

THE WORK AND THE IDEA

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Editorial Note. The text presented here is the first chapter of an upcoming book by the author. The editorial board would like to thank Professor de Beistegui for allowing us to publish it here; our thanks also go to Robert Sinnerbrink for facilitating its publication.

INTRODUCTION

This book attempts to show that it is through the recognition of what I call the hypersensible, and the work of metaphor, that art comes into its own, and is able to twist free of metaphysical aesthetics, rooted in the ontology of identity and governed by the laws of imitation. By “hypersensible” I mean a dimension that escapes the classical distinction and the space that stretches between the sensible and the supersensible, matter and form, or the image and the original. In a nutshell, the hypersensible designates the excess *of* the sensible *within* the sensible, and the genuine matter of art. As such, it escapes any straightforward materialism, as well as any form of idealism, or spiritualism. It could be characterised as *hyletics*. For reasons that I will clarify later on, I prefer to refer to it as an aesthetics of metaphor, or a metaphoric. Why metaphor? Simply because, twisting free of its own, deeply entrenched metaphysical interpretation, metaphor can be seen as the image or trope, applicable to art in general, which reveals the excess of the sensible in the sensible, or the way in which any given image is *virtually* more than it *actually* is. Metaphor is the aesthetic concept that corresponds to difference as the decisive ontological concept. It is the artistic *schema* of difference. As such, it provides an alternative to the classical concept of mimesis, and to the double imperative of presence and identity that governs it.

This thesis, already developed and tested elsewhere in relation to literature,¹ is now put to the test in the visual arts, and in the work of Chillida in particular. The first part of the book is an attempt to extract the conditions of a way out of metaphysical aesthetics by working its way through its history and, at the same time, by learning to recognise the traces of the hypersensible, or the breaking points, which traverse that history. It ends by bringing together the concept of the hypersensible and that of metaphor. In the second part of the book, I

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illustrate this thesis by turning to the work of the sculptor Eduardo Chillida, a work that has been systematically ignored in the English speaking world, despite the fact that a number of seminal thinkers of the second half of the 20th century, whether in Continental Europe or South America, recognised its importance very early on. Gaston Bachelard, for example, wrote the text that accompanied Chillida's first exhibition at the Maeght gallery in Paris in 1956. In 1969, Heidegger dedicated a short but seminal piece to Chillida.² And whilst not technically a philosopher, Octavio Paz, who wrote the catalogue for the Chillida exhibition at the Guggenheim museum in New York in 1980, emphasises the philosophical dimension of the artist's work, and especially its connection with the Presocratics. Finally, Chillida also engaged in recorded and published conversations with philosophers, such as Víctor Gómez Pin.³ Whilst the fact that such eminent thinkers have written about one aspect or another of Chillida's work, or were inspired to write philosophically as a result of their encounter with the work, should provide sufficient evidence of its philosophical relevance, my aim is not to offer a systematic review, or even a summary, of their views. My aim, rather, it is to extract from Chillida's work what I take it to be its philosophical core, and to add an original contribution to a relatively small, but highly significant, group of existing contributions. Specifically, I want to show how Chillida's work challenges the classical categories of aesthetics and forces us to create new concepts, which exceed the limits and the space of Platonic and Aristotelian metaphysics. With Chillida, then, it becomes a matter of recognising an excess or surplus, which doesn't point to, or broach, another, higher space, but which signals the presence of an otherwise undisclosed space, folded or hidden away in the sensible itself. It becomes a matter of recognising how the work of art is one of abstraction from the sensible and into the hypersensible, of extraction of the hypersensible from the sensible. The movement, then, is not from immanence to transcendence, but within immanence itself. And that is the reason why philosophy can no longer be spoken of as a metaphysics of art—unless, reverting to its etymology, one understands metaphysics as the discourse that comes after and presupposes the sense of nature that art opens up, thus also reversing the order that classical metaphysics itself, up until, and including, Hegel, had introduced, and which situated art somewhere between nature and philosophy, or between the (merely) sensible and the (purely) spiritual. In the face of the hypersensible, and the art that discloses it, philosophy transforms itself into an altogether different type of aesthetics—one that, were it not for a fear of hyperbole, one could call a *hyperaesthetics*, thus signalling its connection with the hypersensible and its own overcoming of classical aesthetics.

1. AESTHETICS AND METAPHYSICS

A. PLATO

It is Plato who, famously, set the scene for the meaning and value of the work of art—a scene that was taken up, adapted, and modified throughout the history of philosophy and aesthetics, before it was finally, radically, and irreversibly called into question by Nietzsche. Despite its many mutations and permutations, the Platonic schema remained firmly in place. From Plato to Hegel, art was thought *metaphysically*, that is, from within the space that Platonic metaphysics opened up, the space that stretches between the sensible and the supersensible. From the start, and throughout, it was a question of identifying the place that art occupies within that space, the extent to which and the manner in which art bridges that space, orients one's own sensibility towards the supersensible and the original, or, on the contrary, chains us to the (merely) sensible, to the image. Let me begin, then, by tracing that history—schematically, all too economically—before raising the question of how, if at all, art can be thought outside that schema.⁴

Plato's seminal discussion and denunciation of art takes place in Book 10 of the *Republic*. Two highly significant features of that discussion need to be mentioned from the start. Firstly, Socrates envisages the work of art as a specific kind of image. Yet because the status of the image is itself, as we shall see, essentially ambiguous, it is essential to establish the sort of image that the work of art is, and the relation to the original that characterises the work. Secondly, Plato's discussion takes place in the context of a dialogue concerned with the construction in *logos* of the ideal city, which, as the image or allegory of the cave at the beginning of Book 7 suggests, requires that each soul liberate itself from its bondage to images, that is, from its inability to see them *as* images or shadows,

and ascend towards the vision of the original, in what amounts to a philosophical elevation, or conversion, and a political liberation. It is remarkable that, wanting to warn us against the power of images, and mistaking images for the truth, Plato himself speaks in images, thus performing the very operation against which he wishes to warn us. This type of strategy is repeated later on in the *Republic* when, after his famous denunciation of poetry, Socrates himself turns into a kind of poet and tells the story of Er's visit to the underworld. Much is at stake in this discussion, then, and most specifically the place and rank of philosophy and art in relation to truth, and the place they ought be given in the ideal city.

The work of artists—poets and painters—is a matter of what Plato calls “imitation” (*mimēsis*). And it is precisely insofar as artists rely on such an imitative *technē* that, Socrates tells us, they should be banned from the city. Why should there be no place for imitation in the ideal city? What is the power of images, such that they can threaten the very existence of the city? And how can Plato condemn, and indeed ban, the use of images produced by way of imitation, and at the same time speak through images and stories? This tension seems to point to an essential ambiguity of the image itself, which has the power to disclose the original, but also to conceal it, and deceive us into believing that it is the original. This ambiguity is actually reflected in a conceptual distinction that underpins the discussion of images that we find not only in the *Republic*, but also in the *Sophist*. Some images, Socrates claims in the *Sophist*, look like the original. Such images have the ability to draw one's vision to the original and provide an access—albeit limited and insufficient—to the thing as it is *in truth*. Those are the type of images that Plato himself uses, time and again, as an heuristic device to set us on the way to truth, and away from mere appearances, or semblances. As such, they should be clearly distinguished from another kind of image, which the sophist and the artist alike use. The image in question is not a likeness (*eikōn*) that allows us to see the original, albeit only partially, but a phantom or simulacrum (*phantasma*) that directs our gaze away from the original, and towards the appearance itself, as if the appearance were the original. But the appearances (*phainomena*), after which poems and paintings are forged, are themselves only manifestations of things that are *in truth*, or real beings (*onta*), and which Plato calls “ideas.” The images of the artist only *simulate* being;⁵ they are nothing (real), no more real than the reflection of things in a mirror. Such is the reason why we can refer to them as *simulacra*.

We should be careful, then, not to confuse the two types of images or image-making (*eidōlopoukē technē*), namely, likeness-making (*eikastikē technē*), such as that of the cabinetmaker, which “produces an image [*eikōn*] or imitation by following the proportions of the original, of the paradigm, and by giving the right colour to each part,” and mere semblances, which require a technique that Plato characterises as *phantastic* (*phantastikē technē*). Such are the images produced by imitation: they are only imitations of imitations (of a couch, for example, or a table), and thus thrice removed from the original, or the idea, in which the thing is given as such, or self-given. Once in the grip of such deceiving images, the souls are riveted to non-being, and oblivious of truth. But that is not all. Their danger and threat—to truth, and to the possibility of constructing a city that would be built on truth—consists in their ability to present themselves *as if* they were true, that is, as if beings were nothing other than (their) appearance or *look*, as if there was no truth beyond appearance. And that, Plato claims, is the ultimate deception and the source of all corruption. As Sallis puts it: “by making images (*eidōla*) that are far removed from the truth, both the painter and the imitative poet produce a bad regime (*politeia*) in the souls of individuals.”⁶ Since mimetic art is “far removed from truth,” and “associates with the part in us that is remote from intelligence,” it is, Socrates concludes, “an inferior thing” that “belongs to the inferior elements of the soul” and engenders “inferior offspring.”⁷ As such, it has no place in the ideal city. The reversal of Platonism—assuming that such a thing is at all possible—would require that, in place of truth, and even in place of those images produced after the truth, the city, and all the activities carried out in the city, be ruled by those deceiving images, which, in the absence of fixed, self-present and self-identical instances (the Ideas) against which to measure them, would be allowed to proliferate and bring about anarchy. Unless, at the same time, one were able to introduce other hierarchies and other criteria of selection, and produce an altogether different order.

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B. ARISTOTLE

Although Aristotle envisages art, and especially poetry, as a form of mimesis, he seems to depart quite radically from Plato's own conception, and especially from the idea of art as illusion and simulacrum. In Chapter 4 of the *Poetics*, Aristotle emphasises the fact that imitation is "natural to man from childhood" and that he is in fact "the most imitative creature in the world." Imitation, Aristotle goes on to say, is itself oriented towards *learning*: man "learns at first by imitation."⁸ And since learning is the greatest pleasure achievable for men, imitation and, more generally, knowledge through representation, should not be rejected, but embraced. The reason why, Aristotle claims, we are able to delight in works that represent objects which, in the flesh as it were, seem to us ugly or inferior, such as "the lowest animals" or "dead bodies," is because we learn something about those things. By emphasising this immediate and natural connection between learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, and mimesis, Aristotle calls into question the radical separation that Plato had established between those images produced through mimesis and the original of which they are the image, and which alone is true. Poetry, which is a valuable source of knowledge for Aristotle, is itself born of this natural inclination to imitate, and to learn through representation. For Aristotle, we actually learn through images and, as we shall see in a moment, not only through *artistic* images. As such, images cannot be reduced to mere phantoms or simulacra. They are—or *can be*—images of the truth. With Aristotle, then, a reevaluation of mimetic art takes place, and a closer link between art and truth seems to be established. In fact, Aristotle values imitative art to such an extent that he thinks it teaches us more than history, for example, which speaks only of facts and singular events, whereas poetry is oriented towards universals:

The difference between a historian and a poet is this, that one tells what happened and the other what might happen. Hence poetry is more philosophic and serious than history, since its statements are of the nature rather of universals, whereas those of history are singulars.⁹

Of course, the image of the poet is always singular: he always tells the story of a specific hero. And yet, somehow, he allows the universal to shine through the particular and is interested in the singular only to the extent that it can provide an access to the universal. The rehabilitation of images in Aristotle is also a rehabilitation of intuition as a legitimate mode of knowledge and access to truth.

Despite those differences, however, the Platonic schema remains firmly in place, for at least two reasons. Firstly, Aristotle clearly states that the delight we take in the representation, and thus the knowledge—albeit inadequate—of the object, requires the prior vision of the thing.¹⁰ In other words, and in a way that goes almost without saying, the kind of learning and pleasure derived from imitation requires the prior vision and experience of the being that is imitated. It requires a degree—minimal and provisional—of familiarity with, and knowledge of, the object that is represented. And yet, at the same time, imitation points beyond itself, and beyond the object it imitates. Its *raison d'être*, and the reason why we delight in its many productions, is to extract the universal from the particular, not through rational discourse and dianoetic knowledge, but through the production of images. But the universal is itself not actually given, but only intimated, in the particular. Only insofar as we already know, and have already "seen," the universal, can we recognise it in the particular. In other words, no matter how pedagogic mimesis might be, no matter how much the beautiful words of the poet set us under way to truth, they are never truth *as such*. As Sallis puts it: "one can learn through the image *only* if it is recognised as an image of the thing itself."¹¹ It is this subordination of poetic mimesis to a prior and posterior vision of the truth that binds the Aristotelian account of mimesis to the metaphysical axiomatics of Plato.

There is, however, a deeper and more implicit affinity between Plato and Aristotle on the question of mimesis. For Aristotle, as for Plato, mimesis is not only, and not primarily, a concept that is specific to art. Art is essentially mimetic, but mimesis exceeds art. Mimesis, as I'm about to show, is a metaphysical, and specifically onto-theological concept. By subsuming art under such a concept, classical aesthetics locks art into a metaphysical framework, which itself requires to be deconstructed if the question of art is ever going to be wrested from

mimesis. In the specific case of Aristotle, mimesis defines the relation between the physical, sublunary, world, and divine being. In fact, imitation of the divine, and its immobility, accounts for the motion of the physical world itself, and the Heavens in particular, whose elliptical trajectory is the very figure of eternity, the very image or the realisation within the sensible world of divine perfection. Divine being is always one, without beginning or end, absolutely itself, which means fully actualized, while sublunary or sensible beings, physical beings, are always striving after their unity, tending toward a state of perfection or rest in which they would be fully realized. From where do they get this goal (*telos*), which is the source of their movement? From where does nature derive its becoming? From the fact that, as matter (*hylē*), as power or potentiality (*dunamis*) oriented towards a form (*morphē, eidos*), it tends towards pure being, or truth, defined as self-presence and self-identity; from the fact that it is drawn irresistibly by a principle of perfection which is God's mode of being or *ousia*, which is to say, pure immobility. It is precisely to the extent that sensible beings *imitate* the *ousia* of God in their own way that they themselves will be able to accede to the dignity of essence. Between the physical and the metaphysical, between sensible being and supersensible beings, there exists a principle of imitation and desire or aspiration. In other words, there is between them a relation like that of the copy to the model, of the image to the original, which is to say, a relation of resemblance and identity, even if, by definition, there is still an unbridgeable gap or difference between them. This difference is the one that separates the act of potency, the full and already accomplished being that is proper to the Prime Mover, from the being which, in a perpetual condition of realisation, characterises sublunary beings. *Ousia* means beingness in the sense of full presence (*parousia*), fully realized potency. Being is above all a synonym for presence, or actuality. In the sublunary world, by way of contrast, the act is never pure; it is always mixed with potency, and this potency is what constitutes the movement of the world.

It is in that context that art is itself understood as mimetic. Art (*technē*), Aristotle writes in the *Physics*, and in a way that encompasses useful as well as fine art, “imitates nature”¹²—not only in the Platonic sense, that is, in the sense that it produces likenesses of natural entities, but also in the sense that, like those entities, and like the meta-physical world, it is characterised by the primacy of form over matter, and by that of the final cause, which governs the process as a whole, including its coming-into-being (*genesis*). But art, Aristotle claims in the same sentence, also “extends and perfects nature,” as in medicine, or tragedy, by virtue of the same principle and the same primacy, namely, the end *telos* or that “towards which” (*eis hē, to hou heneka*) it tends *qua* work or natural entity. There is little doubt that, unlike Plato, Aristotle affirms the irreducible materiality and contingency of the physical world, and of human affairs and activities, including artistic. And yet, the structure of imitation that governs them only confirms the Platonic insight according to which, at the heart of matter, and of all things natural and produced, there is a driving force and power that is itself suprasensible, or meta-physical. The work of art, whether in Plato or Aristotle, consists in the sensuous presentation of an original and *ultimately* intelligible reality; it is thus situated in the space—the space of metaphysics itself—*between* the sensible and the intelligible, the particular and the universal, the image and the original. As a result, the role and place of the work becomes essentially ambiguous, insofar as it opens up *and* bridges the space of metaphysics, but only to an extent, and in a way that, ultimately, calls for its own end, its own overcoming, or *Aufhebung* in another, more intelligible or spiritual mode of presentation. Philosophy's recognition of the *power* of art is also, and from the start, the recognition of the *limits* of art as production of images. This essential ambiguity of art for philosophy, summarised in the concept of mimesis, remained in place throughout the history of metaphysics, despite German idealism's claim to have been done with such a concept.

