to, or at least what he finds problematic, is in fact Debord's *facile* denunciation of the spectacle, in favor of a supposedly more original, un-mediated experience of reality. Debord's critique, he argues, operates within the metaphysical duality of image and reality, being and appearance. The "intuition" of the Situationists

[94] Debord, Guy. 1983. *Society of the Spectacle*. Detroit: Black and Red.
[95] "A subject of representation, that is, a subject reduced to the sum or flux of representations which it purchases, is the placeholder that functions as a subject of Being and history" (Nancy 2000, 50).

that Nancy valorizes is that of the erasure of this very opposition in and through the spectacle. For Nancy, the society of the spectacle is a society that can no longer refer itself to an original sense of being, which would precede or be extrinsic to its appearance; that is, the co-appearance of each one, which takes places through the *mediation* of the other. Through market-capitalism and technology, society has come face-to-face with itself, where the "itself" is nothing other than the being of co-appearing (Nancy 2000, 52). As Alison Ross (whose work I will touch on later) puts it, "for Nancy being-with is not an already given "we" that is secondarily distorted. The problem of social-being is not anterior to, nor is it independent of, the technological proliferation of the spectacle, it *is* this spectacle" (Ross 2007, 146). In other words, just as there is no being outside of appearance, so there is no society outside of its historical, technological, tele-visual, mediation.

Nancy generalizes this critique of Debord, extending it to all modern Romantic art movements, and their philosophical counterparts, including the Heideggerian version. He writes,

> "since the spectacle occupies all of space, its opposite can only make itself known as the inappropriable secret of an originary property hidden beneath appearances. This is why the opposite of deceitful "imagery" is creative "imagination," the model for which is still something like the Romantic genius. According to such a model, the artist plays the part of the productive-subject, but still according to the structure of an

ontological presupposition that involves no specific interrogation of the "common" or "in-common" of Being" (Nancy 2000, 51-52).

However, Nancy's reflections on society and the spectacle do not end here. That is to say, Nancy does not argue simply that there is no such thing as society, but only a plurality of (media) images, each one masking the void upon which it is cast. If this were his position, then he would be very close to the postmodern construal of Platonism that John Sallis (rightfully) critiques as one-sided and insufficient.[96] For Nancy, the society of the spectacle does undermine the sense of society. But it undermines only the metaphysical conception of society, which is defined by the duality of being and appearance. Debord's ideas of "real symbolic exchange" are also metaphysical in this sense. However, Nancy develops an alternative ontology of the social. For Nancy, the realm of the image is the realm of co-appearance. It is the realm of society "itself." If

[96] In this case, Nancy's position would be almost identical to that of Baudrillard. Baudrillard's idea that our society can be defined by "the simulacrum" extends Debord's theory of the spectacle. But Baudrillard rejects the possibility of any alternatives to the spectacle (for example, the ideas of "real symbolic exchange," or that of the Situationist avant-garde and its creative imagination). He argues that mediatized images are so pervasive, and so powerful in their ability to duplicate things, that they appropriate all alternatives from the get go. In fact, the idea of an alternative, that is, of a reality or of an imagination outside of the spectacle, is the greatest illusion, and the principle resource of the spectacle. "The simulacrum is never what hides the truth. It is truth that hides the fact that there is none" (Baudrillard 1994, 1). The only critical attitude Baudrillard endorses is one that consists in, as Sallis puts it, exposing today's "hyperreality" for what it is, by "confirming everything that would have prompted one to doubt whether the image revealed something originary or only concealed the void on which it was cast" (Sallis 2000, 83). In other words, the only way out (it is not really a way out) consists in affirming the illusory character of all images, and the dissolution of any sense of reality or originality. Baudrillard identifies this position, the position defined by the dissolution of reality into a plurality of simulacra, with the Nietzschean overcoming of metaphysics.

Baudrillard, Jean. 1994. *Simulacra and Simulations*. Translated by Sheila Faria Glaser. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Baudrillard, Jean. 1993. "The Order of Simulacra." In *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, translated by Iain Hamilton Grant. London: Sage Publications. 50-87.

For Krauss, Baudrillard is an important reference. She identifies his idea of the image (the copy or simulacrum) with the post-Saussurian theory of the signifier. Both Krauss and Baudrillard take Walter Benjamin's analysis of the work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction as a starting point for their claims about the loss of originality, uniqueness, authenticity, art and reality.

each subject is divided from itself because it is mediated by an other, or by the image of an other; and if society itself is divided into a plurality of inter-mediating appearances; then this division or fragmentation of the subject and society (or of the society-subject) is society itself. The very thing that separates the societies' "members," depriving them of a common ground, allows them to enter into relation – that is, as distinct beings, and only distinct beings can in fact come together. Conversely, that which allows them to stand apart from one another, as distinct beings, is their being in-common; since distinction (of the one from the other) implies a relation, a face-to-face, a "society." The division of society is its fragmentation into a plurality of images, each one losing itself in the reflection of the other, but this very fragmentation makes society in its unity possible.[97]

Nancy's reflections on art touch on a similar paradox. He critiques the idea that art has a single over-arching essence, and the correlative idea that each individual work (or each artist) is a self-creating being. However, he also finds a way of rethinking the essence of art, and the idea of originality, from within its critique or deconstruction. While I focus on Nancy's writing on art, I mention this reflection on community because it is fundamental for all of his work. Thus, in *The Muses*, the question is how to

[97] In other words, for Nancy, there is no subject as such, free and autonomous, because the being of every individual is inextricably intertwined with the being of others; and, for the same reason, there is no society, understood as a collective subject, hovering beyond the plurality of the intertwined members. This leads him to a paradoxical idea of community, as it implies the impossibility of any unifying one-ness, or "community." Similarly, in *The Inoperative Community*, Nancy defines community by its very "interruption."
Nancy, Jean-Luc. 1991. *The Inoperative Community*. Edited by Peter Connor, and translated by Peter Connor, Lisa Garbus, Michael Holland, and Simona Sawhney. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

understand the plurality of the arts as co-belonging to "art," without reducing this plurality (the plurality of singularities) to a generic principle.[98]

Although he is critical of facile ways of privileging art above the social, the historical, and the technological; although, like Baudrillard, he is very cautious and aware of how the idea of art or of "creative imagination" can easily turn into its opposite, and become the resource of techno-capital; Nancy does not, and for good reason, let go of it entirely. That is to say, Nancy finds a way of thinking art not in opposition to technology, which implies a subject that stands apart from its social mediation, but as a creative transcendence which mediation (or being-with) itself makes possible. Perhaps the strength of his thought lies in being able to as it were sail past the Scylla of the Romantic metaphysics of art and the Charybdis of the postmodern discourse, for which every work, every image, every being, is but the copy of a copy. To the extent that this is what Nancy accomplishes, he breaks free of Plato *and* his cave of simulacra.[99]

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[98] This is not to suggest that Nancy simply applies his social/political reflection on community to the question of art. A close reading of *The Literary Absolute, the Theory of Literature in German Romanticism*, an early and important work of Nancy co-written with Phillipe Lacoue-Labarthe, in which the authors reflect on the Romantic idea of the community of artists, to be realized through literature (a project which, incidentally, they consider to be "the first manifestation of the avant-garde"), could lead one to argue that it is the Romantic idea of art that lies at the basis of Nancy's conception of community.
Lacoue-Labarthe, Philippe; Nancy, Jean-Luc. 1988. *The Literary Absolute, The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism*. Translated by Philip Barnard and Cheryl Lester. Albany: State University of New York Press. 7-10.

[99] In her recent book-length study of Nancy, Marie-Eve Morin writes that "in *Being Singular Plural*, Nancy distances himself from the discourses on the "society of the spectacle" (which assert that our "reality" consists now only of "media images") because these discourses, according to him, have remained incapable of thinking beyond the metaphysical framework, in that they have not drawn the proper conclusions from Nietzsche's deconstruction of "metaphysics."" She cites Nietzsche's "How the "True World" Finally became a Fable," and continues: "If the true world has slowly shown to be an illusion, then the conclusion is not that everything is now a mere illusion, because the very notion of illusion is itself rendered meaningless by the disappearance of a fixed notion of reality."
Morin, Marie-Eve. 2012. Jean-Luc Nancy. Cambridge: Polity Press. 137.

From Kant to Heidegger, to Nancy

In his writings on art, Nancy often takes the German Romantic and Hegelian idea of art as the sensible presentation of the Idea as his point of departure. This idea of art, which Nancy deconstructs, and reconstructs, has its roots in Kant. However, Nancy's appropriation of the Kantian tradition passes through Heidegger, specifically through Heidegger's reading of Kant (in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*), which, according to Nancy, paves the way for Heidegger's later reflection on art.[100] Heidegger does not deal with Kant's theory of art, which is developed in the third *Critique*. He focuses rather on the first *Critique*. However, what he finds there, specifically in Kant's idea of the

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The claim that Nancy's Nietzschean/Heideggerian understanding of the overcoming of metaphysics leads him to reject the reduction of the world to mere images, or to "a bottomless system of reduplication," is central to my argument. However, the passages on Debord almost contradict my reading. Nancy objects to the Situationist idea of a more originary imagination, and seems to affirm the idea of society as a "game of mirrors… losing itself in the scintillating play of light and images" (Nancy 2000, 49). Here he sounds more like Baudrillard than Sallis. Perhaps this is because in these passages (which come under the heading "conditions of critique") Nancy is only outlining the difficulties that any critique of the society of the spectacle, and any idea of "critical art" must confront (the difficulty that the notion of originality, as an alternative to representation, easily falls back into dualism, and becomes the resource of the spectacle). I argue that Nancy gets beyond the "merely apparent world" when he develops his own idea of art, understood as a more originary image, conceived beyond the dualities of metaphysics.

[100] Nancy makes the claim that Heidegger's analysis of the schematism of the imagination "though never reactivated… paved the way" for the later reflection on art, in the essay "Masked Imagination." Nancy, Jean-Luc. 2005. "Masked Imagination." In *The Ground of the Image*, translated by Jeff Fort. New York: Fordham University Press. 88.

More generally, in *The Literary Absolute, The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism*, Nancy, and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, trace Heidegger's reflection on art (specifically on language and poetry) back to the Romantics of Jena, who they in turn trace back to Kant (in a reading of Romanticism that is very much shaped by Heidegger's reading of Kant and Schelling). The work of John Sallis also reveals the connection between Heidegger's reading of the Kantian imagination and his later reflection on art; as well as showing the relation between Heidegger and Kantian, Romantic aesthetics more generally. The question of Heidegger's and Nancy's relation to Kantian, Romantic aesthetics is one that I cannot avoid touching on here. However, it will have to remain very much in the background.

imagination, serves to deconstruct the dualist schema of metaphysics, and to free the aesthetic realm from its subordination to the intelligible.

Heidegger's reading of Kant turns on the idea of the imagination, which Kant called the root of the two stems of human knowledge, the understanding and the sensibility. Heidegger positions his controversial reading against the prevailing interpretation of Kant, against, as he puts it, "what has been misinterpreted constantly under the heading of Kant's "Copernican Revolution."" [101] According to this interpretation Kant inverts the traditional concept of truth. Since Plato, truth had been understood as residing within objects. That is to say, the true or the real world was understood as a thing in itself, existing beyond the subject's perceptions. In order to have knowledge of truth it was necessary to bring perception into accord with the thing in itself, to represent it as it is. This idea of truth as the correct representation of the being itself, or as the correspondence of the subject's intellect with the thing itself, reigned from the time of Plato, through mediaeval scholastic philosophy, to the time of Kant, if not beyond. [102] Now, Kant recognized that this idea of truth poses insurmountable difficulties for thought, because it implies the possibility – itself unaccounted for – of seeing that which cannot be seen, the thing in itself; or of bringing into an image (a sensible image) that which (the intelligible) is beyond the image. Kant is said to have solved the problem by arguing that truth is not in the object but in the subject. This is the inversion that defines the so-called Copernican Revolution. Truth is in

[101] Heidegger, Martin. 1990. *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*. Translated by Richard Taft. Bloomington; Indiana: Indiana University Press. 8.

[102] On this point see,
Heidegger, Martin. 1993. "The Essence of Truth." In *Basic Writings*, edited by David Farrell Krell. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.

the subject in the form of conceptual categories or cognitive structures through which we organize and make sense of experience. Thus we arrive at the knowledge of truth by making objects conform to our representations, and not the other way around.

Heidegger objects to this interpretation of Kant, arguing that it changes very little. The interpretation maintains the idea of truth as the correspondence of subject and object, the intelligible and the sensible, which are still understood dualistically as separate realities.[103] The problem, which Kant himself brought to light, of what makes this correspondence possible in the first place, is not solved. In other words, the idea of truth as the correct representation of the intelligible through the sensible, in both its Platonic and Kantian versions (according to the standard interpretation of Kant), implies a correspondence of image and thing, subject and object; but it is not clear how the correspondence could ever be established, or made comprehensible, if one begins by opposing them as two separate realities.[104] What happens, what has perhaps always happened in the history of metaphysics, is that the sensible is simply reduced to the intelligible, in one way or another, in order to ensure the correspondence.

Heidegger suggests that if Kant does shed light on this problem, if he does find a way through what the ancients already recognized with concern as the *chorismos* (the separation – of the intelligible and the sensible), it is through the notion of the imagination. The imagination allows us to understand how images, formed by the

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[103] Heidegger writes that according to the popular idea of the "Copernican Revolution," "the "old" concept of truth in the sense of the "correspondence" (*adaequatio*) of knowledge to the being is so little shaken that it [the Copernican Revolution] actually presupposes it [the old concept of truth]" (Heidegger 1990, 8).

[104] "How is the [logical] statement able to correspond to something else, the thing, precisely by persisting in its own essence?" "Wherein are the thing and the statement to be in accordance?" (Heidegger 1993, 120-121).

subject, open out onto a reality that is irreducible to them. It allows us to understand the relation between the intelligible and the sensible, without reducing the one to the other, by suggesting a concept of the image that is not reduced to a transcendent reality (as if it were the copy of a thing in itself), and by suggesting a concept of reality that is not reduced to a mere image (as though there were only images, and images of images).[105] In other words, the true sense of Kant's Copernican Revolution, according to Heidegger, lies in the discovery of the imagination, which takes us beyond the dualist logic of representation, and first grounds (though not without un-grounding) the co-respondence that the latter presupposes (Heidegger 1990, 8).[106]

In his later work, Heidegger develops his critique of the dualist metaphysics of representation by arguing that it is at the root of modern man's calamitous domination of everything that is. Although it has its roots in Platonism, Heidegger argues that the modern epoch is defined by a specifically subjectivist form of metaphysics, in which the representing subject becomes the ground of being, such that the world exists only as an object for a subject.[107] Perhaps the best way to understand this "world picture" is

[105] In *The Abyss of the Image, a study of the Kantian/Heideggerian imagination* (project one of my dissertation), I have carried out a close reading of Heidegger's interpretation of the Kantian imagination, focusing on its articulation in terms of temporality. While that essay can be read on its own (as can the current one) it also prepares the way for the current one, and was written in view of it. That is to say, the idea of the imagination, which serves to deconstruct the dualist schema of metaphysics, was elaborated in view of developing, through Nancy, a post-Heideggerian idea of art.

[106] Although it makes possible the accord between the intelligible and the sensible, the imagination does not simply "ground" representation. It un-grounds it, at the same time. By showing that (sensible) image and (intelligible) thing itself cannot simply be opposed, as model and copy, the imagination prevents us from identifying a ground (or an origin). That is, if the "root" or the ground is the third term, which is neither in the one nor in the other, but always in-between, then this ground is an abyss. This is in fact what Heidegger calls the imagination: *Abgrund* (literally non-ground).

[107] "What is, in its entirety, is now taken in such a way that it first is in being and only is in being to the extent that it is set up by man, who represents and sets forth."

through the standard, pervasive understanding of Kant that Heidegger rejects (at least in the *Kantbuch*).[108] According to this *schema*, things only appear by way of representations or images, shaped in the mind's eye, so to speak. Nothing exists except as an object of cognition. This perspective has its roots in Descartes. With Descartes, the subject of representation comes to the center of the stage, or, as Heidegger puts it, becomes the stage upon which the world plays itself out (very much like a spectacle). The idea of objectivity, central to modern science, does not negate this pre-dominance of the subject, but rather confirms it. Objectivity is defined in relation to subjectivity, as it implies a clear and transparent representation of being. That is to say, it implies the subject's mastery of being, a reduction of its otherness (its hiddenness and its mystery) to what can be known and represented. Heidegger develops this critique by arguing that the epistemological framework of representation, which makes "man the measure of things," is at the heart of modern technology, through which man dominates being. Representational thinking, in other words, is the reason behind our "abandonment of being," our dis-connection from the earth, and our loss of any sense of the sacred.[109]

Heidegger, Martin. 1977. "The Age of the World Picture." In *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, translated by William Lovitt. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc. 129-130.

[108] In Heidegger's later work Kant is critiqued as playing an important role in this "rising up of the subject." However, this does not mean that Heidegger simply contradicts his earlier reading. In the *Kantbuch*, Heidegger argues that Kant "shrinks back" from the centrality of the imagination, particularly in the second version of the first *Critique*, in favour of the constitutive role of the understanding. Heidegger critiques this "shrinking back" because it leads Kant to reinstate the subject/object dichotomy.

[109] The main essay here is "The Question Concerning Technology." Heidegger understands technology as "enframing" (*Ge-stell*, which is essentially linked to *Vor-stellen*, representation; the connection is not just verbal; or rather, the verbal connection indicates that the structure of technology is rooted in thinking in terms of representation). "Enframing" is a setting upon of nature by man, which reduces it to an object of sheer availability and calculating manipulability. Through enframing, nature ceases even to be an object, which would imply some residue of autonomy. It becomes "standing reserve" for unconditional exploitation by man. Heidegger argues that the "supreme danger" is that this process, whereby "man

Heidegger turns to art in order to overcome the modern "reign of technology," just as earlier he turned to the Kantian imagination to overcome the dualist schema of metaphysics. He sees within art a different way of relating to being, or to "the earth," and makes it his task to bring to light the poetic comportment to being as the basis of a more general ethics. Heidegger argues that art is not and never was representation, nor is it a "subjective experience."[110] Art is that which allows things to come to presence of themselves. Art does not simply represent this "presencing" (*Anwesen*) of things. It effectuates or realizes it, by showing things as they have never been seen before. It is, paradoxically, only by showing things in a new light, that art reveals their essential being. The notion of presencing is therefore not simply the opposite of the framework of representation, wherein the subject dominates being. Rather, it is a matter of thinking and experiencing the co-presence of man and world, the presencing of the one through the other.[111]

Heidegger's critique of representation, and his elaboration of the alternative concept of presencing, is fundamental for Nancy's thinking about art. However, in *The*

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exalts himself and postures as lord of the earth," turns against him, turning man himself into standing reserve.
Heidegger, Martin. 1993. "The Essence of Truth." In *Basic Writings*, edited by David Farrell Krell, 111-138. New York: HarperCollins Publishers. 332.

[110] Heidegger spends the first part of one of his main essays on art, *The Origin of the Work of Art,* denouncing "aesthetics." Aesthetics, he argues, is determined by metaphysics, from which it inherits the oppositions of form and content, subject and object. The "aesthetic" idea of art as a subjective experience (or "lived experience," *Erlebnis*) is a product of the specifically modern metaphysics, which Heidegger seeks to overcome – by turning to art.
Heidegger, Martin. 2013. *The Origin of the Work of Art*. In *Poetry, language, Thought*, translated by Albert Hoftstadter. New York: Harper Perennial Modern Thought.

[111] Heidegger conceives presencing (of the one to the other, or of the one through the other) in terms of the notion of *Ereignis*. The term, whose rich etymology he exploits throughout his later work, means both "event" and "appropriation." Man is appropriated to being at the very moment that he appropriates it, and this mutual appropriation *takes place* as an event, that is, as a perpetual transformation of the one through the other.

Muses, Nancy elaborates his idea of art by way of a critique of Heidegger's distinction between art and technology, arguing that art is first and foremost technique. The distinction in question is between *poiesis* and *techne*. For Heidegger, *poiesis* is the essence of all the arts. By *poiesis*, Heidegger does not mean poetry simply, but the "naming into being" (and thus letting things come to presence) that defines all art. However, poetry specifically is privileged, because language is its medium (Heidegger 2013, 70-72). This privileging of poetry raises certain questions about its specificity, vis-à-vis the specificity of other arts, and of the relation of all arts to language. But for Nancy, the main question is whether art has a single essence at all, an essence that could be opposed to its multiple technological "distortions." In Heidegger's idea of *poiesis*, Nancy sees a reduction of the arts to a singular essence (a "nature") that is not in itself plural. The critique here is very similar to the one Nancy makes of the Situationist opposition of a creative imagination to the society of the spectacle, in *Being Singular Plural*. Nancy argues that with the opposition Heidegger falls back into the duality of the intelligible and the sensible, the one and the many, and all of the related oppositions, which constitute the metaphysics of representation, the metaphysics of the subject.

Nonetheless, Nancy himself cannot entirely abolish this distinction, to the extent that he also sees in art an alternative to what he sometimes calls techno-capital, and the metaphysics of representation; or, to the extent that he is not content to leave us with mere "media images." In fact, a distinction between art or the technique of art and the instrumentalism of representational thinking is central for Nancy, and even makes

possible his critique of Heidegger. This, at least, is the case in the principle essay of *The Muses*, if not in his work as a whole. My argument, in other words, is that Nancy's deconstructive critique of the (Romantic, Heideggerian) "poetic" essence of art does not imply its negation, but rather its re-construction. This deconstructive re-appropriation of an ontological idea of art is what distinguishes Nancy's thinking from that of many post-modernists.

