

Thinking Art Post-aesthetically: Beyond Expression, Experience and Consciousness

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CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORSHIP/ORIGINALITY

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

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List of Abbreviations

Heidegger's Works

- AED* *Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens 1910-1976* [GA 13] (Frankfurt Am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2002).
- B* *Besinnung* [GA 66] (Frankfurt Am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1997).
- BPP* *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988).
- BQP* *Basic Questions of Philosophy: Selected "Problems" of "logic,"* trans. Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).
- BT* *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962).
- BW* *Basic Writings: From Being and Time (1927) to The Task of Thinking (1964)*, edited, with general introduction and introductions to each selection by David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, c1993).
- BzP* *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)* [GA 65] (Frankfurt Am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1989).
- CP* *Contributions to Philosophy: (from Enowning)*, trans. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999).
- DOT* *Discourse on Thinking: A Translation of Gelassenheit*, trans. John M. Anderson and E. Hans Freund (New York: Harper & Row, 1969).
- EGT* *Early Greek Thinking*, trans. David Farrell Krell & Frank A. Capuzzi (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984).
- EM* *Einführung in die Metaphysik* [GA 40] 6th Edition (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1998).
- EP* *The End of Philosophy*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).
- EPF* *Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung*, [GA 17] ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1994).
- FCM* *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, trans. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995).

- FS* *Four Seminars*, trans. Andrew Mitchell and Francois Raffoul (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003).
- GP* *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie* [GA 24] (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1975).
- GdP* *Grundfragen der Philosophie: Ausgewählt "Probleme" der "Logik,"* [GA 45] (Frankfurt Am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1984).
- GM* *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik: Welt, Endlichkeit, Einsamkeit,* [GA 29/30], ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (Frankfurt Am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1983).
- HH* *Hölderlin's Hymnen "Germanien" und "Der Rhein"* [GA 39] (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1980).
- HW* *Holzwege*, [GA 5] (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1977)
 "Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes," (1935-1936), pp. 1-74. "Die Zeit des Weltbildes," (1938) pp. 75-113.
- IM* *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Gregory Fried & Richard Polt (New York; London: Yale University Press, 2000).
- IPR* *Introduction to Phenomenological Research*, trans. Daniel O. Dahlstrom (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005)
- M* *Mindfulness*, trans. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly (London: Continuum, 2006).
- N* *Nietzsche: vol. I: The Will to Power as Art*, trans. David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979).
- NI* *Nietzsche I*, [GA 6.1 Vol. I] (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1996). "Der Wille zur Macht als Kunst" (1936-37).
- NII* *Nietzsche II*, [GA 6.2 Vol. II] (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1996).
 "Der Metaphysik als Geschichte des Seins" (1941).
- OBT* *Off the Beaten Track*, trans. Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
- OWL* *On the Way to Language*, trans. Peter D. Hertz (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1982).
- PAA* *Phänomenologie der Anschauung und des Ausdrucks: Theorie der philosophischen Begriffsbildung*, [GA 59] (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1993).

- PIE* *Phenomenology of Intuition and Expression: Theory of Philosophical Concept Formation*, trans. Tracy Colony (London: Continuum, 2010).
- PR* *The Principle of Reason*, trans. Reginald Lilly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991).
- PS* *Plato's Sophist*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003).
- P:S* *Platon: Sophistes*, [GA 19] (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1992).
- QCT* *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Garland Pub., 1977).
- SvG* *Der Satz vom Grund*, [GA 10] 9th Edition (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2006).
- SZ* *Sein und Zeit*, [GA 2] (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1957).
- TDP* *Towards the Definition of Philosophy: With a Transcript of the Lecture Course "On the Nature of the University and Academic Study"*, trans. Ted Sadler (New Brunswick, NJ: Athlone Press, 2000).
- US* *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, [GA12] (Pfullingen: Günther Neske, 1975).
- VA* *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, [GA 7] 10th Edition (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2004).
 "Die Frage nach der Technik," (1949), pp. 9-40. "Wissenschaft und Besinnung," (1954), pp. 41-66. "Überwindung der Metaphysik," (1936-1946), pp. 67-95.
- WCT* *What is Called Thinking?* trans. J. Glenn Gray (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1954).
- WHD* *Was Heisst Denken?* [GA 8] 5th Edition (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1977).
- ZBP* *Zur Bestimmung der Philosophie*, [GA 56/57] (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1987).
- ZS* *Zollikon Seminars: Protocols, Conversations, Letters*, trans. Franz Mayr, Richard Askay (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2001).

Husserl's Works

- CM* *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, trans. Dorion Cairns (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 1995).
- EJ* *Experience and Judgment: Investigations in a Genealogy of Logic*, trans. James S.

Churchill and Karl Ameriks, ed. Ludwig Landgrebe (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973).

Ideas I *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology I (Ideas I)*, trans W. R. Boyce Gibson (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1969).

LI *Logical Investigations*, Vol. 1, trans. J. N. Findlay (London: Routledge, 2001).

LI 2 *Logical Investigations*, Vol. 2, trans. J. N. Findlay (London: Routledge, 2001).

PICM *Phantasy, Image Consciousness, and Memory, 1898-1925*, trans. John B. Brough, (Dordrecht: Springer, 2005).

PIT *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, trans. Calvin O. Schrag, ed. Martin Heidegger (Bloomington & London: Indiana University Press, 1964).

Gadamer's Works

PH *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, trans. David E. Linge (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).

TM *Truth and Method*, Second Revised Edition, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (London; New York: Continuum, 2004).

Kant's Works

CPR *Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. J. M. D. Meiklejohn (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1924).

CoJ *The Critique of Judgement*, trans. James Creed Meredith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952).

Derrida's Works

Diss *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (London: Athlone, 1981).

LInc *Limited Inc*, trans. Samuel Weber & Jeffrey Mehlman (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988).

MC "My Chances/ Mes Chances: A Rendezvous with Some Epicurean Stereophonies." In *Taking Chances: Derrida, Psychoanalysis, and Literature*, edited by Jo-

seph Smith and William Kerrigan, 1-32. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984).

OG *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976).

Pos *Positions*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

SP *Speech and Phenomena, and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*, trans. David B. Allison (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973).

TP *The Truth in Painting*, trans. Geoff Bennington, & Ian McLeod (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

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Abstract

This dissertation asks: in what way can the practice of art, and the encounter with the work of art, constitute the site for a form of philosophical thinking? The work draws on ‘post-aesthetic’ theory, and, in particular, the philosophy of Martin Heidegger and Jacques Derrida to ask: to what extent would this thinking, or modality of knowing, consist of a material or poetic thinking, and how, if it not simply irrational, would it differ from logical discourse? Art is typically thought either in terms of the aesthetic attitude—incorporating subjectivist notions of expression taste and lived experience—or, alternatively, as a logical enterprise, where the work is seen as a carrier of a message incorporating an analytical-political critique. This project seeks to develop a third way that rejects a fusion or neutralisation of this opposition. Central to this argument is the necessity of displacing not only what Heidegger calls ‘representational thinking’ (*Vorstellung*), but also its metaphysical counter-part: lived-experience (*Erlebnis*). Interrogating the fields of both art and philosophy, this dissertation enquires as to how certain practices of art might engage in what might be art’s specific way of thinking, and consider the production and reception of art as a modality of knowing which displaces the modernist metaphysical notions of expression, intention, experience (*Erlebnis*), and aesthetic pleasure. At the same time it examines the theoretical documents and practices of (i), conceptual art, and (ii) John Cage and Fluxus, in order to open the possibility for a non-aesthetic, and non-conceptual, encounter with the work of art, that does not jettison materiality and thinking. In accordance with Heidegger’s thinking on art, This study finds that the non-intentionality of Cage and Fluxus constitutes a radical abstention from aesthetic judgment in making art, and that it offers a way of thinking beyond the closure of the strict volitional model of Conceptual Art. Yet this work puts into question a certain ontological naivety in Cage’s conception of the listening experience as an aesthetic attuning of the faculties. This dissertation proposes that the encounter with the contemporary work of art involves a complex interplay between pre-structured experience and language, rather than what would normally be conceived as sensual-emotional pleasure in form, direct contact with experiential flux, or the receipt of a message that is the explicit product of an artist’s intention.

Introduction

The guiding notions which, under the names “expression” (Ausdruck), “experience” (Erlebnis), and “consciousness” (Bewußtsein), determine modern thinking, were to be put in question with respect to the decisive role they played’

Martin Heidegger (US 130, OWL 36).

This inquiry originated from concerns that arose from my attempts, in teaching situations, to engage students in theoretical and philosophical discussions around works of art. In a pedagogical context it became apparent to me that when a work of art—which in my case was often a piece of video art, or sound art—was put before students, the more the work’s evaluation depended on an aesthetic judgment, the less the work had the capacity to provoke genuinely interesting discussion. The presentation of purely formalistic or aesthetic works of art, at best, served as a supplementary illustration to the history of form, or as conformation of the work’s accepted status in a canonical sequence of exemplary models; and at worst, as an object open only to qualifications of either pleasure or displeasure. I began to find myself increasingly interested in works, and arguments for works, that tend to exceed these narrowly subjective forms of engagement, and—in order to be pedagogically useful—had the capacity to engage in ‘conceptual’ problematics, and generate questions. Moreover, I became more and more interested in theories of art that, on the one hand, question the primacy of aesthetic values, and on the other, resist reduction to an analytical framework that would see them as efficient and transparent vehicles for logical authorial intention.

0.1 Thinking Art

In the early 1990s I came across J.M. Bernstein’s *The Fate of Art: Aesthetic Alienation from Kant to Derrida and Adorno* (1992)¹ where the question is asked: how can we think of art outside its autonomous sphere and allow it to resonate with truth-only cognition? More recently, the theorisation of the emergent field of ‘practice based research’² attempts, in many different ways, to answer this question, and to determine the relevance of artistic practices to university research. Some of the questions it asks are: How would we think *through*, or *by way of*, artistic practice? How is knowledge embodied or represented in the

work of art? How is knowledge produced in the process of making art? In what ways can the practice of art constitute a branch of research, and contribute to the formation of new knowledge? But why research, and why new knowledge? Why, as James Elkins asks, do we want to start thinking about visual art as if it were a science?³ Yet, the often common counter-reaction to thinking art as a cognitive discipline is to turn around and think of art as silent, emotional, personal, subjective and irrational; in short, as the very opposite of scientific reason. I want to argue the case to put art—or as Marcel Duchamp says of painting—‘once again in the service of the mind.’⁴ This does not mean reducing the work of art to theory, or logical propositions, but rather, it means considering the practice of art as way of thinking, that is, of ‘thinking through,’ and ‘thinking differently’; where the work of art is thought neither as an outcome of logical cognition, nor as a product of inner emotional non-discursive feeling. I want to examine the possibility of, in a certain way, doing philosophy through art. Such a practice might not strictly be philosophy but might rather be thought as a ‘sister’ of, or a neighbouring discipline to, philosophy. The kind of knowledge produced through art—if it can be called knowledge at all—may not deliver quantifiable results, methodological formulas would certainly not be appropriate, and the questions generated might be interminable; forever resisting closure. Thought in this way, the work of art performs an intellectual vocation—that is non-aesthetic but, at the same time, not strictly conceptual. But rather than being thought of as a weakness this specificity may be what would constitute its strength.