C. GERMAN IDEALISM

With the birth of Romanticism and German idealism, aesthetics seems to break decisively with mimetic art, and introduce the typically modern notion of (self)-creation. A few examples to illustrate this point should suffice.

In §47 of the *Critique of Judgement*, Kant famously declares that the artistic genius is “entirely opposed to the spirit of imitation [*Nachahmungsgeist*]” precisely to the extent that the genius “gives rules to art,” that is, invents or produces a work that redefines the rules of the artistic game. A few years later, in his *Discourse of 12*

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October 1807 entitled “On the Relation between the Formative Arts and Nature” (ed. Cotta, VII, 289-330), Schelling insists that the relation between art and nature is not one of servile imitation, but consists in the reproduction, on the part of the artist, of the *creative* force and life of Nature. Contrary to what Winckelmann believed, Schelling claims, art isn’t simply a matter of reproducing forms, and our appreciation of it isn’t reducible to our ability to recognise and admire them. In and of themselves, forms lack the force of life, which Schelling calls “spirit,” or “concept.” Nature itself is the product of such a force. Spirit is the true artist, which is at work in nature as well as art: spirit meditates and dreams in the products of nature. Nature is itself already a poem, which art makes explicit. In that respect, there is a superiority of art over nature. Art is the “the world of ideas entirely open” (V, 631), whereas Nature lacks a voice. We find something very similar in Schopenhauer, for whom the artist, “by recognising in the individual thing its *Idea... understands nature’s half-spoken words*. He expresses clearly what she merely stammers.”¹³ He doesn’t imitate nature, but surpasses it.¹⁴ Let me add, in passing, that whereas the genius is driven by Ideas, which are a matter of pure perception, imitators and mannerists are driven by concepts, which, as abstractions generated by our faculty of reason, belong not in art, but in science. Schopenhauer does not seek to hide his disdain of such imitators: “Like parasitic plants, they suck their nourishment from the works of others; and like polyps, take on the colour of their nourishment.”¹⁵ Hegel’s own condemnation of mimesis, or *Nachahmung*, in the Introduction to the *Aesthetics* is formulated in even stronger terms, reminiscent of Plato’s own.¹⁶ Unlike Plato, though, Hegel’s strong condemnation of mimesis goes hand in hand with a revaluation of the role of art in relation to truth: if art were essentially a matter of imitation, it wouldn’t be worth anyone’s time, not even that of the artist, whose initial pleasure at having reproduced the appearance of an object would almost immediately turn into boredom and dissatisfaction. For what is imitation, if not the doomed effort to repeat (*wiederholen*) and reproduce identically what is already, and more perfectly, given in experience, the superfluous (*überflüssige*) and vain attempt to depict the flowers, landscapes, animals, or human events already there before us in our gardens or in the countryside beyond? Hegel mentions, with utter scorn, Zeuxis’ famous painting of grapes, which was proclaimed a triumph of art because doves pecked at them as though they were actual.¹⁷ Imitation will only ever provide a one-sided appearance (*Schein*) of the reality it depicts. As such, it can never make visible the liveliness (*Lebendigkeit*) of real life. It will only ever consist of an *illusion* of reality. Hegel concludes his criticism by saying that “by mere imitation, art cannot stand in competition with nature, and, if it tries, it looks like a worm trying to crawl after an elephant.”¹⁸

And yet, despite this condemnation of mimesis, formulated in the strongest possible terms, the metaphysical paradigm that Plato had introduced remains firmly in place, thus forcing and reinstating mimesis at a more fundamental level, forcing it even more deeply underground. In what follows, and by looking at some aspects of Kant’s *Critique of Judgement*, Schopenhauer’s *The World as Will and Representation*, and Hegel’s *Aesthetics*, I would like to suggest the various, fundamental ways in which modern aesthetics, and the philosophy of art that was born in the aftermath of Kant’s Copernican revolution, remained a *metaphysics* of art, and continued to be thought within the space broached by Plato and Aristotle—the very space, I will argue, that Chillida’s work forces us to abandon, and not simply by virtue of the fact that it is non-representational, or “abstract.” Indeed, as I will go on to claim, in and of itself abstract art is not a sufficient condition for a decisive break with what Kant calls the “spirit of mimesis”—a spirit that will turn out to be the ghost or spectre of metaphysics itself.

Kant

The reconfiguration of mimesis in Kant has its roots in his conception of the role of the imagination, and its connection with the problem of (re)presentation, or *Darstellung*. Kant calls *imagination* (*Einbildungskraft*) the faculty that mediates or bridges the space between the sensible and the intelligible. The role of the imagination is to produce an image for a given concept,¹⁹ or an idea.²⁰ At its most general, the question of the presentation (*exhibitio*) of concepts or ideas to intuitions is a matter of what Kant calls “hypotiposis.” According to whether hypotiposis is applied to concepts or ideas, it receives different names:

All *hypotiposis*, as making something sensible, is one of two kinds: either *schematic*, where to a concept grasped by the understanding the corresponding intuition is given *a priori*; or *symbolic*, where to a concept which only reason can think, and to which no sensible intuition can be adequate, an intuition is attributed with which judgement proceeds in a way merely analogous to that which it observes in schematization, i.e. it is merely the rule of this procedure, not of the intuition itself, and thus merely the form of the reflection, not the content, which corresponds to the concept.²¹

Whereas schematism, as the mode of presentation of the pure concepts of the understanding, is direct, the mode of presentation of the ideas of pure reason can only be indirect, insofar as no sensible intuition can ever correspond to them. The mode in question can only ever be analogous, or symbolic. This is how we are able to represent a monarchical state ruled in accordance with laws internal to the people as an organic body. A state ruled by a single absolute will, on the other hand, might be represented by a mere machine (like a handmill). This, according to Kant, is how the analogy works: “For between a despotic state and a handmill there is, of course, no similarity, but there is one between the *rule* for reflecting on both and their causality.”²² The matter, then, is not one of similarity or resemblance—not one, therefore, of a straightforward imitation—but of a commonality of rule applied to two heterogeneous objects. I cannot emphasise enough this characterisation of the presentation of ideas as analogy, for the following reasons. Firstly, and as surprising as this may sound, Kant’s conception of the symbol echoes Aristotle’s conception of metaphor—a conception which, as I will go on to show, presupposes a certain kind of ontology, and one that, I want to suggest, doesn’t do justice to the productive dimension of poetic and artistic production. Secondly, and as we shall see in a moment, insofar as fine art consists of the presentation of ideas through the production of certain images, art itself is essentially analogical. In other words, I am suggesting that metaphor, and the specific mode of artistic presentation it involves, is neither schematic nor symbolic, neither mimetic nor analogical, but escapes and exceeds the strict metaphysical boundaries within which the question of presentation, and therefore art, has been thought ever since Plato broached the distinction between the sensible and the intelligible. The notion and practice of metaphor, which addresses the presence of the hypersensible in the sensible, requires that we break free from Platonic metaphysics, and think in its place what I call an onto-hetero-logy.²³ Were we, however, to retain the Kantian vocabulary, and displace it at the same time, we could say that metaphor is the (poetic and artistic) schema of difference, or the presentation of the hypersensible.

Let me now turn to Kant’s analysis of art. Fine art, we are told in §44 of the *Critique of Judgement*, is a species of the genus “aesthetic art,” which is characterised by the fact that the feeling of pleasure is its immediate end. Fine art differs from merely agreeable art in that in it the latter pleasure is a matter of sensation, whereas in the former it is a matter of *cognition*. In that respect, Kant agrees with Aristotle’s insistence that art is a source of learning and knowledge, albeit not its highest form. And he even agrees with Plato, insofar as he situates the discussion of art and its value in the broader context of cognition. Where he departs from Plato and Aristotle, however, is in defining the cognition in question not as theoretical, but practical. This is how §49 of the *Critique of Judgement* describes those ideas that Kant calls aesthetic, the potential of which he sees fully realised in poetry:

One can call such representations of the imagination *ideas*: on the one hand because they at least strive toward something lying beyond the bounds of experience, and thus seek to approximate a presentation of concepts of reason (of intellectual ideas), which gives them the appearance of an objective reality; on the other hand, and indeed principally, because no concept can be fully adequate to them, as inner intuitions. The poet ventures to make sensible rational ideas of invisible beings, the kingdom of the blessed, the kingdom of hell, eternity, creation, etc., as well as to make that of which there are examples in experience, e.g. death, envy, and all sorts of vices, as well as love, fame, etc., sensible beyond the limits of experience, with a completeness that goes beyond anything of which there is an example in nature, by means of an imagination that emulates the precedent of reason in attaining to a maximum; and it is really the art of poetry in which the faculty of aesthetic ideas can reveal itself in its full measure.²⁴

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What is this excess that imagination presents by means of aesthetic ideas? What can be said to exist beyond nature and the limits of experience, the representation of which is a source of pleasure, yet not one of interest? It is the idea of the supersensible as such, that is, the idea of a world that we can know or intuit, not theoretically, but practically, and which signals our end and destiny as free, moral beings. The moral good, Kant claims, is the ultimate end of humanity. The sense of aesthetic ideas, and of art in general, consists in its own transcendence, or its ability to point beyond itself, and towards such an end, in a way that echoes Aristotle's own claim regarding the ethical end of tragedy, and the cognitive end of painting. The beautiful—whether in art or, more significantly still, in nature, where it appears as if it were the end of nature itself, albeit one without end, and thus as if it were a work of art—is thus “the symbol [*Symbol*] of the moral good” (§59). When envisaged from the point of view of the beautiful, nature and art are essentially symbolic: “through its beautiful forms” (and not its many charms, which are only empirical), Kant tells us, “nature speaks to us figuratively [*figürlich*]” (§42). If the pleasure that we experience in the beautiful exceeds that which we experience through our senses, it is precisely insofar as the beautiful is the (indirect) presentation of the intelligible, or the supersensible. This is the extent to which Kant is able to claim, as the title of §45 indicates, that “beautiful art is an art to the extent that it seems at the same time to be nature.” By that, Kant does not mean that art should resemble or imitate nature (or other artists or forms of art), in what would amount to a vulgar form of mimesis. It is only from the point of view of its form, and not its content, that art *seems* to be nature. That point of view is characterised by a distinctive purposiveness—a purposiveness without purpose—that is free not of rules as such (art, like nature, needs rules), but of *arbitrary* rules. In order for art to be recognised as beautiful, its rules must seem to be spontaneous, or natural. Whilst intentional, the purposiveness in the product of art must seem unintentional, or regarded as nature. In that respect, Kant can be seen to have criticised and neutralised one form of mimesis—direct, superficial and naive—only to replace it with another, which is indirect, analogical, and hidden.

But it is a form of mimesis that works in both directions. For if we admire art as if it were nature, we also admire nature as if it were art. We admire both in relation to, or in terms of, the *judgement* of the beautiful. Nature and art can be brought together not directly, through a relation of representation, or imitation, but indirectly, by showing how both can be the object of the same judgement. It isn't a matter, therefore, of art imitating nature, or nature imitating art, but of the conditions under which a feeling of pleasure can be indicative of something other than either a mere subjective sensation or a concept. If it is “universally communicable,”²⁵ whilst not rooted in concepts, it is by virtue of the *sensus communis* that it postulates—a postulate that is legitimate because it emanates from reason from a *practical* point of view. It isn't by chance that nature evokes art, “but as it were intentionally, in accordance with a lawful arrangement and a purposiveness without an end, which latter, since we never encounter it externally, we naturally seek within ourselves, and indeed in that which constitutes the ultimate end of our existence, namely the moral vocation.”²⁶

If there is a relation of imitation, therefore, it is subtle and indirect. It is not between art and nature, or nature and art, but between art and nature as the object of a judgement of taste, and of beauty in particular, on the one hand, and the moral good, on the other hand. The beautiful, then, appears as the bridge between the natural order and the ideas and demands of practical reason, or between the sensible and the supersensible. It is precisely as the “symbol of the morally good” that the beautiful “pleases with a claim to the assent of everyone” and that the mind feels “ennobled” and “elevated above the mere ability to feel a pleasure derived from sensible impressions.”²⁷ Such is the reason why those who are interested in the beautiful are those “whose thinking is either already trained to the good or especially receptive to such training,”²⁸ and why, simultaneously, “it is evident that the true propaedeutic for the grounding of taste is the development of moral ideas and the cultivation of the moral feeling.”²⁹ Ultimately, taste is a matter of morality. Ultimately, the relation of analogy between beauty and the moral good is also, and primarily, a hierarchy, which subordinates the sensible (and the faculty of pleasure) to the supersensible (and the faculty of desire).

This Kantian schema—one that, again, has its roots in Plato—is taken up by, amongst others, Schopenhauer and Hegel, albeit at the cost of a series of transformations and adaptations.

Schopenhauer

In §17 of *The World as Will and Representation*, Schopenhauer establishes that science, and especially etiology, teaches us how, “according to the law of cause and effect, this definite condition of matter produces that other condition” and how “for all cases what phenomenon must necessarily appear at this time and in this place.”³⁰ It doesn’t explain, however, the *essence* of phenomena, or what they are in truth. And this, Schopenhauer claims after Kant (yet in a way that eventually leads to a different conclusion), is something we *want* and *need* to know. Do we know the world only scientifically, as a phenomenon? Is the world only our representation, “object for a subject?”³¹ Or is there “something else, something in addition” that defines the inner nature of things, and that we can apprehend *from within*? What would such a thing be, and how can we know it?

Schopenhauer’s answer to this question is well known: it is the world not as representation, but as will, that constitutes the essence of living as well as brute matter, and it is through our bodily or incarnate experience of the will that we know the world as thing-in-itself. Scientific knowledge is, like everything else, an expression and an objectification of the will. Knowledge is entirely subordinated to “the service of the will,” to the demands and ends of life, from which it sprang, “as the head from the trunk.”³² But whilst, with the animals, “this subjection of knowledge to the will can never be eliminated,” with human beings it appears occasionally and “only as an exception.”³³ Music, Schopenhauer goes on to claim in §52, is the artistic medium in which the will is expressed freely, independently of any representation or Ideas, and in a way that would seem to mark a decisive break with mimetic art. And yet, as I will go on to show, whilst envisaging music as a medium without representation, Schopenhauer reinscribes it, ever more forcefully, within the Platonic schema of the original and the copy. Schopenhauer’s discussion of the *other* arts, and especially the formative arts, takes place in the context of his analysis of representation, but considered independently of the principle of sufficient reason, which governs scientific and philosophical representation. Following Schopenhauer, then, we need to distinguish very clearly between two forms of representation, and two modalities of knowledge—one that is concerned only with the *relation* between things, and remains subordinated to the principle of sufficient reason, and one that is concerned with Ideas in the Platonic sense, and is expressed through art. The rational method, which alone is valid and useful in practical life and in science, is of no value when it becomes a question of intimating the world as it is in itself. The only adequate method for the pursuit of such knowledge is “the method of genius, which is valid and useful in art alone.”³⁴ Through the contemplation of Ideas in art, the subject reaches a viewpoint that, whilst not exactly that of the will or thing-in-itself *per se*, opens onto it. In that respect, the experience of art sets us underway to the essence of the world as will.

Before I turn to Schopenhauer’s analysis of the visual and poetic arts, let me emphasise the following. Whilst not exactly identifying the Platonic Idea and the Kantian thing-in-itself, Schopenhauer sees the former as the most immediate manifestation of the latter, independent of the principle of sufficient reason. At the outset of Book Three, for example, Schopenhauer hopes that, “after what has been said, there will be no hesitation in recognizing again in the definite grades of the objectification of that will, which forms the in-itself of the world, what Plato called the *eternal Ideas* or unchangeable forms (*eidē*).”³⁵ The Idea is nothing but the immediate objectivity or representation of the will at a definite grade. But the thing-in-itself is the will insofar as it is “not yet objectified” and has “not yet become representation.”³⁶ What is specific to Schopenhauer, then, is this synthesis of the Idea and the in-itself as defining the essence of the world, or the “truly being” (*ontōs on*). In bringing the Platonic schema of the archetype and the copy, or the supersensible and the sensible, back into the discussion of knowledge, Schopenhauer also transgresses the prohibition that Kant himself had imposed on metaphysics. Naturally, it could be argued that this move is one that Kant himself had made possible by speaking of *aesthetic* ideas in the third Critique. But let us not forget that Kant’s appreciation of art, and his discussion of aesthetic ideas, were rooted in what he saw as their essential connection with the supersensible in a *moral* sense. We could say, then, that by returning to Plato, Schopenhauer extends the *knowledge* of the non-phenomenal world beyond the strict limits that Kant had identified. At the same time, we could say that, through Kant, Schopenhauer rehabilitates art beyond Plato by showing how artistic representations manifest Ideas that underpin *and* exceed the forever fleeting and deceiving world of individuated phenomena.