Conflicting Interpretations of the status of art in the work of Nancy

Some readers of Nancy would argue that his discourse on art borders on contradiction, to the extent that, on the one hand, he critiques the Romantic opposition between art or originary imagination and the derivative images of technological modernity, and on the other, he speaks of art (rather romantically) in terms of a similar distinction. This is what Alison Ross suggests, in her book *The Aesthetic Paths of Philosophy*. Ross' work serves as a good contrast to the reading of Nancy that I am proposing here.

Ross first elaborates a Nancy-inspired critique of Heidegger, and then suggests (albeit tentatively, almost implicitly) that it can be applied to Nancy as well. She argues that in the Kantian imagination, Heidegger discovers a radical conception of being which undermines the subject-based ontology of *Being and Time*, and opens up the path of his later thinking. The imagination, understood as the *Abgrund*, implies the impossibility of assigning a transcendent point of origin in reference to which all beings could be

defined, and thus leads to the later thinking of being as presencing – a presencing that is always a withdrawing.[112] Ross argues that the thinking of being as withdrawing or self-concealing allows Heidegger to think of being as historical, or as varying with historical relations. In other words, the idea of being as an irrevocably hidden ground implies that there is no being itself as such, but only a *plurality* of historical beings. What she objects to is Heidegger's later account of art as a privileged mode of revealing, an "originary experience," which, in contrast to the derivative mode of *techne*, discloses the being itself even in its refusal. Ross argues that rather than inscribing "art" in the field of variable social/historical relations (Nancy's "being-with") Heidegger's idea of art's exceptionalism isolates it, presents it as self-sufficient or auto-creative, and in this way brings back the metaphysical notion of an autonomous subject. The idea of art thus compromises the deconstructive, radical political potential of Heidegger's thought (Ross 2007, 61-108).

Ross argues that Nancy's thinking, in contrast, offers "the outlines of a critique of art's exceptionalism" (Ross 2007, 13). She traces these outlines in Nancy's critique of Debord's distinction between imagination and the spectacle in *Being Singular Plural*, and in his critique of the Heideggerian distinction between *poiesis* and *techne* in *The Muses*. She argues that, since, for Nancy, art cannot be opposed to *techne*, it is better conceived as a *praxis* than a *poiesis* (at least in Heidegger's sense of the term). In other

[112] The simultaneous presencing of being and man to one another implies that neither is the origin of the other, and that each withdraws as it comes to presence, since the other comes to presence before it at the same time. Being is the event, the interplay, of the two, and thus of presencing and withdrawing. As I mentioned earlier, this interplay is to be understood in terms of the concept of *Ereignis*.

words, the critique of art's exceptionalism leads to the alternative conception of art as historical material *praxis*, a *praxis* like any other.

However, for Ross, Nancy also seems to fail to draw the full consequences of his own thinking, to the extent that he also seems to celebrate art, in quasi-Romantic terms, as something apart from the reign of representation, apart from *techne*. The implication here is that Nancy, like Heidegger, would be more consistent with himself if he just gave up the idea of art as a site of originary creation.[113]

Ross' critique of Heidegger and Nancy is justified only if what they mean by art refers to a transcendent, self-constituting subject. This is the critique that Nancy makes of Heidegger (in *Being Singular Plural* and *The Muses*) when he argues that the distinction between *poiesis* and *techne* repeats the opposition between original subjectivity (the being that is itself) and the realm of (illusory) co-appearance. However, Nancy also retains something else from Heidegger's notion of art, something that does not fit into but rather radically undermines the dualist schema.

If, as Nancy and Sallis have suggested, Heidegger's later notion of art is prefigured in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, it is, I think, to be found in the idea of the imagination as a *third term*. The imagination is a third term in the sense that it is in-between the understanding and the sensibility, and articulates the relation between the two. This third term can be understood not as a subject that transcends its empirical, relationally determined, modes of being. Heidegger identifies the thirdness of

[113] For the critique of Nancy, which is quite tempered and tame, see Ross' concluding chapter. See also footnote two to the chapter, on page 216, where Ross, drawing on Rancière, critiques Deleuze and all those who use art "to bestow meaning, in the emphatic sense of the term…" (Ross 2007).

the imagination with the Kantian thing in itself, which constitutes the ground of the unity of the understanding and the sensibility, and thus of the manifold of the subject's appearances in time. However, for Heidegger, the "itself" of the imagination is not a "one" opposed to the other, an identity opposed to difference, or a unity opposed to the manifold. Rather, the imagination is nothing but the relation between the understanding and the sensibility. As the ground of the two, it shows that each one is determined in relation to the other; that is, that each being exists in relation to an other; and that, therefore, there is no such thing as a thing in itself, in the classical metaphysical sense of the term. But for Heidegger, it is necessary to identify the relation, the in-between-ness or thirdness *in itself*, in order to think beyond dualism more radically still. The "ipseity" of the imagination precedes the division of the faculties, the division between subject and object, and it therefore also precedes any identity, which is predicated on an opposition (vis-à-vis an other). The "self" of the imagination is one that is other to itself. Only in this sense does it constitute the ground (*Ab-grund*) of the unity of the faculties, and of the manifold of the subject's experiences – a unity that is, therefore, in itself manifold.[114]

Heidegger's later reflection on art can be understood along the same lines. The distinction between originary *poiesis* and *techne* is not an opposition. It is a concept through which he tries to think that which precedes any opposition. It is that through which he tries to think the relation, or *difference in itself*, as the origin and the being

[114] Here once again I defer to *The Abyss of the Image, a study of the Kantian/Heideggerian imagination* (project one of my dissertation). There I tried to articulate the notion of the third-ness of the imagination in terms of Heidegger's notion of originary temporality: what precedes the subject/object distinction is a time that is never simply past or present, but is already past and still to come.

itself. Great works of art, for Heidegger, reveal this originary instance. This is why works of art are irreducible to representations, which always refer to objects already constituted within relations of opposition.

The idea of an originary moment of art, or of art as the revealing of being itself, is what Alison Ross resists in both Heidegger and Nancy. To put it in terms of Heidegger's reading of Kant, it is as if for Ross the third term is simply nothing, since there is no origin, or being itself, but only the manifold of beings. She suggests that to speak of an origin or of being in itself (in any sense) is to remain within metaphysics. But it seems to me that by thinking in this way Ross is guilty of what Sallis calls the one-sided construal of the overcoming of metaphysics. Her discourse is a negation of Platonism. That is to say, it affirms plurality, the plurality of variable historical relations, by way of a negation of any underlying ground. What such a discourse misses, and what I will try to make visible in Nancy, is the proper ontology of art, which is neither a metaphysics, nor simply its opposite.

Nancy's poetic-technics: a pluralist ontology of art

One of Nancy's most sustained engagements with the question of art is found in the first and principle essay of *The Muses*, entitled "Why Are There Several Arts and Not Just One? (*Conversation on the Plurality of Worlds*)." The way the question is posed easily lends itself to reading the piece as a simple affirmation of the plurality of the arts, against the now unfashionable idea that there is an essence of art. This is partly true.

Nancy denounces what he calls the "philosophical" idea (which, he specifies, is not "only present in putatively "philosophical" texts; it can be found in many declarations by artists") that the plurality of the arts, and of works of art, are but the set of manifestations of a single essence, however that may be conceived.[115] However, Nancy equally denounces what he calls the "technical" or "technological" concept of art, which refuses to ask the ontological question "concerning the unity of this plurality" (Nancy 1996, 2).

Nancy's reflection on art and the arts is in fact a reflection on the relation (not to say dialectic) of the one and the many, which aims to deconstruct the opposition of the two. The real question is therefore about the plural being (the plural essence) of art.[116] The opposition to overcome is not only that of the one and the many. Or rather, this opposition is linked to all the other oppositions of metaphysics. Since Plato, "the many" is the realm of time and space, of appearances or images, of the sensible or the senses. Things that are in time are intrinsically manifold because they are always changing, or becoming other to themselves. This is why they are not properly speaking things, or

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[115] Nancy, Jean-Luc. 1996. *The Muses*. Translated by Peggy Kamuf. Stanford: Stanford University Press. 3.

It is important to note this qualification that the "philosophical" or spiritual idea of art is not just a product of philosophy, but is (or was) indeed shared by many artists. Although I cannot begin to prove this here (and it is not really controversial) most artists from Romanticism through to late Modernism believed in some spiritual essence of art. Krauss' work lends proof to that. What she denounces in Romanticism and Modernism (or in Romantic Modernism) is precisely the "myth" of the timeless originality of works of art. As Krauss shows, many (if not most) modern artists, and many modern art critics, believed in the essence of art as a whole and in the essence of each specific medium. It is usually the self-styled post-modern artist (often, ironically, knee-deep in theory) who renounces the idea of Art, at the same time that s/he renounces medium specificity. Of course, citing this fact alone does not prove anything with regard to the question what is art? However, it should at least caution us in thinking, as many seem to today, that in flying the banner of pluralism against essentialism, one is on the side of the artists, against the impositions of philosophy. The question is more complicated, both historically and philosophically.

[116] "What one might mean by a principle (or a reason or an essence) that would not be a principle *of* plurality, but the plural itself as principle? And in what way must this properly belong to the essence of art?" (Nancy 1996, 2).

things themselves, but only appearances (or even illusions). A thing itself is precisely what does not change. It remains identical to itself, eternally one. That is why it earns the name of true reality or being. For most of the tradition, the true reality can only be that of the intelligible, of a mind "existing" beyond the body.[117] "Representation" is the idea of that which joins the sensible to the intelligible, as an image to its model. Nancy follows Heidegger (who himself follows a long tradition that stretches through Romanticism back to Kant) in turning to art as to that which undermines these oppositions.

That is to say, Nancy not only tries to think art beyond the oppositions of the one and the many, being and beings, *poiesis* and *techne*; to the extent that art deconstructs these oppositions, it serves as the basis for thinking the singular plural of being. That is to say, it is art that allows him to develop an ontology, beyond the dualities of metaphysics. Nancy develops this plural ontology by focusing on the artwork's articulation of the relation between sensible and intelligible sense.

Nancy positions his conception of art against what he calls the "philosophical subsumption of art," which entails a reduction of its plurality to a generic essence. *Poiesis* is the name of this essence, and *techne*, that of the non-essential plurality, not

[117] Here I defer to Sallis' (Heideggerian) summary of the "classical philosophical purview." "Within the classical philosophical purview, things that come to pass (sensible things, as they come to be called) are incapable of sustaining an identity with themselves; they are always becoming other than themselves and thus cannot be things themselves... In the Platonic texts this propriety is identified as the look that shows itself in and through things that come to pass, the look that does not itself come to pass but remains identical with itself. Because it is ever self-same… such a look, an *eidos*, is a thing itself" (Sallis 2000, 99). Sallis then adds, "if, now enforcing the limit, now turning to the sensible, one would redetermine, within this limit, what constitutes a thing proper, then it will be imperative to reopen the question of the self-identity of sensible things" (Sallis 2000, 100). The question concerning the self-identity of sensible things, inspired by Nietzsche's turn to the sensible, is very much at the heart of Nancy's writing as well.

only for Heidegger, but for most of post-Kantian philosophy of art. Nancy argues that the privileging of *poiesis* betrays a privileging of the Idea, or of *logos*, over the sensible. In this way, the Romantic and Heideggerian discourses of art remain within the dualist schema of metaphysics, even if they attempt to break free of it. Nancy also positions what he understands as art against "ordinary sense perception," which, he argues, subjugates the senses to utilitarian significations or representations. It is as if both ordinary perception and the philosophy of art were guilty of a similar gesture: the gesture of representation, which reduces the plurality of sense experience to ready-made concepts. What is confusing here, and borders on contradiction, is that, for Nancy, art, in its non-instrumental essence, is *techne* or technique. Thus the very term (*techne*) which the Romantic/Heideggerian tradition that Nancy is indebted to labeled as an instrumental form of representation, and against which it championed *poiesis*, becomes, for Nancy, the name of art (the "technique of art"). I want to emphasise that despite this critical reversal, Nancy does not simply abandon the notion of *poiesis*, even if some of his formulations would suggest that. For Nancy, it is still a matter of distinguishing (though not simply opposing) art from the instrumental, dualist schema of representation; and thus of understanding *techne* in terms of *poiesis*. It is for this reason, I will suggest, that Nancy remains committed to an ontology of art.

Nancy begins with the suggestion that the plurality of the arts derives from that of the senses. This is because, for Nancy, art is of the sensible. "Art in general cannot not touch…" (Nancy 1996, 11). Nancy does not prove this. But presumably it is a historical

fact that the arts have always involved sensible presentation (it is easier to imagine a philosophy or a mathematics without sensible presentation than an art), with particular attention to the way material qualities affect the senses. This does not imply that art has not been concerned with ideas or meanings, but that in art the sensuous manner in which ideas are presented is of utmost importance for the very "sense" of the idea. Thus, for Nancy, as for much of post-Kantian philosophy of art, art is the sensible presentation of the Idea, but his emphasis is on the sensible, and specifically on its essential plurality.[118]

The identification of the plurality of the senses and that of the arts is not straight forward, not only because it is not easy to map all the arts onto the individual senses. The main reason for the difficulty is that art is not imitative, and it does not simply mirror "natural" sense-perception (if there is such a thing). Moreover, ordinary sense-perception, as Nancy describes it, is already a "doing." Sensing transforms its object and is transformed by it, and the different senses are transformed in relation to one another. The senses are operations and techniques (if not arts) that form, un-form and re-form, "synesthetic" connections.[119] Art redoubles this operation of the senses, but it is necessary to distinguish the two types of operations, the two types of "synesthesia."

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[118] Although it has its roots in Kant (as I suggested earlier), the definition of art as the sensible presentation of the Idea derives from Hegel. Hegel is also the one that suggests that the plurality of the arts can de deduced from that of the senses (even though, unlike Nancy, he later rejects the possibility). Hegel. G.W.F. *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*. Translated by T.M. Knox. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

For Nancy, Hegel is an important interlocutor in this essay, and in his reflections on art more generally. However, while we cannot avoid touching on it, an analysis of their relationship is beyond the purview of this paper.

[119] Nancy goes as far to suggests that perhaps the very division between the senses is "but the result of an "artistic" operation", that is, because it is not simply (naturally) given (Nancy 1996, 10).

The distinction is between the "living integration of the senses," which always constitutes a "signifying and useful perception," and the artistic dis-location of the senses, which, breaking with purposiveness and signification, reveals a more "original unity" of the senses; between regular (ordered) and dislocated synesthesia (Nancy 1996, 23). This is not a simple opposition, because, Nancy argues, art "touches on the sense of touch itself" (Nancy 1996, 18). It reveals what a sense is, or what it means to sense in the first place.

The problem of sense forms a central motif in Nancy's work as a whole. Sense, for Nancy, is an *aporia* (an irresolvable paradox) marked already by the co-presence of the two heterogeneous senses of the word. Leaving aside the intelligible "sense" for now (we will come back to it), sensible sense is already *aporetic*. It is already in itself duplicitous. To sense something is, at the same time, to sense oneself sensing. There is, in every sensation, an intertwining of heterogeneous moments, the "subjective" and the "objective," the sensing and the sensed. This simple fact, which Nancy, like a phenomenologist, invites us to experience for ourselves (for example, by "touching ourselves") has startling implications for philosophy.[120] For Nancy, the experience of

[120] In his thoery of sense, Nancy appropriates Maurice Merleau-Ponty's famous analyses of sensation, most notably (for Nancy) in *The Visible and the Invisible*, especially the last chapter, "The Intertwining – The Chiasm." Merleau-Ponty privileges the experience of self-touching (*le touché/touchant*) as that which provides the prototype of sensation in general. The experience is that of touching one's own hand while it is touching something else. When I sense myself touching, writes Merleau-Ponty, the very sense of self is externalized as a tangible ob-ject. It becomes accessible from the outside. But it remains my hand, still accessible from the inside, as my own sense of touching. It is both active and passive, touching and touched (Merleau-Ponty 1968, 133-134). Vision, and all of the other senses, reveals the same paradox, the same "chiasmus."

For Merleau-Ponty, the experience testifies to the fact that our senses give us access to things *from within*. It shows that we are part of the tangible world, and that the world is not simply opposed to us, but touches us from within. We would not have access to things if we did not thus always already inhabit them internally (Merleau-Ponty 1968, 133). Merleau-Ponty opposes the chiasmus of sense to the

touch implies that there is no such thing as a pure object, a purely apprehended thing, which could be separated from the ("subjective") activity that apprehends it. Conversely, it implies that there can be no pure subject, no pure inner sense of subjectivity, which does not invert itself (inside-out, so to speak) into an object. At least at the level of the sensibility, there can be no pure interiority, no presence of self to self, and thus no autonomous subject, because the self can only sense its own activity – passively – as something sensed. The analysis of sense, grounded in the experience of touch, reveals that each sense or each thing that is sensed (subject or object) does not exist in isolation. Though heterogeneous, the one is intertwined with the other. Each sensing and each sensed, therefore, exists in relation to an exteriority, an otherness, that it can neither assimilate nor exclude.[121] Nancy writes,

> "touch itself – inasmuch as it is a sense and consequently inasmuch as it feels itself feeling, or more than that, inasmuch as it *feels itself feeling itself*, since it only touches by touching also itself, touched by what it touches *and* because it touches – touch presents the proper moment of sensuous exteriority; it presents it *as such and as sensuous*.

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representational schema, which governs metaphysics and contemporary science, as a more original structure of existence. The difference between Merleau-Ponty and Nancy would require a study of its own. But it can perhaps be said that Merleau-Ponty emphasises the connection (continuity or unity) between the touching and the touched, whereas Nancy emphasises "the interruption." Nonetheless, their proximity is great.
Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. 1968. *The Visible and the Invisible*. Translated by Alphonso Lingis. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

[121] In the collection *A Finite Thinking*, Nancy argues that traditional metaphysics can be defined by the intention to resolve the *aporia* of sense, by grounding one sense of sense in the other, for example, by making the subject the ground of the object, or vice-versa.
Nancy, Jean-Luc. 2003. *A Finite Thinking*. Edited by Simon Sparks. Stanford University Press. 5.

> What makes for touch is "this interruption, which constitutes the touch of the *self-touching*, touch *as self-touching*"" (Nancy1996, 17).[122]

It is art that "touches on" the self-touching which is the "proper moment of sensuous exteriority." In ordinary perception, where we represent a thing in terms of the purpose or use that it has, we do not see the interruption at the heart of sense. Representation presupposes the integration, that is, the unity, of the sensing and the sensed. When we apprehend something as an object we do not see or remark the fact that we are seeing it at the same time that it is seen; in other words, we do not see the image (or the "imaging") but only the object to which it refers; just as we do not remark that we are uttering a word when we are uttering a word, but only focus on its significance. We do not see the duplicity – the gap – that separates each sensed thing from itself. Art interrupts this "living integration of the senses." It "un-works" the instrumental schema. It "touches on it… in the sense of shaking up, disturbing, destabilizing, or deconstructing" (Nancy 1996, 18). But this "interruption," this rupture in the texture of lived experience, introduced by a work of art, reveals what is already there, but concealed. It touches on touch itself, revealing what it means to sense as such. Art, in this sense, reveals the original essence of sensation. But it reveals it as what cannot be revealed, or what cannot be touched, except as an otherness that is always other to itself. Nonetheless, art touches on this hidden otherness, in a way that ordinary perception does not.

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[122] The quotation within the quotation here is taken from Derrida's "*Le toucher*: Touch/ To Touch Him." Derrida, Jacques. 1993. "*Le toucher*: Touch/ To Touch Him." Translated by Peggy Kamuf, *Paragraph* 16, no. 2. 127.

Nancy argues that philosophy also misses "the proper moment of sensuous exteriority," albeit somewhat differently. For example, while Hegel recognizes the moment of sensuous exteriority as essential to art; that is, while he recognizes that art divides itself into a plurality of different *senses* or arts (which are, moreover, different historical senses); he nonetheless thinks that there is an essence of art that transcends these material (historical) differences. The essence is the Idea, the sense of human history as such, the sensible presentation of which is the *end* of art. For Hegel (as Nancy reads him) the Idea contains the unity of the sensing and the sensed, and of all the different senses and the different arts. There is, in other words, an interiority, a unity of spirit, within sensuous exteriority. For Hegel, the Idea must divide itself in order to manifest itself in the material realm, but it *maintains itself* within this division. The name Hegel gives to the operation which realizes an interiority within exteriority, and which Nancy condemns as both a theoretical impossibility and a violent imposition, is (of course) "*Aufhebung*" (usually translated as "sublation").[123] While the philosophical operation is different from that of ordinary perception, they are ultimately quite similar. Both elide the "interruption" of touch, in favour of a more unified representation of the world.

[123] For Hegel, since the end (or purpose) of art is the presentation of the Idea, art must, as Nancy puts it, "dissolve and sublate its own end in the element of thought" (Nancy 1996, 9). Hegel argues that art has – and should have – come to an end, in the sense that, for us moderns, it can no longer serve as the means for the presentation of the Idea. It is to be transcended by philosophy, understood as an embodied ethics. It is as if we have collectively realized that since it is the Idea that is at stake, it is better served by philosophy. This argument about the "end" of art is of course much more complex. Suffice to say, both Heidegger and Nancy, in constant dialogue with Hegel, want to avoid such a negation of art, which implies a transcendence of sensuous difference in favour of intelligible unity.