Essentially, my question is: what is the philosophical work that the work of art does? What is the thinking that art performs? To what extent is this thinking a material or poetic thinking, and how, if it is not simply irrational, does it differ from logical discourse?

The rather audacious title: “Thinking Art Post-aesthetically: Beyond Expression, Experience and Consciousness” is taken from the quote from Heidegger in the above epigraph. Here, in a rather economical way, late in his career, Heidegger reflects on the focus of his entire project. His aim, across the years, had always been, he proposes, to put into question the governing concepts of metaphysics, namely: expression, experience and consciousness. In accordance with this reference the title does not refer to experience ‘in general’ but, rather, a certain personal inner (lived) experience—a notion common to both

nineteenth century aesthetic discourse and philosophy. In the same way, ‘expression’ refers not generally to anything that can be said or shown but to a certain inner-to-outer model of subjectivist expressivity. Finally consciousness should rather be thought here in terms of what Heidegger calls ‘modern representational thinking,’ and what Jacques Derrida delegates as ‘self -presence.’

0.2 Scope: Art and Philosophy

In response to these questions my research has proceeded in two directions: one looks into the writings of artists and associated theorists; the other examines the philosophy, primarily, of Martin Heidegger, Edmund Husserl, and Jacques Derrida. In the field of art discourse, I examine and evaluate the various theories and strategies that different historical art practices have mobilised in order to think art as an intellectual endeavour. I concentrate on two moments in modern art which have generated a substantial amount of writing on the issues I am concerned with. These are: (i) the writings and works of John Cage and the Fluxus artists, and (ii) the polemical discourse of a certain strand of Conceptual Art (Joseph Kosuth and *Art & Language*). Both, in different ways, owe a significant debt to Duchamp’s attempt to think art beyond aesthetics.

This thesis is essentially about the intertwining of art—or the discourses associated with art—and philosophy. By ‘art’ I am referring to practices that locate their referential context toward or around visual art institutions and practices (the central disciplines being painting and sculpture). This would include, however, installation art, video art, sound art, media art, environmental-earth art, and various forms of conceptual art. In other words, I am referring to ‘art’ as opposed to broader term ‘the arts’: incorporating cinema, the dramatic arts, dance, and literature. The functional arts of architecture and design are also beyond the scope of my inquiry. However, there are places in my argument where I find it necessary to break down such rigid boundaries and argue for ‘inter-media’ genres that lie between media and disciplinary boundaries. The investigation here will be more concerned with artist’s theoretical writings in support of their practices, and less with actual works of art—though, of course, these are important. That is to say, I am more interested here in the contested concepts and philosophical underpinnings, and artistic strategies, related to the creative practices I examine, rather than empirical descriptions or hermeneutical interpretations of various works of art.

0.3 Post-aesthetic Philosophy

The philosophy of Heidegger and Derrida, in their different approaches, open the way to thinking the work of art in what J.M. Bernstein calls ‘post-aesthetic’ terms. Post-aesthetic theories, as Bernstein describes them, take artistic phenomena as exceeding a narrowly aesthetic designation formulated according to judgments of taste. Moreover, for Bernstein, they are ‘critiques of truth-only cognition insofar as their going beyond aesthetics implies a denial of the rigid distinctions separating the claims of taste from claims of knowing or right action’⁵ Further, I would argue that when the work of art is considered in post-aesthetic terms, notions of genius, taste, or expressive emotion, no longer govern the entire enterprise. Post-aesthetic does not mean ‘non-aesthetic’ or ‘anti-aesthetic.’ It does not call for the liquidation of all aesthetic and emotional responses to the work of art, or of all pleasurable engagement with works of art. Rather, it seeks to displace these values, and prevent them from determining *all* thinking and evaluation of art.

0.4 Heidegger: Twisting Free from Aesthetics

Heidegger’s thinking of the work of art—as opening up the space for the ‘happening of truth,’ which simultaneously involves a ‘twisting free’ from aesthetics—paves the way for an opening up to questioning that cannot be circumscribed by what Heidegger calls ‘modern representational thinking.’ Here I borrow the term ‘twisting free’ from a number of commentators, to indicate a non-dialectical displacement that, rather than constituting a simple overturning, or a clean break.⁶ Heidegger demonstrates that modern objectifying thinking, rather than being the inevitable historical result of a progressive and logical development in the history of philosophy, is in fact produced by a series of turns and distortions, due to the contingencies of translation—where the corpus of philosophy cannot be transparently transplanted into different linguistic communities without encountering and instituting a new way of thinking. In view of this, Heidegger suggests that modern representational thinking must not necessarily constitute the *only* way of thinking. But, as Heidegger accepts, since it *is* our way of thinking, it is not easily surpassable.

The traditional escape route from Enlightenment instrumental rationality has been by way of the romantic retreat from reason into emotions and irrationality. One of the blind

spots in Heidegger scholarship has consisted of the neglect to deal with the way that Heidegger sees irrational ‘lived experience’ (*Erlebnis*) as the flip side of representational thinking, and as the metaphysical determination of art as aesthetics. It is in ‘lived experience,’ Heidegger says, in the Epilogue of “The Origin of the Work of Art,” that art slowly dies and ceases to matter. According to Heidegger, representational thinking and lived-experience, rather than being opposed, actually belong to each other. As far as I am aware, Heidegger’s “The Origin of the Work of Art” has never been examined deeply from this perspective. It is hoped that this thesis will contribute to the filling of this gap.

A post-aesthetic conception of art involves a twisting free from aesthetics, which, for Heidegger, is commensurate with a twisting free from metaphysics and representational thinking. In my analysis I wish to emphasise two important aspects of Heidegger’s meditation on art. The first is the notion of letting (*lassen*), which Heidegger uncovers in his interpretation of the pre-Socratic sense of the Greek word *technē*, and by which he assigns the role of the artist in the creative act to that of a passageway for the work to appear. The other aspect of Heidegger’s writing on the artwork that I want to draw attention to is the idea of art as estrangement, where the work renders the mundane, and everyday, extraordinary. In such a way, I would propose that the work of art is an event that troubles self-evidence, opening up the most obvious and most simple, but, at the same, the work puts its own status, as work and thing, into question.

0.5 John Cage and the Flux

Does Heidegger’s notion of letting provide us with a way of re-evaluating John Cage’s creative strategies of non-intentionality and indeterminacy? Further, is it possible to consider Cage’s chance operations as, not only a creative constraint, but also a specific and radically different kind of phenomenological bracketing? Would the chance operation then, in the fields of music and sound art, suspend presupposed value judgments of taste, so that phenomena may be encountered as they are, rather than how we think they should be? It is, however, important to remain vigilant toward the risk of naively calling for a restoration of full presence in direct and immediate access to naked phenomena. In view of this risk I propose an experience of the artwork that is, in the light of Derrida’s radicalisation of Husserl’s insights, structured by repetition and signification. Along with

John Caputo I argue that it is by way of a repetition that alters, that we make our way in the Heraclitian flux that such works open up to us. This repetition, which is not independent of signs and language, allows us access to the naked thing. For Heidegger, the way in which the work of art delivers us over to the flux, but prevents us from losing ourselves in it, is through its various relations to situatedness, placing, and dwelling. But it is perhaps language that is most important for Heidegger here. In “The Origin of the Work of Art” he makes the claim that all art is ultimately poetry (*Dichtung*). I would like to argue that some of the most engaging contemporary art is a kind of poetry. By poetry I am not, however, referring to a traditional idea of poetry as an aesthetic use of language utilised in order to conjure up evocative images. Rather I am thinking of a poetry, not only in a much broader sense, but further, more specifically, in the form, or tradition, which runs from Gertrude Stein to the ‘Language poets.’

0.6 Aims

What is at stake, in the displacement of aesthetics and putting art into the service of the mind, is the possibility of breaking out from the current holding pattern of thought, where art is thought subjectively in terms of formal or emotional beauty; or objectively in terms of a logical political message; or, alternatively, as a fusion, or dialectical sublimation, of both poles. The possibilities and limits of what art can say, in and on its own terms, becomes important when it comes to establishing models for the evaluation of practice-based higher degree research, or in the evaluation of teaching and learning strategies that incorporate works of art as sites for the generation and dissemination of discursive dialogue. In both instances we are inclined to ask: what is the contribution that the work of art makes to art, cultural theory, and social perspectives? In asking this, we also ask, in a certain way, how the work makes a contribution to philosophy. Not in the sense of ‘art after philosophy’ as Kosuth proclaimed in 1969, but, rather, art entwined with, or inhabiting philosophy. To theorise a way forward in this respect is the contribution that this thesis seeks to make to the fields of art theory and philosophy.

0.7 Chapter Breakdown

0.7.1 Aesthetics

If my argument proposes a post-aesthetic position in regard to art, what then are the specific problems of an aesthetic conception of art? What are its limits, and how has it traditionally resisted being put into question? In the first chapter I consider what is meant by the term ‘aesthetic experience’ in its contemporary sense. This entails an historical analysis of the development of ideas concerning aesthetic experience since Kant. In order to clarify what a post-aesthetic position might be, this chapter seeks to answer the question: can modern subjectivist aesthetics be simply equated with Kant’s theory of aesthetic experience, or, rather, does it begin to value states of emotion that would be foreign to Kant’s way of understanding the aesthetic reflective judgment? To what extent has aesthetic modernism become the overriding framework for the evaluation of art objects? The chapter concludes with an analysis of the modernist-formalist theories of Clement Greenberg and Michael Fried, and examines the way that the notion of the autonomy of art functions in modernist criticism. I wish to argue for a certain autonomy regarding the discipline of art-making, where art must not only *say*, it must *say as* art, on its own terms, rather than being subsumed under rational discourse, or being diffused into life. I thus argue for a sense of autonomy radically different from the formalist grounding conception of ‘self-criticism,’ which is, as I will show, a reinscription of the Kantian notion of genius.