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For it is art, Schopenhauer insists, which provides the kind of knowledge that “tears itself free from the service of the will” and allows the subject no longer to be merely individual.³⁷ Art is the truly ideal knowledge, outside of the principle of individuation and the relations that characterise scientific knowledge. Art is the type of knowledge “that considers what continues to exist outside and independently of all relations, but which alone is really essential to the world, the true content of its phenomena, that which is subject to no change, and is therefore known with equal truth for all time.”³⁸ Contrary to what Plato claimed, then, yet in a way that remains entirely consistent with the Platonic opposition between being and non-being, art is the way in which the subject come to know the world *sub specie aeternitatis*. Where science, and especially etiology, is the knowledge of events and relations, art is the contemplation of eternal forms. Where science follows endlessly the restless and unstable stream of the phenomenal world, “and can never find an ultimate goal or complete satisfaction,” art “plucks the object of its contemplation from the stream of the world’s course, and holds it isolated before it.”³⁹ But how, exactly, is art able to do precisely what Plato thought it incapable of doing? What conception of art must Schopenhauer have in order to see it not as presenting fleeting and deceiving images, copies of an original, but as the original itself, permanent, stable, and self-identical? By moving from the particular to the universal, the part to the whole, and the momentary to the eternal, in what amounts to a metonymic operation:

This particular thing, which in that stream was an infinitesimal part, becomes for art a representative of the whole, an equivalent of the infinitely many in space and time. It therefore pauses at this particular thing; it stops the wheel of time; for it the relations vanish; its object is only the essential, the Idea.⁴⁰

Art is concerned neither with the particular thing as such, the object of common apprehension, nor with the concept of that thing, the object of rational thought and science, but with *Ideas* in Plato’s sense. Ideas in that sense are not grasped through reason, or even ordinary sensations, but through *pure perception*, which Schopenhauer identifies with contemplation.⁴¹ Only through such contemplation, “which becomes absorbed entirely in the object, are the Ideas comprehended.”⁴² To this pure type of perception, this “clear eye of the world,”⁴³ directed towards essences and fixed identities, I will oppose the *mixed* vision of art as presentation of the hypersensible.

Far from being incarnate or corporeal, Schopenhauer’s pure perception is an intellectual vision that frees the subject from the essentially negative grip of the will, from the pressures of desire, fear, and hope, which spring from lack, and thus from suffering:

It is the state where, simultaneously and inseparably, the perceived individual thing is raised to the idea of its species, and the knowing individual to the pure subject of will-less knowing, and now the two, as such, no longer stand in the stream of time and of all other relations.⁴⁴

Such is the reason why Schopenhauer values Dutch *still* lifes and tranquil landscapes: they calm the will, and reveal the pleasure that we can gain by contemplating the most ordinary things, so long as we see them as the expression of an Idea. Aesthetic pleasure follows only from the forgetting of oneself as individual and will, as temporal and spatial, and the ability to immerse ourselves in the beauty of things *qua* Ideas. Beyond the philosophy of art, and as I will show in the following chapter, Schopenhauer’s Platonic conception of art, revisited and rehabilitated beyond Plato’s own condemnation of mimetic art, corresponds indeed to a certain view and practice of modern and contemporary art, and especially *abstract* art. There is, I will suggest, a certain form of abstraction that is perfectly compatible with Schopenhauer’s view of art. Yet that conception, against which Nietzsche fought all his life, is precisely not the one that I want to retain, nor that with which Chillida confronts us. With its emphasis on that “*one eye of the world [das eine Weltauge]*,”⁴⁵ on the supersensible and the metonymic behind the phenomenal, it leaves no room for the discovery in the sensible of what I shall call the hypersensible, or the conception of art as the *double* vision of metaphor. Thinking art at the limit of metaphysics, and developing an aesthetics freed from any residual Platonism, means acknowledging a different sense of the sensible, and sensation, as well as a different sense of vision. Chillida’s specific form of abstraction,

and the relation to the sensible it makes possible, forces thought outside the metaphysical opposition between the phenomenal and the ideal, becoming and being, time and eternity, and into the hypersensible.

Schopenhauer's discussion of the various fine arts, from architecture to poetry and tragedy, ends with music. Music, he argues, stands apart from all the other artforms, and is the highest amongst them all, in that it "refers to the innermost being of the world and of our own self" and affects "man's innermost nature" *absolutely* and *universally*: it is "an entirely universal language," and one, he goes to add immediately, in what amounts to a clear distinction between music and all the other arts, "whose distinctness surpasses even that of the world of perception itself."⁴⁶ In music, then, it is no longer a matter of perceiving or contemplating those Ideas that all other artforms, in one way or another, present. Rather, it is a matter of *experiencing* the world as will, directly and immediately. All the arts objectify the will *indirectly*, by means of the Ideas. But music doesn't amount to an objectification. Or if it does, it is "as *immediate* an objectification and copy of the whole will as the world itself is..."⁴⁷ In fact, Schopenhauer never reaches the point at which he is able to define the sort of operation that music is, or the exact modality of apprehension that it presupposes. And this inability, I believe, has to do with the Platonic metaphysics—revisited through Kant—with which he operates. For most remarkable, in his analysis, is his claim that, whilst it is no longer possible to recognise in music "the copy, the repetition, of any Idea of the inner nature of the world,"⁴⁸ music remains entirely a matter of mimesis. To be sure, music is no longer a representation of the representations (the Ideas) of the inner nature of the world. Yet it is related to that world "as the depiction to the thing depicted, as the copy to the original."⁴⁹ It is the most likely, the most faithful copy, and thus the mode of expression that brings us closest to the true world: "its imitative reference to the world must be very profound, infinitely true..."⁵⁰ And yet, it is also the most mysterious and obscure relation between copy and original. In fact, it is something of a paradox. It establishes music as a representation (*Vorstellung*) of "that which of its essence can never be representation," and as "the copy of an original that can itself never be directly represented."⁵¹ Since music "transcends" [*übergeht*] the Ideas, it is independent of the phenomenal world, which it ignores entirely.⁵² Unlike the other arts, music could even exist without the phenomenal world. And yet, as a "*copy of the will itself*,"⁵³ it is an image, a phenomenal representation of some kind. Such is the reason why, ultimately, the relation of imitation between music and the world is not one that can be demonstrated. It can only be intimated, experienced, by listening to music, and drawn by analogy with the other arts' relation of imitation to the world as will.

Still, it is possible to show how music operates, how it imitates the world as will. Although Schopenhauer doesn't use the word, we could say, following the classical conception, inherited from Aristotle's *Poetics*, that music proceeds metaphorically.⁵⁴ Where the visual and poetic arts operate metonymically, by showing the universal through the particular, and sometimes allegorically,⁵⁵ music seems to operate metaphorically. The most faithful imitation, the most likely copy, is that which, bypassing the world of Ideas, recreates the world analogously. Music is the artistic analogy of the will, the pre-representational medium in which the world is intimated in its essence. The "deepest tones of harmony" are analogous to "the lowest grades of the will's objectification, inorganic nature, the mass of the planet."⁵⁶ Similarly, the high notes, which seem to detach themselves from the deep bass-notes, and the harmony they create, are analogous to the way in which organic nature, bodies, organisms, came into existence "through gradual development out of the mass of the planet."⁵⁷ Music, then, is not oriented towards specific archetypes, or objectifications, of the will, but towards the world in its unity and consistency, its self-generation and self-objectification, from its brute, inorganic state, to its highest expression in the human intellect:

Further, in the whole of the ripienos that produce the harmony, between the bass and the leading voice singing the melody, I recognize the whole gradation of the Ideas in which the will objectifies itself. Those nearer to the bass are the lower of those grades, namely the still inorganic bodies manifesting themselves, however, in many ways. Those that are higher represent to me the plant and animal worlds. The definite intervals of the scale are parallel to the definite grades of the will's objectification, the definite species in nature... The higher ripienos, running parallel to the animal world, move more rapidly, yet without melodious connexion and significant progress... Finally, in

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the *melody*, in the high, singing, principal voice, leading the whole and progressing with unrestrained freedom, in the uninterrupted significant connexion of *one* thought from beginning to end, and expressing a whole, I recognize the highest grade of the will's objectification, the intellectual life and endeavour of man.⁵⁸

At this point, it becomes clear how Schopenhauer's revaluation of art, and of music in particular, is at once a complete reversal of the Platonic condemnation of mimetic art, and a radical and powerful re-inscription of the mimetic framework, which he inherits from Plato. Whilst seeing in music the artform that allows one to break with representation, and enter the domain of truth proper, Schopenhauer continues to think of our relation to truth within the framework of mimesis: the arts "speak only of the shadow, but music of the essence."⁵⁹ Music expresses only the quintessence [*das Wesentliche*] of life and of its events, and never the actual events themselves—*this* or *that* emotion, passion, or affliction. This is the extent to which it is a direct copy of the will, and not a copy of a copy, or a simulacrum. Music is the noumenon that is closest to the phenomenon, or the metaphysical *in* the physical. Ultimately, music and the will are so close that "we could just as well call the world embodied music as embodied will."⁶⁰ With his remarkable appreciation of the specificity of music, and of the manner in which it escapes the Platonic suspicion regarding mimetic art, Schopenhauer tests the limits of metaphysical aesthetics. Specifically, he establishes a crucial connection between music and truth beyond or, better said perhaps, beneath the conception of truth as representation (whether scientific and rational or artistic and perceptual). As such, he makes possible a connection that, following Nietzsche and certain developments within phenomenology, I would like to radicalise. At the same time, given Schopenhauer's overall commitment to Platonic and Kantian metaphysics, the radicalisation in question can only exceed the mimetic schema in which he continues to operate. I shall return to music and the nature of its relation with the other artforms when discussing Chillida, and the aesthetics of the hypersensible. It will become a question of showing how, when no longer subordinated to the distinction between the sensible and the supersensible, or the phenomenal world and the true world, art breaks with mimesis, and opens up, and onto, the true world of the *hypersensible*.

Hegel

Unlike Plato, and even Aristotle, for whom art is essentially and irreducibly imitative, Hegel, like Schopenhauer, sees the meaning and value of art in its ability to present an image of the beautiful itself, that is, of its idea. In order for art to reach its true domain, it must go beyond imitation and present an image of the truth, or the universal, in the particular. In other words, the philosophical value of art consists in its ability to present *more* than what is actually given in experience, to transcend the particular in the direction of its universal truth, or idea. That is the point at which the work of art is no longer simply an illusion, or a *mere* appearance, but a sensuous shining of truth itself. Against Plato, and with Schopenhauer, Hegel claims that artistic images aren't phantoms or simulacra, far removed from the original, but genuine manifestations of truth itself, and in fact truer than the original. Aside from those images produced by way of imitation, an appearance (*Schein*) is never a *mere* appearance, but always a manifestation of essence, or spirit. In other words, appearance is essential to essence, and artistic appearance is always more than the merely empirical. The following passage, in which Hegel defends the truth of art, is worth quoting in full:

Truth would not be truth if it did not show itself and appear [*schiene und erschiene*], if it were not truth *for* someone and *for* itself, as well as for spirit in general too. Consequently, not pure appearance [*das Scheinen im allgemeinen*] in general, but only the special kind of appearance in which art gives reality to what is inherently true can be the subject of reproof. If in this connection the pure appearance in which art brings its conceptions into existence is to be described as *deception* [*Täuschung*], this reproof first acquires its meaning in comparison with the phenomena [*Erscheinungen*] of the *external world* and its immediate materiality, as well as in relation to our own world of feeling, i.e. the *inner world of sense*. To both these worlds, in our life of experience, our own phenomenal life, we are accustomed to ascribe the value and name of actuality, reality, and truth, in contrast to art which lacks such reality and truth. But it is precisely this whole sphere of the empirical inner and outer world which is not the

world of genuine actuality; on the contrary, we must call it, in a stricter sense than we call art, a pure appearance and a harsher deception. Only beyond the immediacy of feeling and external objects is genuine actuality to be found. For the truly actual is only that which has being in and for itself, the substance of nature and spirit, which indeed gives itself presence and existence, but in this existence remains in and for itself and only so is truly actual. It is precisely the dominion of these universal powers which art emphasises and reveals [*erscheinen läßt*].⁶¹

And yet, one can wonder whether this reversal doesn't leave the Platonic schema entirely in place, whether it constitutes a fundamental reorganisation of the relation between the particular and the universal, the image and the Idea, but one that leaves the distinction itself, and the place of art in relation to it, entirely intact. Like Plato, Hegel situates art within the broader, philosophical question regarding the manifestation or shining of truth as the universal, or the Idea, underlying the particular. The philosophy of art, Hegel claims, is concerned first and foremost with what, in *Greater Hippias*, Plato calls beauty *as such*, or the *being* of the beautiful (*ti pot' estin to kalon*),⁶² and not, in the way that Hippias himself believes, with particular instances or examples of beauty.⁶³ That being said, where Hegel differs from Plato is in recognising the logical necessity of the particularisation and differentiation of the idea, which gives birth to a variety of forms and figures of art, and which in turn need to be grasped as necessary instances and moments of the idea. The truth doesn't exist outside its incarnation, and art is one such incarnation. In fact, the *incarnation* of truth in art is what we call the beautiful.

Yet art, according to Hegel, and in a way that remains consistent with the Platonic account, isn't the highest expression of truth. Having established the superiority of the beautiful in art over the beautiful in nature—since art is a product of spirit and spirit is superior to nature (“spirit is alone the *true*”⁶⁴)—and therefore severed the mimetic connection between art and nature, having reversed the order established in the *Republic*, Hegel immediately emphasises the limits of art in relation to truth. Art isn't the highest expression of truth, precisely to the extent that it remains bound to the sensible. Ultimately, the sensible itself remains the *merely* sensible, insofar as its philosophical value consists in its ability to point beyond itself and towards the supersensible, towards spirit freed from all sensible limitation. Religion and philosophy are ultimately truer than art, because they alone penetrate the depths of the supersensible. The work of art can satisfy our need for the absolute, and quench our thirst for truth, only to an extent, and up to a point. The truth of art itself consists in its own self-overcoming in a higher, unlimited expression of the absolute. The truth of art lies in art's ability to transform itself into non-sensuous truth.