However, Nancy's critique is complicated by the fact that "self-touching" is not simply sensuous exteriority. If it were, then the touching and the touched would reconstitute the subject/object dichotomy. That is, if the terms of the relation were simply isolated and opposed, dis-posed as parts external to one another, then each one would be an object identical to itself. Each would thus be determined in accordance with the principle of identity, and not of difference. Opposition, simple sensuous exteriority, is the correlate (the flip-side) of the metaphysical notion of the one, in other words, of pure and simple interiority. Nancy is well aware of this. His paradox of sense avoids the twin poles of the dialectic.[124] The paradox shows the *aporia* at the heart of this mutual referral of the one and the many. It is the deconstruction of the dialectic. The touching and the touched are not simply opposed, they are separate *and inextricable*. This means that there is an interiority of sensuous exteriority itself. There is a self-touching of touch itself, a self-sensing of sense itself, an "*in itself"* of sense.

It is not therefore a matter of simply opposing exteriority to interiority, or difference to identity, but of thinking the latter on the basis of the former. It is a matter of thinking difference (the difference of sensuous exteriority) in Heidegger's terms as that which *joins by separating*. In other words, a relation of difference, which implies the accord of heterogeneous senses, is privileged over the relation of identity, which implies the correspondence of opposites.

[124] With regard to Hegel's *Aesthetics*, Nancy writes, "the self-overcoming of art [its sublation] has as its absolute corollary and symmetry what one might call the induration of the arts in an irreducible material difference" (Nancy 1996, 9).

The identity implied in self-sensing is not that of a transcendent self-causing being, a being outside of relations. It is not beyond the division that makes each sensing pass into something sensed, which passes into a new sensing, and so on, *ad infinitum*, across the whole *infinitely plural* spectrum of the senses, and of the different senses of art. The in itself of sense is, rather, the identity that is implied in this very division, to the extent that passing outside of self, or becoming-other, requires a certain communication (perhaps something like "communication without communication"), that is, to the extent that plurality implies a community of being.

""Thing in itself," writes Nancy, "does not mean "thing grasped in an essence that has retreated to the farthest point, behind appearance," but *thing itself*, that is, still *right at* itself or *next to itself*. For a thing to have, potentially, "something" like an "interiority" or an "intimacy," it must still first be itself, and thus laid out [*disposée*] right at itself, very precisely. (One could say: superimposed on itself, and thus touching itself, near/far, *distanced in itself*)" (Nancy 1996, 19). The prepositions are used by Nancy to indicate the relationality of sensuous exteriority, (understood in terms of space and time: the gap and the interval) which is constitutive of any identity. However, there is an inversion implied here: the relationality is a division which *unites itself*, difference is a kind of thing itself, a difference in itself.

There is, accordingly, for Nancy, an intelligible sense of the sensuous sense. There is a transcendence of exteriority that is immanent to sensuous exteriority itself. This is why Nancy argues that art "touches on" "trans-immanence," and not on mere immanence, the immanence of sensuous plurality. Transcendence is another word for

the interiority of sensuous exteriority, for the self (*ipse*) of self-touching (Nancy 1996, 18).[125]

What then, according to Nancy, does art do? It "breaks down the living unity of perception or action" by isolating a certain sense, or even a certain quality of a certain sense: not, for example, a colour, but the nuance of a colour. Nancy gives the example of "a spot in the iris of a face painted by Rembrandt," citing Wittgenstein, who writes that he cannot imagine someone pointing to it and saying "the wall in my room should be painted this colour" (Nancy 1996, 20).[126] The sensible quality, the "in itself" or "right at itself" of sense, is irreducibly singular. Each sense is heterogeneous to every other, and cannot be reproduced or represented in terms of a general category (Nancy 1996, 20-22). Art, Nancy argues, is the technique that isolates and reveals this "in itself" of sense: the nuance, the difference, or the detail (art is a "technique of the detail" or "detail of technique").

However, in its very difference, in its very discreteness or disparateness, a sensation testifies to the fact that it exists in relation to something else, that it is a co-existence. A colour, understood as a locality, or made visible, through art, as local and only local, exists in a place and therefore next to and beside other places (Nancy 1996,

[125] In Nancy's thinking, immanence and transcendence become indistinguishable concepts. Thus we could say that immanence is the in itself of the being that gathers the plurality into a unity, and transcendence is the exteriority of each being to the other (which would be the opposite of how I had just formulated it). This is not a contradiction. It is the paradox of sense.

[126] "There is not color "in general," there is not even red "in general." As Wittgenstein says: "To be able generally to name a colour, is not the same as being able to copy it exactly. I can perhaps say 'There I see a reddish place' and yet I can't mix a colour that I recognize as being exactly the same…"" (Nancy 1996, 20).

20-21). It coexists with a plurality of other places, colours and sensations, which surround and permeate it, like waves washing over a stone. Therefore, each locality, writes Nancy, is “infinitely divisible,” as it “combines heterogeneous sensuous values” within itself (Nancy 1996, 21). In revealing the singularity of a sense, a work of art reveals its intrinsic plurality, at the same time.

Let us consider an example that Nancy does not give in this particular context, but which is consistent with his argument and with his writings on art generally. When, within a painting, an image separates itself from that of which it is the image, foregrounding itself as *only* an image, obscuring the thing from which it *draws*; it thereby reveals the latter as its own hidden backside, as an otherness that haunts it – obscuring it in turn – from within. In other words, the separation makes visible the gap, not simply as an opposition, but as the intertwining of heterogeneous values, the clear and the obscure, which simultaneously reveal and conceal, obtrude and make room for, one another. The technique of the detail, in this sense, is that of the chiasmus. Art dis-locates the “living unity of the senses,” which is defined in reference to a presumed common object, in order to reveal a more original communion of the seer and the seen, the sensing and the sensed, understood as irreducibly different.

Now, because each sensation is intrinsically plural, because it communicates, from within, with a variety of others, Nancy argues that each one opens onto the world as a whole. Each one communicates with all of the others. The whole, understood in this *sense*, is not given above the particular senses (which are therefore not simply parts of a whole). But neither is it reducible to any one or series of them. It is that which emerges,

as an inexhaustible totality, perpetually made and unmade, from within their intertwining.[127]

The artistic example given of this dis-located synesthesia, whereby each sense communicates with all of the others, from within its particular locale, is Bacon's *Corridas*, as described by Deleuze, who himself draws on Merleau-Ponty and Henri Maldiney. In the painting, Deleuze writes, "one hears the hooves of the animals [other examples follow]…[128] It is therefore the painter's task to *make one see* a kind of original

[127] Here again it is Merleau-Ponty that informs Nancy's analyses. In his phenomenological description of sense experience, Merleau-Ponty argues that each of the senses constitutes a field that, while heterogeneous, communicates with all of the others. Merleau-Ponty argues against the empiricists, who, arguing against the intellectualist (or idealist) supposition of a universal homogeneous space containing all sensations, reduce sensations to disparate, private domains. Conceding that the senses are not homogeneous, he argues that each sense nonetheless constitutes a certain field, in the sense that each takes place as a contact or co-existence of the sentient and the sensible. A sensation is not simply an interior subjective experience, not because it is determined in reference to a transcendent object (or an abstract space), but because to sense is to engage with the world and to exist in it. Moreover, insofar as each sense touches on the object, and therewith on the world in which the object is situated, then each sense senses all of the others. When we see an object in space, we also see its hardness or softness, just as we see the warmth or coldness of a colour, and even visualize (however schematically) the space of the interval traversed by a melody. This kind of synesthesia, writes Merleau-Ponty, "is the rule" (Merleau-Ponty 2002, 266). It shows that each of the senses can separate itself out and take possession of all the others. This fact of synesthesia also proves that each sense is in itself inter-sensory. "Thus the unity and the diversity of the senses are truths of the same order… It is neither contradictory nor impossible that each sense should constitute a small world within a larger one, and it is even in virtue of its peculiarity that it is necessary to the whole and opens upon the whole" (Merleau-Ponty 2002, 256-257).
Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. 2002. "Sense Experience." In *Phenomenology of Perception*, translated by Colin Smith, 240-282. London and New York: Routledge Classics.

Nancy also follows Merleau-Ponty in formulating the argument in Kantian terms: if the plurality of the disparate *particular* senses is "the empirical," and their unity "the transcendental;" then "here the empirical is the transcendental" (Nancy 1996, 20). This is what Kant was close to and would have recognized had he not subordinated (in Merleau-Ponty's words) the transcendental Aesthetic to the transcendental Analytic, or (in Heidegger's words) had he not shied away from the idea of the originality of the imagination. Nancy does want to distinguish himself from Merleau-Ponty, arguing that what is at stake for him is a dis-located synesthesia, and not the latter's "original unity of the senses." However, since he does not elaborate, it is hard to say what exactly separates the two thinkers.

[128] The other examples are worth recalling: "in the 1976 triptych, we touch the quivering of the bird plunging into the place where the head should be; and each time meat is represented, we touch it, smell it, eat it, weigh it, as in Soutine's work; and the portrait of Isabel Rawsthorne causes a head to appear to which ovals and traits have been added in order to widen the eyes, flair the nostrils, lengthen the mouth, and mobilize the skin in a common exercise of all the organs at once."
Deleuze, Gilles. 2005. Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation. Translated by Daniel W. Smith. New York: Continuum.

unity of the senses and to cause a multi-sensible Figure to appear visually" (cited in: Nancy 1996, 23). Deleuze writes that this is only possible if "the sensation of any particular domain… is directly plugged into a vital power that exceeds all domains and traverses them. This power is Rhythm."

For Nancy, the synesthetic communication, which takes place within a work of art, implies the possibility of the communication of different works, and potentially of all art. Just as each sensation, each work sets off "in Baudelaire's terms, a *response* from one touch to another" (Nancy 1996, 23).[129] This communication, or this "co-respondence," "is neither a relation of external homology nor an internal osmosis, but what might be described, with the etymology of *re-spondere*, as a pledge, a promise given in response to a demand… the different touchings promise each other the communication of their interruptions; each brings about a touch on the difference of the other (of an other or several others, and virtually of all others, but of a totality without totalization)" (Nancy 1996, 23). In other words, it is not a question of one work of art serving as a model or ground for the others. There is no origin to which the plurality of the arts could be referred. If one work can serve as the ground of the other, it is only insofar as the latter becomes a ground for the former, originally re-constituting it, at the same time, in accordance with the principle of reversibility that characterises the relation between the sensing and the sensed. Thus if each work recalls and promises

[129] Nancy is referring to Baudelaire's poem "*Correspondances*," from *Les Fleurs du Mal*. In the poem, Baudelaire celebrates the "transport of the spirit and the senses," whereby "perfumes, colours, and sounds respond to one another" ("*se répondent*"). For Baudelaire, this experience touches on the sacred core of nature, which art alone brings to light.
Baudelaire. Charles. 1972. *Les Fleurs du Mal*. Paris: Gallimard. 40.

itself to an other ("and virtually to all the others") it does so across an interval, which allows for each one to emerge as an original trans-position.

For Nancy, there is no unity of art in the sense of a transcendent essence. However, all works of art communicate (at least virtually) because they open onto the inexhaustible "sense of the world." They open onto (and open) this sense of the world as a whole by way of the gap that separates each one from the other.[130] Yet this sense of the world is nothing other than the multiplicity of works, each one opening towards the others from within its discrete domain. Each particular work opens to the whole by virtue of its "local" singularity, which implies a multiplicity of surrounding spaces, spaces that permeate it, like waves washing over a wreck. The unity or essence of art is simply this permeation, this to and fro, this trans-position, which takes place in and through the interval that separates each work, or each sensation, from all of the others.[131] In this sense, the sense of the world as a whole is immanent to the sensible plurality.

The idea of rhythm that Nancy appropriates from Deleuze, and which is essential for fully grasping his idea of art, in the ontological unity of its plurality, derives from the

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[130] "Art disengages the senses from signification, or rather, it disengages the world from signification, and that is what we call "the senses" when we give to the (sensible, sensuous) senses the sense of being external to signification. But it is what one might just as correctly name the "sense of the world"" (Nancy 1996, 22).

[131] Nancy does not really give us a concrete example that would show how this virtual communication between works of art could be actualized. But, recalling the example of Bacon, we can think of the "co-respondences" that take place between works organized into series, particularly the triptychs. More generally, we can consider the resonances that traverse Bacon's oeuvre as a whole. More generally still, we can imagine the connections that can be brought to light between Bacon's oeuvre and that of other artists, connections that can be revealed by other artists still, or by writers commenting on their works (for example, the connections Deleuze reveals between Bacon and Cezanne). But these examples would need to be developed. As they stand, Nancy's claims are general philosophical/ontological claims about the way in which works of art, worthy of the name, touch on the inexhaustible sense of the world, and thereby "set off" potentially infinite associations.

work of Henri Maldiney.[132] In music, rhythm is a connection formed across an interval. Rhythm takes place in-between the beat that has past and the one that is now emerging. It creates a correspondence, or a contemporaneity, between what is no longer, what is present, and what is yet to be, where these moments are not juxtaposed like inert blocs, but flow and merge, permeate, prolong and fall back into, one another. Maldiney elaborates an "existential" conception of rhythm, which he generalizes as a principle of art. His idea of rhythm is based on Heidegger's understanding of the relation between self and world, or man and being, which we touched on in the previous section;[133] and on Merleau-Ponty's analyses of sensation. We cannot elaborate on this idea of rhythm here, primarily because Nancy himself does not do so. It is based on an idea of temporality, which is essential for understanding Nancy's idea of sense. That is to say, while Nancy speaks of sense mainly in spatial terms (sense is a locality that exists in relation to other localities, localities that communicate across a border that simultaneously joins and separates) the spatiality of sense is not that of a series of inert blocs. The relation between the sensing and the sensed, and between the different senses, is that of a perpetual to and fro, a movement of trans-position, whereby each one transforms and is transformed by the other. In Heidegger's terms, the relation between man and being is to be understood as an event, a presencing, whereby each at once reveals and conceals, opens and closes to, the other. It is through a conception of time, time as rhythm, albeit only schematically outlined, that Nancy is able to

[132] Maldiney, Henri. 2013. "*L'esthétique des rythmes*." In *Regard, Parole, Espace*. Paris: Les Editions Du Cerf.

[133] "Rhythm," writes Deleuze, citing Maldiney, and sounding very Heideggerian, "is diastolic-systolic: the world that makes me by closing itself down on me, the self that opens itself to the world, and opens up the world" (Deleuze 2005, 42-43).

understand the unity of the senses, and the unity of the plurality of the arts. For time, understood rhythmically, is that which divides into a plurality of moments, and holds this plurality together, at once making the present pass, retaining and prolonging it into the future.

> "Rhythm," writes Nancy, "is the beat of appearing insofar as appearing consists simultaneously and indissociably in the movement of coming and going of forms or presence in general... It is… the mobility that raises them up as such – and that raises them up less in relation to a "ground" (perhaps there is no ground for all these figures, no other "ground" than their differences) than it raises some in relation to others, all of them being thus grounds or figures for one another. Perhaps the "ground" is only the *mimesis*/*methexis* according to which the arts or the senses of the arts endlessly meta-phorize each other. Contagion and transport of the Muses. (Nancy 1996, 24).[134]

However, Nancy is keen to distinguish his ontological idea of art from what he calls the "philosophical subsumption" of art, which, he argues, also takes place in

[134] The Deleuze passage cited by Nancy continues: "This power is Rhythm… which is more profound than vision, hearing, etc… [It] appears as music when it invests the auditory level, as painting when it invests the visual level…" (cited in, Nancy 1996, 23-24). Citing these passages, Nancy critiques what he calls "Deleuze's ""essentialist" formula," arguing that "rhythm does not *appear*; it is the beat of appearing insofar as appearing consists simultaneously and indissociably in the movement of coming and going of forms or presence in general, and in the heterogeneity that spaces out sensitive or sensuous plurality" (Nancy 1996, 24). This critique seems facile. To begin with, for both Deleuze and Nancy, who follow Heidegger and Maldiney, rhythm is the inter-play of revealing/concealing. Moreover, it is hard to see how Nancy's own conception of rhythm is not "essentialist," since, as for Deleuze, it serves as the basis of his idea of the unity of all the senses and of all the arts.

Heidegger. As I mentioned earlier, the philosophical subsumption is based on an idea of *poiesis*, which is defined in opposition to *techne*. Perhaps surprisingly, Nancy identifies *techne* with the sensuous, and *poiesis* with the intelligible. I say "surprisingly" because in the Romantic tradition art has been identified with the sensible, and celebrated against instrumental forms of activity. However, by tracing the history of the division, Nancy tries to show that *poiesis*, even when identified with the sensible, is a metaphysical notion. According to a long tradition that goes back to Plato, *poiesis* is understood as something like an "end in itself," and as that which produces itself. This is why it is often understood as the product of genius or of a spontaneous nature. *Techne*, on the other hand, is understood as that which is produced heteronomously, by way of something else, and as a means that has its end outside itself. The technician's work and "his" materials serve an extrinsic purpose, which means that his work is always derivative, rather than original and free.[135] The division is between "the product and the production… the finite operation and the infinite operation" (Nancy 1996, 6). However, the finite product here is *the one* that, having its end and origin within itself, remains eternally self-same; and the infinite refers to the ever-changing aspect of the sensible that, having its origin and end outside itself, is never a thing (identical to) itself. Within the history of metaphysics, from Plato to Heidegger, *poiesis* is thus identified with the intelligible realm, or with the intelligible of the sensible. This is why, more than all the other arts, poetry is said to have an essential proximity to philosophy (for Heidegger the

[135] "Technique is a – perhaps infinite – space and delay between the producer and the produced, and thus between the producer and him or herself. It is production in an exteriority to self and in the discreteness of its operations and its objects" (Nancy 1996, 25).

thinker is almost a poet, and vice-versa). This identification is also due to the fact that poetry is an art of language, and language (*logos*), according to the tradition, is what gives us access to the universal. Accordingly, Heidegger argues that poetry is the essence of all the arts (Heidegger 2013, 70-72). The essence is the bringing into presence that every artwork performs, but poetry alone can *say* this essence. It thereby reveals the intelligible of the sensible, the one of the many, or, in Heidegger's terms, the Being of beings.

Nancy identifies art with *techne* or technique because he wants to emphasize that it is sensuous, and as such a multiplicity. However, as we have seen, Nancy's own plural *ontology* cannot avoid the moment of transcendence from the many to the one, from the arts to Art. He does not want to avoid it because the interruption of touch implies a self-touching, or an in itself of touch. It is not therefore a matter of simply opposing *techne*, as the sensuous plurality of the arts, to *poiesis*, as the unity or essence of art. Without "the one" there would be no manifold. There would be merely a series of self-identical objects, and not what Nancy calls "the transport of the Muses," whereby *all* of the arts endlessly metamorphose into one another (Nancy 1996, 24). Nancy writes,

> "The permanent subsumption of the arts under "poetry," and the no less permanent and irreducible face-to-face of "poetry" and "philosophy," are effects of this demand to sense sense sensing (itself). Thus the poetic subsumption is not in vain, and it indicates clearly the unique and unitary place of "art." But it does not fill this

> place with a substance or a subject (that is, with an infinite relation to self, with an absolute sensing-itself) except insofar as it interprets "art" in the philosophical mode, that is, as reunion *without exteriority* of the intelligible and the sensuous. In other words: as a touching-itself that would reabsorb into itself the moment of interruption (Nancy 1996, 29).[136]

Nancy understands poetry as the in-between of the one and the many, in terms of what he calls (drawing on Merleau-Ponty again) the chiasmus of intelligible and sensuous sense (Nancy 1996, 28). Poetry redoubles the *aporia* of (sensible) sense in the register of the intelligible; or, rather, it reveals the *aporia* that lies in-between the two senses of sense. The paradox of self-touching implies that touch touches on the un-touchable (or that sense senses the insensible). Self-touching, which is always the touching of the other within, touches that which is neither in the subject nor in the object, which is neither this nor that; and which, therefore, transcends empirical being. By thus touching itself, by thus transcending itself, touch touches on the Idea, or *logos*. However, poetry alone, as the art of language, can realize this immanent transcendence of sense, in its proper intelligible register. Nonetheless, the transcendental moment is

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[136] In *Multiple Arts, The Muses 2*, Nancy clarifies the confusion that led some readers to think that he is simply rejecting the Romantic Heideggerian *poiesis*, understood as the essential sense of art (and as the essential sense of sense itself). In the second chapter of the book, "Taking Account of Poetry," Nancy is asked the following question (it is not indicated by whom the question is posed): "the first chapter of *The Muses* acknowledges as a given the post-Romantic dispersion of the arts. What happened to the poetic absolute that was once synonymous with the literary absolute?" Nancy responds, "is it the case that I "acknowledge as a given the post-Romantic dispersion of the arts?" I must have expressed myself badly…" In the opening chapter of the book, entitled "Making Poetry," Nancy writes, "if we understand, or in one way or another, accede to a dawning of sense, we do so poetically."
Nancy, Jean-Luc. 2006. *Multiple Arts, The Muses 2*. Translated by Simon Sparks. Stanford: Stanford University Press. 3-10.

nothing outside of the empirical division. The word must remain flesh. It is immanent to the spatio-temporal dis-position that constitutes each particular being as empirical (as *this* being, *this* touch, *this* sensation). Because it presents the *logos* in sensuous form, poetry reveals the inner unity of the two heterogeneous senses of sense. It thereby reveals that on which all the other arts touch, in other words, the unity of all the different techniques. However, when *poiesis* is posited as the transcendence of *techne*, that is, as a unity that lies over and above the plurality of the arts, the *aporia* is resolved. The intelligible falls on one side, the sensible on the other, and the one becomes the ground of the other. It is this kind of metaphysical moment that Nancy wants to avoid or deconstruct.[137]

If *techne*, according to the tradition (as Nancy recounts it) is a work that has its origin outside itself, and *poiesis* is *auto-poiesis*, a spontaneous, self-creating work, then Nancy allows us to think beyond this opposition. A work of art, for Nancy, always has a relation to something that precedes it. However, it is not simply caused by something other, nor does it serve some extrinsic end, any more than it is simply self-causing, or an end in itself. Neither *techne* nor *poiesis*, the work of art lacks an origin. Nancy defines art as the exposition of the abyss or lack of origin, or rather as the exposition of an *original*

[137] Here is another way in which Nancy articulates the chiasmus of the two senses of sense, which poetry brings to light in an exemplary manner, "(sensuous) sense senses only if it is oriented to an object and valorizes it in a meaningful, informative, or operational context [in other words, if it sees beyond the merely empirical quality of the thing, and grasps its meaning]; (intelligible) sense makes sense only if it is, as one says, "perceived" [in the words of William Carlos Williams, "no ideas but in things"]" (Nancy 1996, 28). If traditionally the sensible is defined by passivity or receptivity, and the intelligible by activity, then the paradox of sense implies an activity within receptivity. "(Sensuous) sense makes (intelligible) sense; it is indeed nothing but that, the intellection of its receptivity as such. (Intelligible) sense is sensed/senses itself; it is indeed nothing but that, the receptivity of its intelligibility" (Nancy 1996, 28). The idea that the sensibility is a receptivity that involves activity, and is thereby immanently connected to the understanding, is, as we have seen earlier, at the basis of Heidegger's reading of Kant.
Williams, William Carlos. 1992. Paterson. New York: New Directions Books. 6.

withdrawal of the ground (which he names, in Heideggerian, "*Grundlosigkeit* or *Abgründigkeit*") (Nancy 1996, 26). Art is a "technique of the ground," that is to say, a technique of letting the ground withdraw, *and thereby come-to-presence in its withdrawal*.