0.7.2 Conceptual Art and Post-aesthetic Theory

Challenges to an aesthetic conception of art have historically come from the avant-garde—notably: Dada, Duchamp, and Surrealism—but perhaps the most vocal and theoretically rigorous response to the hegemony of 1960s modernist criticism came from a particular branch of conceptual art. Chapter two engages with the theoretical writings, and texts-as-artworks, of the Art & Language collective, and Joseph Kosuth, which rejected the morphological basis of the formalist premise of art. Further rejecting what they saw as the neo-avant-garde wish to break down the distinction between art and life, they argued—influenced by Ad Reinhardt—for art as an autonomous practice. Whereas the alternative version of autonomy put forward by Conceptual Art places agency, consciousness, and intention at the centre of artistic practice, I argue for a sense of autonomy that resists instrumental thinking, and that, far from being securely grounded, keeps itself con-

stantly open to question. In one sense the theoretical work of Conceptual Art presents a post-aesthetic conception of art. However, there are, as I see it, tremendous problems in the theoretical positions put forth by Art & Language and Kosuth. However, my purpose here is to ask: what are the lessons we can learn from their resistance to formalist aesthetics? Although Conceptual Art adopts a philosophical approach in order to overcome aesthetics, does their work constitute an intervention into the philosophical tradition? The second part of this chapter examines some of the more recent attempts to think art post-aesthetically, following Heidegger's work on art and the artwork, where the work of art is thought, non-metaphysically, as an event in which truth happens.

0.7.3 Heidegger and the Work of Art

The next three chapters culminate in an examination of the post-aesthetic possibilities of Heidegger's meditations on the work of art, where he argues that art is one of the ways in which truth happens. However, this entails thinking the basic conceptions of art differently from the ground up. In chapter three I examine how Heidegger seeks to get back behind the fundamental terms and building blocks of the tradition in his careful dismantling of the history of Being,⁷ truth, and aesthetics. What we have come to regard as a rather progressive uninterrupted refinement of thought—from early Greek philosophy through to modernity—is alternatively conceived by Heidegger as a series of distinctive shifts and distortions which are not only due to the translation of Greek words into Latin, and then into other languages, but are, further, a consequence of how these transplanted philosophical terms function within different systems of thinking (Greek, Roman, Christian, and modern). This means, for Heidegger, it becomes possible to say that what he calls modern representational thinking, the culmination of Western metaphysics, might not constitute the *only* way of thinking. It might then be possible, Heidegger thinks, to get back behind, or outside, analytical representational thinking, and that such a possibility might be found in thinking through the event of the work of art. Chapter three functions primarily as an exposition of Heidegger's interrogation of the history of Being, truth and art.

If art is thought as opening a space for the happening of truth instituting a thinking that twists free of metaphysics, art must also, Heidegger argues, overcome aesthetics. To

conceive of art aesthetically, in terms of ‘lived-experience’ (*Erlebnis*), as non-thinking, emotional experience, is, according to Heidegger, to merely oppose one aspect of metaphysical thinking to another. In a certain way, Heidegger sees the completion, or compliment, of modern representational thinking in *Erlebnis*. Chapter four looks at the history of Heidegger’s engagement with the term *Erlebnis*, from the early phenomenological work with Husserl, through to the being-historical treatises of the late 1930s. In order to think art outside of aesthetics, Heidegger retrieves a pre-Socratic sense of the Greek word *technē*. The second part of this chapter focuses on the various ways by which Heidegger attempts this retrieval, in regard to it functioning as a term for a non-aesthetic conception of art—from the rather standard sense given to it within the Aristotelian framework of the early writings, up to its re-interpretation as the poietic essence of technology.

Chapter five concludes the inquiry launched in chapter three, leading back to the central question: in what ways can it be said that the work of art carries out philosophical work? This chapter explores some of the possibilities, in Heidegger’s inquiry into the work of art, for thinking art beyond both aesthetic and critical-analytical-representational paradigms. I aim to establish the possibility of thinking the ‘creative act’ in terms that would neither be spontaneous and arbitrary, nor calculative and reasoned; and to propose a way of thinking the reception of the work that is not determined by either disinterested pleasure, nor according to the conceptual analysis of thematic content. This chapter is concerned with the modes and modalities of knowing that the encounter with the work of art makes possible, and how these modes of knowing depart from analytical-conceptual epistemological models. My argument is that the work of art presents, in an estrangement, a form of radical otherness that ultimately brings us back to a rethinking of the most ordinary. In Heidegger’s conception of the encounter with the work of art, knowing is associated with both willing resoluteness and a non-willing letting. Thus the displacement of aesthetics further involves a re-evaluation of the act of artistic creation where it is thought more as an event in which phenomena are let to emerge, more than a strictly voluntary act—whether that be spontaneous or calculated. If the disciplines of art making, and the modes of encounter with the work of art entail a non-willing letting, then can they be conceived as providing the basis of a fundamental phenomenological starting point free from untested axiomatic assumptions?

0.7.4 Sound, Phenomenology, and Concrete Knowledge

If phenomenology (at least in Heidegger's terms) is a method of ontological investigation, and if post-aesthetic art can be said to be an ontological revealing, does the work of art constitute a form of phenomenological practice or research? If so, as a way of knowing—in terms of what would seem to be a direct and immediate way to the 'real'—what are the implications of such an approach that gives primacy to pure perception and immediate experience? What is at stake in such a question is the status of concrete knowing through, and by means of, the encounter with the work of art? In the following three chapters I turn to a consideration of sound art from the perspective of ontology and phenomenology. The contrasting sonic practices of Pierre Schaeffer and John Cage—as constituting two paternal discourses of sound art—are measured in relation to Husserl's phenomenology, and Heidegger's notions of situatedness and releasement, respectively, in chapters six and seven. I provisionally place Cage and Schaeffer on opposite sides of what Brandon LaBelle calls the 'contextual debate' in music and sound art, and argue that Cage's non-aesthetic strategies of non-intentionality and indeterminacy constitute a much more radical phenomenological investigation than Schaefferian 'sonic research,' as well as a displacement of aesthetics in the act of composition.

In chapter six I set out to show that Schaeffer's phenomenological method of sonic research results in a categorising of sound according to aesthetic presuppositions. Moreover, I suggest that this aestheticisation may be the effect of what Derrida calls a latent aesthetics within Husserl's phenomenology. Another problem with Schaeffer's research, and what restricts it to a purely aesthetic framework, is that it isolates sound from its environmental context. This chapter asks to what extent is this decontextualisation a consequence of the thinking associated with Husserl's transcendental and eidetic reductions, and sets out to untangle the ontological from the aesthetic in sound art practices.

In order to address these problems, chapter seven turns to the more existential approach of John Cage that, in a different phenomenological attitude, lets sounds be themselves and reveal themselves to us as they are. In this chapter I detail the various ways in which I propose Cage's methodology overcomes the two problems presented by Schaeffer's sonic research: (i) the unavoidable aesthetic presuppositions that in the form

of an unchecked position-taking threaten to undermine the objectivity of the research; (ii) the suppression of worldly context in the investigation and presentation of sound. I compare this approach philosophically to Heidegger's thinking of situatedness and *Gelassenheit*, contending that Cage's indeterminate operations function as a kind of phenomenological bracketing an abstention, which lets sounds be, by suspending aesthetic values of taste, and giving us access to the uncontaminated flux of experiential sound.

In the last section of chapter seven, and in chapter eight, however, I begin to question such dreams of naked presence, and inquire into the means by which we might gain access to the 'unmediated' flux? Is there ever a blank space or reception, or a presuppositionless starting point? For Heidegger and Husserl, experience is pre-structured according to shifting personal horizons. I argue, following John Caputo—drawing on the more radical potentialities of Husserl's phenomenology critically worked through by Derrida—for a protentional-retentional structure of experience, constituted by repetition and language, in order to determine the limits of concrete knowing, and to question the primacy that such procedures give to immediate experience. My argument here is that there can be no purely visual, tactile or sonorous work of art that is free of traces. Rather, I ask how the work of art hands us over to the flux, while at the same time, denying the immediacy of a simple presence.

0.7.5 From Sound to Language

If meaningful access to the flux is impossible without repetition and language, should art then turn to language, not in order to surpass or suppress experience, but to engage in the play between the implicit and explicit structures of experience? Chapter nine examines how, in non-intentional work, intention can ethically fold back into the work. Here I compare Derrida's non-voluntaristic notion of iterability with what Joan Retallack calls the 'poethical.' In this chapter I ask: what ways can non-intention—as the enacting of a non-willing thinking—function in poetic discourse, and what are the ethics of non-intentionality? If, as Derrida argues, the structure of iterability prevents authorial intention functioning as the guarantor of meaning, can a distinct line be drawn between the univocity of rational 'transparent' discourse, and the equivocity of poetic forms of discourse? I argue for the role of the constraint (the aleatory operation or systematic rule), as a suspension of taste and syntactical oppositional pre-ordering, but not without a certain

ethical vigilance that compels an intervention in, or deflection of the meaning effects produced by the text. This is not to suggest, however, that we think of works of art, in structuralist, or post-structuralist, terms as merely texts. Despite the overturning of aesthetic subjectivity, and the critique of the self-sufficient art object, carried out by the Conceptual Art of the 1960s, works of art continue to manifest as material, physical, entities. In the wake of Derrida's deconstruction of the empirical and phenomenological claims to direct and immediate experience, how are we to think of the *work* of the work in terms of its materiality?

How are we to think, in art and language, the interplay of word and thing, image and text, sound and grapheme, post-aesthetically? In chapter ten I suggest that this entails a double movement in which the word and the thing, image and text, are thought together in terms of non-transparency and difference: in terms of both poetics and materiality. This involves a use, and a conception, of language that goes beyond the simple opposition of logical transparency and aesthetic opacity. Certain authors associated with 'language writing,' and 'conceptual writing,' argue for a writing practice that functions as a form of conceptual art. Here I argue for a conceptual visual art practice that functions as a kind of poetry: that is, an engagement with language that acknowledges and puts into play the materiality or thickness of language, in relation to the connotational pre-delineatory structure of images.