2. AESTHETICS AFTER METAPHYSICS? OR OVERCOMING MIMESIS

A. NIETZSCHE

With Nietzsche, the relation between art and truth, or between the sensible and the supersensible, is entirely reversed, and displaced. It's not simply revised, in a way that, for example, would bring art even closer to truth. On the contrary: Nietzsche's revaluation of art requires that art and aesthetics be freed from what metaphysics, from Plato to Schopenhauer, calls the “true world.” No longer subordinated to the tyranny and univocity of truth, art becomes a refuge *from* truth (“*we possess art lest we perish of the truth*”⁶⁵) and, at the same time, “the highest task and the genuinely metaphysical activity of this life.”⁶⁶ “Truth” is nothing but a “fable” and an “error”: “We have abolished the true [*wahre*] world,” Nietzsche famously claims in the section of *Twilight of the Idols* entitled “How the ‘True World’ finally Became a Fable.”⁶⁷ With this declaration, Nietzsche moves beyond his own initial attempt, carried out in *The Birth of Tragedy*, and still marked by Schopenhauer's dualistic worldview, to understand the appearance and plasticity of the world, which cover over the roaring current of the abyss, as an illusion to which we necessarily fall prey. We are now at a crossroad, between the end of a history, and, possibly, the beginning of a new dawn. This intermediate, undecided time, signals Zarathustra's moment:

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(Mid-day; moment of the shortest shadow; end of the longest error; zenith of mankind; INCIPIT ZARATHUSTRA)⁶⁸

Having announced the abolition of the true world, Nietzsche asks: “what world is left? The apparent world, perhaps?” To which he responds emphatically: “But no! *with the true world we have also abolished the apparent world!*”⁶⁹ The question stands, then: is anything left at all? When the sensible (*aisthēton*) is no longer oriented towards, and subordinated to, the intelligible (*noēton*), when the phenomenal world is no longer distinguished from the world as it is in-itself, and no longer interpreted within the schematic opposition between true and apparent, when it has been liberated from what, up until then, had been its sense, end, and value—then what? Is there *another* world to which we can return? A fragment from the *Nachlass* (probably from 1886) provides us with a clue: “The opposition [*der Gegensatz*] of a real and an apparent world is lacking here: there is only one world, and this is false, cruel, contradictory, seductive, without meaning—A world thus constituted is the real world.”⁷⁰ In other words, the world to which we need to return, and which we need to affirm, the only “real” world, is the polysemic, polyphonic, and forever changing world of appearances. It is the world of simulacra, which Plato sought to neutralise and exclude from the ideal city. It is simply as a result of our inability to face and embrace it that we feel the urge to create another, higher world of pure order and absolute being, and declare it the *true* world. The only truth, however, is sensuous and superficial. The only reality is that of the “earth.” It is to the earth, Zarathustra tells us, that we now need to remain true, as the only truth that remains: “I beseech you, my brothers, *remain true to the earth*, and do not believe those who speak to you of unearthly [*überirdischen*] hopes! Poison-mixers are they, dying ones [*Absterbende*] and themselves poisoned, of whom the earth is weary: so let them go!”⁷¹ It is only at the cost of such a return to the earth that we will be freed from Man and his nihilistic values. For Man, Nietzsche tell us in the Foreword to *Zarathustra*, is precisely what needs to be overcome. Man is only “a rope over an abyss,” “fastened between animal and Overman.”⁷² The Overman alone is the goal and the “meaning of the earth.” His head is no longer buried “in the sand of heavenly things; it is “an earthy head that creates meaning for the earth.”⁷³ Man must finally become a child, an artist, and create new values for this earth, *earthly* values. The creation of values presupposes a new innocence, and a lightness, of which contemporary man, the “last man,” is incapable.

But what about art? What can be its role and, most importantly, its value, now that the distinction between the sensible and the intelligible, the apparent and the true, is no longer in place? By revealing life as a matter for the senses, filled with contradictions and competing instincts, not imbued with any *a priori* direction or meaning, not, that is, oriented towards transcendent values and ideas, and not orchestrated from above, art becomes the very form of fidelity to the earth:

In the main, I agree more with the artists than with any philosopher hitherto: they have not lost the scent of life, they have loved things of “this world”—they have loved their senses.⁷⁴

Wrested from its subordination to the true world of ideas and transcendent values, art is affirmed as a fiction, a creation—a “lie”—necessary for life: “for all life,” Nietzsche writes in August 1886, “is based on semblance [*Schein*], art, deception, points of view [*Optik*], and the necessity of perspectives and errors.”⁷⁵ All life is “will to power,” that is, perspectival and partial, cruel and selective, as well as seductive. It is the battleground on which conflicting and forever shifting forces, drives and impulses seek to gain the upper hand. Art then appears as life—illusion, deception, and seduction—elevated to the second power, affirmed and willed as such. “The will to appearance, to illusion, to deception, to becoming and change” has replaced the “will to truth” as the highest value. Precisely insofar as art lies, it is worth more than truth.⁷⁶ As such, art is the most powerful rival of, and alternative to, the ascetic ideal, whose hatred and devaluation of life springs from “*the protective and healing instincts of a degenerating life*.”⁷⁷ “[A]rt, in which precisely the *lie* hallows itself, in which the *will to deception* has good conscience on its side, is much more fundamentally opposed to the ascetic ideal than is science: this was sensed instinctively by Plato, this greatest enemy of art that Europe has yet produced.”⁷⁸

This eruption of the sensuous, this unleashing of the sensible, is itself felt and echoed in Nietzsche's own style and language, as if language itself were returned to the earth, wrested from its dry, poisonous subordination to the supersensible, freed from the numbness, slumber and apathy of transcendence, or "spirit:" "Of all writings, I love only that which is written with blood. Write with blood: and you will discover that blood is spirit."⁷⁹ Nietzsche's own corpus is written with blood; he is himself an artist, who forges a multiplicity of images, and echoes the polyphonous song of the earth. His images, though, aren't indicative of an original, hidden presence. They are not signs of a reality given independently of the image. If images imitate something, and correspond to an original, the original is itself a shining, unrelated to any thing-in-itself.

As early as *The Birth of Tragedy*, and through the artistic figure of Apollo, "the shining one," Nietzsche emphasises the role of art as production and contemplations of images, without reference to the original, or the Ideas, of which they would be the impoverished or fallen image. This is how one can interpret the logic of imitation that Nietzsche still advocates near the beginning of *The Birth of Tragedy*, and his subsequent definition of art, near the end of the book, as a "supplement" to nature—a definition that seems to conform to, and yet ultimately displaces, the Aristotelian definition of mimesis. Having established the Apollonian and its opposite, the Dionysian, as the two fundamental artistic drives that "burst forth from nature herself, *without the mediation of the human artist*," having, that is, presented nature herself as an artist, and declared her artistic impulses to be satisfied, most immediately and directly, first in dreams, and their extraordinary ability to produce images, and then in intoxication, "which seeks to destroy the individual and redeem him by a mystic feeling of oneness [*eine mystische Einheitsempfindung*]," Nietzsche defines the artist as an 'imitator' ('*Nachahmer*') of nature thus understood. Every artist is steeped either in Apollonian dream-inspiration, or in Dionysian intoxication and mystical self-abnegation, or, remarkably, and uniquely, as in Greek tragedy, in both. This initial description conforms to the classical, Aristotelian, conception of mimesis, to which, in the same section of the book, Nietzsche actually refers. It is complicated, however, by a further definition of art, which Nietzsche introduces towards the end of *The Birth of Tragedy*:

... art is not merely imitation of the reality of nature but rather a metaphysical supplement [*Supplement*] of the reality of nature, placed beside it for its overcoming [*Ueberwindung*] (KGA III 1: 150/147).

Sallis summarises this apparent tension elegantly by writing the following: "Art is indeed an imitation of nature, yet not merely such, not merely a mimetic double, a fabricated image, that would leave its original simply intact and unaffected."⁸⁰ There is no doubt that Nietzsche rejects the Platonic conception of mimesis. But he does seem to endorse the Aristotelian conception, which interprets imitation as the completion and improvement of nature. The question, of course, is to know why nature would want or need to be overcome through art, and why it would require this metaphysical supplement in order to be completed. The mistake, I believe, which Nietzsche himself rectifies in his later work by stripping it of its Aristotelian and Schopenhauerian influences, is to qualify this supplement of the reality (*Wirklichkeit*) of nature as "metaphysical" and to speak of nature's self-"overcoming." Should we choose to retain this vocabulary, a double operation would need to be performed. Firstly, and as Nietzsche himself emphasises from the start, the metaphysical and the overcoming should not be interpreted as a transition towards the supersensible, or the thing-in-itself—not, that is, as the repetition of the classical determination of art between the sensible and the intelligible, but, as I have indicated, as the striving that defines life as will to power. Secondly, the metaphysical supplement is not external to the reality of nature; it is not generated from without. Rather, it belongs to the sensible itself, and signals the *excess* of the sensible within the sensible, or the manner in which the reality of nature exceeds itself in, and as, the hypersensible.

Is this excess not the ecstasy, the 'being outside oneself', which Nietzsche recognised in the Dionysian? Is this movement not the Dionysian excess (*Uebermaass*) that "revealed itself as truth" and opposed itself to the Apollonian demand "nothing in excess?"⁸¹ Should we not finally recognise the pleasure of art in a certain distance from the intelligible as well as the sensible, in the double sense of a turn away from the intelligible, the Idea, and towards the sensible, yet away from the sensible as what is merely given in actuality (*die Naturwirklichkeit*), or present, and towards the excess of the sensible, which art alone enables us to see? Aesthetics beyond, or

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at the limit, of metaphysics presupposes this double move, or twisting free. It presupposes the turn of the hypersensible. But, assuming that art produces *images* of such an excess—for let us recall, in passing, that Nietzsche credited music alone, as the non-imagistic medium, with the possibility of expressing it—how could we characterise the image in excess of the metaphysics (of presence)? How can we define this turning within the sensible, and away from metaphysics? Borrowing a trope from poetics, and allowing it, in turn, and in time, to twist free of the metaphysics that, from the start, oriented it towards presence and identity, let me refer to such an image of excess and ecstasy, of transport, transgression, and translation, as *metaphor*. Let me introduce metaphor as the image that opens up the time and space of art, the time-space of the hypersensible.

B. PHENOMENOLOGY

Husserl

One may be entitled to believe that phenomenology, with its injunction that philosophy put aside all talk and opinion—all representations—and turn to things themselves as they present themselves *from themselves*, follows in Nietzsche's footsteps by facilitating a much needed return to the sensible. As a consequence of phenomenology's insistence that the phenomenal world is the only existing world, and the only legitimate object of philosophical inquiry, one even may feel entitled to claim that it provides the necessary tools and method to develop a non- or post-metaphysical aesthetics. By post-metaphysical aesthetics, I mean one that would not see the work of art as the sensuous image or shining of an *ideal* content given independently of the work itself—an aesthetics, therefore, that would break once and for all with mimesis as its governing principle. Is a phenomenological approach to aesthetics thus defined at all justified?

The phenomenological turn takes the form of an absolute commitment to what Husserl calls "the principle of all principles," which he formulates thus: "In regard to the *principle of all principles*: that *every originarily donative intuition* [Anschauung] is a *legitimising source of knowledge*, that *everything originarily* (so to speak, in its bodily actuality) offered to us in 'intuition' ['Intuition'] is to be accepted simply as what it presents itself [sich gibt] as being, but also *only within the limits in which it there presents itself*, no conceivable theory can mislead us."⁸² Intuition, then, and especially perception, which Husserl saw as its paradigmatic and fullest expression, was to serve as the guiding light through the newly born science of phenomena and experiential contents. By way of caution, though, let me emphasise from the start that Husserl never equated perception with sensation alone.⁸³ Perception is an intuitive act, that is, according to Husserl's own definition, a *sense-fulfilling* act. This, in fact, is what distinguishes it from the merely sense bestowing—or signifying—act, which refers to an object without presenting it in person or in the flesh (*leibhaftig*). Intuition, on the other hand, doesn't merely represent the object, but allows it to be there, bodily present as it were. With the notion of fulfilment, Husserl was able to extend the reach and legitimacy of perception beyond the merely sensible object, and apply it to ideal objects. A category, for example, is fully and actually present in *categorical* intuition. Similarly, an essence is present "in its corporeal identity" in *eidetic* intuition.⁸⁴ Perception, in other words, is an act that is broader than sensation. That being said, there is no doubt that, within this originary givenness, sense perception, that is, perception of the *sensible* world, is granted a certain privilege: it is in sensation alone that the intention is actually, completely fulfilled, and the object *bodily* given. This, however, and by virtue of the determination of perception as actual, bodily givenness, of which sensation is only an exemplary case, does not mean that categories or essences, which in themselves aren't sensible, and therefore real, cannot be said to be perceived in a broader sense: whilst not objects of *sense* perception, they are indeed given *in* and *as* themselves. Let me summarise this point: only in sense perception can something be truly and completely given; yet there is an intuition of the non-sensible also.

Yet, despite its injunction—indeed, as Derrida has shown, *because* of the injunction—that we return to the things themselves, and direct our gaze away from the supersensible, phenomenology remains committed to the Platonic, metaphysical ideal. By granting intuition, and especially perception, in which bodily actuality, or actual, bodily presence, is most clearly visible, a methodological privilege, and turning into the principle of all principles, phenomenology restores the metaphysical project in the purity of its Platonic origin.⁸⁵ Far from

disrupting it, it only displaces it. For what underlies the Platonic schema *and* the privilege of intuition is the drive to presence and the pre-understanding of the being of all beings as presence and identity. This fundamental trait is one that we saw at work in Aristotle as well.

And yet, it is from within phenomenology itself that the metaphysical grip begins to give, and the commitment to presence and identity begins to loosen. It is perhaps no coincidence if the two thinkers within that tradition who went the farthest in calling such a privilege into question were also the two thinkers who contributed the most towards rethinking the status and significance of art. I am thinking of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty. Where the former twists free of metaphysics, and metaphysical aesthetics, by rethinking the nature of the connection between art and *truth*, the latter shakes and reshapes the very foundations of phenomenology by developing an original theory of *vision*, which requires a significant departure from Husserl's own theory of perception and intuition.

Merleau-Ponty

Let me begin with Merleau-Ponty. The influence of Husserl's phenomenology on Merleau-Ponty's thought cannot be stressed enough: it was decisive from the start, and remained in force until the very end. The thematic of perception, which unifies that thought, and which is meant to signal the origin of subjectivity as well as that of the world, remains incomprehensible without referring to the manner in which Husserl himself privileged it. Following Husserl, Merleau-Ponty sees perception as an act that is broader than sensation, and it is only on the basis of such an expanded conception of perception that we can understand the "perceptual faith" that is spoken of in *The Visible and the Invisible*.⁸⁶ It is synonymous with actual, bodily givenness, and encompasses virtually every experience or act, including ideal or categorial. But Merleau-Ponty also follows Husserl in granting sense perception, that is, perception of the *sensible* world, a certain privilege within this ordinary givenness; for it is only in sensation that the intention is completely fulfilled and the object is *bodily* given.

Merleau-Ponty draws the conclusion of the primacy of perception by claiming that perception extends and exceeds itself in something other than itself: it is the "archetype of the originary encounter" that is "imitated and renewed in the encounter with the past, the imaginary, the idea."⁸⁷ In what amounts to a genuine reversal of Platonism, the idea, the imaginary, in short, all that is not immediately sensible and that, within Platonism, used to fall within the domain and under the authority of the intelligible, is now envisaged as essentially derived from a single origin, namely, the sensible. Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of the sensible world puts him at odds with the intellectualist or Platonist school, for which the sensible world is only the perversion and degradation of an intelligible reality that is in principle accessible to a purely intellectual intuition. Rather than reiterate the opposition of the sensible and the intelligible, of sense perception and intellectual intuition, Merleau-Ponty chooses to speak of the visible and the invisible. Between the two, there is no longer an opposition, or a hierarchy, but a movement of deepening and extension of a single structure: the invisible is the invisible *of* the visible itself, and accessible only in and through the visible. Insofar as all experiences are rooted in the sensible, it remains, however, that sense perception constitutes the exemplary or *archetypal* sense of what is bodily given, and not one of its modalities only. Perception is essentially sense perception. At the same time, it is irreducible to—and potentially always more than—sense perception. It is this chiasmic structure, indicative of a new sense of being beyond the disputes of idealism and empiricism, which Merleau-Ponty precisely calls "the flesh." Hopefully, it has become clear why the concept of the "sensible," which we find throughout *The Visible and the Invisible*, designates at once a dimension of the world and the world itself. Similarly, it is now clear why Merleau-Ponty equates the flesh, the perceived (*le perçu*) and the sensible, even though he now prefers to speak of a "brute" or "wild" being, rather than of the perceived.⁸⁸ This is because "to see is always to see more than one sees."⁸⁹ It is the sensible itself that transcends itself in its own sense and not, as Husserl believed, the transcendence of sense that is realised in bodily givenness. The transcendence in question is no longer vertical and supersensible, but horizontal: the sensible overcomes itself in a movement of self-deepening, and its "sense" is precisely this depth. Sense is the hidden side, the lining of the sensible. I will return to this question regarding the self-transcendence of the sensible and this "more than one sees"—not as sense, though, but as the move

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internal to the sensible itself, and towards the *hypersensible*.