Now, the idea of the groundlessness of art could lend itself to being interpreted as a way of folding *poiesis* onto to *techne*, and Nancy does seem to emphasise the latter. Technique itself is the *mise-en-abyme* of the origin, whereby whatever appears as original turns out to be derived, which in turn presents itself as original, and so on, *ad infinitum*, according to the incessant inversion which turns sensing into sensed, and vice-versa.[138] One could argue that for Nancy the only unity, the only *poiesis*, is that which is implied in the dissemination that trans-poses each sense outside itself. However, this is the reading of Nancy that I would like to oppose. I do not think it is consistent with his text, even if at times he seems ambivalent about this central point. Here we should recall what Nancy states at the beginning of his essay, namely, that the aim is to think beyond not only the philosophical conception, but also the purely "technical" or "technological" concept of art. The latter is the one that refuses to ask the ontological question concerning the unity of the plurality of the arts (or simply "what is art?") (Nancy 1996, 2). Nancy is aware that these two opposite conceptions actually condition and sustain one another, and it is their opposition that he tries to deconstruct.[139]

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[138] "Technique is the obsolescence of the origin and the end" (Nancy 1996, 26).

[139] While Nancy does not, at least in this context, make the sort of argument regarding the overcoming of metaphysics that John Sallis makes, of which I gave an account in the introduction, his position is

The way out of the metaphysics of art *and* its technological negation (or, as Sallis would say, out of Plato *and* his cave) is to think art as a poetic-technics. Even if Nancy does not use this term, it is the best way of characterizing his idea of art. Poetic-technics defines the work as neither determined nor determining. It implies an originary non-origin, or a groundless ground (this is in fact the meaning of Heidegger's *Abgrund*). It is the lack of origin, within or without, that allows a work of art to spring – as if out of nothing.[140]

All of this makes apparent that Nancy's critique of the philosophical "subsumption" of art is made in view of re-conceiving (or rehabilitating) the Romantic/Heideggerian, philosophical/poetic notion of *poiesis* or *auto-poiesis*, even when he turns against that tradition. What Nancy objects to, in objecting to the privileging of *poiesis* over *techne*, is the reduction of art to an origin or an end, a Truth or a Sense, extrinsic to it. Nancy argues against the idea that a work of art is an end in itself, because the idea of an "end" still implies that the work is a means to an end, and it is this instrumentalizing of art that he wants to avoid. According to Nancy, we miss out

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consistent with that of Sallis. Sallis' argument, I would suggest, illuminates why Nancy is not content to leave us with mere *techne*, understood as a negation of *poiesis*. The *mise-en-abyme* of technology implies that each work, each singularity, is determined in reference to an extrinsic origin, even if that origin is itself determined in turn, *ad infinitum*, that is, even if that origin is lost. Thinking of sense or art in this way does not actually put an end to referring a work to an extrinsic origin, which is what Nancy wants to avoid. Technique is a notion that does not free itself from reference to a lost origin. I will return to this again in the conclusion, since it is Sallis' construal of the overcoming of metaphysics that helps me to frame my reading of Nancy's ontology of art in contrast to a certain post-modern idea of the deconstruction of art.

[140] Perhaps the best way to understand Nancy's idea of art is through the notion of creation *ex nihilo*. A notion of creation *ex nihilo*, which is to be understood in terms of creative temporality, is implied here. However, Nancy only explicitly refers to the "Judea-Christian idea of "creation"" in negative terms, arguing that it comes to fill in the abyss (Nancy 1996, 25). That is, a notion of creation, derived from theology, fills the abyss (the lack of origin) with a notion of the autonomous subject (the genius). On the other hand, in *Creation of the World, or Globalization,* specifically the chapter "Of Creation," Nancy elaborates a positive concept of creation *ex nihilo*, by deconstructing the Judea-Christian idea.
Nancy, Jean-Luc. 2007. "Of Creation," *Creation of the World, or Globalization*. Translated by Francois Raffoul and David Pettigrew. Albany: State University of New York Press.

on art when we relate to it in terms of preconceived representations. We should, rather, let it be, let it spring forth or come-to-presence of itself. Representing art (or being) in terms of an Idea is what Heidegger denounces as the modern technological "frame," which blinds us to the more original presencing that takes place through *poiesis*. But Nancy argues that Heidegger does not go far enough. Heidegger did not allow art to be art for its own sake,[141] because he used it as a vehicle for the revealing of his ontological concept of truth. While retaining the Heideggerian conception of *poiesis*, Nancy turns it upside down and against Heidegger himself.

However, Nancy is also not satisfied with mere aesthetics, or with art for art's sake.[142] For Nancy, art is also the vehicle of the revelation of an ontological sense, the "sense of the world." By freeing the work from reference, by letting it spring forth, we see "being-in-the-world in its very springing forth" (Nancy 1996, 18). In other words, in a work of art we see the origin and sense of the world as whole, an origin and a sense that is defined as a state of perpetual renewal.

Is it then the case that Nancy's critique of the philosophical "subsumption of the arts under "poetry"" is negligible with reference to Heidegger? The critique applies well to the Hegelian *Aufhebung* (though this too is rather quickly said, and would require a study of its own) insofar as Hegel privileges the Idea over the sensible, and philosophy over art. Heidegger does not privilege the Idea over the sensible, or Being over beings,

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[141] Nancy writes that "because art is "for the senses…" in a certain sense at least, there is only "art for art's sake" (Nancy 1996, 11).

[142] In his reflection on Kantian "aesthetics" (in "The Sublime Offering," included in the collection *A Finite Thinking*), Nancy writes that "there is no Kantian aesthetics," because Kant, and all serious reflection on art after Kant, interrogates in art something other than art or mere aesthetics (Nancy 2003, 213). For Nancy, this "other" is the other sense of sense, the intelligible sense.

and he does not privilege philosophy over art, at least not explicitly. In fact, the opposite is the case, so much so that some have criticized him for his reverence before the poets.[143] Nonetheless, Nancy's critique suggests that despite his valorization of art, Heidegger still understands it in metaphysical terms. According to Nancy, Heidegger can only privilege *poiesis* as that which *names* the essence of the arts by separating its "linguistic" intelligible aspect from the sensuous, that is, from the sonorous and rhythmic aspect that constitutes the technique of poetry. In this way, while Heidegger goes a long way in deconstructing the opposition between the intelligible and the sensible, upon which metaphysics is based, Nancy is perhaps not wrong to suggest that he does not fully break free from it.[144]

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[143] Alain Badiou begins his *Handbook of Inaesthetics* by contrasting Plato's "judgement of ostracism" against the arts to Heidegger's Romanticism. He writes, "at the other extreme, we find a pious devotion to art, a contrite prostration of the concept – regarded as a manifestation of technical nihilism – before the poetic word, which is alone in offering the world up to the latent Openness of its own distress" (Badiou 2005, 1).

Badiou, Alain. 2005. *Handbook of Inaesthetics*. Translated by Alberto Toscano. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

[144] However, as we saw earlier, for Nancy poetry is also privileged due to its in-between status. Poetry reveals the essence of art because it is both sonorous material exteriority *and* logos. Nonetheless, Nancy's point of emphasis is that this poetic logos remains sensible through and through.

In "Poetry's Promiscuous Plurality: On a Part of Jean-Luc Nancy's *The Muses*," William Watkin gives a detailed account of Nancy's idea of poetry, showing both its closeness to Hegel and Heidegger, and its subtle difference. Watkin argues that Nancy privileges poetry for the same reason that Hegel and Heidegger do (though he focuses more on Hegel). He writes, "if [for Nancy] poetry is meaningful in relation to thinking sense" this is not only because its sonorousness is always interrupted or negated by the element of logos; but also because this negation "always leaves a remnant or vestige, the so-called "Vestige of Art" (Watkin 2012, 203). In other words, poetry is ontologically privileged in thinking the singular plural of being, because it both transcends material plurality (its sonorousness) and remains immersed in it. This sounds a lot like Hegel, and is not far from Heidegger, as Watkin points out. However, Nancy's emphasis on the sensuousness of poetry makes a significant difference. He writes, "[for Nancy] poetic sensuous essence can only come to presence through its interruption by supersensuousness, not because the supersensuous explains or names the sensuous, as has traditionally been assumed to be the case, but because self-sensing sensuousness is defined as exteriority and excess only by its being interrupted" (Watkin 2012, 203). The point that "self-sensing sensuousness is defined as exteriority" "only by its being interrupted" by the intelligible is central to my argument. It is the idea that the sensible sense would not be defined as that which is immanently other to itself if it did not always already open onto a unity, that is, if it did not transcend itself to an intelligible sense. My insistence on the supersensuous in

What lends support to Nancy's critique is the fact that Heidegger is unwilling or unable to think from within the sensuous as such. Heidegger never developed a theory of sensation as such. He considered the term "sensation," like that of "the body" or "aesthetics," to be too closely linked with the objectivist empirical tradition. For Heidegger, such notions suggest a kind of biologism, or a biological determinism. They therefore remain within a dualist (Cartesian) framework. It is perhaps this fear of biologism, and the inability to think sensible sense differently, that prevents Heidegger from fully breaking free from a kind of idealist metaphysical discourse of art. It prevents him from thinking the nuance of a colour, the detail of a line, the quality of a texture, in its singular *sense*. It is therefore Nancy's mediation of Heidegger's thought through Merleau-Ponty's theory of sensation that sets him apart. With the help of Merleau-Ponty, Nancy grounds Heidegger's philosophy of art in the sensible, making it more concrete.

For Nancy, the sensuous, material aspect of a work of art is not an objective quality. It is, rather, its manner or form, in other words, its technique. The sensation, or the touch, that constitutes the singularity of a work, resides within its rhythmic composition. With his neglect of the sensuous, Heidegger at the same time neglects the formal/technical working (or un-working) of art. He neglects what Nancy calls the technique of art, or rather, the techniques of the arts; for insofar as technique is not

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Nancy, which is what makes for an ontology of art, is not a matter of privileging it over the sensible, as though sensuous exteriority had to be negated. It is a matter of showing that the supersensuous is a necessary moment of the sensuous itself. This is what poetry shows, and that is why it is privileged. Watkin, William. 2012. "Poetry's Promiscuous Plurality: On a Part of Jean-Luc Nancy's *The Muses.*" In Jean-Luc Nancy and Plural Thinking," edited by Peter Gratton and Marie-Eve Morin. New York: State University of New York Press.

understood in reference to an overarching principle, it is always plural. It is always the technique of each one, which implies a plurality of heterogeneous singularities. The plurality of heterogeneous singularities is an idea that Heidegger comes close to, but falls short of. Nancy carries it through.

Conclusion – The Originality of Art (something to aim for)

In her recent book on Nancy, Marie-Eve Morin reflects on what she calls Nancy's paradoxical discourse on art. She writes,

> "[For Nancy] Art (capital A) is the tenuous thread of translatability between the arts and between art works. Art is not before or above the arts, as their origin or organizing principle, it happens at the interstice between all of them… At the same time, Nancy's discourse on art as fragmentation remains paradoxical, in a way similar to his discourse on community, which named community only to say that it remains always absent and consists of the interruption of community… Here again, by naming the fragmentation of art, Nancy's discourse necessarily tends to totalize fragmentation and turn it into a unifying, transcendental principle: "the principle of Art is Fragmentation." (Morin 2012, 147)[145]

[145] Morin continues, "unless, of course, writing exscribes itself, unless organized writing gives way to a corpus" (Morin 2012, 147). For Morin, Nancy's idea of writing as ex-scribtion implies that his *theoretical* discourse of art is fragmented by the *practice* of writing, which never amounts to a philosophical system

In my essay I have explored this paradox, the paradox of Art and the arts, of a discourse that conceives art as a plurality of fragments, and yet continues to speak of it in terms of an essence or a principle. While Morin is troubled by the paradox, she does not think that it undermines, ultimately, the coherence of Nancy's discourse on art. Alison Ross, on the other hand, who I mentioned earlier, argues that Nancy's discourse "offers the outlines of a critique of art's exceptionalism," because it deconstructs the distinction between art and technology. This implies that Nancy does not follow through on his critique of Art, and is not consistent with himself, to the extent that he still speaks of art as the source of sense, contrasting it to derivative, instrumental "significations" or "representations." She moves to develop the "outline of a critique of art's exceptionalism," by pushing his thinking in that direction. What is at stake in the poiesis/techne distinction is the ontological idea of art. That is to say, at stake is the possibility of distinguishing what art is, originally or in essence, and thus of erecting it as a principle. For Ross, such an idea of art is incompatible with a genuinely pluralist discourse.

Although Ross' work is not in direct proximity to the post-modern art discourse of Rosalind Krauss, it does share some affinities with it. There is a shared concern (which is of course not without foundation) regarding the totalizing metaphysical tendencies of the Modern Romantic idea of art, an idea that Nancy both critiques and is invested in. The Modernist art discourse, defined by the opposition of art and technological

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(but a "corpus"). However, if the idea of ex-scribtion is the idea of art, of art as the writing of the fragment, then it is not clear to me how it helps to resolve the paradox. Is not this idea of writing itself (as exscribtion) the principle in question, the one that serves to organize and define the practice?

reproduction, can easily turn itself into a dogma, and thereby foreclose the possibility of diverse artistic creations. There is also a shared concern that privileging art serves to denigrate other, "everyday" forms of activity: the work of the many pales in comparison to that of the elite few. For Krauss and for Ross, in order to overcome this metaphysical violence, the very idea of art, that is, of originality or of the radically new, needs to be *levelled*.

However, there is another concern that both thinkers, and all of those who insist on pluralism *tout court*, seem to ignore. There is another side to the problem of metaphysics and its overcoming. As I have tried to show (with the help of John Sallis), the post-modern discourse, with which Ross' reading of Nancy is aligned, is defined by the negation of metaphysics. The problem with this is, firstly, that it leads to relativism, which is always a contradictory position. For example, Nancy argues that in erecting *poiesis* as the essence of the arts, above its technical plurality, Heideggger reduces art to a single idea. This, he suggests, is an instrumental gesture, which forecloses the possibility of a work revealing itself as itself and for itself. That is to say, and this is key to my reading, Nancy's critique of Heidegger's distinction itself relies on a similar distinction. Nancy's critique would not be possible without distinguishing "the technique of art" from instrumental representations. If we were to do away with this distinction, as Ross suggests we should, then the critique would have no ground to stand on. Instrumental habits and the opening of sense which Nancy invites us to see in a work of art would be equal, equally true or untrue, and the one could not be critiqued on the

basis of the other.[146] Secondly, this pluralist (relativist) discourse is in fact entirely conditioned by metaphysics. For it is predicated on the negation of the origin (of the real, the true, the being itself); that is to say, it is predicated on the idea – or the specter – of a lost origin.

What I have tried to show is that Nancy's discourse on art is not contradictory. It is paradoxical, but the paradox is necessary and "sensible." The paradox is that of sense, of its duplicitous logic. It is the paradoxical notion that the plurality of sensible sense implies an immanent unity, and thus an immanent transcendence to the intelligible sense. It is the paradox of the one and the many, the tension between which ought not to be resolved either way. In other words, according to the paradoxical logic of sense, pluralism implies an ontology. The plurality of the arts implies an essence of art, and not

[146] The post-modern discourse, or the relativist discourse of pluralism, would have to be classified as nihilistic, from Nancy's Heideggerian point of view. The question concerning technology, for both Heidegger and Nancy, is related to the problem of nihilism, as Nietzsche first formulated it, in his reflections on the death of god. Nancy often takes the Nietzschean death of god as a starting point for his thinking about the present. For example, in *The Sense of the World*, Nancy begins by characterizing our historical epoch as one in which traditional systems of meaning have been exhausted: the world no longer has any sense, because of the collapse of the metaphysical discourses of Truth, Reality, Being in itself, or even "Art," understood as some sort of absolute. Similarly, as I mentioned in the introduction, in *Being Singular Plural*, Nancy affirms that our society has become a society of the spectacle, and that there is no original sense of reality or "creative imagination" that could serve as the basis of an alternative to the spectacle. Technology, or what Nancy sometimes calls the "ecotechnics" of capital, is one of the main culprits behind this decline. However, Nancy's position on the modern loss of sense is very paradoxical (as was that of Nietzsche and Heidegger). On the one hand, he argues that we must affirm or go through nihilism, refusing any revival of metaphysics, even taking nihilism to its extreme. On the other hand, going through nihilism, confronting the abyss of sense, is to lead to a transformation, whereby the very absence of sense opens up the possibility of the creation of sense (the absence of intelligible sense leads to a praxis of sense-making from out of the sensible). For Nancy (as for Nietzsche and Heidegger) art plays a key role in this transformation. The point to emphasize here though, in relation to the postmodern discourse of pluralism, is that while nihilism needs to be endured, it also needs to be overcome. For Nancy, it is overcome through the (artistic) creation of new values or of a new meaning (in the emphatic sense of the word), and not through the relativizing negation of sense and value.
Nancy, Jean-Luc. *The Sense of the World*. Translated by Jeffrey S. Librett. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
Nietzsche, Friedrich. 1968. "Book One: European Nihilism," in *The Will to Power*. Translated by Walter Kaufman. 9-82.

simply a plurality without essence, as the discourse of postmodernity would have it. Technique as such is *poiesis*.

What distinguishes Nancy's discourse from metaphysics is that the essence of art, the ontology, is understood on the basis of a concept of difference. The central notion, which helps to explain Nancy's logic of sense, is that of a difference which joins by separating, a difference "in itself," that is, a difference that has an "itself," being the ground of its own identity. It is this notion of difference that allows us to understand how the plurality of singularities "co-respond" – as one – while remaining distinct.

In Kantian terms, which is where we started, difference in itself is the third term. It is the imagination, the relation, the in-between-ness, for and in itself. Difference is the relation in its priority with regard to the terms it relates. It is the relation in its autonomy, which is the autonomy of a heteronomy (a heterautonomy). That is to say, prior to representation, which conceptually determines an object as such and such, in accordance with the principle of identity, *there is* the intertwining of the sentient and the sensible, the seer and the seen. Prior to the subject/object dichotomy there is the spacing of the one in relation to the other. This spacing is to be understood rhythmically, as an event, as the turning – or the presencing – of the one toward the other. According to Nancy, this "originality," which precedes and makes possible representations or significations, in the ordinary sense of the term, is what the technique of art discloses.

An idea of art, however, is only an idea. It needs actual works to realize it. Theory itself cannot make art. But it can kill it. If one is led to think that there is no such thing as

an originary experience, an experience of the world, as Nancy puts it, “in its very springing forth,” then one will not even aim for it. How many would be artists were nipped in the bud after reading Krauss’ (hugely influential) book? How many turned away from the pursuit of originality (not as a superficial concern for individual difference, but as a search for an original encounter with the being of the world) by the postmodern discourse that condemned the pursuit as a myth, because of that discourse’s inability to think beyond representation? By thinking through, with the help of Nancy, the possibility of an originary disclosure of the world, I hope to reignite an interest in art as the practice of revealing the world in its perpetual un-expected birth, as a practice of the radically new. Such a “proposition” could not be further from a conceptual dogma of art.