0.8 Overview

I am not attempting to present an overarching theory of art, nor is my purpose to determine the totalising requirements for a post-aesthetic theory of the work of art. The ways in which the work of art can twist free of aesthetics and become the site of thinking are indeed multiple. At the same time, I am not advocating the production of dry academic art, nor am I wishing to restrain desire or purge the experience of art of any pleasure. I am not arguing against emotion and feeling *per se*. Rather, as John Cage puts it: '...I give the impression that I am against feelings. But what I am against is the imposition of feelings.'⁸ Works of art certainly have the capacity to move us, but this does not mean that emotional responses or judgments of taste should be the primary criterion for assessing the value and quality of works of art. Nor should feeling be considered to be the ultimate

origin or creative source of the work of art. Rather, my argument is that the primary consideration of what the work gives us is what it gives to thinking.

Nor could it be said that I am arguing for a new kind of art, or proclaiming the post-aesthetic as a movement implying a periodisation. I am convinced that a great deal of contemporary art transcends the opposition between rational ‘truth only’ cognition, and ‘irrational,’ intuitive, emotive expression; a divide as old as the ancient quarrel between philosophy and poetry. What I want to emphasise is the power, at a deep level, that this divide imposes on our thinking about art. Its power lies in its simplicity, because thinking any other way is fraught with extreme difficulties. But should that stop us? Rather, I propose that we should embrace these difficulties, and that art should, in a certain way, add friction, and be difficult, rather than opting for easy and convenient metaphysical escape routes.

Although it strives to develop a line of thinking initiated by Heidegger, this is not strictly a thesis *on* Heidegger. However, it necessarily demands a substantial amount of laborious explication in order to engage in the complexity of his thinking on the work of art. Rather than trying to force Heidegger’s thinking into a grid of explanation, this thesis aims to extend his thinking on the work of art, and the various aesthetic and post-aesthetic theories that draw on his work: namely those of Krzysztof Ziarek, Gerald Bruns, Gianni Vattimo, and Miguel de Beistegui. It further attempts to reconcile certain Heidegger scholarship that would seem not to be immediately pertinent to art—Jeff Malpas’s writings on space and place, Bret Davis’s inquiry into Heidegger’s displacement of voluntarism, and John Caputo’s ruminations on flux and repetition. The twisting free from aesthetics that I argue for here is simultaneously a twisting free from the guiding notions of metaphysics—expression, lived experience (*Erlebnis*), and consciousness—that the mature Heidegger, looking back on his career, thought that he had done his best to overcome. However, I must stress the impossibility of any simple, direct, and more or less, immediate overcoming. To entertain such an idea would be to adopt a transcendent perspective. The problem with such a perspective is that it risks subsuming the object of analysis under the very terms that it is trying to overcome. Because these problems cannot be handled with philosophically clean hands, the adoption of an immanent perspective is required. Such a perspective is not easy—if at all possible—to maintain within the struc-

ture of a traditional dissertation. Bearing this in mind, let us rehearse what might be called the standard objection: that the author seeks to overcome binary oppositions whilst still operating within the framework of such oppositions. In view of this I wish to emphasise two points. First, this thesis does not call for an *overturning* of the dominant concepts of Western metaphysics, but rather a *twisting free*, a displacement, which is never immediate, absolute, and might not even be permanent. Second this thesis does not propose that such a twisting free can be carried out, nor that its operations can be totalised and circumscribed, by means of a logical argument presented in the style of a dissertation. Rather, it argues that the work of art presents one of the ways in which the thinking required for such a displacement may be brought about. The work of art, thought in different terms, would have the capacity to lead us toward a non-metaphysical mode of thinking.

1. Untangling Aesthetics

In what ways can we think art and philosophy together? Certainly such a conjunction would require more than the mere illustration of philosophical ideas with works of art. Nor is it a question of philosophy influencing art or art influencing philosophy. It is rather that art and philosophy both belong to the same history of thought, that they are culturally connected in various ways by differing logics. Traditionally, aesthetics is thought of as a branch of philosophy, and yet it is one whose very definition designates a mode of experience that remains foreign to philosophy, if we consider, in a generalised sense, that the aim of philosophy is to establish grounds for universal validity. What is it that we mean by aesthetics?

The term ‘aesthetics’ was coined by Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, in 1735, from the Greek *aisthēsis*, which refers to the science or modality of sense perception. Baumgarten, however, shifts the emphasis away from sense perception as such, and toward the study of perfect sensuous representation as a lower level counterpart to logic. Thus the term begins to be taken as the study of the beautiful and the sublime.¹ However, much confusion is generated by the shorthand use of the term ‘aesthetic’ (as an adjective) to describe two very different ideas. In one sense it refers to ‘aesthetics’ which, in the broad sense, names the field in philosophy or critical theory that reflects on art (as a distinct human activity) and works of art. In another sense it designates ‘*the* aesthetic,’ or more precisely ‘the aesthetic attitude’ or ‘aesthetic experience.’ The aesthetic—or more precisely, ‘aesthetic judgment,’ in the Kantian sense—names the disinterested judgments of taste that one makes when encountering the beautiful in art and nature. In short we routinely use the term ‘aesthetic’ to describe the discourse on art and the beautiful, and, at the same time, the experience of art and the beautiful that this discourse attends to. When Jacques Rancière begins his *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, with the sentence, ‘aesthetics has a bad reputation,’² he is referring to the charge, that issues constantly in recent years, that aesthetics as a philosophical theoretical discourse seeks to hijack and capture the power of art for itself. Thus when Rancière deploys the term anti-aesthetic to describe this view, he is not speaking in the manner of Duchamp’s, or Conceptual Art’s, opposition to aesthetic values, but almost the very opposite. It would not be possible to say that Rancière, in his

support *for* ‘aesthetics,’ is arguing *against* such anti-aesthetic attitudes. Rather it seems that his position is closer to what J.M. Bernstein calls ‘post-aesthetic theory.’ The major difference between these two thinkers is that Bernstein defines aesthetics as ‘the theoretical discourse that comprehends art in its autonomous, post-Christian guise,’³ whereas Rancière comprehends it in terms of the discourse on art in general. The ambivalence again comes to be seen when Alison Ross argues that Heidegger’s writing steers philosophy in an ‘aesthetic direction.’⁴ While, Bernstein and Krzysztof Ziarek argue that Heidegger’s work represents a ‘post-aesthetic’ approach. Here Ross—although she proposes that Heidegger’s direction is based on Kant’s *Critique of Judgement*—is using the term aesthetic to describe a particular use of language that may be said to deviate from a direct and transparent usage. The anomaly which allows Ross to designate Heidegger’s project as ‘aesthetic,’ even though Heidegger speaks of ‘overcoming aesthetics,’ is made possible due to a shift in semantics. This thesis takes a post-aesthetic approach. Put simply, this is an approach that considers the work of art in terms of transcending strictly formal and emotional determinations. Post-aesthetic does not mean—in a way that might be misconstrued from Rancière’s and Ross’ usage of the word ‘aesthetic’—a reaction to a perceived dominance of aesthetic theory over actual works of art, nor a turn toward rational transparent language in philosophy. Thus when I use the word ‘aesthetic,’ in a phrase such as ‘the aesthetic view of art,’ I am referring to the primacy of aesthetic experience in art according to subjective judgments of taste and the emotion.

1.1 Aesthetics

J. M. Bernstein in his *The Fate of Art: Aesthetic Alienation from Kant to Derrida and Adorno*, was possibly the first to describe Heidegger’s conception of art—or rather what art should become—as ‘post-aesthetic.’⁵ For Bernstein, post-aesthetic theories of art issue a challenge to the hegemony of ‘truth-only cognition’ as the only real base of knowledge and knowledge making. The view presented by post-aesthetic theories is that if art remains limited to aesthetic concerns, it has no possibility of escaping its autonomous isolation from the other spheres of activity that constitute enlightened modernity: namely rational truth only cognition (science), and right action (morality). A purely aesthetic, non-cognitive, conception of art, for Bernstein, consigns art to the fate of being imprisoned within an impotent world of illusion. As Bernstein puts it: ‘The experience of art *as aesthetic* is the experience of art as having lost or been deprived of its power to speak the

truth—whatever truth will mean when no longer defined in exclusive ways.⁶ Bernstein describes this loss as ‘aesthetic alienation.’ The challenge then, as Bernstein sees it, is to think art as occupying a place that is not outside of moral and epistemic reason. Bernstein concludes that art in modernity functions as a placeholder for an absent politics, where the gap between the original truth claim of a work of art, and the aesthetic response to it, is the uninhabitable space where the work of art is experienced in terms of its excess to aesthetics. This gap is the place, for Bernstein, where a critique of dominant culture remains possible. Bernstein’s analysis of aesthetic alienation owes much to the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer, although Bernstein considers Gadamer’s interpretation of Heidegger’s thinking of the work of art as being a little too conservative

A student of Heidegger’s Marburg lectures, Gadamer begins in his 1960 opus, *Truth and Method*, with a critique of aesthetic consciousness, where he argues that aesthetics gets in the way of the truth content of a work of art. The concept of genius is, for Gadamer, the central tenet of what he calls the subjectivised view of aesthetics, or aesthetic consciousness (*aesthetische Bewußtsein*), which separates truth from work, restricting knowledge to a scientific conception of truth. By a process of abstraction and decontextualisation, in aesthetic consciousness, the work of art becomes a ‘pure’ work of art disassociated from its world. Gadamer’s approach seeks to develop a conception of knowledge that is experienced through the work of art but which also corresponds to a holistic hermeneutic experience. If a post-aesthetic approach to the problems of the production and reception of works of art seeks to overcome aesthetics, what is it that constitutes an aesthetic attitude? In this chapter I argue, following Gadamer, that the aesthetic conception of art is not limited to the Kantian model elucidated in the *Critique of Judgement*, and, moreover, that the dominant sense of the aesthetic disposition, as it is developed throughout the eighteenth, nineteenth, and into the twentieth century, is much more deeply problematic than Kant’s formulation. In short, this chapter sets out to determine what it is that a post-aesthetic conception of art seeks to overcome.