Where Merleau-Ponty departs from Husserl, and progressively introduces a new sense of being, is in his conception of bodily givenness (*Leib*). Instead of designating the full and total presence of the object, and thus the fulfilment of an intention that, up until then, had remained empty or only partially fulfilled, *Leib* signals an awakening and an initiation to the world, an experience of the “there is.” And because *Leib* thus understood is no longer equated with the full presence of the object, it does not exclude a dimension of withdrawal and absence. It is the very meaning and function of bodily givenness that has undergone a certain transformation: where the flesh used to provide an access to the saturated presence of the phenomenon—envisaged as an object of knowledge and the horizon of all acts—it now awakens the sensible body to a world and a sense of being as “there is.” The move, then, is one that takes us away from the “ontology of the object,” which characterises modern metaphysics, including aspects of Husserlian phenomenology, and classical physics (in the broad sense of the science of nature of Descartes, Galileo and Newton), and into an ontology of the flesh as the proper and originary mode of givenness of the world, the outline of a “there is” from within which the very being of the human emerges. Bodily givenness is no longer a function of an intentional, intuitive act, albeit that of an *incarnate* consciousness. If anything, it is rather the “subject” who is now intended and constituted within the world, in what amounts to a reciprocal and co-originary disclosure. To the reversal of Platonism previously mentioned, and which did not result in a mere empiricism, we must now add the suspension of all idealist theses, including that of Husserl himself (for whilst not a matter of representation, the transcendental consciousness remains *constitutive*). More fundamentally still, we must note the advance that consists in overcoming the dualist ontology of the sensible and the intelligible, as well as that of the subject and the object, through an ontological monism that is rooted in the notion of perception and unveils the world as carnal reality, a reality to which I myself belong, a fabric woven with the same threads as those of my body.

That is the reality to which art opens, and the soil on which it grows. Art, and especially the formative arts, Merleau-Ponty claims in *Eye and Mind*, makes visible the “there is,” the “soil of the sensible world” that we *inhabit* as sensuous, bodily creatures.⁹⁰ It is, Merleau-Ponty claims, through my body, and especially my eyes, that I am *in* the world, and *of* the world. This means that the world of the human is a *visible* world, that my eyes orient me in the world, organise that world, but only to the extent that, contrary to what, ever since Descartes, modern philosophy has affirmed, the world and I are made of the same, sensible stuff:

A Cartesian can believe that the existing world is not visible, that the only light is that of the mind, and that all vision takes place in God. A painter cannot grant that our openness to the world is illusory or indirect, that what we see is not the world itself, or that the mind [*l'esprit*] has to do only with its thoughts or with another mind.⁹¹

I see the world from within the world, as “flesh,” and not through a noetic vision. My vision is always and from the start *incarnate*. It is through this incarnate vision that the being of the human is itself made visible. The human body—which discloses the world and, at the same time, belongs to the world, which is at once always, and inescapably, *here*, “degree zero of spatiality,”⁹² and already *there*, in the midst of things—inhabits the space between seeing and being seen, or touching and being touched. To say that it inhabits the world means that it doesn’t “see” the world as a pure surface, or as extension, but that it experiences and lives it as the fold where the world reflects back on itself, and comes to life in a distinctly phenomenological sense, that is, neither in a purely material sense—the undeniable importance of which Merleau-Ponty acknowledges by saying that evolution has granted us with eyes, and a sense of touch, that are directed not exclusively at the world around us, but also at ourselves, and this is in such a way that we feel ourselves *as* we feel the world—nor in a purely spiritual sense, as spontaneity and absolute freedom in Sartre’s sense. Our body extends itself into the world, and the world reflects itself in our body. Our world is one of reciprocal encroachment, reflection and folding, rather than depth or, better said perhaps, perspective, which evokes a space in which things are simply behind one another.⁹³ As a result, our vision of the world is only ever partial and limited; yet this incompleteness is also the condition of our access to the world as incarnate and alive: what separates me from the world is also

what unites me to the world. It is this sensible or incomplete being of the world and of myself, this reciprocal encroachment, which distinguishes vision from thought, and loosens the drive to self-presence and self-identity that characterises metaphysics: “Vision is not a certain mode of thought or self-presence: it is the means by which I become absent from myself, and witness the fission of Being from within...”⁹⁴ Vision thus understood also differs from the way in which, in his early thought, and following Husserl’s principle of principles, Merleau-Ponty envisaged perception. Whilst his earlier attempt to return to the sensible through the problematic of perception retained aspects of Husserl’s intellectualist conception of intuition, and remained somewhat caught up in the very dualism it was trying to overcome, his later thought, rooted in a more radical theory of vision, amounted to a genuine return to the sensible.

Now, Merleau-Ponty claims, as soon as we see our relation to the world, and our own worldliness, in those terms, painting and sculpture come to light in a different way. And the specific way in which Merleau-Ponty understands the significance of the formative arts would seem to come very close to recognising what I call the hypersensible. Ultimately, however, I believe that what I call the hypersensible and what Merleau-Ponty describes as the shining of “a visible elevated to the second power”⁹⁵ amount to two different ways of appreciating the *work* of art and of vision. What does Merleau-Ponty mean by that expression? He means that painting and sculpture produce an “image” or an “icon” of the visible—not a phantom or a pale imitation of some visible *thing* (although, of course, there might well be some such thing displayed in the work), not a “weakened double” or a “trompe-l’œil”⁹⁶ in the Platonic sense, then, but a doubling or redoubling of the very structure of the visible itself. Art produces an image that is more than what is merely present in the visible world, without being an intelligible or supersensible reality. I see more with than without the picture. I see “with” or “according to” the picture, more than I see *it*. It is this *excess* that I should like to emphasise, despite the fact that, once again, the excess that I shall want to emphasise will turn out to be of a different kind. What matters, at this point, is the fact that Merleau-Ponty recognises the operation of painting as one that brings to light, and into the visible, something that is always implicit and at work in the way in which we see and experience the world, yet something that remains hidden, or invisible in the world—its *visibility*: “[P]ainting celebrates no other enigma but that of visibility.”⁹⁷ From then on, painting and sculpture need no longer be seen within the metaphysical context of the original and the image, or the sensible and the supersensible. The work doesn’t refer to an original already given in experience; it no longer imitates anything: “whether figurative or not, the line [of Matisse, Klee, or Moore] is, in any case, no longer the imitation of things, or itself a thing.”⁹⁸ Rather, the image that art produces is now seen, in what amounts to a reversal of the Platonic schema, and of the image of the cave especially, as the image of the light *from which* the visible shines—not the light of Truth, or the Good, but of the sensible itself: “Light, lighting, reflection, shadows, colour,”⁹⁹ and, more generally, the intertwining of my body in the world and the world in my body. The invisible that art, and art alone, makes visible, is not the reality of another, higher world, but the invisibility *of* the visible. By seeing the picture, it is as if I saw myself seeing, as if the picture were an image of the fact and the manner of the visibility of the world, of the “there is” that precedes all beings—of truth, then, but as *clearing*.

Despite this achievement, we can wonder the extent to which Merleau-Ponty’s conversion of the classical distinction between the sensible and the intelligible in that of the visible and the invisible does justice to the sense and experience of the sensible with which art confronts us. My objection to phenomenological aesthetics—in the double sense of a science of sensible experience and a discourse on art—does not concern its injunction that we return to the things themselves, or to the manner in which the phenomenal world unfolds, but in the belief in intuition, and especially perception, as the origin of the givenness in question, or the source from which the world as such and as a whole springs. For what phenomenology—at least a certain type of phenomenology, the type that remained faithful to the Husserlian injunction—cannot attend to, so long as it remains a phenomenology of *Leibhaftigkeit*, is the hypersensible, or the sensible excess within the sensible. Such an excess, I believe, is a matter not of perception, but of *vision*—a vision that is neither the immediate vision of phenomenological life, nor the intellectual vision of the mind, directed towards sense and essences. Rather, it is the double vision of art itself, distinct in that it involves a process of creation, and not imitation, yet one that is rooted in the sensible itself. Artistic vision involves a change of focus, of *how* we see, and that change itself requires the introduction

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of what we call style. If anything, it requires a certain loosening of perception, a certain distance from the manner in which the world is immediately given. For, contrary to what Husserl claimed, and as Merleau-Ponty rightly emphasises, the givenness is never that of a disinterested gaze. Perception is always bound up with life in a biological sense, that is, with practical life—a dimension to which Heidegger was very sensitive, but which he formulated in existential terms—and this sense of life that we call survival. Merleau-Ponty is again right to emphasise the fact that my perception, which he also calls “vision,” is indicative of my power, or my bodily “I can.” It is bound up with a life of projects and concerns, at once limited and disclosive of the world. But the eye or the vision of art, whilst indeed different from that of the mind, is also different from the incarnate vision of my body—a vision, Merleau-Ponty claims, which is generated from within the world and in the midst of things, and yet places them, organises them. Art, on the other hand, is concerned with the *plus-que-vivre*, or *sur-vie*, with a loosening of the grip of biological life, and the emergence of the hypersensible.

Heidegger

Let me now turn to Heidegger. His most decisive anti-Platonic move, and his own reversal of Platonism, consists in establishing an intimate, and indeed essential, connection between art and truth—one that is very much at work, albeit only implicitly, in Merleau-Ponty’s own account of art and vision. But the connection in question required that the essence of truth be rescued from its classical interpretation as *correspondence* and that the question of art itself be no longer thought in terms of an adequation (*homoiosis*, *adequatio*) between an image and an original. A crucial stage of that operation is reached in §44 of *Being and Time*, where Heidegger identifies primordial truth (*alētheia*) with the disclosedness (*Erschlossenheit*) of Dasein, and thus with a meaning that is ontologically prior to its metaphysical and epistemological interpretation. The move towards the essence of truth, which Heidegger eventually equates with the task of thinking itself, is further enacted in “On the Essence of Truth” (1930) and “Plato’s Doctrine of Truth” (1931/32, 1940). Moving away from his own interpretation of truth as *existential* disclosedness, Heidegger envisages truth as the ongoing (in a way that is history- or epoch-making) and irreducible strife between the *essence* of truth as un-truth, or concealment, and the *event* of truth as unconcealment. It’s in the context of this reconfiguration of the question of truth that Heidegger turns to the work of art, most notably in “The Origin of the Work of Art” (1935/36).¹⁰⁰ The work of art becomes philosophically relevant—and according to a sense of philosophy that is precisely no longer Platonic, or metaphysical—when it is seen to present the *essence* of truth as the strife between concealment and unconcealment, when it is itself seen as a *happening* of truth. To say this is to claim that art remains a matter of (re)presentation, or of what Kant calls *Darstellung* (*exhibitio*). And yet, what turns out to be of the utmost significance is that the (re)presentation in question exceeds its schematic and symbolic modalities, which Kant distinguishes in the *Critique of Judgement*, and becomes *aletheic* instead. Art, in other words, is a presentation (without representation), or a setting-there (*Dar-stellen*) of truth itself. It is not the representation of something in space and time, as something that is now there (*da*), but, Heidegger claims in the first, shorter version of the lecture, the institution (*Stiftung*) of the There (*Da*) itself.¹⁰¹ It is, Heidegger says, translating the modern thematic of presentation and *Darstellung* back into the Greek *thesis*, *das Ins-Werk-setzen der Wahrheit*, or the setting-into-the-work of truth.¹⁰²

In the work of art, the happening or presentation of truth takes the form of a strife between world and earth. Specifically, and in a way that makes the work of the translator difficult, the *Darstellen* or “setting” of truth in the work involves the *Aufstellen*, or “setting-up,” of a world, and the *Herstellen*, or “setting-forth” and “pro-duction” of the earth. In addition to the connection between truth and world, already established in *Being and Time*, but which now needs to be related to the artwork, Heidegger needs to justify the connection between truth and earth. Before we turn to Heidegger’s analysis of the strife between world and earth, it is of the utmost importance to emphasise that the strife in question does not coincide with the essence of truth as the original strife (*Urstreit*) between clearing and concealment. The work of art itself presupposes the primordial strife, which is not reducible to art. Art, Heidegger insists, is only *one* essential way in which truth happens.¹⁰³ “Earth rises up through world and world grounds itself on the earth only insofar as truth happens as the original strife between clearing and concealment.”¹⁰⁴

The work “opens up” (*eröffnet*) or “sets up” (*aufstellt*) a world—for example, the world of the sacred, the gods, and mortals, in the case of the temple, or the cathedral. Let me emphasise that Heidegger speaks of the work as opening up or setting up, and not reproducing or representing, a world. This means that the world in question *is* or is disclosed in and through the work. The world is itself not a thing, nor even the sum of all things. Yet it defines us in our being, more than any actual thing. *Being and Time* defines who we are, namely, a Dasein, as “being-in-the-world.” Stones, plants, and animals are worldless. The latter two are alive, of course, and presuppose an environment and a natural habitat, which sustains them, and in which they evolve. But they don’t have a world in the way that Heidegger understands, that is, as the “openness of beings.”¹⁰⁵ Why? Because they don’t relate at the same time to the horizon of closure from which that openness occurs. They don’t relate to innerworldly things by relating also, as humans do, to the dimension through which “all things gain their lingering and hastening, their distance and their proximity, their breadth and their limits.”¹⁰⁶ In other words, there is always more to human experience than the sheer presence of things in the world; there is also the experience of the world as such, of the open region within which things find their place. There is the experience of the horizon or the limit from which all things become present and come to life—a horizon and a limit that is itself never present as such, at least not as a thing. There is the *experience*, and not just the postulate, or the philosophical axiom—this is the mystery and the paradox—of the transcendental *x*, or horizon, from which the actual experience of innerworldly things—things of use, things that are merely present, or other Dasein—takes place. It is never an object of *actual* experience, in the way that, for example, the hammer in my hand, the woman in my arms, or the living tissue under the microscope can themselves be objects of experience. But it is an object of *virtual* experience: something that is never actually and fully present, yet always given, as a pure possibility. So long as he identifies the phenomenon of the world with the existence of the human being, Heidegger takes death—as Dasein’s ownmost and uttermost possibility, never to be outstripped or realised as an actuality—to be the transcendental horizon in question. The horizon of originary closure that discloses the world as such and as a whole is *existential*. In relation to this early schema, “The Origin of the Work of Art” introduces a remarkable development—one that, I believe, opens up the possibility of what I call the hypersensible as the distinctive dimension of art. For what Heidegger calls world, and which he understands the work of art as opening up, or setting up—and not simply representing, reproducing, or projecting—is no longer a feature of human existence, and not even of this specific existence that we call the artist, but of the work itself. But that is not all. For if the work of art has the ability to reveal the world as such and as a whole, or the worldliness of human existence, it is precisely as a result of another ability, entirely consistent, and yet not identical with, the role that death played in the analytic of Dasein. The work of art also brings into play, and into a form of visibility, the transcendental horizon of the world (time, or history), which simultaneously opens up and limits the world, in what amounts to an irreducible tension or strife. It is as *earth* that this horizon appears in the work. This decisive move signals the break with any idealist temptation, and the possibility of a history that is material *and* transcendental.

Let me highlight a few features of Heidegger’s account of earth. Firstly, earth points to the irreducible materiality of the work—that is, to the fact that the work is necessarily made up (*hergestellt*) of some material and that, contrary to what happens in equipment, the materiality of the work comes forth and shines through in the work, as if for the first time: “The rock comes to bear and to rest and so first becomes rock; the metal comes to glitter and shimmer, the colors to shine, the sounds to ring, the word to speak.”¹⁰⁷ Far from emphasising the work’s connection with the supersensible, and with its ideal content, Heidegger emphasises the work’s ability to make matter itself visible, yet in a way that resists its appropriation for practical, and even more specifically technological, use: in the case of equipment and practical life, matter is simply “used up” and “disappears into usefulness.”¹⁰⁸ This is a remarkable development with respect to the analytic of existence developed in *Being and Time*. But for a single passage, in which Heidegger envisages the possibility of a relation to the forces of nature that is not one of practical concern (*Besorgen*), but of poetic rapture, the materiality of the world is never thematised in *Being and Time*.¹⁰⁹ It is a development that opens up the possibility of an aesthetic materialism through the creation of a concept of matter (*hyle*) that is no longer thought in combination with, nor subordinated to, the classical concepts of idea (*idea*, *eidos*) and form (*morphē*). It opens up that possibility by

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insisting that, in the work of art, there is an *excess* of materiality, or earth, over function, or world. Something *remains* in the work, and it is that remainder that we are drawn to, and into. It is this remainder—in excess of our practical relation to the world, and our theoretical representation of it—that we actually *see*, according to a type of vision, and a sense of the visible that Heidegger leaves unthematized and that, [following Merleau-Ponty's own initiative,] I will try to thematize fully and rigorously in due course. For the time being, and recalling some of the phenomenological distinctions introduced earlier on, let me simply emphasize that the seeing in question is not a matter of sense perception or eidetic intuition. It is a matter of a sense of vision that is specific to art.