Project Three:
Time and the Cinema

Introduction

The films that form the object of this study were chosen in relation to a question concerning the cinema's relation to time. Time has been a major preoccupation for modern art. Situationist interventions, action painting, performance art, and recently, the ever more ephemeral installations (to name just a few examples), have all, in different ways, been preoccupied with time, and with the creation of events. For many of these artistic movements the event, in its opening up of the present to an unpredictable future, is synonymous with the creative act itself. Time has also been a major preoccupation for modern philosophy. Bergson, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Deleuze (to name just a few canonical figures) have all labored at thinking creativity – as the principle feature of being – in terms of a concept of time. Drawing on the concepts of time developed within this philosophical tradition, the project sets out to analyse the cinema as a site for the production of creative temporalities. The guiding hypothesis is that the cinema is not a medium which mechanically reproduces an exact likeness of the real; rather, at its best, it creates events that open the past and the present to the future.

My question and my hypothesis have been developed with the help of precursors, who have asked similar questions. The function of this introduction is to give an account of the work on which I have drawn, and thereby provide a broader context, an outline of the field, within which my work is situated. Perhaps the most important

reference, not only for myself but for anyone interested in the question of cinema and time, is the work of Gilles Deleuze. In contrast to traditional "Film Theory," which, drawing on structural linguistics, approaches the cinema as though it were a language; and in contrast to "the new formalism" (initiated by David Bordwell), a reactionary movement against Film Theory, which refuses to think about the cinema in any serious philosophical manner; Deleuze approaches the cinema from the standpoint of a philosophical reflection on time initiated by the philosophy of Henri Bergson.[147] Deleuze takes Bergson's question, regarding whether the cinema is capable of constituting

[147] Deleuze, Gilles. 1986. *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*. Translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
Deleuze, Gilles. 1989. *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*. Translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

While in the early history of cinema, the medium's relation to movement and time was much discussed, classical Film Theory, that hybrid of Marxism, Semiotics, and Psychoanalysis, shifted the focus towards the question of language. Although Film Theory was not a unified group or system, the idea that the cinema is a language is one of its shared presuppositions. Film Theory begins by considering the basic unit of cinema, the image or shot, as an utterance, which it understands in terms of structural linguistics as a signifier. It considers the relations between images, relations which determine the sense of the utterance in the first place, in terms of syntagmatic and paradigmatic linguistic structures. These structures function as the underlying codes or models that the cinema mobilizes every time it tries to make images signify something. Film theorists are led to this point of view largely because of the historical fact that, following the model of Hollywood, the cinema became narrative. However, Deleuze claims that "at the very point that the image is replaced by an utterance, the image is given a false appearance, and its most authentically visible characteristic, movement, is taken away from it" (Deleuze 1989, 27). For Deleuze, it is movement and time that define the specificity of the medium. The image is not an utterance but a singular duration. The relations between images are not syntagmatic or paradigmatic. They are relations of duration. From the standpoint of movement, and especially from that of time, the relation between the cinematographic image and its object differs significantly from that of an utterance and its object. If the image puts its object into movement or time it does not resemble, represent, or signify it. It constitutes it as a temporal object, an object in flux, which is no more a signification than it is a spatial object. Deleuze's argument against Film Theory, which is principally addressed to the work of Christian Metz, is that it assumes that the movement and time of the image are determined by linguistic structures, rather than the other way around. He argues that even in the cinema which is most indifferent to other possibilities of the medium, narrative is constructed on the basis of an initial organization (or montage) of movement and time. By assimilating the cinema to language, Film Theorists assume that it relies on and therefore reproduces pre-existing linguistic codes. In this way, argues Deleuze, the cinema is denied its unique creative possibility: the possibility of creating new events, or new temporalities. Of course, all this is very quickly said. To validate it, a more sustained assessment of Deleuze's critique of Film Theory would be required (and I think that one is needed, for, to my knowledge, it has not been written yet). However, such a work falls beyond the purview of this essay.

creative time, or if it is doomed to mechanical repetition, as his point of departure. However, while Bergson was very apprehensive about the creative possibilities of the cinema, Deleuze sets out to prove the opposite, by focusing on mainly Modernist and experimental films. The distinction between creative and static or mechanical time, which is at the heart of the thinking of both Bergson and Deleuze, and the question of the relation of these two times to the cinema, is the starting point for the reflections brought together in this project. Therefore, in order to provide a context for these reflections, a general introduction to Deleuze's Bergsonian theory of cinema is necessary.[148]

Writing at the turn of the twentieth century, Bergson was largely responsible for making time one of the central problems in modern philosophy. His philosophical project begins with the intuition that our traditional ways of understanding time are at odds with our experience of time. We tend to think of time in terms of measurable dimensions much like those of space, dividing it into a series of discrete instants, like one might divide a pie into a number of pieces. But our experience of time is that of a flow, the moments of which do not have the stable character of objects. Bergson is thus led to develop a distinction between the creative time of lived experience, which he calls "duration," and the static, "spatialized" time, described by science, rational philosophy, and technology.[149] Creative time is composed of irreducibly heterogeneous,

[148] While I have drawn on the original texts of Bergson, it has always been through the lens of Deleuze. It is Deleuze's Bergson that provides the main point of reference for my work. This is why I have at certain moments taken the liberty to cite Bergson and Deleuze's Bergson interchangeably.

[149] *Time and Free Will*, Bergson's first work, serves as the starting point for his philosophy as a whole. It is there that Bergson first develops the distinction between our traditional understanding of time in terms of spatial dimensions and duration.

in other words, unique and singular, durations. Static, "spatialized" time is homogeneous. It is constituted as a result of the assimilation of each duration to a common measure. Through this assimilation we fail to see the singularity of each duration. A duration (a moment, or an event) Bergson insists, is not the representation of an underlying changeless thing. It is unprecedented and un-repeatable. However, there is continuity within time. The flow of time is such that each moment blends into the next. In fact, Bergson argues that all of the moments of experience are connected, as our memories intertwine with the present, and vice-versa. However, the unity, the unity of a life or of life as whole, *is made* from within the heterogeneous multiplicity of singular durations. It is not the unity of a series of instants understood as representations of a pre-existing changeless Being. The notion that each moment is a singular, heterogeneous duration; and the correlative notion of the unity of time as whole, as a unity that is made from out of the intertwining of a multiplicity of heterogeneous durations; are the two poles of Bergson's thought, which are central to Deleuze's cinema books.[150]

One of Bergson's favourite critiques of the "spatialized" time described by science invokes the ancient paradoxes of the Eleatics. The paradox of the arrow, for

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Bergson, Henri. 2001. *Time and Free Will*. Translated by F.L. Pogson. Dover Publications, INC.

[150] The notion of the Whole undergoes several mutations in Bergson's work. In the early Bergson the question of duration is related to the unity of a subject's life; in *Matter and Memory*, the question is raised about the coexistence of the Whole of memory; in *Creative Evolution*, Bergson speculates on "the universal Becoming" of life as a Whole.

Bergson, Henri. 1962. *Matter and Memory*. Translated by N.M. Paul and W.S. Palmer. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd.

Bergson, Henri. 1944. *Creative Evolution*. Translated by Arthur Mitchell. Random House Inc.

example, states that in order for an arrow to hit its target it must first cross half of the distance, and before that, it must cross half of the half… and, since space is infinitely divisible, it will never move. This is the simplest of the paradoxes to describe, but they are all very similar in terms of their significance. Bergson argued that the modern mathematical solutions to the paradoxes do not touch the metaphysical problem that lies at their core. The problem is that one will never be able to reconstitute real movement, which implies an imperceptible transition from one moment to the next, by beginning with so many "stations of rest."[151]

When Bergson reflects on the cinema, in *Creative Evolution,* he surmises that its images can only articulate a homogeneous time. In fact, he goes further, claiming that the cinema is an exemplary instance of the habit of cognition, which readily assimilates the heterogeneous to the homogenous, the creative flow of time to the static dimensions of space.[152] The camera, he argues, gives us "snap-shots" ("instantaneous views") of movement, freezing and fixing it (Bergson 1944, 331), as one might pin a butterfly to the wall. These freeze-frames (immobile chunks, much more spatial than temporal in character) are then placed into a ready-made frame of time, provided by the projector. This frame of time, that is, the mechanical succession of images, is perfectly homogeneous. It remains unaffected by the changes that take place in it. In other words, it is not the time of a singular duration, with its unique color or tone. It is a frame of time that can be indifferently imposed on any event (Bergson 1944, 331-332);

[151] "It is to this confusion between motion and the space traversed that the paradoxes of the Eleatics are due; for the interval which separates two points is infinitely divisible, and if motion consisted of parts like those of the interval itself, the interval would never be crossed" (Bergson 2001, 112-115).
[152] "The *mechanism of our ordinary knowledge is of a cinematographic kind*" (Bergson 1944, 332).

much like the time-space of Newton (in this regard) which can be used to measure any number of events, but fails to express the singular feature of any one them.

In this way the cinema provides the model of our "mechanism of knowledge." It is important to note that Bergson does not deny the usefulness of measuring time. Being able to assimilate time to a common measure allows us to predict certain events, and to thereby control future outcomes. However, the usefulness of the operations of measure should not blind us to the fact they erroneously assimilate that which is happening for that which has happened, mistaking "the unstable for the stable" (Bergson 1944, 331-332).

Deleuze begins his two volume study of the cinema by arguing that Bergson is right only with regard to the cinema in its beginnings, that is, before the invention of the mobile camera and of montage. He writes: "On the one hand, the view point (*prise de vue*) was fixed, the shot was therefore spatial and strictly immobile; on the other hand, the apparatus for shooting (*appareil de prise de vue*) was combined with the apparatus for projection, endowed with a uniform, abstract time" (Deleuze 1986, 3). In other words, the immobility of the camera made cinematographic images look static, like stations or points of rest; and the fact that celluloid could not yet be cut made the ordering of sequences of images appear as though it were pre-scribed by the mechanical movement of the projector. With the mobile camera the shot would "stop being a spatial category and become a temporal one" (Deleuze 1986, 3-4). Meanwhile, montage would free the art of synthesizing images (or would make that art more independent) from the abstract "frame" of the projector. Montage would thus allow for

what Deleuze calls fluid cuts or "mobile sections;" but also, as the films gathered in this project will show, simultaneities, false continuities, and strange anachronic loops; techniques which, Deleuze argues, enabled the cinema to create the flow of duration, in its intertwining of past, present, and future.

In the early cinema, which is defined by montage (this includes, primarily, D.W. Griffith and the Soviet School), Deleuze finds what he calls the movement-image. He argues that the movement-image comes close to the Bergsonian idea of duration. For the cinema of montage each image or shot is a unity (a "unit-shot") but not exactly a unit of number (an objective unit of measure). The shot is in the present, which is not a station in abstract time or a point of rest, but an undivided transition from past to future. Montage consists in establishing relations between these unities of movement, of bringing them together in a coherent whole, which has little to do with the ready-made time of the projector. Deleuze argues that all the great classical filmmakers, from Griffith, through Eisenstein, to Vertov, were concerned with the image of a whole (for example, the film as the image of the United States of America, or global Communism), that would not be superimposed on the individual movements, but would emerge out of and be reflected in each of them. In other words, the whole constituted by the movement-image emerges out of diverse singular movements, which means that it is perpetually made and unmade, as it passes through each of them, rather than being made once and for all, from an unchanging standpoint.[153]

[153] Perhaps the best example that Deleuze offers is the work (theory and practice) of Eisenstein (Deleuze 1986, 32-40). He writes that for Eisenstein "the interval, the variable present, has become the qualitative leap." The "qualitative leap" refers to Bergson's analysis of the living present, which changes qualitatively,

However, the cinema of the movement-image falls short of authentic creative temporality. Deleuze argues that the cinema image is centered in the present, which functions as an underlying point of reference. Each shot is in the present, but more importantly, since the movement-image belongs to a cinema defined by montage, each shot appears as a part of a larger, more encompassing present. Deleuze therefore argues that the movement-image gives us an "indirect representation of time," where time is still understood on the basis of an unchanging seat of permanence (Deleuze 1989, 34-37).

Deleuze writes: "the movement-image is in the present, and nothing else. That the present is the sole direct time of the cinematographic image seems to be almost a truism" (Deleuze 1989, 35). It is this truism that comes to be undermined with the various types of new cinema that emerge after the Second World War, most notably Italian Neo-Realism and the French New Wave. In the new cinema we find a different sense of time, which is no longer predicated on the present. Deleuze continues: "But is this not a false obviousness… There is no present which is not haunted by a past and a future, by a past which is not reducible to a former present, by a future which does not consist in a present to come… It is characteristic of cinema to seize this past and this future…" (Deleuze 1989, 37). Deleuze gives many examples of how the new cinema seizes and reveals these dimensions of time: the new use of the sequence shot and

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that is, changes in nature; rather than merely quantitatively, whereby its nature would remain the same. Deleuze continues: "The whole … is no longer a totality of reuniting which subsumes the independent parts… It is a totality which has become concrete or existing, in which the parts are produced by each other in their set and the set is reproduced in the parts… [It] … is no longer a way of assembling an empirical reality from outside, but the way in which dialectical reality constantly produces itself and grows" (Deleuze 1986, 37).

depth of field (as initially analysed by Bazin) which allows the image to float, so to speak, in a vague background, serves to reveal both a past that exceeds the grasp of conscious memory, and a future that cannot be represented; “cinema-verité,” which tries to make visible what characters were before and after the film, not in view of a crude realism (“which would lead us all the more to presents which pass”) but in order to make visible the frontier which divides the present of the image in relation to an invisible past and future (Deleuze 1989, 37-39). In these films the present is put into relation with a time that is discontinuous with it, with which it cannot correspond. The present thereby becomes discontinuous with itself: it loses “itself.” The result is a dis-location of the time of the image. We can no longer discern a core of stability, which would serve to unify actions and reactions, background and foreground, characters and their settings, and the images of the film as a whole, within one coherent time (Deleuze 1989, 37-43). What we can discern is a new type of relation, predicated on dis-continuity. The terms of this new relation are not simply juxtaposed, which would make each term identical to itself, and therefore coherent within itself. Rather, each is divided or displaced in relation to the other.

Deleuze explains this new “time-image” in terms of a new relation between character and setting. In the new cinema characters are confronted with intolerable situations, for which they have no adequate response (for example, the father helpless before his crushing social circumstances in *The Bicycle Thieves*; the young boy, traumatized to the point of death, in *Germany Year Zero*; Ingrid Bergman at the edge of *Il Stromboli*). That is to say, they encounter situations for which they have no ready-

made schemas of action, and the enduring of which implies a shattering of self. The new cinema is full of such liminal experiences. What these films show us, Deleuze argues, are events of the unexpected, the uncanny, and the new. For Deleuze such events can be understood in terms of Bergson's notion of creative time. That is to say, the encounters with the unexpected are conceptualized in terms of time, as singular moments or durations, wherein the past and the present open to the future.[154]

At the same time that the new cinema discovers singular durations, it discovers a new idea of montage; that is, a new way of connecting singular durations within a dynamic whole. Classical cinema was also concerned with the image of a dynamic whole. However, it maintained the model of succession (a succession of presents) for the organization of images. Succession implies that each new moment reproduces the one that precedes it, like cause and effect, or like a conditioned reaction to stimuli. Moreover, insofar each moment is reproduced in the one that follows, the succession as a whole implies the reproduction of one and the same present. In the new cinema, in contrast, each moment is a singularity. Each one effectuates a rupture with the past. The link upon which the reproduction of the past in the present was predicated is

[154] The *Time-Image* begins with an analysis of the new type of character that emerges with modern (post WW2) cinema. Deleuze writes that when the unity of self and world which prevailed in classical cinema is broken, narrative action is replaced by "purely optical situations." The situations are "purely optical" in the sense that they transform the character from the condition of an agent to that of a seer ("the character himself becomes a viewer"). That is to say, these situations reduce the character to a state of passivity, as he or she is deprived of any ready-made schema of action. In this state of passivity, however, Deleuze argues, characters are able to encounter the "inexhaustible possibility" of the future. "What happens to them does not belong to them … they know how to extract from the event the part that cannot be reduced to what happens: that part of inexhaustible possibility that constitutes the unbearable, the intolerable, the visionary's part" (Deleuze 1989, 19-20).

broken, in favour of discontinuity. The idea of montage that emerges in modern cinema consists in establishing continuity within discontinuity.

Deleuze writes that in modern cinema the idea of the whole; that is, the unity of events composed in the film as a whole, which expresses an idea of being as a whole; passes into the interval between images. The interval, which the modern cinema explores, is one that joins while separating (Deleuze 1989, 179-180). This implies a radically different idea of the whole. It no longer has anything to do with a transcendent beyond, to which each image would refer as to its underlying ground. The whole, understood on the basis of the interval, is the idea that each image, or each duration, opens to the other. In other words, there is a unity of time in the sense that each moment is always already affected and transformed by the other, in the sense that each one is always already turning into the other. Perhaps the best example that Deleuze gives of this new type of montage, and the new type of whole that it constitutes, is the work of Godard. What interests Deleuze in Godard is the exploration of the interstice ("the constitutive in-between of images"). Deleuze writes: "the question is no longer that of the association or attraction of images. What counts is on the contrary the *interstice* between images, between two images… In other words, the interstice is primary in relation to association, or irreducible difference allows resemblance to be graded… Film ceases to be 'images in a chain … an uninterrupted chain of images each one the slave of the next,' and whose slave are we (*Ici et Ailleurs*). It is the method of BETWEEN, 'between two images,' which does away with all the cinema of Being = is. Between two actions, between two perceptions, between two visual images, between

the sound and the visual: make the indiscernible, that is, the frontier, visible (*Six fois deux*). The whole undergoes a mutation, because it ceases to be the One-Being, in order to become the constitutive 'and' of things, the constitutive between two of images" (Deleuze 1989, 180).

In the interval that joins while separating images coexist. Each acts upon and transforms the other *simultaneously*. The result is a perpetual division, a perpetual transformation, of past into present and present into past; or rather, since by virtue of the division the present is deprived of identity, into the already past and the still to come. Insofar as the images are simultaneous and heterogeneous, such that each one is simultaneously passive and active vis-à-vis the other, neither one can be the ground (or cause) of the other. In other words, in the new film there is no underlying ground, no unifying "subject," but only the thread of a perpetual transformation. This is the result of undermining the model of succession, and the chronological temporality, that still governed the movement-image.

It is, finally, through this new way of shooting and cutting that modern cinema gives us what Deleuze calls the time-image. In the cinema of the time-image, each shot, or each moment, is a singularity. It is not defined in reference to something that precedes, exceeds, or transcends it. Accordingly, the unity of the film as a whole, and the unity of being that it expresses, is a unity composed out of singular, heterogeneous durations.

It has been many years now since the publication of Deleuze's cinema books, and in that time a lot has been written about them. One contemporary writer, who has pushed Deleuze's work in new directions, and whose work has helped me to elaborate my own analyses, is Elie During. For During the main question, the question that is at the heart of both modern philosophy and the cinema, concerns the possibility of the coexistence of heterogeneous durations. He argues that this philosophical problem is very much at the heart of cinema because, while, on the one hand, cinematic images unfold in a chronological succession; on the other hand, as various voices, various places, various lines of action are introduced, there is always a sense of the coexistence of images, a sense of all these things going on "at the same time."[155] In his book *Faux Raccords, La Coexistence des Images*, During aims to understand precisely the sense of this coexistence. He provides an original take on the Deleuzian/Bergsonian problem of the whole of time(s); a perspective that, because of its penetrating analyses of contemporary experiments in the moving image, inspired the first two chapters of this project.

During begins his book by affirming the validity of Deleuze's Bergsonian intuition with regard to the cinema; that is, by asserting that movement and time are the primary elements of film. He writes that the cinema operates by way of a series of cuts, which first disconnect images of movement from their context, and then connect them to form

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[155] ""Il était une fois": c'est ainsi que commencent les histoires. Mais, dès que s'introduisent d'autres voix, d'autres lieux, d'autres lignes d'actions, il faut bien poursuivre par un "pendant ce temps". "Pendant ce temps", donc, les êtres continuent à vivre, à agir, à durer. Ils coexistent. Le cinéma l'exprime bien à travers le montage alterné, qui est un de ses ressorts narratifs les plus efficaces: les flux de durée s'y raccordent de loin en loin pour donner l'illusion du simultané."
During Elie. 2010. *Faux Raccords, La Coexistence des Images*. Actes Sud. 12-13.

a new unity, or a new continuity. This is the art of montage. It consists, to be precise, in creating the effect of a whole, a kind of global movement. Drawing on Badiou, During calls the global movement: "un effet temporel de parcours," a temporal effect of traversal. However, this global movement, he insists, emerges in and through a series of "local" disconnected movements (During 2010, 13-14).

If a global movement or a global time – forged out of heterogeneous pieces of time – is what constitutes a film, then montage is the real art of cinema. Nonetheless, as During points out, the illusion of a global (unitary) movement is inscribed in each local movement. That is to say, it is inscribed in each shot. The sense of a continuous movement within each shot is the cinema's famous illusion of continuity. During writes that it is the reason why even in the most experimental cinema, the cinema that is most adverse to narrative continuity, it is always possible to forget the operation of montage – the cuts and their fissures – and to see the heterogeneity of durations as continuations of one and the same "subject."[156] While the sense of continuous movement that is present in each shot serves to demonstrate the primacy of movement and time in film as such, what interests During are the films which use montage to interrupt the flow of time in the image. More precisely, what interests During are films that reveal the discontinuity that lies at the heart of continuity. This is why the notion of "false continuity" (*faux raccords*), During's principle concept of cinema (which is

[156] "Si l'on s'accorde si volontiers à reconnaitre dans le cinéma un art du temps, c'est qu'il est toujours possible – même dans le cinéma le plus 'expérimental,' le plus rebelle en apparence à toute fabulation narrative – d'oublier l'opération du montage en l'indexant, par une série de reports locaux, à des mouvements et à des flux capable de suggérer, a l'horizon du film ou entre les plans, un movement d'ensemble, un 'temps global' qui oriente le cours des images" (During 2010, 14).

reminiscent of what Eisenstein called “impossible continuity”) is to be distinguished from the more ordinary illusion of continuity.