Although Heidegger, from 1935 on, constantly gives the term *aesthetics* a derogatory cast, in the 1936 lecture series on Nietzsche, “*Der Wille zur Macht als Kunst*” (“The Will to Power as Art”), he defends the disinterested attitude formulated in Kant’s *Critique of Judgement* against the misinterpretations of Nietzsche and Schopenhauer, and proceeds to

render Kant's conception of aesthetic Judgment ontologically, in terms of 'self showing' of Being in a 'free granting.' Thus, although this defence of the Third *Critique* amounts to only a few pages in Heidegger's oeuvre, we can surmise that the conception of aesthetics that he finds problematic is not to be found in Kant—or at least not according to Heidegger's idiosyncratic reading of Kant. If the aesthetics that Heidegger wishes to overcome—that he describes as 'the debris of nineteenth century aesthetic doctrines' (*NI* 107, *N* 108), and that Gadamer refers to in the term 'aesthetic consciousness'—is not Kantian, then what is it? It could be argued that in the Nietzsche lectures Heidegger radically deforms Kant's third *Critique*, skewing it to an ontological reading—a reading that is wholly consistent with Heidegger's treatment of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, in his *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*.⁷ In taking such a view we could argue that what Heidegger seeks to overcome under the name of aesthetics, might only be the standard interpretation of the third *Critique*: an interpretation we could assume, Heidegger objects to. This would be only partially correct. There are other issues involved in what Heidegger understands as aesthetic experience. Much of what Heidegger finds offensive in aesthetics—expression of inner subjective emotion, an experience that merely flounders in feeling and pleasure, and the idea of aesthetic cultivation—I would argue, are thoroughly un-Kantian.

1.2 Kantian Aesthetics and After

Kant provides us with the key concepts of a philosophy of modern aesthetic experience: disinterested taste and creative genius. However, modern aesthetics develops to cover a much broader field: from the absolute autonomy of *art for art's sake*, to theories of psychological distance, emotional transmission, intuition, insight, empathy, experience, gestalt psychology and significant form. Central to the development of modern aesthetics is the romantic emphasis on expression, and moreover, the expression of innerness and emotion. For Kant, the kind of judgments that we make, regarding the quality of aesthetic phenomena, are judgments of taste, which are made without interest. This distinguishes them from sensuous judgments of the pleasant (or agreeable), and from practical-moral judgments of the good, which are both, as Kant claims, bound up with interest. By disinterested, Kant means that the observer of a certain object is ultimately indifferent to its existence, or has no stake in it being what it is. Objects that provide the kind of satisfaction that appeals to pure judgments of taste, Kant calls 'beautiful.' Judgments of taste,

according to Kant, cannot be cognitive or objective, in the full sense of the term. They are contemplative and, as Kant suggests, combine the imagination with the understanding. However, the satisfaction that derives from judgments of taste must be, for Kant, universal, i.e., valid for everyone. This is not the case with the merely agreeable (*das Angenehme*), where tastes can differ, (as in the like or dislike of certain foods). The universality of aesthetic judgments, however, cannot be grounded on concepts. This means that there can be no rules accountable for the formulation good or bad taste. The aesthetic idea, for Kant, is a ‘representation of the imagination which induces much thought, yet without the possibility of any definite thought whatever, i.e., any *concept*, being adequate to it’ (*CoJ* 175-76 §49). The rational idea, on the other hand, is a concept to which no *intuition* (or representation of the imagination) can be adequate.

What could be called the aesthetic attitude to art today is certainly not limited to the Kantian conception of aesthetic judgment: the beautiful and the sublime, and the natural predisposition of genius. My contention is that most, if not all, current theories that attempt to link art practice to knowledge making (research), from within an aesthetic framework—or at least one that privileges the primacy of aesthetic-intuited-felt decision making, over conceptual (or even other non-propositional) methodologies, can be ultimately traced back to romantic conceptions of aesthetics, uncritically handed down through modernist criticism.

Romanticism inaugurates a shift away from Kantian ideas of taste and beauty towards the aesthetics of feeling: emotion and expression. It is against a background of Enlightenment rationalism that emotional intuitionism emerges as, what is seen to be a necessary humanistic correction. Accompanying this shift is a growing denigration of imitative representation—art as a copy of nature and reality—in favour of individuality of expression and originality that find their expression in moods, emotions and feelings. Kant’s idea of genius as ‘the innate mental aptitude (*ingenium*) *through which* nature gives the rule to art’ (*CoJ*, 168 §46, Kant’s emphasis) becomes a distinctly interiorised, originating, and authentic human capacity, which takes the form of a ‘natural force’—as in Schelling and Goethe, or as a creative capacity that rivals God. As Monroe C. Beardsley observes, ‘Artistic production comes to be conceived as an act of self-expression; and the critic, as the

[nineteenth] century moves on, feels a growing concern with the artist's sincerity, with the details of his biography, with his inner spiritual life.'⁸

Gadamer, in *Truth and Method*, provides us with some indications of how certain shifts of emphasis occurred in aesthetic theory in the immediate wake of Kant, where genius begins to displace the concept of taste as a moral idea (universalised by the original Roman idea of *sensus communis*). Gadamer draws attention to a significant change in the metaphysical background which forms the basis of the aesthetic apprehension of natural beauty, and which ties genius back to nature. In accordance with this change, Gadamer argues, the standpoint of art (and the artist) displaces the primacy given to nature in the conceptions of taste and genius. Although Schiller models his idea of aesthetic education on Kant's symbolic analogy between the beautiful and the morally good, it is when the concept of art gets pushed to the foreground, Gadamer observes, that values of taste are no longer seen as having a moral dimension. That is, they become separated from the idea of the *sensus communis* as 'the sense that founds community' (*TM* 19). The moral dimension of taste, as Gadamer argues, is tied to the categorical imperative, which enables one to imagine oneself in the position of another. If, for instance, I find an object beautiful, I then insist that anyone else *ought* to find it beautiful as well. The judgment is made through a consideration of an imagined universal coming-to-agreement that overrides the personal. It is thus possible, according to Kant's theory of taste, Gadamer argues, to be pleased by a work of art but not find it to be satisfying a judgment of taste.

1.3 Symbol and Allegory

Gadamer chooses, as an example of the rise of the value of experience as the basis of art, and the corresponding devaluation rhetoric, to demonstrate how the opposition between symbol and allegory develops after Kant: a distinction in which the symbol becomes the universal concept of aesthetics. In 'contrasting the symbolic (conceived as something inherently and essentially significant) with the allegorical, which has external and artificial significance,' Gadamer argues, 'The symbol is the coincidence of the sensible and the non-sensible' (*TM* 64). Under genius, subjectivisation, and expression, the symbol is opposed and valued over allegory. The symbol is seen as indeterminate, infinite and inexhaustible, whereas the allegory is denigrated as over-rational, 'of carrying a more exact relation to meaning' and of thus being exhaustible (*TM* 65). The symbol (the German

translation from the Greek is *Sinnbild*, literally meaning-image) as self-referential and concrete image becomes, according to Gadamer, the basic and universal aesthetic concept. As the consonant coincidence of sensible appearance and intelligible meaning, the symbol mirrors a coincidence based on former religious functionality. This is the form that the eighteenth century gives to what Bernstein describes, in his *Classic and Romantic German Aesthetics*, as ‘aesthetic reason’ or ‘aesthetic rationality.’⁹ Bernstein observes that ‘Aesthetic reason is a reason aestheticized, drawn out of its logical shell where the rules of deductive reason are constitutive to become, in its reformed disposition imbued with spirit, feeling, sensuousness, life.’¹⁰ Aesthetic reason, Bernstein suggests, is a response to the perceived crisis of Enlightenment rationality that claims to ‘suspend’ instrumentalism, and the consequent disenchantment and dematerialisation of nature, and, at the same time, ‘reveal the possibility of human meaningfulness as materially saturated and so embodied...’¹¹ But this fusion or synthesis of sensible and intelligible, of creativity and cognition, is not without problems. As Gadamer argues, ‘the symbol does not simply dissolve the tension between the world of ideas and the world of the senses: it points up a disproportion between form and essence, expression and content’ (*TM* 67), which is the origin of its peculiar undecidedness and religious power. In contrast, Kant thinks of the symbol— as when he says ‘the beautiful is the symbol of the morally good’ (*CoJ* 223 §59)— as a presentation based on analogy. Here Gadamer observes that ‘Kant combines the demand for full freedom of reflection in aesthetic judgment with its humane significance’ (*TM* 65).

Against the primacy of genius, and full original experience transmitted through the spontaneous action and force of expression, the ‘ingenious manipulation of fixed forms and modes of statement’ (*TM* 62), of rhetoric and allegory, is devalued. In such a climate, allegory, which ‘rests on firm traditions and always has a fixed, statable meaning, which does not resist rational comprehension through the concept’ (*TM* 68), is regarded as overdetermining, external and secondary. With Enlightenment rationalisation, as art becomes free of dogmatic and religious bonds, the unconscious production of genius and the organicity of the symbol emerges as triumphant over ‘cold and rational allegory’ (*TM* 68-69). Lived experience (*Erlebnis*) then becomes, in the nineteenth century ‘the highest standard of value’ (*TM* 69). As Gadamer puts it:

Schleiermacher's appeal to living feeling against the cold rationalism of the Enlightenment, Schiller's call for aesthetic freedom against mechanistic society, Hegel's contrast between life (later, spirit) and "positivity," were the forerunners of the protest against modern industrial society, which at the beginning of our century caused the words *Erlebnis* and *Erleben* to become almost sacred clarion calls (TM 55).

Typical of nineteenth century aesthetic theory, where the originating expressive emotion of the artist-genius is elevated over the actual work of art itself, is Eugene Véron's *L'Esthétique* (1878). For Véron, emotion is not only regarded as the consequence of the aesthetic experience of the work of art, but emotion is also the determining cause. The beholder experiences, through the work of art, the inspirational (and originating) emotions of its creator. This change in the idea of genius corresponds to what Gadamer describes as the 'ambiguity' of the German term '*Erlebniskunst*,' which originally meant 'art derived from experience (*Erlebnis*)' (TM 61), but which later expanded to become the aesthetic-emotional experience received from the work of art by the spectator. With Véron, however, the work of art comes to be seen as a conduit for the originating emotional experience of the artist-genius, thus satisfying both concepts. The work of art, in Véron's view has the power to communicate these feelings directly. Formal beauty, in this schema, is disregarded in favour of individuality and originality.