What the artwork enables us to see and feel, then, is the irreducibility of being, or truth, to the disclosedness of world. Naturally, the work opens up the world; it “sets it up” or “brings it about” (*aufstellt*). But it also, and simultaneously, “sets forth” or “brings out” (*herstellt*) the earth. Paradoxically—or so it would seem—this setting forth or bringing out of earth in its materiality is a presentation of that which resists presentation, representation, and usability. It is a presentation of that which can only be *seen*, and resists any attempt at translating into sense or use. Earth is what resists representation, and especially the techno-scientific objectification of nature. The stone of the temple, for example, “presses downward and manifests its heaviness. But while this heaviness weighs down on us, at the same time it denies us any penetration into it.”¹¹⁰ The earth opens up or, better said perhaps, intimates a dimension that we can experience, yet which we cannot penetrate. If we attempt such penetration, by smashing the rocks for example, or weighing them, the earth withdraws and escapes us. Similarly, if we try to understand the colors on a canvas in terms of oscillations and waves, the work itself vanishes: “Color shines and wants only to shine.”¹¹¹ In and as earth, matter is pure surface, pure shining—a shining without depth or height. Its depth is its surface, its stubborn superficiality, which offers no hold or grasp. Earth is the Ungraspable, the Unforceable. Following Plato's definition, yet depriving the Platonic schema of its ideal paradigm, Heidegger calls the shining that is set into the work “the beautiful:” “*Beauty is one way in which truth as unconcealment comes to presence.*”¹¹² But the shining in question—beauty—is no longer a semblance, a phantom, or even *just* an image of truth. It is the coming into presence or, as Heidegger says, the happening or event of truth proper, of the *essence* of truth.

But what is the essence of truth? And what is earth's connection with such an essence? By contrast with the scientific—or, for that matter, the metaphysical—representation, what becomes visible, what shines forth in the work, is the self-seclusion and withdrawal of earth itself—in other words, its resistance to being used and used up entirely in the world, its irreducibility to the two fundamental modalities of presence that, in *Being and Time*, Heidegger associated with the worldhood of Dasein, namely, readiness-to-hand (*Zuhandenheit*) and presence-at-hand (*Vorhandenheit*). In “The Origin of the Work of Art,” the earth appears as the necessary counter-tendency to the self-opening or disclosedness of world: it is the self-sheltering and concealing, from which the world itself emerges: “World is grounded on earth, and earth rises up through world.”¹¹³ Yet the world, as the self-opening, or the primordial drive to disclosedness, tolerates nothing closed and always seeks to bring earth into the open, to crack this mystery open, to have done with closure. Light, pure light is what world wants. World is the metaphysical drive or impulse, the drive to truth understood as presence and clearing. It is the Promethean force behind Platonism, the quest for knowledge, and the mastery of nature.¹¹⁴ But the earth resists this drive to presence and mastery: as the sheltering and concealing, it “tends always to draw the world into itself and to keep it there.”¹¹⁵ Orpheus and Lethe could be seen as the divinities of the earth thus understood.¹¹⁶ The more we penetrate the earth, the more it withdraws into its own essence, which is the essence of truth. But this essence isn't a matter of depth, or interiority: it is through its surface, its absolute superficiality that earth escapes the grip of world. It's the world that believes in depth and wants to go deep into the earth, when the earth only wants to flee and float, shine and shimmer. Our modern history has to a large extent been that of what the French call the *mondialisation* of earth, culminating in this particular “set-up” that Heidegger calls the *Gestell*. But the paradox, and the “danger,” is that by wanting to reduce earth to world, and colonise the source that belongs only to itself, we have only cut ourselves off from the origin, turned away from the essence of truth in the name of truth, concealed originary concealment, and become oblivious to our own essence or transcendental horizon. In the work, however, the strife between world and earth appears *as* strife, that is, as the irreducible and constitutive force of history itself.

In this remarkable development, Heidegger enacts a return of the work to the sensible itself, or, better said perhaps, to the hypersensible as the dimension that is *in excess* of the sensible as a mere object of intuition, or perception, and yet entirely unlike the supersensible. Through such a development, a new artistic materialism becomes possible. It is such a materialism that I want to retain, and radicalise, emphasising all the while the fact that, through the work, material earth shines through. If the work amounts to a shining, it is not of the Idea, but of the earth itself. It isn't a shining that refers to anything outside itself. It is devoid of any intentional structure. It is shining *as such*.

C. DELEUZE

To try and define more precisely what I mean by the hypersensible, and draw further its connection with the earth, let me now turn to the thought of Gilles Deleuze, and his work on Bacon in particular.¹¹⁷ What follows also serves as a transition towards the question of metaphor, which I will develop in the next part of the book.

In a plateau of *A Thousand Plateaus* entitled “Geology of Morals,” Deleuze and Guattari envisage the Earth from at least two different perspectives, which can help us understand how and why, in turn, Deleuze approaches Bacon.¹¹⁸ They introduce their thoughts on the Earth via a conceptual character named “Professor Challenger.” The Professor begins by explaining that the Earth, which is a body “permeated by unformed, unstable matters, by flows in all directions, by free intensities or nomadic singularities, by mad or transitory particles,” is actually and at the same time subjected to a very different phenomenon, “beneficial in many respects and regrettable in many others: stratification.”¹¹⁹ The process in question is also described as “inevitable:” one cannot escape it. It is “beneficial” because it provides life and matter with a minimum of structure and stability. It is “regrettable,” though, insofar as something, some of that original intensity, is always lost, or forgotten, in the process. It is that intensive and free state which, according to Deleuze, philosophy and art seek to regain and bring to life through the creation of concepts and aesthetic affects. The existential or, better said perhaps, *vital* problem that Deleuze faced from the very beginning was the following: how can we—as thinking, feeling, and sensing beings—generate the conditions under which those very intensities, which tend to cancel themselves out in extensities, can be brought back to life, and *into* life? How can we affirm difference beyond its own tendency to negate itself in identity? How can our concepts, affects, and percepts wrest themselves from fixed identities—essences and clichés—and experience the world of intensities? This is how Deleuze and Guattari describe the process of stratification of the earth:

[Strata] consisted of giving form to matters, of imprisoning intensities or locking singularities into systems of resonance and redundancy, of producing upon the body of the earth molecules large and small and organizing them into molar aggregates. Strata were acts of capture, they were like “black holes” or occlusions striving to seize whatever came within their reach. They operated by coding and territorialisation upon the earth; they proceeded simultaneously by code and by territoriality.¹²⁰

Elsewhere, and especially in connection with his interpretation of Spinoza, Deleuze refers to it as *expression*: nature, or God, *expresses* its own essence in attributes and modes.¹²¹ Similarly, matter expresses itself in forms and individuals. Although stratification is a notion borrowed from geology, it applies to various natural phenomena, such as organisms. Such is the reason why Deleuze also speaks of organisation as the process that generates organisms and organs. But the point is that the organism doesn't exhaust the body, or the earth: it is only a *stratum* on what, following Artaud, Deleuze calls the “body without organs:” the earth, or the body without organs, constantly eludes this process of stratification; it is constantly caught up in processes of destratification, decoding, and deterritorialization.¹²² In other words, “there is no reason to think that all matter is confined to the physico-chemical strata: there exists a submolecular, unformed Matter.”¹²³ Were we to relate this back to the Heideggerian distinction between world and earth, introduced earlier on, we could say that world, and the way in which it unfolds organically, practically, or historically, doesn't exhaust the material reality of the earth. Naturally, such a distinction between world and earth could be maintained only at the cost of a materialisation of the world itself, and by extending the notion of world to all living—and even non-living—things. In any

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event, the material processes that Deleuze defines as “expression,” “stratification” and organisation” define the Earth from a certain point of view, and only up to a point. They aren’t “the earth’s last word.”¹²⁴ For the earth is also—above all, in fact, and primarily—a “body without organs,” or a “plane of immanence,” that is, to quote Deleuze and Guattari again, a surface “permeated by unformed, unstable matters, by flows in all directions, by free intensities or nomadic singularities, by mad or transitory particles.”¹²⁵ The matter in question here exists in a free state: it consists of relatively unformed and unstructured energy flows, from which strata and aggregates emerge. It isn’t yet organised, differentiated into structures and substances. But it isn’t dead matter either. On the contrary: “The body without organs is not a dead body but a living body all the more alive and teeming once it has blown apart the organism and its organisation.”¹²⁶ As a result, “dismantling the organism has never meant killing,” whether oneself or anything, “but rather opening the body to connections that presuppose an entire assemblage, circuits, conjunctions, levels and thresholds, passages and distributions of intensity...”¹²⁷ There is a life—Life itself—that is anorganic, and that coincides with the BwO. Life understood in that way, or what Deleuze and Guattari also call Primary Matter, is the universal body that is not yet formed, or stratified, and the set of submolecular and even subatomic particles, of pure intensities and free, prephysical and prevital singularities that flow on such a body.

The Deleuzian distinction between the organic and the anorganic, or the stratified and the free, also corresponds to that between two types of space—“striated” or “metric” and “smooth.” The same body can be both at the same time. Take, the sea, for example. On one level, Deleuze and Guattari tell us, as a pure, flowing surface, the sea is the archetype of a smooth space. Yet “it was the first to encounter the demands of increasingly strict striation.”¹²⁸ Maritime space was striated as a function of two astronomical and geographical gains: *bearings*, obtained by a set of calculations based on exact observation of the stars and the sun; and *the map*, which intertwines meridians and parallels, longitudes and latitudes, plotting regions known and unknown onto a grid. Slowly, and beginning in the 15th century, the striated progressively took hold, turning an intensive, directional, non-metric multiplicity into an extensive, dimensional, metric multiplicity. More recently, however, it is as if the sea had regained some of its smoothness, but only through the perpetual motion of the strategic submarine, which outflanks all gridding and invents a neonomadism in the service of a war machine still more disturbing than the States, which reconstitute it at the limit of their striation. All of this shows that, whilst absolutely distinguishable in principle (*de jure*), smooth space and striated space are in fact always intertwined: “smooth space is constantly being translated, transversed into a striated space; striated space is constantly being reversed, returned to a smooth space.”¹²⁹ Smooth space is filled by events or haecceities, whereas striated space is filled with formed and perceived things. Smooth space is a space of affects, whereas striated space is a space of measures and properties. Smooth space is intensive (*Spatium*) rather than extensive (*Extensio*): a Body without Organs, as opposed to an organism and a plane of organisation. What one perceives (or feels) in a smooth space are *intensities*: wind and noise, sonorous and tactile qualities, the creaking of ice and the song of the sand, as in the desert, steppe or ice. In the absence of fixed points, characteristic of the striated space, “the navigator of the desert relies on the ‘song of the sands’ and other shifting sets of relationships (haecceities)—as the mariner relies on the differential tastes of the sea.”¹³⁰ It is through affect, not representation, that one navigates such spaces. Striated space, on the contrary, is overdetermined (“canopied”) by the sky as *measure* and by the measurable visual qualities deriving from it, whether at sea or in the desert.

How does all of this apply to art, and more specifically to the hypersensible? Let me try and address this question by turning to Deleuze’s work on Bacon. Art, according to Deleuze, is a creative activity that is oriented towards the free intensities of the earth, or the body without organs—those very intensities that natural, and all too often “cultural,” processes trap into fixed entities. Bacon, however, like Cézanne, aims to extract the flows and intensities, the forces and energies hidden within things, without dissolving into formlessness. The mere dissolution of form, as evidenced in the fluid chaos of traits, the explosion of stains and patches, the proliferation of lines that no longer delimit anything, the appearance of lumps, smears or blisters, which much of contemporary art has privileged, is an altogether too brutal plunge into chaos, into pure matter, and the manifestation of an anarchic, unstable life. In a way, a residual and minimal form can be a safeguard against the threat of total chaos, and one that stops the line of becoming from turning into a line of death. It is not

brute, amorphous matter that Bacon aims to depict. Nor is it simply organic life:

I never look at a painting, hardly. If I go to the National Gallery and I look at one of the great paintings that excite me there, it's not so much the painting that excites me as that the painting unlocks all kinds of valves of sensation within me which return me to life more violently.¹³¹

We saw how the space that Deleuze characterises as smooth—and of which Bacon's paintings would be an example—is filled with events or haecceities, and not forms, substances, or properties. What one perceives (or rather *feels*) in a smooth space, we said, are intensities: sonorous and tactile qualities. Smooth space is a space of affects (or, to use Bacon's own word, *sensations*), and not representations. Such would be the fundamental aim of art, then—at least that proposed by Bacon and endorsed by Deleuze: to return us, artist and viewers alike, to the life contained and somehow solidified in the world of forms, to free the vital forces and flows contained in the most familiar and (apparently) most inanimate things, to produce images that aren't representations, images of a model, or even *mere* images. Only if art brings us closer to life, only if the life to which we return as a result of art has gained in intensity, is such a detour worthwhile. But the life that art brings us back to is not the organic life of *perception*, the life of what we call lived experience (*Erlebnis*, *le vécu*). Rather, the life that is set free in painting is the life that is trapped and covered up in the organised body; it is the anorganic or dis-organised life of the *hypersensible*. In formulating this demand that art return us to life *more violently*, Bacon achieves in painting the task that Rimbaud—and Artaud after him—had ascribed to poetry, namely, “to arrive at the unknown through the disjunction of all the senses” (*le dérèglement de tous les sens*).¹³² In a very similar spirit, Artaud prefers to speak of “a kind of constant loss [*déperdition*] of the normal level of reality.”¹³³

Let me now return to Bacon's paintings, and to the bodies they depict. The vast majority of Bacon's bodies seem to undergo a radical transformation of their ordinary shape and situation. Specifically, they give the impression of being in the process of disorganising themselves entirely, that is, of emptying themselves of their own organicity: in a scream or a smile, in excrementing, vomiting or spilling blood, through the mouth or the anus, through the erasing of the eyes or a general fluidification of the body, they seem to be undergoing something like an escape from organicity. How could there not be a violence attached to that movement? How could it not appear as monstrous to our own perception? The violence that we find in Bacon's paintings is not, as Deleuze insists, linked to “the representation of something horrible”—that very representation which, by virtue of its universal character *as* a representation, Aristotle valued as an instrument of knowledge, despite the unpleasant nature of its subject. Rather, the violence in question can be attributed to “the action of forces upon the body” or the “intensive fact of the body.” It is the violence of a body returned to the forces and tensions that its own organisation and organic life have managed to tame and control.¹³⁴ The body that's painted no longer has any organs, that is, parts that work together in order to guarantee the day to day functioning of the body. All it has are levels and thresholds. Like an egg, it has axes and vectors, zones, movements and dynamic tendencies, with respect to which forms—those very forms, the Theory of Form tells us, which life needs in its day to day dealings with the world—are only contingent or accessory. Organs are now *fragments*, which Bacon isolates and allows to communicate with something entirely different, to produce a hitherto unimaginable assemblage and reveal the presence of another, virtual life that cuts across the life of the organised body. Not analogically, that is, as a result of some resemblance, or even some mental association, but *metaphorically*, as a result of a line of life, an intensive flow that does not follow the lines and bifurcations of the organised body, but that of the body without organs. It is this type of subterranean communication, which allows fragments to communicate with one another, in what never amounts to an organic totality, but a juxtaposition or construction of fragments, it is this work of moles, visible only to those who no longer perceive, but can finally *see*, which I characterise as metaphorical. I will return to this question later on.

With Bacon, painting can no longer be envisaged as an organic totality; it has become a collection of fragments. As a result, Bacon's paintings can seem somewhat artificial. But, paradoxically, it is precisely this artificiality that Bacon claims for painting, if it is to break with habits and clichés, and produce the *sensation* he is after:

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For instance, in a painting I'm trying to do of a beach and a wave breaking on it, I feel that the only possibility of doing it will be to put the beach and the wave on a kind of structure which will show them so that you take them out of their position, as it were, and re-make the wave and a piece of the beach in a very artificial structure... I just hope that this painting, no matter how artificial it is, will be like a wave breaking on a seashore.¹³⁵

Only in this "oblique" manner can it hope to achieve the desired effect. Otherwise, it's "just one more picture of a sea and a seashore."¹³⁶ What will make it something different?