In order to get a better sense of what During means by “faux raccords” and how this notion informs the studies that follow, let us consider briefly one of his examples: the film installation entitled *Adjungierte Dislokationen* (1973) by the Austrian artist Valie Export.[157] In the work three projections are juxtaposed in a space that forms a large rectangle: on the right two projections (shot in Super8 film), one above the other; on the left, one projection, equal in height to the other two (shot in 16mm film). In the large image on the right we see the artist with two cameras strapped to her (a mobile tripod, as it were), one on her chest and one and her back. The smaller images projected on the right were filmed by these two cameras. In the film, about eight minutes long, we see the artist walking through various environments (city streets, an apartment building, a field in the country). During is interested in this work because he sees it as raising a question that is very much the one that guides his research: “what is signified by this curious operation, which consist in joining dislocations” (During 2010, 20)?

What is dislocated by the work is the unity that one might expect to find between the three images. During writes, “there is no way of reconstituting, on the

[157] Technically, this is a film installation, and one might ask: what justifies considering film installations, works that project multiple screens (*simultaneously*) on the walls of the gallery, as cinema? I think the move is justified insofar as for During the cinema is a theoretical problem. The problem is that of the coexistence of heterogeneous durations, a coexistence made possible, in an unprecedented way, by the technology of the moving image. From this point of view there is a very obvious and a very important relation between the cinema and certain works classified as video-art (and some times as “post-cinematic”). I have taken a similar liberty, justifying it in similar terms, when considering Dan Graham’s *Present Continuous Past(s)*, a video installation, as a work that reveals something about the temporality of the cinema.

basis of these strangely joined traces, the equivalent of even a precarious type of coherent sequence-shot, which would be made of the fusion of the small images and the large, from an improbable 360 degree perspective."[158] Primarily, dis-location here signifies that the constitution of a global time, of a continuous movement, which is fundamental to the cinema, is interrupted.

But what is most interesting for During is the joining of these dislocated images to one another within a single, continuous time-space. The jointure hinges upon the larger image. It seems to offer precisely the point of view, the mobile site, from which the two smaller images are seen. In other words, it presents itself as a point of view that is above ("un point de vue de surplomb") the two irreconcilable perspectives, and that would reveal their coherence (During 2010, 21). It does this to the extent that it explains the piece. However, the larger image does not make visible the time-space in which the two smaller images could be seen as part of a single whole, as two parts of a continuous line of perspective. In other words, the video invites us to assume a position that is impossible to assume, to connect images that remain dis-connected.

This is an example of a false or impossible continuity. The images remain separate, but inextricable. The standpoint that unifies them is the one that divides them. The effect is the constitution of a whole which is perpetually made and unmade; in other words, a whole which is made out of coexisting heterogeneous durations. This is very close to the Deleuzian time-image, in which the whole "passes into the interval,"

[158] "Il n'y a strictement aucun moyen de reconstituer, sur la base de ces traces étrangement ajointées, l'equivalent même précaire d'une espèce de plan-séquence cohérent qui serait fait du recollement des deux petites images et de la grande, selon une improbable perspective a 360 degrés" (During 2010, 20).

whereby it ceases to function as an underlying substratum, and becomes the perpetual transformation of each part by every other. Moreover, by turning to the work of Valie Export (and other similar works) During is able to show the creation of a time-image not by way of a story, but simply by way of a montage of heterogeneous durations.[159]

In order to further develop my questions I have turned to a source who is not writing in the wake of Deleuze's cinema books, though it is in this Deleuzian context that his work, which dates back to the early 70s, has recently witnessed a revival. The source is Stanley Cavell, specifically his principal work on the cinema: *The World Viewed*. It is there that Cavell asks: "what happens to reality when it is projected and screened?"[160] Cavell is influenced by Andre Bazin's realist ontology ("the ontology of the photographic image"), at the heart of which lies the claim that by virtue of its automatism, that is, "by removing the human agent from the task of reproduction," the cinema, like photography, overcomes subjectivity, and makes the world present to us, as it really

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[159] During further develops the idea of the coexistence of heterogeneous durations by way of the idea of the mnemic double, which is based on Deleuze/Bergson's notion of "false recognition." In the article "Memory of the Present and False Recognition,"Bergson argued that memory is not formed after perception. It is formed contemporaneously with the creation of perception ("au fur et a mesure…") like a shadow alongside the body; "even if consciousness is not aware of it normally, any more than the eye can see our shadow if it illuminates it as it turns towards it" (Bergson 2002, 144). Bergson is led to this claim from his initial insight into the nature of time. That is to say, the idea of the contemporaneity of past and present is based on the idea that time does not move in "fits and starts," from one point of rest to another, but flows, such that each moment is already past and still to come. Now, insofar as it is contemporaneous with the formation of perception, memory never fails to produce a disconcerting effect of *déjà-vu*. This is a "false recognition."
Bergson, Henri. 2002. "Memory of the Present and False Recognition." In *Henri Bergson, Key Writings*, edited and translated by K.A. Pearson and John Mullarkey, 141-156. Continuum.

The idea of the contemporaneity of past and present is another way of articulating the idea of the coexistence of images, which, from another point of view, succeed one another. I have drawn on and developed During's (and Bergson's and Deleuze's) analyses of false recognition in the studies that follow.

[160] Cavell, Stanley. 1979. *The World Viewed*. Harvard University Press. 16.

is.[161] It makes present the world in itself, the world as unmediated by subjectivity (Cavell 1979, 23). However, he introduces a very interesting "variation" into this classical ontology: the cinema makes the world present on condition that we be absent from it. He writes: "What does the silver screen screen? It screens me from the world it holds – that is, makes me invisible. And it screens that world from me – that is, screens its existence from me" (Cavell 1979, 24). What is of particular interest to me is that he conceives this relation between absence and presence in terms of time, adding, "and a world I know, and see, but to which I am nevertheless not present (through no fault of my subjectivity), is a world past" (Cavell 1979, 23). The barrier of the screen ("a screen is a barrier") functions, from this point of view, as a line dividing the time of the film, and the world of the film that took place in that time, from the present of the projection, from whence the viewer peers out.[162] Cavell adds: "that the projected world does not exist (now) is its only difference from reality" (Cavell 1979, 24). This minor difference of time would seem to be almost imperceptible, as well as con-fusing, since it is an absence that becomes present, and it becomes present to a viewer that is absent from it…

Cavell's remarks invite us to think about the relation between the time registered on film and the time of the viewer. He points to a difference between the time that is passing in a film, the present of the world viewed, which is past in relation to the present of the viewer, and the present; that is, the present in which that past is

[161] Bazin, André. 1967. "The Ontology of the Photographic Image." In *What is Cinema? Volume 1*, translated by Hugh Gray, 9-17. University of California Press.
[162] "In a movie house, the barrier to the stars is time" (Cavell 1979, 155).

now passing. His remarks point to this difference as to two aspects *coexisting* on the screen. However, the question of the temporality of projection is not, as such, Cavell's main focus. The condition of cinematic viewership, which makes the spectator absent (or present as absent) from the visible "presentness" of the world; or makes the absence of the world viewed present as an absence before the viewer; refers, for Cavell, primarily to the problem of modern alienation. It is as though the cinema dramatizes the condition of the modern city dweller who is forced to withdraw into himself at the very moment that everything, including privacy itself, is made public. That is to say, the cinema screens the social condition of individuals who do not "acknowledge" the visible presence of one another.[163] However, what interests me in Cavell's reflections, and what served as the starting point for the film analyses that follow, was the question of cinematic projection, as the locus of a duplicitous time. In order to further develop this type of reflection, I turned to yet another source.

Zsuzsa Baross intervenes creatively in the work of Deleuze, approaching the cinema as a creative apparatus of memory.[164] In the article, "Toward a Memory of the Future," her first move is to consider the cinema as "essentially and intrinsically a *projected* medium" (Baross 2011, 30). The concept of projection is perhaps best

[163] "Our condition has become one in which our natural mode of perception is to view, feeling unseen. We do not so much look at the world as look *out at* it, from behind the self. It is our fantasies, now all but completely thwarted and out of hand, which are unseen and must be kept unseen. As if we could no longer hope that anyone might share them – at just the moment that they are pouring into the streets, less private than ever. So we are less than ever in a position to marry them to the world" (Cavell 1979, 102).

[164] "The cinema uniquely remembers (for) the future."
Baross, Zsuzsa. 2011. "Towards a Memory of the Future." In *Posthumously, for Jacques Derrida*. Sussex Academic Press. 29.

understood in contradistinction to Benjamin's widely accepted idea of the cinema as mechanical reproduction.[165] The projected image repeats, but it repeats creatively. It is not the image *of* something that exists in the world, a revelation *of* the being of the real. Its being is constituted in and through projection, as the being of appearing. In this sense the moving image is "the pure effect of repetition." Its lack of originality, moreover, "is more original and "originary" than Benjamin's mechanical reproduction." Baross writes: "Before (in the ontological sense of priority, since in "real" time the two operations, production and reproduction, coincide) the "bare" mechanical repetition could reproduce as copy the same film, *Casablanca*, in every theatre, every time, until the end of time, there will have been the "first" and originary repetition: the passage of the film positive repeating in reverse, before the light and behind the lens of the projector, the passage of the negative inside the camera" (Baross 2011, 30).

Baross brings our attention to something that no one in the history of film studies has meditated upon in a rigorous way (though Cavell does make some provocative remarks that touch upon the matter): the gap, or rather, the hiatus, between the time registered by the camera, and the time of projection.[166] It is to be understood, with reference to Deleuze, as a "creative interval," wherein a repetition of difference takes place. Through the interval the same time is repeated differently: the past is revealed (*révélé*, in the photographic sense of the word) for the very first time.

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[165] Benjamin, Walter. 1968. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." In *Illuminations*, edited by Hannah Arendt, translated by Harry Zohn, 217-252. New York: Schocken Books.

[166] Godard is perhaps another exception, and one of the sources Baross names: "Once again I defer to Godard: "Between the camera and the projector there is a hole (it is not by accident that one speaks of a hole in memory (*trou de memoire*)… One shoots (*enregistre*) today and projects tomorrow"" (Baross 2011, 31).

Baross's reflections are inspired by the cinema of found-footage. This type of cinema, an art of repetition, derives its possibility from the interval. Or rather, it derives its possibility from the fact that the creative repetition, which the interval makes possible, is repeated with every subsequent projection. *Casablanca* projected today is not the same as *Casablanca* projected 40 years ago, or even 10 years ago. It is not the same film because of the historical changes that have taken place both within the cinema (the films that have been made since then) and outside. These changes are always potentially visible in every projection. They constitute the historical index of the image. That is to say, every cinematographic image, "even the most elementary," writes Baross, folds time in relation to itself, creating anachronic temporal relations (Baross 2011, 32). Every image, while unfolding in time, projects another (past) time *simultaneously*. However, the cinema of found footage is unique in deliberately and explicitly exploiting this possibility, by bringing to light the historicity (the relation of past to present) inscribed in the image. In this way, found footage makes the Archive of images into a source of the new. It shows, moreover, through purely cinematic means, that the continuity of past and present can only be established by way of an interval, that is, by way of a transformation.

All of the studies that follow explore the questions of time that have been discussed in a certain branch of film studies, of which I have tried to give a picture, by focusing on its most important, or for me the most innovative, writers. The first chapter explores the question of time and the cinema through a look at Christian Marclay's

recent film *The Clock*. The film is an assemblage of film moments, moments in the history of the cinema, where time is indicated, alluded to, or inadvertently revealed; spliced together to form a strange 24 hour clock, which is to be projected in perfect synchronicity with real (clock) time. It raises the question of the relation between film time and the homogeneous time of the clock, a question that marks the starting point of my project. The film allows the question to be developed from two correlative points of view. On the one hand, it is a found-footage film, which exploits the interval between the time registered and the time projected, which is explored on the theoretical plane in the work of Cavell and Baross. On the other hand, it is an in-credible montage of "false continuity," in Elie During's sense of the word, as it creates an impossible continuity between irreconcilably heterogeneous durations. It thus constitutes a unique example of the coexistence of heterogeneous durations.

The second chapter is focused on Dan Graham's video-installation *Present Continuous Past(s)* (1974). This work raises the question of the medium's relation not only to real time, but more specifically to the time of the viewer. In the work, the viewer finds herself in front of a camera and a monitor: a camera that records her, and a monitor that projects her image eight seconds later. This sort of doubling of the past (of the past in the present and the present in the past) is multiplied by a mirror covering the wall opposite of the camera and monitor. The mirror reflects whatever is in the room, which includes the image on the monitor. Consequently, when the monitor projects the moment of eight seconds ago, it includes an image of the monitor that was then reflected in the mirror, projecting the moment of 16 seconds ago. The effect is a

potentially infinite regress of "time continuums within time continuums," as Graham himself described it.[167] The film allows the question of the cinema and time to be developed in terms of the connection between past and present, as well as in terms of the coexistence of the past as a whole with the present, which I develop, drawing on Deleuze's and During's re-elaboration of Bergson's notion of "false recognition."

The third and last chapter of the project revisits Michael Snow's *Wavelength*. "The film is a continuous zoom which takes 45 minutes to go from its widest field to its smallest and final field. It was shot with a fixed camera from one end of an 80 foot loft, shooting the other end, a row of windows, and the street. This, the setting, and the action which takes place there are cosmically equivalent. The room (and the zoom) are interrupted by 4 human events including a death. The sound on these occasions is sync sound, music and speech, occurring simultaneously with an electronic sound, a sine wave, which goes from its lowest note to its highest in 40 minutes."[168] On first impression this film seems like a reflection on the illusion of continuity, both the mechanical illusion of the continuity of movement, and the illusion of progressive narrative continuity, which is essential to the movies. This is how the film has been read, for example, by Annette Michelson, who saw it as a kind of meta-narrative (a narrative about narrative).[169] Against such a reading, I argue that the film in fact breaks apart the illusion of continuity, and the linear (chronological) temporality of narrative action. It

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[167] Dan Graham artist's statement is available online: http://www.medienkunstnetz.de/works/present-continuous-pasts/.

[168] Snow, Michael. 1994. *The Collected Writings of Michael Snow*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press. 40-41.

[169] Michelson, Annette. 1978. "Toward Snow." In *The Avant-Garde Film: A Reader of Theory and Criticism*, edited by P. Adams Sitney. New York: Anthology Film Archives.

undermines, or complicates, continuity by punctuating the movement of the zoom with superimpositions of images just projected onto the present image, and by reversing the movement at the moment of climax. What thus emerges is a kind of anachronic temporal form, wherein the future appears as always already past, and the past as yet to be. The future, imagined in this way, appears as a constant source of the new. It appears as that which defies all of our attempts to apprehend it, to reduce it to something known and familiar, to something already present. This film perhaps more than all of the others, reveals the creativity of time celebrated by Bergson and Deleuze, and it also does so through purely cinematic means.

All three films, I argue, create creative temporalities by means that are specific to the cinema. They all play with the illusion of temporal continuity, which is fundamental to the cinema. They twist, reverse, and disrupt the continuity of movement, in order to reveal the gap that separates one moment from the next, and that allows for a creative transformation, of the one through the other, to take place.

Chapter 1: The cinema and real-time, through the lens of Christian Marclay's deranged clock

Christian Marclay's THE CLOCK (2010), the film that won the Golden Lion at the Venice Biennale (in 2011) and was quickly snapped up by a number of major galleries (including MOMA and the National Gallery of Canada) is literally a clock, or a perfect simulacra of one. Having found a clip for every minute of the day, Marclay spliced them together to form the moving-image of a 24h clock, which, as if to make the likeness complete, is projected in real-time. The discovery that there is an image for every

minute of the day serves as a reminder that the cinema has always been concerned if not obsessed with time. However, the concern has not always been with real-time. One could even say that the cinema has always presented us with the opposite; with invented, imaginary time, which makes us oblivious to the realities of the day. But the escape from the present – THE CLOCK reminds us – is never complete. Real-time goes on; passing *along with* the time of the film. The question raised by the film raises is: what is the relation between these two times, the cinematic and the real? To put it differently, is real-time the universal that unifies all of the times invented by the cinema; or does each film, even THE CLOCK, beat to its own measure?

On first impression, the film not only gives us an identical representation of real-time, but constantly serves to remind us of its presence. Functioning as a commentary on the cinema, it seems to say that no matter how hard they try, the movies will never make us oblivious to the present and to all the anxieties that are wrapped up with it. Considered more metaphysically, THE CLOCK seems to argue that real-time is reality itself; the light, as it were, behind the play of shadows, which the cinema serves as its master. This is how a number of commentators have seen the film. For example, in his Artforum February 2011 review ("Borrowed Time") David Velasco wrote that the film serves as a reminder "that every camera, every image, can be put in service of the real."[170]

But what is real-time? It is the common sense of time that organizes much of our daily experience. We often take it for granted, forgetting that it is a certain

[170] Velasco, David. 2011. "Borrowed Time." In *Artforum*. Vol. 49, No. 6, February.

representation of time and not necessarily an objective state of affairs. However, modern philosophers, beginning with Henri Bergson, have argued that real-time is simply a frame through which we measure time, the true nature of which is in fact immeasurable. Throughout his work, Bergson argues that when we measure time we treat it as though it were space. Events that are in fact perpetually in flux are reduced to the level of objects with determinable dimensions, as though they were fixed and unmoving. The frame of measure, for example the 24h clock (the minute or the hour), serves as a common denominator by which a variety of events, irrespective of their differences, can be referred to an objective point of reference. Time is thereby represented as the movement of one and the same now, which itself never changes. The movement is, moreover, represented as a chronological succession: the present comes first, the past functions as a copy; which is, in turn, reproduced in the present (much like the order of cause and effect). Bergson does not deny that this way of representing time is very logical and useful. By establishing correspondences between different moments, we are able to predict and control the outcomes of various processes. However, he argues that time is more creative, and that by virtue of this creativity each moment is different; radically different, such that it cannot be represented in terms of a common measure. It is this creativity of time that according to Bergson comes to the fore in works of art.[171]

In order to get a better sense of creative time, let us consider the relation between past and present, a relation which, I will argue, forms the crux of THE CLOCK,

[171] This is the case according to Bergson and even more so according to Deleuze's reading of Bergson, which is the main point of reference for this project.

from a Bergsonian point of view. In contrast to the objective representation of time, Bergson emphasizes the heterogeneity of each moment. No matter how much the past might resemble the present, it cannot be reproduced. This is a "fact," even if the past-ness of the past cannot be objectively apprehended. However, the difference between past and present, from a Bergsonian point of view, is not a simple juxtaposition. We cannot, for example, divide the different moments of our lives as neatly as one might divide a cake into equal separate pieces. The past as a whole inheres in each of our present acts. The things that we have lived through are expressed in these acts. Conversely, the present is not the instant, with clearly determinable boundaries, which we isolate in order to measure. It is submerged or plunges into the past at the very moment that it becomes present. In other words, rather than a chronological succession of discrete instants, for Bergson time is a continuous flux, wherein moments flow and melt into one another, each one transforming and being transformed in relation to the other. In this sense time is not only composed of differences, it perpetually differentiates, that is, makes anew, past and present simultaneously. Bergson often used the example of a melody, where we retain the preceding parts as the new ones arrive, and experience each part modifying the other.[172] He was, however, more skeptical about the temporality of the cinema. He argued that the cinema can only give us an artificial image of time, a mechanically produced homogeneous time (Bergson 1944, 330-333). The first impression of THE CLOCK, which, as I mentioned, many viewers

[172] Bergson writes that in the experience of memory, the subject does not, in recalling former states, "set them alongside its actual state as one point alongside another, but forms both the past and the present states into an organic whole, as happens when we recall the notes of a tune, melting, so to speak, into one another" (Bergson 2001, 100).

are left with, would seem to confirm this claim: not only is the film itself in real (objective) time; also, functioning as a meta-commentary on the cinema, on the cinema's relation to time, it suggests that every film beats to this measure. However, the work of Gilles Deleuze has shown that the cinema is more than capable of creating creative times, times that open past and present towards the future, in Bergson's sense of the word; despite what Bergson had to say about it.[173] Does THE CLOCK confirm this Deleuzian hypothesis; that is, does it make visible differences in time, the difference that the cinema makes in time; or does it, rather, project the cinema as a homogeneous medium, which reduces every moment to a common measure? It seems to me that when we assimilate the time of the film to real-time, the image (past) to the real (present), we miss the play of difference that really makes Marclay's film *tick*.

In the history of writing on film not much is to be found regarding the relation between time unfolding on the screen and real-time. However, in *The World Viewed*, Stanley Cavell reflects on the change that takes place between the time registered on film (the reality of the world viewed) and the present time of the projection (the viewer's real-time).[174] These reflections can help us think about THE CLOCK in relation to the question of time and the cinema. Cavell writes: "What does the silver screen screen? It screens me from the world it holds – that is, makes me invisible. And it screens that world from me – that is, screens its existence from me" (Cavell 1979, 24). The cinema

[173] As I have elaborated in the introduction, Deleuze's two volume study of the cinema begins by arguing against Bergson's claim that the cinema is doomed to reproduce homogeneous ("spatialised") time (Deleuze 1986, 1-3).
[174] "What happens to reality when it is projected and screened?" (Cavell 1979, 16).

makes present a world that is absent. It makes it present to a viewer that remains absent from it. Cavell understands this relation between absence and presence in terms of time; adding, "and a world I know, and see, but to which I am nevertheless not present (through no fault of my subjectivity), is a world past" (Cavell 1979, 23). The barrier of the screen functions, from this point of view, as a line dividing the time of the film, the world of the film that took place in that time, and the present from whence the viewer peers out.[175] "That the projected world does not exist (now) is its only difference from reality" (Cavell 1979, 24). This minor difference of time, while being unbridgeable, is almost imperceptible, so deeply interfused are the two registers of the screen.