1.4 Significant Form

Aesthetic emotional transmission theory finds its way into the theories of Clive Bell and Roger Fry in the second decade of the twentieth century. Bell proposes that the quality of the work of art is defined by its ability to provoke what he calls 'aesthetic emotion.' This concept of aesthetic emotion, which, for Bell, is revealed in the artwork as 'significant form,' and is to be distinguished from the everyday emotion of life, forms the background for many current ideas about what is meant by 'aesthetic experience.' It's worth noting however, that a renewed importance attached to a revitalised notion of form differentiates Bell's aesthetic theory from Véron's, which rests on a vague idea of 'emotional intuition.' However, Bell's conception of significant form, in a similar way to Véron's theory, constitutes a 'transmission theory' where the emotions of the artist are transferred to the beholder. With significant form, Bell suggests, 'the created form moves us so profoundly because it expresses the emotion of its creator.'¹²

My purpose in this chapter has been to differentiate aesthetic theories of emotional intuition and *Erlebnis* from Kantian aesthetics. For Kant Judgments of taste relating to the beautiful, that is, aesthetic judgments of fine art, are made without emotion. Judgments of beauty are for Kant independent of emotional, conceptual and sensuous interests. With the romantics there is a renewed concern with the cognitive status of art. This occurs specifically around the critical discourse of poetry and engenders the formulation of new theories of the imagination. There is a widely held notion in this period that feeling constitutes a source of knowledge. This leads to theories of emotional intuitionism, or insight theory, that have their roots in the earlier eighteenth century writings of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson. Whereas Kant ties genius back to nature, Bell distinguishes between the aesthetic properties of the work of art and those of nature which are, he says, apprehended without emotion. It is thus only significant form—lines, colours...—that engenders aesthetic emotion, and thus the beautiful form of nature, according to Bell, is not significant form.

As we enter the twentieth century, the aesthetic attitude evolves into a mixture of ideas associated with formal beauty with the idea of expression and emotional intuition. The notion of genius shifts from Kant's conception of a more or less unconscious, or spontaneous, predisposition of the artist to create art in a manner *as if* it were a product of nature, to a more anthropocentric and deeply interiorised model where subjective emotion is seen as the origin of expression. But to what extent do these aesthetic conceptions of art still determine our thinking toward works of art? In the visual arts, the modernist criticism of Clement Greenberg and Michael Fried, have had the effect of diminishing, if not eliminating, the emphasis on emotion that we find in aesthetic theories such as Bell's. But at the same time, these critics inherited the idea from Bell that significant form can only be encountered in art, and not in the beauty of nature.

1.5 Modernist Criticism

In an essay published in the *Partisan Review* in July-August 1940, "Towards a Newer Laocoon," Greenberg proposes that the visual arts should borrow their principles from the example set by music, in order to attain music's self-sufficiency and formal purity. Since music, in its absolute form, is non-imitative, absorbed in its medium, and, consisting of

purely formal qualities, constitutes a species of abstract art, it can communicate nothing but pure sensation. Music thus provides the model of reduction for painting and sculpture. As Greenberg sees it:

Guiding themselves, whether consciously or unconsciously, by a notion of purity derived from the example of music, the avant-garde arts have in the last fifty years achieved a purity and radical delimitation of their fields of activity for which there is no previous example in the history of culture. The arts lie safe now, each within its 'legitimate' boundaries... Purity in art consists in the acceptance, willing acceptance, of the limitations of the medium of the specific art.¹³

Greenberg's concern is that art risks—if it does not hold on to its core set of activities—being assimilated to entertainment, or therapy. The arts of painting and sculpture, for Greenberg would be saved from such a fate only by following a program of reduction where representational elements are gradually purged from the works, and the individual arts are thus, 'hunted back to their mediums.'¹⁴ The more abstract the work of art becomes—the more it distances itself from the task of representing reality—the more self-sufficient, secure and autonomous it becomes. In the essay "Modernist Painting," published twenty-five years later, Greenberg continues the argument for the purity and security of painting's essential core, introducing the term 'self-criticism' in order to ground the program of reduction.

Western civilization is not the first to turn around and question its own foundations, but it is the civilisation that has gone furthest in doing so. I identify Modernism with the intensification, almost the exacerbation, of this self-critical tendency that began with the philosopher Kant. Because he was the first to criticise the means itself of criticism, I conceive of Kant as the first real Modernist.

The essence of Modernism lies, as I see it, in the use of the characteristic methods of a discipline to criticize the discipline itself—not in order to subvert it, but to entrench it more firmly in its area of competence...

It quickly emerged that the unique and proper area of competence of each art coincided with all that was unique to the nature of its medium. The task of self-criticism became to eliminate from the effects of each art any and every effect that

might conceivably be borrowed from or by the medium of any other art. Thereby each art would be rendered 'pure', and in its 'purity' find the guarantee of its standards of quality as well as of its independence.¹⁵

Self-criticism, by rendering pure, by excluding what is inessential to the medium, by paring down to essentials—to that which is 'proper' to it—would, according to Greenberg, establish the basis of an authentic practice that would 'save' art from becoming irrelevant in the face of the other discursive spheres. The way that each art is rendered pure, in accordance with its medium, by self-criticism, would seem to be analogous to the way that reason—the medium of philosophy for Kant—is rendered pure in the *Critique of Reason*.¹⁶

Not only does this 'rendering pure' guarantee an art's independence (a specific art's independence from other mediums, but also art in general's independence from the other spheres) but it also guarantees, as Greenberg contends, a certain standard of 'quality.' By ensuring its independence, Greenberg argues, each art would 'narrow its area of competence, but at the same time it would make its possession of this area all the more secure.'¹⁷ The uniqueness of the medium of painting—because modernist paintings announce their surface, in contrast to the pictorial depth of classical realist works—becomes, for Greenberg—according to an ever-evolving tendency—'flatness.' What is at stake in "Modernist Painting," however, is not the determination of the irreducible essence of painting as such, but rather modernist art's self-certainty in its own operations. This, it would appear, would be the task of self-criticism, yet, as Stephen Melville observes, the term tends to, in a certain way, get 'lost' in Greenberg's analysis.¹⁸

1.6 Self-criticism and Genius

An immanent self-critical practice occurs, according to Greenberg, independently, in the absence of a self-critical theory, and it occurs unconsciously among a collectivity of artists whose 'immediate aims... remain individual.'¹⁹ The self-critical operation of modernist painting proceeds without the conscious awareness of those who were responsible for it, and thus, for Greenberg, a self-conscious operational agency could not be part of, could not be present in this act of self-criticism since: 'No one artist was, or is yet, consciously aware of this tendency, nor could any artist work successfully in conscious awareness of

it.²⁰ Although Greenberg does not explicitly refer to it, it's not difficult to recognise, hibernating within "Modernist Painting," Kant's notion of 'genius' as it is elucidated in the third *Critique* (*Critique of Judgement*). When considering beautiful objects, Kant stipulates that in order to judge them aesthetically the beholder must have taste, but in order to produce the beautiful object the artist must be naturally endowed with genius, which is not something that can be learned by the studied application of rules. Likewise, in Greenberg's terms, the aesthetic consistency of modernism 'shows itself only in results, never in methods or means.'²¹ Artists cannot simply apply a fixed methodology to the production of modernist works, which, as Greenberg sees them, must be products of inspiration, not products of theory. Further, the products of genius become exemplary models that serve as the standard for all aesthetic judgments. The artist of genius is one that does not merely copy these works and learn from imitation, rather the artist emulates these works in new works. As Kant says:

[genius] cannot indicate scientifically how it brings about its product, but rather gives the rule as *nature*. Hence, where an author owes a product to his genius, he does not himself know how the *ideas* for it have entered into his head, nor has he it in his power to invent the like at pleasure, or methodically, and communicate the same to others in such precepts as would put them in a position to produce similar products. (*CoJ* 169, §46, Kant's emphasis)

The modernist work, in Greenberg's terms, cannot impart any knowledge of its own construction—of its own coming into being—rather, it merely provides inspiration, and in so doing perpetuates its continuance. At the same time the artist cannot be consciously aware of this process, and yet they must, in some sense, not lose faith in their own originality. Greenberg's Kantianism, to some extent, displaces the emotional formalism of Bell, because formal qualities are not seen to be a product of the artist's subjectivity. Rather, the evolution of form depends on something larger: a tendency that can only properly be evaluated in retrospect. As Greenberg observes: 'it has needed the accumulation over decades of a good deal of individual achievement to *reveal* the self-critical tendency of Modernist painting.'²² A work of modernist art belongs to the tendency of self-criticism only if it can be shown to be relevant to that tendency. It was by means of such

a reductive formulation that the basis of what can be said to constitute modernist art, for Greenberg and Fried, was radically delimited.

1.7 Presentness and Theatre

Although Michael Fried, one of Greenberg's most ardent followers, initially accepted his essentialism, he had begun to question the reductionist drive to purity as early as 1966. For Fried, the self-securing of art depends not only on the exclusion of those activities that lie between the arts, but also on the rejection of a certain transgressive relation between the art object and, what Fried calls, its 'beholder.' In the essay "Art and Objecthood," Fried accuses certain artists of the 1960s (Donald Judd, Robert Morris, and Tony Smith, later to be labelled 'Minimalists') of interpreting Greenberg's notion of opticality far too literally, and of the consequential 'espousal of Objecthood,'²³ which Fried regards, in a derogatory sense, as the condition for 'theatre.' Minimalist works constitute the negation of art, according to Fried, due to their theatrical concern with the actual situations in which the beholder encounters the work, where the work forces itself on the act of beholding in a kind of too obviously intended *stage presence*. Properly modernist works, in contrast, for Fried, exhibit 'presentness': an experience of the work that occurs instantaneously, in such a way that the whole of the work, in all its depth and complexity, is apprehended in a single moment. The successful work, in Fried's terms, exhibits the coherence of its form as a unity that restricts itself to falling within the visual field of an appropriately positioned viewer. In an instant, Fried contends, the work lays its claim on us, and we are forever convinced by it.²⁴ However, the immediate, present, durationless, experience of the modernist work would appear to come into conflict with the historically observed 'tendency' of self-criticism, and Fried's ultimate test for the quality of a work of art: that it stand up in comparison to the indubitable great works of the past. Thus, in Fried's terms, this experience would seem to involve absence as much as presence.