Only if I can take it far enough away from being another picture, if I can elevate, as it were, the shore and the wave—almost cut it out *as a fragment* and elevate it within the whole picture so that it looks so artificial and yet so much more real than if it were a painting of the sea breaking on the shore.¹³⁷

By being elevated to the position of a fragment, by being extracted from its organic totality, its ordinary environment, the wave attains a level of intensity and a reality otherwise unsuspected. It is now a pure wave, a pure sensation, like the small patch of yellow wall from Vermeer's painting or the "piece" from Vinteuil's sonata in Proust's novel, like the contact of fresh grass on Rimbaud's feet in the poem *Sensation*, or like the patch of grass in another painting called "landscape 1978". It's just a bit of grass, Bacon claims, but with remarkable movement, and looking like fur, encased in the typical glass cube, and from which Bacon is able to extract a pure sensation. The production of this sensation, the realisation of this intensity is entirely a function of its seemingly artificial creation. Proust claimed that if God had created things by naming them, the artist recreates them by naming them *differently*. Every creation is a re-creation, and this is the reason why realism in art is of no value. Bacon formulates this idea in his own words:

In one of his letters Van Gogh speaks of the need to make changes in reality, which become lies that are truer than the literal truth. This is the only possible way the painter can bring back the *intensity* of the reality which he is trying to capture. I believe that reality in art is profoundly artificial and that it has to be *re-created*.¹³⁸

More remarkably, Bacon insists that in painting those fragments (grass, water, faces, etc.) he is trying to capture their "essence" or their "energy."¹³⁹ Essence is nothing spiritual, but a material force or an energy emanating from a thing or a person. It is this "abbreviation into intensity"¹⁴⁰ that Bacon has sought—and managed—to produce.

There is no doubt that Bacon's figures retain some degree of resemblance with their model. At the same time, however, resemblance is clearly not what Bacon's paintings are about. The logic of sensation is not predicated on resemblance, that is, on the possibility of recognising a model—an original—in the copy. It is a misunderstanding to believe that art aims to reproduce the outline or the familiar appearance of its "model," and to believe, therefore, in the presence of something like a model, if by model we understand that which needs to be reproduced identically. Far from being something self-evident, the model is a question and a problem for the painter, an enigma, even, and one that he sets out to solve by painting it, one that can be addressed by way of painting only. Speaking again of his portraits, and of those of Michel Leiris in particular, Bacon says:

I really wanted these portraits of Michel to look like him: there's no point in doing a portrait of somebody if you're not going to make it look like him.¹⁴¹

Painting must record the world it depicts. It aspires to be "real" or "factual." And yet,

of those two paintings of Michel Leiris, the one I did which is less literally like him is in fact more poignantly like him. What is curious about that particular one of Michel is that it does look more like him and yet, if you think about Michael's head, it's rather globular, in fact, and this is long and narrow. So that one doesn't know what makes one thing seem more real than another.¹⁴²

Bacon is expressing a paradox and a mystery. A paradox: by looking less (objectively) like Michel Leiris the portrait manages to look more like him (without referring to the manner in which the subject—the painter—perceives him). A mystery: what is it that allows us to recognise more reality (I would say more truth) in the painting than in the original? The solution to both problems, I believe, lies in the process and reality of deformation, similar to what I call metaphor, insofar as it too involves a displacement and a transposition. In order to look like Michel Leiris, or like any model, the painting must deform them: “I’m always hoping to deform people into appearance; I can’t paint them literally.”¹⁴³ Or again: “What I want to do is to distort the thing far beyond the appearance, but in the distortion to bring it back to a recording of appearance.”¹⁴⁴ It is as if, by choosing to deform its subjects, rather than reproduce their familiar traits and contours, Bacon were able to bring out a quality or state of the subject that is not immediately apparent, yet truer or more essential to him or her. What is deformed in the painting is the habitual, familiar outline of the model. But this is the outline that art is precisely seeking to move beyond. Why? Because it is the line of ordinary perception, the form that emerges from our practical, everyday dealings with the world, and which the Theory of Form, which was so central to Merleau-Ponty’s own phenomenology of perception, designates as the *good form*. It is a misunderstanding to act as if the painting were a recording of a *perception* of the model. In “recording” the model, the artist aims to bypass perception. For we perceive objects and forms which, far from being the reality and truth of that object, only indicate what we normally retain from it, out of need and habit. And it is perception thus understood that creates all the clichés and ready-made images that art must overcome in order to arrive at a pure *sensation* of its subject. By deforming his subjects, Bacon tells us very clearly that he isn’t interested in representing them, that is, in reproducing the *form* of their appearance. It’s precisely the form in which the subject normally appears that’s the problem. He who sets out to paint grass, a wave, or a peach, for example, will be overwhelmed from the very start by the forms of the peach: a peach is something soft, like a baby’s skin, sweet and juicy, like the summer itself, etc. The painter will have to move beyond those clichés and avoid those forms in order to arrive at the genuine force and intensity of the peach, in order to paint the peach as if for the first time. The operation of de-formation is precisely this twisting free of form, this distortion through which something else—the plane of sensation—is liberated.

Deformation is the dislocation of form, that is, the transition from the plane of form to another plane of reality (and not into another form), one that is not dominated by perception and habitual recognition, but by sensation and recognition of a different kind. This is the reason why, having said that his art aims to *record* reality, Bacon also claims that art aspires to be “deeply suggestive or deeply unlocking of areas of sensation other than simple illustration of the object that you set out to do.”¹⁴⁵ Speaking of the head I was alluding to a moment ago, Bacon tells David Sylvester that it amounts to “an attempt to bring the figurative thing up onto the nervous system more violently and more poignantly.”¹⁴⁶ The violent shock that we experience in the face of Bacon’s paintings is at bottom a function of its ability to provoke our nervous system directly, to deal with affects and sensations in their raw state, without the mediation of a stable form, of perception, imagination, or intellection. Elsewhere, prompted to define the difference between an illustrational and non-illustrational form, he says: “Well, I think that the difference is that an illustrational form tells you through the intelligence immediately what the form is about, whereas a non-illustrational form works first upon sensation and then slowly leaks back into the fact.”¹⁴⁷ This—the plane of sensation—is where art takes place for Bacon. To a large extent, then, form is in the way of what Bacon tries to capture and record in his paintings, that is, a raw state of being that affects us, a set of sensations that simmer beneath the superficial nature of form. It is as if, by wanting to see beyond the form, Bacon wanted to bring us down to another level of reality, truer than that of organised life, in which everything has its place and every point of view is an overview. Sensation, Bacon insists, is what takes place in the passage from one “order” or “level” to another. Such is the reason why sensation requires deformations. It is precisely insofar as abstract as well as figurative painting remain on the same level—the level of form and of the brain—that they cannot isolate a figure and get to the level of sensation. To be sure, they can produce transformations, that is, modifications of form, or the passage from one form to another, assuming all along that form is the only true aim of art. But they cannot arrive at a deformation of the body. All transformations take place on a single plane, that of form, whereas deformation marks the passage from one plane to another, from the final, organised body to the a-formal and intensive world of intensive forces.

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As a pictorial strategy, deformation is an invitation to *see*, but to see *differently*. It's all a question of what is meant by *seeing*. Following Worringer and Riegl, Deleuze distinguishes between an optical and an haptic vision, that is, between a vision of distance and one of proximity. If Bacon's canvas can be said to call for an haptic vision, it also represents a radicalisation of that vision, insofar as it wants to translate vision immediately into sensation, without any detour of narrative, interpretation, imagination, intellection, or even perception. Consequently, it becomes matter of "seeing" the raw meat or the carcass in a crucifixion, the scream or the smile as such in the mouth, etc. It is not pain that the scream suggests, but the scream itself; not the self-contentment that the smile reveals, but the pure smile. Bacon does not aim to paint the face, its history, its past and present, and the narrative that every face tells, but the head, this chunk of meat in which the body is gathered—a fragment. The face, Deleuze writes, "is a structured, spatial organisation that conceals [*recouvre*] the head, whereas the head is dependent upon the body."¹⁴⁸ The head is a striated space, a set of coordinates, which we read all too easily—an invitation to recognise, understand and interpret. Remarkably, in Bacon's portraits, and by contrast with traditional portraiture, our gaze is not directed towards the gaze of the subject, to which we naturally turn as to the clue that will reveal its most intimate secrets, its inner life, its story. In his paintings of figures or portraits, the eyes are often closed (as in *Study for portrait II* and *III*, after the life mask of William Blake), as if forbidding this privileged way into the life of the subject, the life of the soul. Sometimes, the eyes are erased (as in some of the portraits of George Dyer), or in the process of being erased (as in *Three studies for portrait of Lucian Freud*, 1966). At other times, they are distorted to the point of monstrosity (Pope n° II, 1960, for example, is cross-eyed), as if suggesting a total lack of something like an inner life: there is nothing to be retrieved, interpreted or read, no story to extract, no depth. Bacon's Figures do not want to tell a story. They have nothing to say, quite literally:

I mean people can interpret things as they want. I don't even interpret very much what I do. By saying that, don't think that I think that I'm inspired, but I work and what I do I may like the look of, but I don't try to interpret it. After all, I'm not really trying to *say* anything, I'm trying to *do* something.¹⁴⁹

What those paintings want to do, however, is liberate the forces of life that representation—illustration and narration—always leave to one side, the very forces of life that do not indicate the particular life of this or that subject, the lived content which this or that visible form expresses, and which the art of portraiture has traditionally taken upon itself to represent, but the impersonal and preindividual forces and facts that are enveloped in the form: the carcass in the crucifixion, the scream in the pope's face, etc. It is perhaps no coincidence that Bacon chooses the most iconic, immediately recognisable images and narratives to extract from them something that is entirely surprising and unfamiliar, and which we can nonetheless recognise—according to an operation of recognition that is quite distinct from that based on mere resemblance—as somehow there from the start, at once enveloped in them and exceeding them. Thus, the familiar scene of the crucifixion becomes the scene of something else altogether, as opposed to yet another representation of the same narrative. The reproduction of Velasquez' representation of Pope Innocent X is no longer a representation of representation, nor a picture in praise and recognition of a great master, but the presentation of a vital potential contained in the original, and now set free, liberated from its familiar, recognisable form. It is no longer a question of representing and imitating the world, of juxtaposing forms and weaving narratives, nor even of introducing a variation in a classical theme, but of extracting and presenting the flows that operate beneath the surface of things, of tearing subjects and objects apart, allowing their content to spill out and adopt a different material configuration. There is only surface, and transversal movement. There is no longer a form emerging from a background, no longer a foreground and a background, a surface and a depth. The great fields of colour surrounding Bacon's figures rarely suggest something like an environment, a background that would allow us to reconstruct something like a coherent narrative, a "scene", whether already familiar or to be filled in by our imagination. What there is, though, is a force of becoming, visible in the head itself (and not in the face, which is already coded, mapped, *known*). There is a becoming animal, a becoming ape, for example (as in *Study of nude with figure in a mirror*, 1969), in the same way that there is a becoming human of the baboon (as in *Study of a baboon*, 1953), the mouth of which we find again in two different studies after Velasquez' portrait of Innocent X from 1949 and 1953. It would be a grave mistake, therefore, to think of the process of deformation,

and of the lines of becoming, in terms of a transformation. For the movement of deformation is not from one form to another, but from the organised, stable body to the disorganised, fragmented body (or what, following Lyotard, Deleuze calls the Figure).¹⁵⁰ It is a movement that signals a shift from perception, imagination and intellection to sensation. To the idealism of transformation (and perception), Deleuze opposes the realism of deformation (and sensation). To the aesthetics of imitation, and its deep connection with the metaphysics of the sensible and the suprasensible, we wish to oppose the aesthetics of the hypersensible. If, ultimately, I wish to retain the notion of the hypersensible to define the realm that is proper to art, it is because it seems more complete than that of sensation. Sensation names one side or aspect of the hypersensible, the side that, for lack of a better word, and with Kant's conception of the aesthetic in mind, I would call *subjective*. By that, I mean the side of the artist and the viewer, the side with which we feel or sense. But the other side of art and of aesthetic experience is that of the sensible itself—of what, following a certain tradition, I have called the earth, and which names matter in its free state, beyond or, better said perhaps, beneath perception.

3. TRANSITION TO CHILLIDA, AND THE AESTHETICS OF METAPHOR

What if the work of art were not an image or a manifestation, in the sense of a sensuous representation, of an original—whether that original be itself a sensuous, singular being, present to our perception in its bodily actuality (*leibhaftig*), or a non-sensuous reality, an *idea*—but something that would be present only in and through the work, something that otherwise would remain invisible? What if, contrary to the Platonic demand that the work be oriented towards the full presence and self-identity of the thing—a demand that remained operative throughout the history of aesthetics, albeit as the goal that the work could never achieve *qua* work—the work were oriented towards a different modality of presence, and precisely away from anything like the identity or *self*-showing of the thing? What if, far from directing us towards the eidetic core, the identity, or the full presence of the thing, the work of art were the presentation of that aspect of a thing by which it escapes from itself and joins another, that force or power by which it *becomes* something else? Wouldn't there be beauty too in the vision of otherwise hidden connections, in seeing not the thing *itself*, whether as body or idea, but the opposite, namely, one or many other things, virtually contained within it, and liberated through the work, in what would amount to a diffraction and an opening up of the thing? Wouldn't the freeing of such a virtual world not amount to a genuine reversal of Platonism, and a radical displacement of mimesis? For the aim of the work, its purpose and end, would be precisely to reveal the many worlds contained within one given thing, the many faces and voices folded within it. The work would free up the differences trapped within the identity of essence, and oppose the unity—and beauty—of fragmentation or, better said perhaps, diffraction, to that of totality. Insofar as it would not be oriented towards a pre-given original, such a presentation would amount to more than just a shining—a manifestation *and* a falsification—of truth. It would amount to a creation and an invention. [With respect to phenomenology, and the rigorous analysis of perception and intuition it puts forward, my claim is that the artistic image is not a matter of perception, but of *vision*, and that artistic vision—that of the artist as well as the viewer—requires in fact a suspension of perception, or, better said perhaps, a splitting, doubling or de-coupling of perception.]

As such, the image would also cease to be allegorical, and become metaphorical. It is remarkable how, in the history of aesthetics, metaphor has been systematically downplayed in relation to allegory, or even metonymy, as I began to show in relation to Schopenhauer. [Having said that, we can imagine—as Kant himself doesn't say anymore—that all the figures and tropes of art (allegory, metonymy, metaphor, etc.), insofar as they are concerned with the beautiful, partake of the symbolic, and remain subordinated to the Platonic axiomatics, which envisages the production of images only in relation to the supersensible.]

Beyond Kant, who conceived of knowledge as either theoretical or practical, and with Schopenhauer, yet up to a point only, the question I would like to ask is whether there might be such a thing as aesthetic knowledge—a knowledge that would be specific to art, and thus resist its orientation towards the supersensible. In other words, can it make any sense to speak of aesthetic ideas as *sensible* ideas, and to conceive of art in terms of an excess, but one that would itself be sensible? Is there an excess of the sensible within nature itself, an excess which, far

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from wresting us from nature, and broaching the supersensible, would bring us back to nature? This excess, I want to argue, is precisely what the operation of metaphor reveals. Metaphor, I want to argue, is not symbolic, or analogical, in the Kantian sense. It is not, to use Proust's formulation, a matter of technique, but of vision. It is the gift and the training that allows one to see the work differently. What does difference mean in this context? It means an ability to see nature according to its differences, not its identities, and to see differences not as species of a common genus, but as free differences. It signals, in what amounts to a different sense of vision, the ability to see two (or more) things at once, in a vision that is no longer convergent and monoscopic, that is, oriented towards the practical goals of life and the theoretical contemplation of things in their essence, but divergent and stereoscopic. It proceeds by way of doubling nature, or holding together that which is ordinarily—and for practical or theoretical reasons—held apart. In and through the work of metaphor, the world is present to us in a way that cannot be apprehended differently, though other means. And yet, it is present to us as the world *itself*, and not as a world that exists only in fancy. Metaphor allows hitherto unsuspected connections to emerge from within the depths of the world. This is how Marcel in the *Recherche* is able to say that the aim of art is to describe “nature as it is, poetically.” By that, he doesn't mean that science, for example, doesn't describe nature as it is. Rather, he means that we should take seriously the possibility of a knowledge of nature that is essentially and irreducibly poetic, or aesthetic. And metaphor, not the symbolic, is the operation by which this type of knowledge takes place. It breaks with the transcendence of analogy and introduces the immanence of differential univocity in the aesthetic. It also breaks with the logic of mimesis that remained in place throughout the history of aesthetics, and its transformation in Kant, Schopenhauer, and Hegel.