There is a difference, in other words, between the time that is passing in a film, the present of the world viewed, which is past in relation to the present of the viewer, and this present; that is, the present in which that past present is now passing. This is an ontological claim, which implies that every cinematographic image is past, a past projected in the present. No matter what the representations of time, which could refer to a future time, or to the present time of the viewer (as in films where characters address themselves directly to the audience, aiming thereby to break down the barrier of the screen) the image retains the ineluctable mark of the past, of a time that is no longer, and that is made present as such. This is why in the cinema the barrier (unlike the "fourth wall" of the theatre) can never be entirely broken down. The world viewed is always sealed, or, to use Cavell's word, screened, from that of the viewer. Marclay has not achieved the impossible perfect coincidence of these two times, these two worlds.

[175] Cavell writes: "In a movie house, the barrier to the stars is time" (Cavell 1979, 155).

He has, however, complicated and played with the difference; exploiting the fact that it joins what it separates (past and present, the image and the real), in order to produce a certain creative derangement of time.

In THE CLOCK the difference between the past time registered by each image of the film and the present time of the viewer comes strikingly into view, upon a closer look. The film is a moving spectacle of time-pieces of the most diverse kind. Each time-piece marks the present time of the narrative as well as the real-time of day, as though they were one. But the images are marked historically. Not only the grandfather clocks, even the wrist watch, the leather-strap variety (for example, on the hand of Sean Connery as James Bond) will appear retro for the young viewer, who is likely to check his cell phone for the "corresponding" time… The mark of history is also revealed by the fashions and styles of filmmaking, which distinguish the images from one another. The spectacle of time-pieces therefore also functions as a spectacle of the history of the cinema; wherein one and the same theme, time, appears in *innumerable* variations. Projecting these images in sync with the present effectively allows their datedness to come to the fore. Difference stands out through the contrast.

However, THE CLOCK is doubly dated. For it is also dated as present, a present projection of the past, in reference to real-time. The film is not simply defined by the archival material that it samples. It appropriates images past and makes a new present out of them; each one serving as a part, a minute or less, of a new 24 hour cycle. Every image is thus present and past "at the same time." But the coincidence is established between heterogeneous times.

The two registers of time appear as identical only if we ignore the historical markers that distinguish the images from one another and from the present of the viewer; that is, if we reduce the film to the empty frame of real-time. In fact, the coincidence – of, for example, 4:55pm marked by a Lubitsch film and 4:55pm in present day Vienna – serves to confuse the coherence of both registers, as it brings them together *while* holding them apart. The two times, the real and the cinematic, past and present; in Cavell's words, the time that is screened and that from which it is screened; remain distinct while becoming indiscernible. Precisely where and when we would expect to find a perfectly symmetrical identity, that is, in the present of THE CLOCK, there is a disorienting play of difference, which sees the real and the cinematic pass into one another and perpetually exchange places.

The disorientation takes place not only between each image and its real-time referent, but also between the film as a whole, that is, the 24 hour sequence of the film, and the corresponding 24 hour real-time sequence. In this regard as well the film only seems to move in line with the chronology of real-time. But considering the historical markers of the images, the film is oblivious to chronology. For example, at around 7:00 am a Rube Goldberg machine wakes up Michael J. Fox (Marty McFly) from *Back to the Future*, made in 1985; and then a naked JoBeth Williams jumps out of bed after a one-night stand with Dustin Hoffman, screaming as she runs into a young boy in the hallway, from *Kramer vs Kramer*, made in 1979. What came before, in the order of history, comes after, in the order of real-time (the order of the present projection). The film takes the greatest liberties in leaping back and forward in time. However, what holds

this crazy montage together, and what gives the film its proper rhythm, is the fact that it coincides with the sequence of the real. The chronological order is constituted at the same time that it is unraveled. Time is reversed *while* it marches on. There are effectively two clocks, a virtual and a real, nested within or superimposed upon one another. Each serves to displace and to confuse the identity of the other, by virtue of their coincidence.

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about the film is the fluidity that Marclay achieves in moving from one disparate image to another, creating the illusion that all of these moments are going on in one continuous time, which contributes greatly to the sense that the assembled film is taking place in real-time. We move across different periods of the cinema as characters move across the threshold of a doorway, entering the door in a film from one period and existing in another. The screen is also cleverly used to this effect, which makes for a self-reflexive gesture, reminding us that what is at stake is the time of the medium. For example, sometime approaching midnight, handsome Frank and Louise (from *Ghost Dog*) are drinking wine and watching cartoons; Frank turns the channel and the film turns as well, to a different film, a different apartment with a different TV, where someone has just turned the channel; a few "channels" later, Hitchcock is on TV, telling us that "the hourglass is a wonderful invention…" The soundtrack also provides an important thread, "the acoustic glue," as Marclay, originally a turntablist, called it (Velasco 2011). Sounds continuing from one scene to another, sounds overlaid across various clips, sounds or musical pieces (for example, Mozart's *Requiem* plays across scenes from the afternoon, Mahler's

Resurrection Symphony across those of midmorning) make for incredibly smooth transitions. Establishing continuity, creating a new and seemingly real temporal order, out of images taken at different times, is simply how movies are made. The montage that creates a film's time usually takes certain liberties with regard to real-time (through ellipsis, for example). THE CLOCK, on the other hand, seems to be strictly determined to keep time with real-time, aligning the flow of the images with the movement of the dial. The irony is that it is in fact a montage of *false continuities*. Through the seemingly seamless transitions the seams show through; as none of the images fit, logically, one next to the other. There is perhaps no more irrational film, no film so strictly committed to irrational cuts, and indifferent to coherent narrative transitions. THE CLOCK flows, in other words, but it flows against the grain of real-time.

THE CLOCK exploits and does not simply level the difference that joins (while separating) the time of the viewer to that of the film. The dis-junction, which affects both times, transforming and destabilizing the one in relation the other, takes place in two correlative ways: between the past time retained by each image and its real-time referent, on the one hand; and between the irrational 24 hour sequence of the film and the real 24 hour sequence, on the other. The time that is thereby produced; produced, that is, by putting the medium into relation with real-time in this way; the double or duplicitous time of THE CLOCK, is neither real-time nor the hermetically sealed time of the film. It is a heterogeneous time, in the sense that it differs within itself, perpetually (and imperceptibly) passing from one register to the other. Its identity, that is, the

"coincidence" of its two sides, is thus constituted as an identity of difference. To put it differently, the time of the film is that of an otherness that is other to itself.

I began with referencing Bergson's distinction between real-time and our more creative experience of time. Creative time is an ever-changing process, a process wherein each moment changes in relation to every other. Real-time, on the other hand, is time understood as a series of discrete nows; which is to say, as a series of points of rest. While THE CLOCK does not give us an experience of duration, in the way that Michael Snow's *Wavelength* or the slow sequence shots of Ozu may; it nonetheless establishes a series of relationships between past and present, before and after, which serve to derange chronology and constitute a time of contemporaneity, which implies a perpetual transformation of the one through the other.

The two times, creative and real-time, coexist. Marclay's derangement of time does not simply negate real-time (how could it?). The deranged time takes place alongside or along with real-time. That is to say, in between one minute and the next, in between the present and the former present, the film opens up a different register of time, which is heterogeneous. One can always reduce the film, every film, to real-time, by simply clocking the sequence of images. But one thereby misses the creative work of the cinema; that is, the time that is formed by the image and the relations between images; which is never reducible to real-time, even in the case of a film that looks very much like a clock.

As I mentioned earler, the idea that the cinema creates its own creative time, in Bergson's sense of the word, is introduced by Gilles Deleuze. Deleuze valorizes the cinema's capacity to actualize a virtual register of time. The virtual time of the cinema is never in the (real) present. Dividing in both directions at once, it constitutes a "state" of perpetual renewal or limitless transformation (Deleuze 1989, 68-97). THE CLOCK actualizes creative, heterogeneous time by mobilizing functions which are specific to the cinema alone: the archive, or the memory of the image, which retains the mark of the past; and projection, which brings the archive to life in the present. That is to say, it exploits the gap between the time registered and the time projected – a gap that lies at the heart of the cinematographic apparatus – to create a two-sided clock, which simultaneously recalls the past and makes it present anew.[176]

Contrary to first impressions then, THE CLOCK is nothing like a real clock. It does not repeat the same movement, the same Now, ad infinitum. If we see the film as a meta-commentary on the cinema as a whole, which it invites to do, it does not suggest that the cinema is in service of the real. Rather, projecting the *difference that the cinema makes* in time, it suggests that the cinema never simply keeps time; but always makes its own time by dis-organizing real-time. Each film is a clock, in other words, but essentially an idiosyncratic one.

[176] As I mentioned in the introduction, it is the work of Zsuzsa Baross, along with that of Cavell, which first brings to light the interval between the time registered on film and the time of projection, as a source of creativity (Baross 2011).

Chapter 2: the time of the cinema and the presence of the subject: Dan Graham's Present Continuous Past(s)

THE CLOCK is one of a kind. If it does, however, have a precursor, it is not to be found among cinematic real-time experiments, like Andy Warhol's *Empire*.[177] Rather, it is to be found in works that explore the relation between (to use Cavell's language again) the time that is screened and the real-time from which it is screened. This is the *modus operandi* of Dan Graham's *Present Continuous Past(s)*, a video installation from 1974. The work also seems to reflect the real-time of the viewer. More specifically, it seems to reflect (literally, like a mirror) the unified subject, the subject that remains present to itself across time; which is *pre-supposed* with the homogeneous concept of time, as the correlate of the objective present. But in fact, like THE CLOCK, Graham's

[177] Lucien Logette makes this comparison in his September 2011 review of the film for *La Quinzaine Littéraire*.

work dis-places the present, by bringing it into relation with the past registered on the screen. As a result the unity of the subject comes undone. Although it is a video-installation, and some would argue, a performance piece, I will argue that the work constitutes a great example of the cinema as a machine for the creative dis-location of time, and of the certainties that hinge upon it.

In the work the viewer finds herself in front of a camera and a monitor: a camera that records her, and a monitor that projects her image eight seconds later.[178] The key to the effect of the work is that the interval is just short enough to imply a sense of continuity, of the present with the past, and yet just long enough to mark the difference. By virtue of this duplicity, the interval separates the past retained by the image from the present of the viewer, or the image of the viewer from the viewer present before the screen. However, it joins them at the same time. The past is thus made contemporaneous with the (viewer) present, appearing as its mirror reflection. But it is a heterogeneous past, a sort of counterfeit double, that replays the viewer in the role of an other – an other within.

The notion of a past contemporaneous with the present recalls Henri Bergson's analyses of memory, and their application to the cinema by Deleuze. It is these analyses that are invoked by Elie During in his reading of Graham's work.[179] Bergson argued that memory is not formed after perception. It is formed contemporaneously with the

[178] A detailed description of the work, including a sketch, is available on line: http://www.medienkunstnetz.de/works/present-continuous-pasts/

[179] The chapter "Le Souvenir du Present," from *Faux Raccords: La Coexistence des Images*, has deeply informed my reading of Graham's work (During 2010).

creation of perception ("*au fur et a mesure*…") like a shadow alongside the body; even if consciousness is not aware of it normally, "just as we should be unconscious of our shadow were our eyes to throw light on it each time they turn in that direction" (Bergson 2002, 144). Bergson is led to this claim from his initial insight into the fluid nature of time; that is, past and present are contemporaneous insofar as time does not move in "fits and starts," from one point of rest to another, but flows, such that each moment ("melting," the one into the other) is already past and still to come. Now, insofar as it is contemporaneous with the formation of perception, memory never fails to produce a disconcerting effect of déjà-vu. That is to say, if the present has already past (has past *as soon as* it became present) it is always (always and already) the effect of repetition. While perception, the perception of the present, gives the subject the sense of actively and freely engaging with the world, the co-presence of memory makes that very activity seem like the acting out of a role, a simulacra. The subject is thus divided between past and present, its consciousness split between memory and perception: "Thence two different selves, one of which, conscious of its liberty, erects itself into an independent spectator of a scene which the other seems to be playing in a mechanical way" (Bergson 2002, 149). This description applies even more readily to the experience of the video-installation than to our everyday experience of being in time.

The doubling of the past (of the past in the present and of the present in the past) is multiplied by a mirror covering the wall opposite of the camera and monitor. The mirror reflects whatever is in the room, which includes the image on the monitor. Consequently, when the monitor projects the moment of eight seconds ago, it includes

an image of the monitor that was then reflected in the mirror, projecting the moment of 16 seconds ago. The effect is a potentially infinite regress of "time continuums within time continuums."[180] It is therefore not only the past of the present, the memory formed contemporaneously with perception, that coexists with the present; but the past of every present; that is, every present that has past before the camera. Each new present, appearing on the screen, doubles and replays *all* the others differently, the difference being marked by the interval.

This recalls Bergson's analyses even more. Beginning with the idea that each past is contemporaneous with its present, or more generally, with the idea that time is a continuum, a durational flow, Bergson is led to argue that the whole of the past coexists with the present. The "coiling up" of the past upon the past is incessant; and everything that we have ever lived through (thought, felt, and wanted) is there at every moment, "pressing against the portals of consciousness" (Bergson 1949, 7). Bergson asks rhetorically: "what, in fact, are we, what is our *character* [which becomes visible in each, even the most insignificant gesture, he reminds us elsewhere] if not the condensation of the history that we have lived through since our childhood?" (Bergson 1949, 7-8).

For Bergson the past as a whole coexists with the present. That is to say, the past forms a "whole," in which the multiple moments of an individual's life, but also of life as a whole, are brought together.[181] Paradoxically, however, the unity of the whole is

[180] This is how Dan Graham describes the effect in his artist's statement, which is available online: http://www.medienkunstnetz.de/works/present-continuous-pasts/.

[181] The extension of the theory of duration from a theory of the subject to the problem of the unity of life as a whole is made in *Creative Evolution*. It raises problems that fall outside of the purview of this paper, since Graham's video-installation is concerned with the unity of the subject in time. Nonetheless, it should

predicated on difference and division. The multiple moments (in the context of the installation: the images of the past on the monitor screen) remain heterogeneous by virtue of the interval of time. They coexist and form a whole only in the sense that they are not discrete instants, but each is affected and transformed in relation to every other. In other words, the Bergsonian whole, as the installations allows us to see it, is composed of heterogeneous durations, each of which repeats and differentiates all the others. The whole is therefore open and creative. It is a whole that is perpetually made and unmade. That is to say, the whole, understood on the basis of the splitting of the present, which opens and thereby communicates with past and future, does not have a beginning or an end, which would serve as its timeless referent. It is a whole of incessant becoming (and not of a static being) because there are "time continuums within time continuums," a circuit within every circuit, a repetition within every repetition, a mask (a double) behind every mask. The forking of time into past and present (at the same time) extends infinitely in both directions. This is why Deleuze is right to identify the Bergsonian notion of the past, the past which doubles the present, the past which coexists with the present as a whole, with the notion of the *mise-en-abyme*. He writes, "'the putting into abyss does not redouble the unit, as an external reflection might do; in so far as it is an internal mirroring, it can only ever split it in two,' and subject it 'to the infinite re-launch of endlessly new splitting'" (Deleuze 1989, 82). The *mise-en-abyme* of the present in the mirror of the past, which constitutes the ever-changing continuity of time as a whole, is what Graham's work gives us to see.

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become apparent that Bergson's theory of the subject's existence in time already anticipates the later move, insofar as it defines that existence as open towards an event that exceeds it.

In contrast, on the other side of the screen we see the real-time of the present. It is indexed in the work by a mirror that stands at right angles to the other mirror-wall and to the monitor-wall. In his artist's statement, Graham writes: "The mirror at right angles to the other mirror-wall and to the monitor-wall gives a present-time view of the installation as if observed from an «objective» vantage exterior to the viewer's subjective experience and to the mechanism that produces the piece's perceptual effect. It simply reflects (statically) present time." The objective present reflects itself; that is, it is identical to itself. It is, in this sense, homogenous, static, and changeless. However, Graham's work also testifies to the Bergsonian lesson that despite its homogeneity (or because of it) the objective present lacks consistency. The present, Bergson taught and Graham makes us see, can only be preserved by way of an agency – memory – which makes it pass (Bergson 1962, 170-232). In other words, only that which displaces and transforms the present is able to constitute its memory; just as it is the time that divides the subject which alone constitutes its unity.

We can always see the video, or any film for that matter, from the standpoint of real-time, by treating the images as so many discrete measurable instants. But we would then miss the "perceptual effect" that lies at the heart of the experience of Graham's work. The effect is created in between the images, in and through their relations. It is created in between the medium and the present of real-time, in and through the medium's relation to time. Similarly, we can represent our own experience of time through the grid-like frame of real-time. However, we then neglect the complex and multiple layering of experience that takes place alongside of real-time, where past

and present communicate, each changing in relation to the other. Graham's work seizes upon and realizes the possibility of this other time, which passes along with real-time.

If we do represent our own experience in terms of real-time, we see ourselves as remaining identical, despite the various changes, across time. For the notion of a unified subject is the correlate of the objective present. That is to say, the idea of a subject that remains self-same across time is the presupposed basis of the idea of objective time; just as the idea of a self-identical (objective) present is the basis of the unity of the subject. But if Graham's work implies a theory of the subject, which surely it does, the theory casts doubt on the presupposition of such a subject. Like much of modern philosophy (after Bergson) the work shows how the subject is constituted in time. The sense of self presupposes the sense of being present to oneself from one moment to the next as the same. It thus presupposes the unity of the present. But the unity of the present depends upon memory, which sustains the present only by dividing it and making it pass. The present cannot therefore be the ground of identity. It is constituted as a divided present, and the subject is constituted as a divided subject. We see this in the video very clearly: the subject is displaced at the very moment that it recognizes itself, the moment of the reflection of (self) perception in its corresponding memory image. Recognition (self-recognition) becomes the locus of mis-recognition (*méconnaissance*), and of an infinite splitting of the self.

Is *Present Continuous Past(s)* cinema? The work does use the technology of the moving-image. It exploits the gap between the time registered (by the camera) and the

time projected, which lies at the heart of the apparatus of cinema. On the other hand, one could argue that being placed in the context of an installation, where the viewer's presence before the camera becomes an integral part of the work, this technology serves a different kind of art. Inviting the viewer into the work, making her a participant in the creation of the work, enabling her being present in the work; either with the help of the technology of the moving-image or theatre; is more of a feature of performance art than cinema. The answer to this question, however, depends on what we think the cinema is or can be. I have taken Stanley Cavell's concept of the screen as a barrier as one of the starting points for this discussion. Graham's work would fall outside of the concept of cinema that I have introduced if it eradicated this barrier; that is, if it allowed the viewer to be present in, to share the same present as, the image screened; if it allowed her sense of presence to be reflected on the screen. For what this barrier signifies is that the cinematographic image is never in the present. The barrier marks the heterogeneity of the time of the screen to the present time of the subject. Graham's work exploits the barrier, that is, the duality of the screen, to create a time in which the unity of the present and the subjective certitudes that rests on it are displaced. The work projects an image of the past that remains heterogeneous to the subject. The fact that the two times become simultaneous, in a mirror relation, allows the subject to see its own time reflected as if it were the time of an other. To put it differently, a past that divides the present from itself is made present or takes the place of the present; just as an otherness that deprives the subject of identity appears in its place, as its double. In *The Time-Image* Deleuze writes that what we have learned from Kant, and what

Bergson made all the more explicit, is that "time is not the interior in us, but just the opposite, the interiority in which we move, live and change;" it is the cinema, he adds, that shows "how we move in it, in this form which carries us away, picks us up and enlarges us" (Deleuze 1989, 82). From this point of view, *Present Continuous Past(s)* is an exemplary instance of cinema. It reveals precisely where the cinema begins (its limit, as it were) to take hold of, divide, and open the subject to the exteriority of a heterogeneous time.[182]

One can also question whether THE CLOCK is cinema per se. One could call it a form of performance art, because it engages the present of the spectators, or the spectators present, and because it seems to happen in the present. However, both works make visible the difference between the time that the medium brings into play and that of the present subject; between the time of the screen, in Cavell's words, and that from which it is screened. Whereas real-time is governed by the principle of identity, each now resembling itself and resembling all the others; the time of the screen is heterogeneous, each moment differing in itself in relation to all the others. It is the medium that creates this heterogeneous time, by bringing time into a new relation

[182] Elie During is keen to point out the difference between Graham's work and the performance art tradition. Whereas the latter often aims at creating a sense of presence; that is, of the subject (viewer or artist) being present in the event of the work; Graham's piece serves to displace that sense in favour of revealing the pre-subjective process that constitutes the present in the first place: "Car la question n'est pas de saisir le "pur présent" de l'acte ou de la performance mais de se rendre attentive au présent qui se fait, et qui souvent aussi se défait. Il ne s'agit pas de chercher la présence dans le processus mais de rendre tangible le processus même du présent: le présent se faisant… le présent s'exfoliant à mesure qu'il passe" (During 2010, 88).

with itself. In other words, the time that is produced in between the time registered on film and real-time is the creative time created by these works of cinema. It cannot be traced back to a real, or real-time, referent in the world.