For Fried, the aesthetic judgment is certainly not a judgment made according to personal taste but is one in which the marks of a historical trajectory (following a certain logic) can be seen. These indications have less to do with a work's material-pictorial properties (a painting's flatness for Greenberg), than to the relation set up between a work and its beholder. However, for both Fried and Greenberg, it is always judgments of taste that come first and last. The task of the critic is to come up with arguments on behalf of those

judgments. By assembling such arguments and observations it is hoped that such intuitive aesthetic judgments can be seen to be not merely subjective but quasi-objective and universally valid. This is the core of what was seen to be, in the mid 1960s, the crisis of formalist-modernist criticism. A critic like Fried can always defend himself by saying that 'all judgments of value begin and end in experience' and that these judgments will not be binding.²⁵

If modernist criticism is to be anything more than a set of rationalised justifications for aesthetic judgments of artistic quality then the relation between the aesthetic judgment and the relation between the beholder and the work (as either absorbed, instantaneous, of conviction and complete, or distanced and incomplete) must be rethought. The challenge was for the following generation of post-minimal and conceptual artists to rethink these relations beyond the aesthetic paradigm while still holding on to an autonomous notion of art, entailing a guarding against the threat of art falling into theatre and entertainment. But as we shall find, this notion of autonomy is, from that moment on, never stable, monolithic or timeless (cannot be simply organised around pure and essential definitions of painting and sculpture).

Within the field of contemporary art it might be possible to say that aestheticism has effectively been displaced. It no longer functions as the governing discourse that determines the quality of works of art, or the meaning that quality works of art have for us. Why then should we concern ourselves with post-aesthetic theories, if art (as a more or less mainstream enterprise) has moved beyond aesthetics? Although we can say that such a shift has most definitely occurred, I do not believe that we yet properly understand the implications of this event. We still tend to think of the move away from aesthetics simply as a move towards a kind of conceptual-political art (for which the central questions are: what is the work about, what issue does it raise?), where good art equates to sound ideology, and thus art is evaluated from an external perspective. And when this instrumental thinking reaches its limits, or seems too constraining, or too stretched, we revert to back to aesthetic ideas about art, or to a problematic fusion of sense and idea. My contention is that much of the current discourse on art, having believed that many of the problems of art were solved (or found to be irrelevant), in the last century, hovers between these simple alternatives simply because any other way of thinking is extremely difficult. My pro-

positional, however, is that we embrace these difficulties, even if they should remain ultimately insolvable. To embrace and inhabit art's particular way of thinking—a way of thinking *through* the work of art—would involve a certain idea of autonomy that would preclude the simple transplantation of discursive procedures and methodologies from external disciplines. It is therefore necessary to rigorously distinguish this broader notion of autonomy from the narrowly conceived formalist-aesthetic notion of autonomy implied by modernist criticism, and self-criticism, of Greenberg and Fried.

2. After Aesthetics: Conceptual Art and Post-aesthetics

A significant part of my argument entails the claim that what we have come to know as ‘contemporary art’ is based on an understanding of art as post-aesthetic, and that this understanding of art owes a great deal to the conceptual art of the 1960s. Terry Smith, in the mid 1990s, claimed that ‘The Minimal-Conceptual nexus has become so pervasive that it is now part of what distinguishes contemporary art as contemporary—that is, as part of an international art world.’¹ Further, as Peter Osborne contends: ‘is not all contemporary art in some relevant sense “conceptual”?’² The conceptual art practices that occurred roughly between 1967 and 1972 constitute a crucial turning point between a modernist aesthetic paradigm—where the art object is evaluated on the basis of a purely morphological experience, according to an evolving dialectic of form—and a post-aesthetic rethinking of that experience.

The term ‘conceptual art’ refers to a broad set of practices, some of which cannot be readily separated from Minimalist and ‘post-Minimalist’ practices. This chapter, however, investigates the theoretical underpinnings of a certain outspoken and polemic branch of conceptual art that sought to distinguish itself from other conceptualist practices that it regarded as merely ‘stylistic.’ Joseph Kosuth called this branch (not without some discomfort) ‘Theoretical Conceptual Art.’³ The discursive activity of both the American Kosuth, and the English Art & Language collective,⁴ presented, at the time, the most sustained and rigorous critique of modernist-formalist criticism’s values of aesthetic taste and artistic de-intellectualised spontaneity. This theoretical, analytically focused, philosophical, conceptual art that Peter Osborne labels as ‘strong’ or ‘exclusive,’ is characterised not only in terms of a rejection of modernist formalist criticism, but also in terms of an acceptance of the modernist context and, to certain extent, its self-image.⁵ Charles Harrison writes: ‘...no account of Conceptual Art can be adequate if it does not involve some effort to understand Modernism.’ The critical efforts of both the modernist critics and the Conceptual artists both centre around a certain ‘anxiety’ about the status of art, in the face of the threat of ‘theatricality.’ In very different ways they are concerned for art’s autonomy. Theoretical Conceptual Art’s idea of art is certainly a post-aesthetic conception of art, but, as I will attempt to show in this chapter, it is not without its problems.

2.1 Art & Language and Joseph Kosuth

Conceptual art emerged out of Minimalist and post-Minimalist artistic practices of the 1960s at a time when the critical regime of Greenberg and Fried was in full force. The Conceptual Art of Joseph Kosuth, and Art & Language addressed itself essentially to what they saw as the dogmatic assumptions of Formalist criticism. First of all, these artists objected to the primacy given to aesthetic form. Following the anti-retinal stance of Duchamp, they argued that what defines a work of art is irreducible to the surface of its look. Rather, art should be, first and foremost, about ideas. Thus they aimed for, as Duchamp had wished, to put art (or painting) back ‘into the service of the mind.’⁶ Objecting to the uncritical, and unreflective, immediate experience of art, they argued that the spectacular subject of such an experience has always been assumed to be the disinterested and attuned, appropriately sensitive, beholder. Further, they strongly objected to Greenberg’s stipulation that the self-critical production of art must proceed without any degree of self-consciousness. Rather, they argued, it is imperative that the artist actively engage in the meaning produced by the work and take full intellectual responsibility for it.

There is a prevalent misconception that regards the activity of Conceptual Art to be a concern with the ‘dematerialisation’ of the object in favour of non-material ideas. However, as Charles Harrison points out, these immaterial activities must be understood as provisional strategies. In order to circumvent the aesthetic and unreflective consumption of the modernist beholder, Conceptual Art strove to make works by which no satisfaction on these terms could be obtained by the spectator. Accordingly, these works aimed at what Harrison calls ‘the suppression of the beholder.’⁷ The preclusion of the disinterested modernist spectator was at first effected by works involving texts, images, and objects arranged as installations, such as Kosuth’s “Protoinvestigations” (Plate 1), ‘not-paintings’ such as Art & Language’s black paintings from the mid to late 1960s (Plate 2). In the late 1960s, however, some works consisted entirely of written material. These essays, which doubly functioned as both secondary criticism and primary artwork, sought also to collapse the distinction between artist and critic—a distinction that positioned the artist as the provider of a somewhat less cognitive subject matter to a separate and more cognitive enterprise of critical discursivity. The text as artwork can also be seen in terms of a position that rejected Greenberg’s distinction between the visual art and literature.

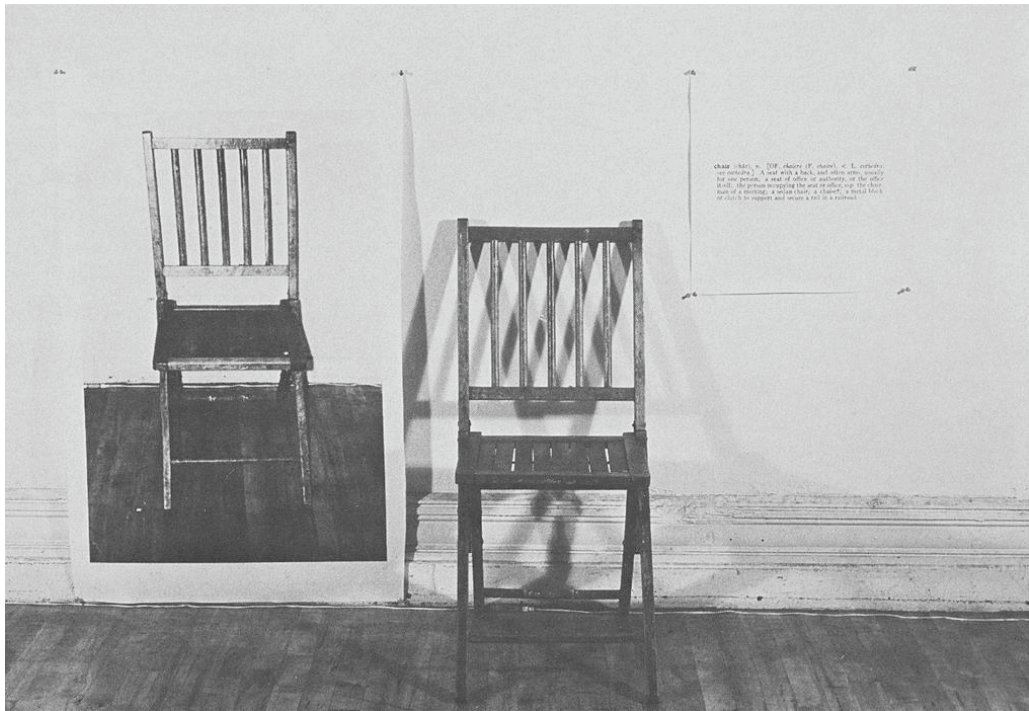


Plate 1. Joseph Kosuth, One and Three Chairs, 1965-67, photograph, photostat of dictionary definition, and wooden chair.