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NOTES

1. Miguel de Beistegui, *Jouissance de Proust. Pour une esthétique de la métaphore* (La Versanne: encre marine, 2007).
2. M. Heidegger, *Die Kunst und der Raum* (St Gallen: Erker Verlag, 1969). The text was illustrated with 7 litho-collages from Chillida. The artist and the philosopher had met in 1968 and Heidegger was impressed enough by what he saw and heard to devote a specific text to sculpture and the question of space—an articulation that he had hitherto ignored.
3. *Elogio del horizonte. Conversaciones con Eduardo Chillida*, edited by Susana Chillida (Barcelona: Ediciones Destino, 2003), 105-119.
4. Much of this discussion is informed by, and thus indebted to, John Sallis' work, which I have extended in parts and nuanced in others. I want to make clear from the start, however, that what I call the hypersensible, and the question of metaphor that I attach to it, whilst perhaps finding echoes in Sallis' work, cannot be taken to express his views.
5. Plato, *Republic*, 596d-e
6. J. Sallis, *Force of Imagination*, 51.
7. Plato, *Republic*, 603b.
8. Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1448b5-8.
9. Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1451b2-3.
10. Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1448b17.
11. J. Sallis, *Double Truth*, 177.
12. *Physics*, II, viii, 199a15-17.
13. A. Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986), Band I, 313. Translated by E. F. G. Payne, *The World as Will and Representation* (New York: Dover Publications, 1969), Volume I, 222. Henceforth *WWV I*, followed by German and English pagination.
14. *WWV I*: 313/222.
15. See A. Schopenhauer, *WWV I*: 331/235.
16. G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970), 64-67. The lectures, edited by Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel, are based on the so-called Hotho second edition (1842), which was itself put together on the basis of Hegel's notebooks and several sets of student notes from various lecture courses (1823, 1826, and 1828-29). More recently, Anne-Marie Gethmann-Siefert released an annotated version of the 1823 lectures, still based on Hotho's original edition, but historically more reliable than the synthesis carried out by Hotho: see G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen. Ausgewählte und Manuskripte*, Band 2: *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Kunst* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1998). The English translation in two volumes, due to T. M. Knox, is based on the 1842 edition: *Hegel's Aesthetics. Lectures on Fine Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975). Henceforth *Ästhetik*, followed by German and English page numbers.
17. *Ästhetik I*: 66/42.
18. *Ästhetik I*: 66/43.
19. I. Kant, *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1966), A 140/B 180.
20. *Kant's gesammelte Schriften, Herausgegeben von der Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Band V. Erste Abtheilung: Werke, Fünfter Band: Kritik der Praktischen Vernunft, Kritik der Urtheilskraft*. Berlin: Georg Reichermer, 1908 (first edition), 1913 (second edition), §59. *Critique of the Power of Judgement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), edited by Paul Guyer, translated by Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews. Henceforth *KU*, 5, followed by German and English pagination.
21. *KU*, 5: 351/225.
22. *KU*, 5: 352/226. My emphasis.
23. See M. de Beistegui, *Truth and Genesis: Philosophy as Differential Ontology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005).
24. *KU*, 5: 314/192-92.
25. *KU*, 5: 306/185.
26. *KU*, 5: 301/181.
27. *KU*, 5: 353/227.
28. *KU*, 5:301/180.
29. *KU*, 3: 536/230.
30. A. Schopenhauer, *WWV I*: 154/97.
31. A. Schopenhauer, *WWV I*: 245/169.
32. A. Schopenhauer, *WWV I*: 255/177.
33. A. Schopenhauer, *WWV I*: 255/177.
34. A. Schopenhauer, *WWV I*: 265/185.
35. A. Schopenhauer, *WWV I*: 246/170.
36. A. Schopenhauer, *WWV I*: 252/174.
37. A. Schopenhauer, *WWV I*: 256/178.
38. A. Schopenhauer, *WWV I*: 265/184.

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39. A. Schopenhauer, *WWVI*: 265/185.
40. A. Schopenhauer, *WWVI*: 265/185.
41. "Genius," Schopenhauer writes, "is the capacity to remain in a state of pure perception, to lose oneself in perception..." (*WWVI*: 266/185).
42. A. Schopenhauer, *WWVI*: 266/185.
43. A. Schopenhauer, *WWVI*: 266/186.
44. A. Schopenhauer, *WWVI*: 281-82/197.
45. A. Schopenhauer, *WWVI*: 282/198.
46. A. Schopenhauer, *WWVI*: 357/256.
47. A. Schopenhauer, *WWVI*: 359/257.
48. A. Schopenhauer, *WWVI*: 357/256.
49. A. Schopenhauer, *WWVI*: 358/256.
50. A. Schopenhauer, *WWVI*: 358/256.
51. A. Schopenhauer, *WWVI*: 358/257.
52. A. Schopenhauer, *WWVI*: 359/257.
53. A. Schopenhauer, *WWVI*: 359/257.
54. As I have already shown in connection with Proust, and will argue again in this book, metaphor itself needs to be wrested from imitation, analogy and, more generally, ontology, in order to see its differential and alethic potential released. It is only by wresting aesthetics from metaphysics that metaphor can be seen in a more *productive* light. It is a matter of going beyond Schopenhauer, of pushing metaphor beyond analogy, that is, of no longer referring "our" world to another, which would be the world *as such*, the "thing in itself."
55. A. Schopenhauer, *WWVI*: §§ 38, 50.
56. A. Schopenhauer, *WWVI*: 360/258.
57. A. Schopenhauer, *WWVI*: 360/258.
58. A. Schopenhauer, *WWVI*: 360-62, 258-59.
59. A. Schopenhauer, *WWVI*: 359/257.
60. A. Schopenhauer, *WWVI*: 366/262-63.
61. *Ästhetik I*: 21/8.
62. Plato, *Greater Hippias*, 295a.
63. Plato, *Greater Hippias*, 286d-287d.
64. *Ästhetik I*: 2/15.
65. F. Nietzsche, *Der Wille zur Macht*, selected and arranged by Peter Gast with the aid of Elisabeth Förster Nietzsche (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1996), 554. Translated by Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale as *The Will to Power* (New York: Random House, 1968), 435. Henceforth *WM*, followed by German and English page numbers.
66. F. Nietzsche, *Die Geburt der Tragödie, Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, edited by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, Volume III 1 (Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1972), 20. Translated by Walter Kaufmann as *The Birth of Tragedy* (London: Penguin Books, 1967), 31. Henceforth *KGA*, followed by volume and page number in German and English.
67. F. Nietzsche, *KGA VI 3*: 75. Translated by R. J., Hollingdale as *Twilight of the Idols*, (London: Penguin Books, 1968), 50.
68. F. Nietzsche, *KGA VI.3*: 75/51.
69. F. Nietzsche, *KGA VI.3*: 75/51.
70. F. Nietzsche, *WP*: 575-76/451.
71. F. Nietzsche, *KGA VI 1*: 9. Trans. R. J. Hollingdale, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (London: Penguin Books, 1969), 42.
72. F. Nietzsche, *KGA VI 1*: 10/43.
73. F. Nietzsche, *KGA VI 1*: 33/60.
74. F. Nietzsche, *WP*: 552/434.
75. F. Nietzsche, *KGA III 1*: 12/23.
76. F. Nietzsche, *WP*: 576/451.
77. F. Nietzsche, *KGA VI 2*: 384. Translated, with notes, by Maudemarie Clark and Alan J. Swensen as *On the Genealogy of Morality* (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett, 1998), 86.
78. F. Nietzsche, *KGA VI 2*: 420/111.
79. F. Nietzsche, *KGA VI 1*: 44/67.
80. John Sallis, *Crossings. Nietzsche and the Space of Tragedy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 41.
81. *KGA III 1*: 36-37/46.
82. Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie*, Erstes Buch, Husserliana 3, ed. Walter Biemel (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1950), 42. I am here following J. Sallis' elegant translation in *Force of Imagination*, 39.
83. See R. Barbaras, "Le dédoublement de l'originaire," *Le Tournant de l'expérience* (Paris: Vrin, 1998), pp. 81-94.
84. E. Husserl, *Gesammelte Werke (Husserliana)* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1984), Band XIX/2, *Logische Untersuchungen*,

- VI, § 45, A 614/B142; *Gesammelte Werke (Husserliana)* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976), Band III/1, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und Phänomenologischen Philosophie, I, Allgemeine Einführung in die reine Phänomenologie*, § 24, 43-44.
85. Jacques Derrida, *La voix et le phénomène* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1967), 3.
86. *Le visible et l'invisible* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), p. 209; trans. Alphonso Lingis, *The Visible and the Invisible* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), p. 158. Henceforth V.I., followed by French and English pagination.
87. V. I., 210/158.
88. V.I., 209/158.
89. V.I., 300/247.
90. M. Merleau-Ponty, *L'Œil et l'Esprit* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), 12.
91. M. Merleau-Ponty, *L'Œil et l'Esprit*, 83.
92. M. Merleau-Ponty, *L'Œil et l'Esprit*, 59.
93. M. Merleau-Ponty, *L'Œil et l'Esprit*, 46; and again, 65, where Merleau-Ponty uses the word "depth" to designate the encroachment or reflection of the visible world, and no longer the organisation of an idealised space.
94. M. Merleau-Ponty, *L'Œil et l'Esprit*, 81.
95. M. Merleau-Ponty, *L'Œil et l'Esprit*, 22.
96. M. Merleau-Ponty, *L'Œil et l'Esprit*, 22.
97. M. Merleau-Ponty, *L'Œil et l'Esprit*, 27.
98. M. Merleau-Ponty, *L'Œil et l'Esprit*, 76.
99. M. Merleau-Ponty, *L'Œil et l'Esprit*, 29.
100. M. Heidegger, "Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes," *Holzwege* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1950), 1-72; edited and translated by Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes, "The Origin of the Work of Art," *Off the Beaten Track* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1-56. Henceforth OWA, followed by German and English pagination.
101. The earlier version of the lecture was delivered at the *Kunstwissenschaftliche Gesellschaft* of Freiburg im Breisgau on 13 November 1935. It was published in 1987 as a pirated, bilingual edition, by Emmanuel Martineau, who had obtained a typed copy of the handwritten manuscript from Jean Beaufret. The official first draft of "On The Origin of the Work of Art" was published in *Heidegger Studies*, Volume 5, (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1989), 7-22.
102. In the Appendix to "The Origin of the Work of Art," Heidegger explains that *setzen* and *stellen* are to be understood in the Greek sense of *thesis*, that is, as bringing something *hither* into unconcealment, bringing it *forth* among what is present, allowing it to lie forth and find its place, and not, as became the case later on, "placing" or "representing" something, in the sense of summoning it before the "I" as subject (68/53). This, in a nutshell, is the difference between the *Stellen* that characterises the work of art as *Her-* and *Aufstellen* and the *Darstellen* of the Kantian subject.
103. M. Heidegger, OWA, 48/37.
104. M. Heidegger, OWA, 41/32.
105. M. Heidegger, OWA, 30/23.
106. M. Heidegger, OWA, 30/23.
107. M. Heidegger, OWA, 31/24.
108. M. Heidegger, OWA, 31/24.
109. See M. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Max Niemeyer Verlag: Tübingen, 1927), 70.
110. M. Heidegger, OWA, 31/24.
111. M. Heidegger, OWA, 32/25.
112. M. Heidegger, OWA, 42/32.
113. M. Heidegger, OWA, 34/26.
114. According to Hesiod, Prometheus stole the secret of fire from the gods, so as to better the life of men. According to Aeschylus (*Prometheus Bound*, 445-506) and Plato (*Protagoras*, 320-322), Prometheus brought human beings the benefits of technology and civilisation.
115. M. Heidegger, OWA, 34/26.
116. A detailed and convincing account of the structuring opposition between Prometheus and Orpheus can be found in Pierre Hadot, *Le voile d'Isis* (Paris: Gallimard, 2004), 110-112, and Parts V and VI. Whilst the Promethean attitude is characterised by audacity, a curiosity that knows no bounds, the will to power in the face of adversity, and the search for what is useful, the Orphic attitude is characterised by a certain respect and restraint in the face of nature and its mysteries, and, of course, by a relation to the unknown depths of the earth. There is, Hadot claims, considerable evidence that links the mysteries of Eleusis with the Orphic tradition. If Orpheus is also seen as penetrating the mysteries of nature, it is not through violence and will, but melody, rhythm, and harmony. Unsurprisingly, many poets and writers, from Ronsard to Rilke and Blanchot, see Orpheus as the voice of art itself, and by that we need to understand the voice of the Night that never becomes Day, the light of earth, so radically distinct from that of the world. As for *Lethe*, it also stands for the hidden presence of earth beneath the forces of the world. In an article entitled "Mythical aspects of Memory and Time," in *Mythe et pensée chez les Grecs* (Paris: Éditions de la découverte, 1994), 117 ff., Jean-Pierre Vernant evokes the cult of *Lethe* at the oracle of Trophonios at

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Lebadicia. It was associated with *Mnemosune*, and together they formed a couple of complementary religious powers. At the place of the oracle, in what was known as Trophonios' cave, a descent into Hades was simulated. Before entering the cave, the person consulting the oracle was brought before two springs called *Lethe* and *Mnemosune*. Drinking from the first, he would forget everything about his human life. He would then enter the domain of the Night. By drinking from the second, he was supposed to remember everything that he had seen and heard in the other world (which, in the current context, I interpret as the earth). What is relevant, here, is the extent to which one needed to forget, and transform oneself, in order to enter that other domain of experience.

117. Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: Logique de la sensation* (Paris: Éditions de la différence, 1981). Trans. Smith, D., *Francis Bacon: the Logic of Sensation* (London: Continuum, 2003). Henceforth *FB*, followed by French and English page numbers.

118. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Capitalisme et schizophrénie tome 2: Mille Plateaux* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1980). Trans. Massumi, B., *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (London: The Athlone Press, 1988). Henceforth *ATP*, followed by French and English page numbers.

119. *ATP*, 53-54/40.

120. *ATP*, 54/40. Translation modified.

121. *Spinoza et le problème de l'expression* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1969). Trans. Joughin, M., *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza* (New York: Zone Books, 1990).

122. *ATP*, 54/40. Translation modified.

123. *ATP*, 628/503.

124. *ATP*, 55/41.

125. *ATP*, 54/40.

126. *ATP*, 43/30.

127. *ATP*, 197-198/159-160.

128. *ATP*, 598/478.

129. *ATP*, 593/474.

130. Mark Bonta and John Protevi, *Deleuze and Geophilosophy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 76.

131. David Sylvester, *Interviews with Francis Bacon* (London: Thames&Hudson, Revised edition 1980), 141. Henceforth *Interviews*, followed by page number.

132. The famous letter to Paul Demeny from 15 May 1871 (*Lettres de la vie littéraire d'Arthur Rimbaud* [Paris: L'imaginaire Gallimard, 1990], p. 45), known as the *lettre du voyant*, can never be quoted enough. It is the purest expression of the artistic life, that is, of the life that calls on (and for) another organisation of the senses, of the body and the world. It is matter of seeing, but of seeing differently, from the disorganisation of the senses. The body without organs—at least the organs insofar as they work together in perception, with a view to a practical goal and according to an organic necessity—alone can “see” in that way. The artistic life is no longer bound to life by action: “Poetry will no longer lend its rhythm to action, it *will be ahead* [*La Poésie ne rythmera plus l'action: elle sera en avant*]” (p. 49). In that respect, the seeing of the Poet is also a *foreseeing*, a seeing that oversteps the limits of ordinary, practical perception. Two days prior to his letter to Demeny, Rimbaud had sent a letter to Georges Izambard, in which he first formulated his manifesto. It is from this first version that I quoted: “I want to be a poet, and I am working myself to make myself a *seer*...” (p. 38). And what are we to say of the short poem entitled “Sensation” (in *Œuvres poétiques* [Paris: Garnier Flammarion, 1964], p. 28) other than that it echoes in words the ambition that Bacon set for painting?

133. Artaud, “Le pèse-nerfs,” *Œuvres* (Paris: Quarto Gallimard, 2004), 161.

134. *FB*, 34/45-46

135. *Interviews*, 148.

136. *Interviews*, 148.

137. *Interviews*, 148. My emphasis.

138. *Interviews*, 172.

139. *Interviews*, 168 and 175, respectively.

140. *Interviews*, 176.

141. *Interviews*, 146.

142. *Interviews*, 146.

143. *Interviews*, 146.

144. *Interviews*, 40.

145. *Interviews*, 56.

146. *Interviews*, 12.

147. *Interviews*, 56.

148. *FB*, 19 / 20.

149. *Interviews*, 198.

150. Lyotard, Jean-François. *Discours, Figure* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1971).