Creating time, creating multiple, heterogeneous times, is a possibility that belongs to the medium of cinema. However, it is not given to it, ready-made, as a universal structure. It is a possibility that must be created, and realized differently, each time. There are many different ways in which the cinema can dis-articulate, dis-assemble, or de-range time. Most often film time is created through montage. It emerges through the relations between images, as they unfold from the beginning to the end of the film. THE CLOCK and *Present Continuous Past(s)* are unique in exploiting the gap between the time registered and the time projected. Each exploits the creative possibility of this gap in its own singular way, turning the present toward the past, as toward a source of the new.

Chapter 3: Revisiting Wavelength, after Deleuze's Time-Image

> "The film is a continuous zoom which takes 45 minutes to go from its widest field to its smallest and final field. It was shot with a fixed camera from one end of an 80 foot loft, shooting the other end, a row of windows, and the street. This, the setting, and the action which takes place there are cosmically equivalent. The room (and the zoom) are interrupted by 4 human events including a death. The sound on these occasions is sync sound, music and speech, occurring simultaneously with an electronic sound, a sine wave, which goes from its lowest note to its highest in 40 minutes. It is a total glissando while the film is a crescendo and a dispersed spectrum which attempts to utilize the gifts of both prophecy and memory which only film and music have to offer" (Snow 1994, 40-41).

It is not easy to approach a film that thematizes the impossibility of attaining what is aimed at; a film, a 45 minute zoom, whose object seems to withdraw as the camera approaches it. "A track towards the true nature of film," as Bruce Elder called it,[183] *Wavelength* questions itself, reflects on its own possibility and ontological status, yet seems to withhold the answer, deferring the end of its movement. However, as in philosophy, a question well-posed may provide an answer, despite or *by* remaining open. Moreover, a path "toward Snow" has already been breached. The film has been written about extensively. Perhaps the most often cited, and the most relevant, is Annette Michelson's article "Toward Snow." Rather than seeing the film as a documentary, or a reflection on what it means to "dwell" in a space, Michelson understands that the film is about time. Citing Valery's *Introduction to the method of*

[183] Elder, Bruce. 1977. "Michael Snow's *Wavelength*." In *The Canadian Film Reader*, edited by Seth Feldman and Joyce Nelson. Toronto: Peter Martin. 320.

Leonardo da Vinci: "The working of his thought is thus concerned with that slow transformation of the notion of space which, beginning as a vacuum chamber, as an isotropic volume, gradually became a system inseparable from the matter it contains and from time;" she suggests that we see a similar kind of transformation take place in the film (Michelson 1978, 172). What at first appears as the image of an ordinary apartment, framed in the static geometry of perspective, is turned into a meditation on – but also an experience of – time, time and the cinema. Michelson points out that the film is punctuated by sudden changes from positive to negative, intense flashes of color, superimpositions of fixed images over the progressive zoom itself, and a series of human events, all of which create a series of still (photograph-like) moments within the forward movement. These interruptions serve to remind us that the movement of the cinematographic image "bears in its wake" discrete events, out of which the flow of time emerges (Michelson 1978, 174). In other words, for Michelson the film is about the formation of time, of temporal continuity, out of fixed frames, isolated events, and spatial objects. It is a film about film, or about its essentially temporal dimension.

It is this creation of time, which *Wavelength* both performs and reflects on, that makes it such an interesting and important film for thinking about the cinema. In this regard, Michelson puts us on the right track. However, for Michelson, time is synonymous with narrative. In making visible the formation of time, *Wavelength*, she argues, functions as a reflection on narrative. It functions as a kind of a meta-narrative. Moreover, Michelson understands narrative time through Husserl's phenomenological concept of time-consciousness. For Husserl, consciousness is intentional, in the sense

that it is directed at objects in the world. As intentional, the temporality of consciousness is teleological (in layman's terms, goal-oriented).[184] Michelson equates the teleological time of intentional consciousness with the time of narrative (Michelson 1978, 173). Narrative, she argues, establishes a relation between the subject (viewer or artist) behind the camera and the world given before the camera, which exhibits intentional activity. It exhibits intentional activity insofar as it compels the viewer to organize the flow of images in reference to a meaningful end, the end of the story, and to experience the perpetual modification and development of that end across time. The experience of film time, in this sense, mirrors the experience of a subject intentionally positing a goal and acting to realize it in the world. *Wavelength*, for Michelson, is a perfect example, because it strips the narrative down to this essential temporal aspect: the experience of moving towards a resolution (Michelson 1978, 173-177).

However, not every narrative has a teleological structure, not every story resolves itself in a single revelation. There are many open-ended and pluralistic narratives in modern literature and film. In contrast to Michelson, I argue that *Wavelength* only seems to have a linear trajectory, but at a deeper level reveals a more twisted structure, projecting an end-less future, at both the beginning and end of the film. More importantly, however, it strikes me that the film should not be considered a narrative at all (even an open-ended one). *Wavelength* is composed as a movement. From the beginning to the end of the film, the zoom sketches a figure in time; a figure, a back and forth movement, which creates a certain *sense* of time. The time of the film is

[184] Husserl, Edmund. 1999. *Cartesian Meditations*. Translated by Dorion Cairns. Kluwer Academic Publishers.

the effect of a certain ordering of the flow of time in the image and between images, of a certain montage that takes places within the zoom. In other words, it is by purely cinematographic means, and not by way of the story, that Snow is able to create that sense of temporal continuity, the stretch of time, which Michelson was not far from conceptualizing.

In order to better understand the experience of time that lies at the heart of *Wavelength*, Gilles Deleuze's work on the cinema is a valuable resource. Deleuze emphasizes the irreducibility of the movement and time of the cinematographic image to narrative. In classical cinema, he argues, time was bound up with narrative development more closely. It thus took a more teleological form. However, according to Deleuze, modern cinema is preoccupied with time more directly, often foregoing the rational development of events in order to explore the unfolding of time for itself (Deleuze 1986; Deleuze 1989). This is the case with *Wavelength*, the "focus" of which is not the end of the story, but the experience of being on the way. It is this experience of being on the way, that is, of moving towards a future, a future which will not arrive, that I will try to conceptualize, in its metaphysical and cinematographic aspects, through an approach that is informed by the work of Deleuze.

back to the future: the zoom

Michelson is right to point out that *Wavelength* begins by installing a threshold of expectation, through the searching, narrowing movement of the zoom. The film

appears as having “relentless directionality,” or “that regard for the future that forms a horizon of expectation” (Michelson 1978, 174). The sense of a “towards which” becomes visible, as the photograph comes progressively into view on the horizon, and is, as it were, thematized. The horizon is made visible as that in relation to which the present of the image, and, correlatively, the consciousness that is situated in the present, is constituted, as a present in time, on its way “towards” the future.

At the same time, Michelson points out, the film makes visible a “horizon of the past,” through superimpositions (of the image just seen) and events “passing into the field from behind the camera and back again” (Michelson 1978, 174). “And back again,” that is to say, there is a recursive movement whereby the past is re-projected (superimposed) onto the future, just as a memory is re-activated in the present. What is initially projected ahead becomes past (falling behind the camera) and serves as the basis for a new horizon. For Michelson, this re-course to the past does not disturb the film’s “relentless directionality.” It gives it shape, in the way that a memory serves to fix the end point of a new action.

The film (or its time) seems to move like an arrow towards its target, suggesting a linear schema, and the promise of a resolution. However, this progressive movement is foiled, or serves as a foil for a different type of temporality that becomes apparent in the course of the film. We are “moving from uncertainty to certainty,” as Michelson puts it; but what happens at the moment of “revelation,” when the camera discovers the object of its search? It turns out to be a photograph of ocean waves, and the zoom continues. The image regains the depth that it started with and that it only seemed to

have exhausted. Michelson writes: “The photograph is re-projected in superimposition upon itself. The eye is projected through a photograph out beyond the wall and screen into a limitless space” (Michelson 1978, 175). What takes place is a sort of return to the beginning; a return, that is, to the condition of being on the way towards… or of being suspended before an uncertain future. [185]

By virtue of returning us to the condition of the beginning of the film, the future (the photograph *towards which* the zoom moves) ceases to appear simply as what is ahead on the horizon. It “turns out” as having already been given, as what the zoom aims at *retrieving*. It is as though it were – a future – past. In his description of the film, Snow spoke of “the gifts of both prophecy and memory that only film and music have to offer” (Snow 1994, 40-41). Considering the loop-like structure of the zoom, the conjunction “and” could be taken as suggesting an imbrication of prophecy and memory, past and future, which makes each the function of the other. The gift of time would then be this imbrication: the giveness – in memory – of the future; or the “yet to be” character of what is given (as past).

The effect of this imbrication, or of the folding of the future onto the past, is a kind of *mise-en-abyme*: there appears a horizon behind the horizon, a veil behind the veil. In other words, the recommencement of the zoom into a horizon which lay behind the horizon, implies the possibility of an infinite regress. The future *mise-en-abyme*

[185] The climactic moment of the film, when the photograph moves clearly into view, is marked by a rapid series of superimpositions of the photograph as it *was* just projected; as well as by a sine wave (the soundtrack of the film) which begins to slide up and down its range of cycles, as though it were turning back and doubling upon itself, after having steadily progressed, until then, to its highest pitch. Both of these devices serve to emphasize the loop-like or repetitive structure of the zoom.

(placed in the abyss) appears as *infinitely deferred*. As the zoom approaches it, at the very moment, the future opens anew as already still to come; and so on, ad infinitum, as though the movement had no end. It is in this sense that the zoom returns to its "origin." It repeats and recommences the un-ending movement towards the future.

The time of the film is not therefore linear, but it is not simply circular either. It does not simply return to what was already there, since what was already there, and what comes to have the status of the past in the course of the film, was itself simply a possibility, a vague future on the horizon. In other words, what was given beforehand was a movement that still had to be made, a horizon that had not yet been given or had only been given in the form of the not yet. The zoom returns only to the future, to that which continually escapes it, to that which it can never be done with. Its trajectory is therefore more paradoxical than that which is implied by a simple circle. Spinning away from and towards itself at the same time, it traces something like a broken or de-centered circle. The meaning of this figure is that time is not defined in reference to a preexisting origin or end. It is eternally new.

The "human events" that punctuate the zoom do not constitute a narrative, so much as they serve to mark the time of the film. A woman walks into the apartment accompanied by two men carrying a book-shelf. They leave, and later the woman returns with someone. They do not do very much (they listen to some music). Later, after a sound of breaking glass, a man stumbles in and dies on the floor.[186] The woman returns and calls someone to tell him about the dead man in her apartment, whom she

[186] The man is played by the avant-garde filmmaker Hollis Frampton. A more detailed description of the plot can be found on Wikipedia.

does not seem to know. This absurd little "narrative" constitutes a before and an after, with a death in-between. What is essential here is the fact that it is *at the moment of death* that the camera turns into the photograph (passing just above the dead body). Death coincides with the transition, with the moment when the film turns back (to the future). From this standpoint the photograph of ocean waves appears as a sort of visualization of death; or of the point of rupture, the moment, the time of death. But if in this sense the film unveils the great mystery of life, it is only, alas, to unveil another veil. For if it is death that is projected, it is projected as infinitely deferred. That is to say, death is made present as what cannot be made present. It is given as unattainable, or "imprevisible;" – and what, conceivably, is more "imprevisible" than death?

This reading of the film is confirmed in a certain way by Snow's *Wavelength for those who don't have the time*, made in 2003. The film, which is *Wavelength* cut into three parts and superimposed upon one another, does more than economize on time. It reveals what is most essential about *Wavelength*. The film folds *Wavelength* upon itself such that the end is co-present with the beginning: the photograph of waves is already there while the zoom is just beginning to move towards it. We see the photograph up close, occupying the whole screen, and *at the same time* we see it superimposed upon itself, as a small image, far on the horizon. Thus the zoom moves toward a future that has already past and is still to come. From the point of view of Snow's sequel, what is

essential about *Wavelength* is neither narrative nor linear perspective, but that doubling up of time that is best understood in terms of the anachronism: *back to the future*. [187]

from a (Husserlian) phenomenological towards a Deleuzian concept of time

Is *Wavelength* a metaphor of the subject's experience of being in time? Michelson is not the only significant film critic to make this argument. What it implies is that the film *refers* to a reality given in the world, by *mirroring* the "intentional" structure of subjective experience. Understood phenomenologically, consciousness is "intentional" in the sense that it is always directed at objects in the world. Insofar as intentionality is an activity (of the subject in the world) it is fundamentally temporal. This is what, according to Michelson, the film dramatizes: with the camera in the role of consciousness, and the photograph in that of the world. Like phenomenology, the film

[187] The fact that the central and final image of *Wavelength* is a photograph sheds further light on the temporality of the film. If a photograph fixes a moment of time, a photograph projected in a film is itself fixed in time. Snow explored this paradox (of photographs cinematographically projected in time) in his film *One Second in Montreal*. The film projects a series of photographs of parks in Montreal. Each still is held progressively longer, which reveals, ineluctably, the irreducible inscription of time on the cinematographic image. As Michelson puts it, in *One Second in Montreal* "the flow of time is superimposed, inscribed upon the photograph's fixity – as the discrete images of the loft had been superimposed upon its traversal by the zoom [in *Wavelength*]" (Michelson 1978, 177). However, in the final moments of *Wavelength* the projection of the photograph serves to reveal something like the eternity at the heart of time itself.

does not describe this relation as static, or the movement from the one to the other as "deterministic" (that is, uni-directional, like a cause and effect relation). For phenomenology, subject and object, intention and goal, past and future, are never given once and for all. In *Wavelength* we are to see the perpetual transformation of subject and object in relation to one another, through the perpetual reversal of horizons, whereby what was projected ahead becomes the starting point for new initiatives. We are to see, that is to say, the perpetual transformation of the world by the camera's subjective eye, and of the eye by the world. Michelson's phenomenological reading of the film is not strictly "realist," since from this standpoint reality is not simply reproduced. Nonetheless, the reading refers the camera's eye to the horizon of the world and to its subjective correlate, as to an original structure, of which it becomes "a metaphor."[188]

However, if *Wavelength* reverses the direction of time, in the way that I have described it above, then it ruins intentionality. Even if, following Michelson, we begin by considering the camera in the role of consciousness and the photograph in that of its object; and if we understand the relation between the two, as "dramatized" by the film, in terms of time; we cannot fail to see the ruin of intentionality. The photographic object

[188] The question of what kind of image of the subject is constituted by *Wavelength* was much discussed in the seventies and eighties, during the heyday of Film Theory. Stephen Heath argued with Michelson, suggesting that the film's implied narrative and linear perspective prevents it from questioning how the apparatus of cinema constitutes the subject in the first place; and makes it complicit with a certain ideology of the (all-powerful) subject. Snow, for his part, claimed that neither narrative nor perspective were the true subjects of the film. Guided by Deleuze, I have focused on the time that is articulated by the movement of the image in the film, which implies a different way of looking at the question of the cinema and its relation to the subject.
For a summary of these more classical debates about *Wavelength*, see:
Legge, Elizabeth. 2009. *Michael Snow, Wavelength*. Afterall Books.

appears in the guise of a future that withdraws from the grasp of consciousness as it approaches it. It does not function as a goal that the subject can recognize or represent. It does not refer back to the original intention of the subject, as its actual or potential realization. It appears to the subject as the unknown, the unforeseeable, the limitless. Ex-posed to such a future, plunging, that is, zooming into it, the subject is undone. That is to say, the coherence of the subject, its identity across time, is broken; broken by the fact that a part of it, the future into which it is projected, remains inaccessible and unrecognizable. If there is a unity between consciousness and its object, the camera eye and the photograph, it lies in the continuity that the zoom establishes, and this continuity links the one to the other, the past (self) to the future, as to a radical otherness. In other words, the point of connection, of the self with its object and through this object with itself, is a point of divergence.

In the film the projection of the future and the ruin of the subject are marked by death. Similarly, in the history of philosophy, it is the meditation on death, in the work of Heidegger, that introduces a rupture with the modern theory of the subject. Having defined the subject as situated in time (*Dasein*); and having defined time by the possibilities that the subject aims to realize in the world; Heidegger identifies death as the limit of all these possibilities.[189] Death is not only a possibility that cannot be realized. It also marks the limit of all possibilities, of all possible realizations. However, the possibility of not realizing a possibility, or of not being able to, is a feature of all possibility. It serves to define the very character of possibility, that is, its essentially

[189] Heidegger, Martin. 1996. *Being and Time*. Translated by Joan Stambaugh. Albany: State University of New York Press. Division 2, Section 1.

contingent, “not yet,” quality. Moreover, this “not yet” essence of possibility, which is marked by the possibility of death, is also what enables the realization of possibilities, since it implies that the course of action is not fixed in advance. This reasoning leads Heidegger to conclude that death is the ultimate human possibility, the horizon that sustains every horizon, enabling the realization and the negation of all possibilities. If the subject is defined by a possibility that it cannot master, if its “ownmost” (as Heidegger calls it) possibility escapes it, then it exists outside itself (Heidegger 1996, 232). Being towards death, the subject cannot know itself or what will become of it. It is defined, rather, by a movement away from itself; that is to say, the movement towards itself, towards its own possibilities, pushes it outside itself. The subject is outside of itself (as Heidegger would say, it is ec-static); or, which amounts to the same thing, it is an other to itself. This reflection on death and the ruin of the subject is radicalized in the work of Blanchot, Levinas, Derrida, and Deleuze. It takes place in *Wavelength* (both as reflection and experience) through the movement of the zoom towards an infinitely deferred horizon.

There is thus a metaphysical or rather ontological aspect to the film, which brings it into relation with philosophy. Although Snow was not thinking about Heidegger or Deleuze, he did have metaphysical “aims,” calling the film a summation of his religious inklings (Snow 1994, 40). It is hard not to see the photograph of the ocean, projected at the moment of death, as invoking some sort of transcendence. However, it would be presumptuous to see it as invoking the beyond of death as the place of everlasting bliss. The ocean is too vague and indeterminate for that. It appears, rather,

as a limit towards which the subject moves, but which it can never cross. Death is this limit, at once full of promise and infinite possibility, and, at the same time, a hopeless black hole, in which everything comes to nothing. The sublime quality of the film, or of its climactic moment, can also be explained by this Janus-faced character of death: at once a source of great wonder and novelty, and the most harrowing, destructive experience.

In the cinema books Deleuze turns to Heidegger when discussing the cinema's relation to thought. It is Heidegger's later reflections on the nature of thinking that interest Deleuze the most. In the text *What is Called Thinking?* Heidegger exploits the double sense of the German phrase *Was Heisst Denken?* (meaning both what is called thinking and what calls for thinking) to transform the question "what is called thinking" into the question "what calls for thinking;" that is to say, what enables us to think in the first place.[190] His answer, at once simple and profound, is that what calls for thinking, what is most thought provoking, is the fact that we are *not yet* thinking. It is the lack of knowledge, rather than the stock of accumulated knowledge, that makes us think in the first place; just as it is the possibility of not being able to act that gives us the possibility of action, of realizing something new and undetermined, in the first place. Deleuze writes that when the cinema discovers time, not the time that unfolds as a determined sequence, but the empty time that opens a limitless horizon, it discovers this fundamental "inpower" (*impouvoir*) of thought. In other words, with the time-image the cinema forces us to think thought itself, which is the "not yet" that lies at the origin of

[190] Heidegger, Martin. 1976. *What is Called Thinking*. Translated by J. Glenn Gray. Perennial, HarperCollins Publishers.

all thought, at the origin of all possibility.[191] The cinema has innumerable ways of making us probe the very depths of thought. *Wavelength* does it by making visible death as the "imprevisible" (invisible) future.

However, the ontological aspect of the "not yet" should not blind us to the specificity of the medium of the cinema and the singular way that it is realized in this monumental film. Deleuze's approach, moreover, instructs us to consider this specificity as well as the singular way it is realized by each film. *Wavelength* does not give us a representation of death or simply reproduce the concept. The zoom does not function as a representation or a reproduction of a real subject moving towards a photograph of the future. Rather, it is a movement that opens the future for itself. In other words, the event that the film constitutes does not function as a mirror of experience. It is an experience. It effectuates a rupture, whereby the subject plunges into the abyss of time, in and through the very movement of the looping zoom.

The effectuation of the rupture, moreover, is accomplished through purely cinematographic means. The time it takes the zoom to traverse the apartment, and the projection of this time on the screen, are manipulated and organized in a way that allows the future to become visible as a withdrawing horizon. That is to say, it is in the space of the 45 minutes that it takes for the projector to repeat the movement of the zoom; and in between the images articulated into a continuum, which (through

[191] "What forces us to think is 'the inpower (*impouvoir*) of thought,' the figure of nothingness, the inexistence of a whole which could be thought. … The cinematographic image, as soon as it takes on its aberration of movement, carries out a *suspension of the world* or affects the visible with a *disturbance*, which, far from making thought visible, as Eisenstein wanted, are on the contrary directed to what does not let itself be thought in thought, and equally to what does not let itself be seen in vision" (Deleuze 1989, 168).

superimposition) loops back on itself; that the abyss of time (the infinite deferral of the future) surges up and becomes visible. This is perhaps why the 45 minutes feels like an eternity.[192]

[192] While the sense of an infinite stretching of time has little to do with the real-time length of the film, one does have to sit through *Wavelength*, one does have to give it time. It is the slow building up of duration that disposes us to eventually experience its limitlessness. This is why, while *Wavelength for those who don't have the time* reveals the anachronism that lies at the heart of the film, it is not the same experience.

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