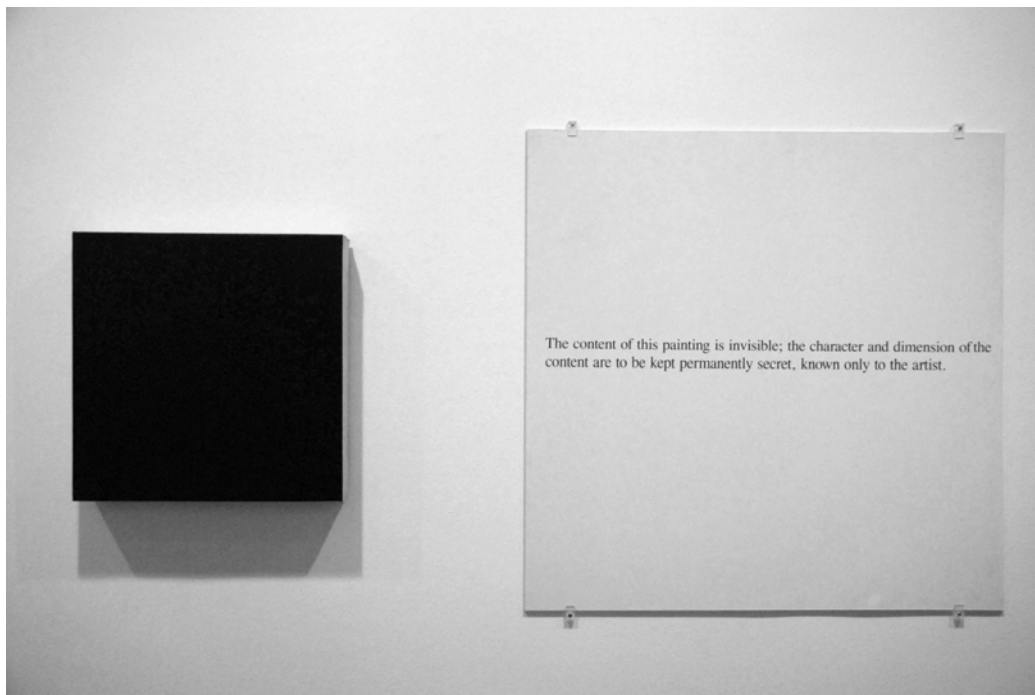


Plate 2. Mel Ramsden, Secret Painting, 1967-68, enamel paint on canvas and gelatin silver photograph on composition board. National Gallery of Victoria. Image courtesy of vapourtrails

Rather than subscribing to the idea that painting and sculpture were ‘dead’—that their historical functioning in an art context had come to an end—Art & Language saw them merely as ‘unavailable’ activities. As Harrison explains: ‘painting and sculpture were seen simply as practices which could not sustain their historical potential under the cultural conditions of the time.’⁸ They were unavailable because, at that time, in the late 1960s, with the domination of formalism, it was almost inevitable that any work performed in these media would be interpreted according to morphological values alone. The modality of the reception of the work of art was to be shifted, in the work of Art & Language, from the emotional, visual, formal response, to active participation, critique, and work extending beyond the institutional conditions of the work’s installation and into conversational communities. In response to formalism, Peter Osborne observes, ‘Art & Language attempted to internalize philosophy as a disciplinary practice into their art practice, or rather, to make art out of philosophical conversations.’⁹

2.2 Art’s Autonomy

It is important to note that Art & Language—and to some extent Kosuth—although they disagreed with Greenbergian formalism, saw their own practice as a continuation of modernism rather than a distinct break with it. On the one hand, Art & Language wished to break with the formalist precepts of aestheticism, spontaneity and visuality, but on the other hand they wished to maintain a certain sense of artistic autonomy, and a certain relation to a tradition. Above all, these artists sought to occupy a position at the centre of international art practice and discourse, which, at that time meant to *occupy* the space of modernist beholding. To do other was, in their view, to be consigned to provincialism where their voice, as a marginal voice, would matter to no one. It was in terms of this provinciality that they saw the other competing paradigms of the ‘marginal second voice of Modernism’:¹⁰ Pop Art, Kinetic and Op Art, realist art (including political activism), but also neo-avant-garde practices such as Fluxus. Rather than adopting an alternative practice, Art & Language wished to stage an encounter with formalist high culture on equal terms from a position of adjacency at the site of cultural contestation. This engagement—with a form of modernism that was orthodox and hegemonic—aimed to work from within to recover from it, as Harrison puts it, ‘the dialectical character of Modernism,’¹¹ implicitly, and self-consciously, circumventing the general cultural valua-

tion of formal aesthetic practices, and explicitly destabilising the criticism of Greenberg and Fried.

‘Art is art and everything else is everything else’ Ad Reinhardt proclaimed in 1962, in an essay that presents the autonomy of art in its most basic and uncompromising form.¹² Modernist art, according to this view, has no need of external subject matter or considerations. It does not need to mimetically or symbolically represent anything exterior to its own sphere of activity, or any thing that exists in the world. The negative implication of this idea is that modernist art would seem to be hopelessly bound to its own unique set of problems, and thus would seem to be of little relevance to social and political realities, nor have the ability to contribute to knowledge beyond a rather limited framework.

Aesthetic autonomy is a product of the Enlightenment that oversaw the separation of art, science and morality into separate spheres. Previously, art had been motivated by religious and courtly imperatives, where the subject-matter of art had always been determined in advance by church or patron, and its role was a functional one of representation within these orders. With art’s withdrawal from these institutions it could begin to operate ‘for itself.’ Art was then free to follow its own concerns, which became more and more determined by factors intrinsic to itself, no longer serving a prescribed purpose or needing to justify itself by any reasoning arrived at via an external logic (of science or morality). However, at the same time, this autonomy results in art becoming more and more alienated from questions of truth, and social concerns. The German literary critic Peter Bürger observes, that the reaction to this condition was to attempt to ‘integrate art into the life process.’¹³ The problem with this response, Bürger argues, is that ‘An art no longer distinct from the praxis of life but wholly absorbed in it will lose the capacity to criticize it, along with its distance.’¹⁴

One of the few critical responses willing to engage with Greenberg’s and Fried’s work, not from a simply oppositional position, is that of Stephen Melville. Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe characterises Melville’s approach to art history as being concerned with the question of what the work can *say*, where ‘*what it can say* is to some extent *conditioned by what it is*.’¹⁵ If a work of art is said to ‘say’ then this saying is conditional on its ontological and material status. In other words, for art to say it must say *as* art; or more precisely, in Green-

berg's and Fried's terms, *as* painting, or *as* sculpture. Art must 'say' something to us, must make a claim on us, but in order to do so art must be something that matters to us.

2.3 Re-thinking Autonomy

Although Art & Language—and Kosuth in particular—strove for a new basis for art's autonomy, they wished to radically separate the idea of art from any material foundation. Kosuth's conception of 'art as idea (as idea),' where the question of the nature or function of art becomes the decisive activity of defining art (at a certain point in time), would be indicative of this sense. According to this view, a particular work of art is a definition of art where: 'the "art idea" (or "work") and art are the same and can be appreciated as art without going outside the context of art for verification.'¹⁶ The work of art, as Kosuth conceives it, in "Art After Philosophy," resembles an analytic proposition. If one goes outside the context of art to bring 'outside information' into the consideration of the work of art, then one is considering art, in Kosuth's terms, as a 'synthetic' rather than an 'analytic' proposition. Kosuth's tautological art propositions, in which art is used to question the nature of art, are modelled on A. J. Ayers' description of the distinction between analytical and synthetic propositions (see chapter 1 note 15). For Kosuth conceptual works of art are analogous to analytic propositions because 'if viewed within their context—as art—they provide no information what-so-ever about any matter of fact.'¹⁷ Kosuth draws attention to Donald Judd's comment that 'if someone calls it art, it's art,'¹⁸ which places the definition of art—that a certain work *is* art—under the stipulating power of the artist. However, the point I wish to make here is that Kosuth is proposing a kind of autonomy for the artwork that thinks art on its own terms. This version of autonomy replaces the Greenberg/Fried model of self-definition carried out by formal self-criticism—as an ongoing reduction to pure form—with a model based on the conceptual idea as a definition of art in general (regardless of medium) as an art condition, which can only be described, worked on, and made sense of from within that condition.

In an interview with Art & Language Michael Baldwin explains the difference between the formalist version of autonomy and the Conceptualist version in the following way: '...Greenberg's formalism is partly justified by him in respect of the idea of "autonomy." But the relative (or total) autonomy of painting does not entail Greenbergian formalism.'¹⁹ Continuing Baldwin's thread in the same interview, Mel Ramsden adds:

Formalism and autonomy (which are not the same thing) receive bad press from those who think that practices must be transparent conduits for meaning, and who thereby neglect the existing meanings of such practices. Art is (more or less) autonomous. In fact, we have long been sympathetic to a position theorised by the late Paul de Man: namely, that artistic practice only comes into being when it is turned back on itself. Paradoxically, this is just where it is least autonomous, where the world is let in—but the world let in as irony or aporia.²⁰

Art & Language would seem to adopt Greenberg's notions of self-criticism and autonomy, but reject the idea that self-criticism acts independently of self-conscious agency, producing art spontaneously and intuitively. They further reject the idea that self-criticism is something that can be morphologically negotiated at some point in the production of a work of art. Rather, self-criticism must be constituted from the beginning, in terms of the initial idea, and this means that subjective alterations constituting stylistic decisions in the work are to be made redundant. However, the theories of self-criticism put forward by Harrison and Art & Language are consonant with those of Greenberg and Fried in one important aspect. Self-criticism for all of these theorists must, as Melville argues, 'only be radical if it genuinely places its self at stake and holds itself in the condition of being at stake'²¹ As Melville continues:

...this means that self-criticism is radically and inevitably *critical*—one can paint only out of the history of painting and the particular concrete paintings that matter for and constitute that history. For the art critic or historian, the confrontation with a given painting is necessarily an explication of that history within which the painting exerts its claim on us.²²

In light of the pluralism of contemporary art practices, we could perhaps substitute 'work of art' for 'painting' in Melville's formulation of radical self-criticism. But in making such a substitution what becomes foregrounded is the specific singularity of art as a thinking-material practice.

Boris Groys argues that if we accept the denial of the autonomy of art—prevalent in recent art-theoretical discourse—art can only become an aestheticising foil for pre-

existing political positions rather than a form of resistance. The crucial question for Groys is: 'Does art hold any power of its own, or is it only able to decorate external powers—whether these are powers of oppression or liberation?'²³ Groys maintains, that 'there is no such thing as a purely aesthetic, art-immanent, autonomous value system that could regulate the art world in its entirety.'²⁴ The autonomy of art that would constitute a power of its own, he argues, is guaranteed precisely by this very absence or rejection of aesthetic judgment. The autonomy of art, for Groys, rests on abolishing the hierarchy of taste, and 'establishing the regime of equal aesthetic rights for all artworks.'²⁵ Groys' argument, that the dismantling of such hierarchies results in the annulment of aesthetic values, would seem to bring him into proximity with post-aesthetic conceptions of art, where the possibility of taking aesthetic pleasure in the work is not explicitly denied to the beholder; rather, the aesthetic judgment ceases to act as the determining condition for the encounter with a work of art.

I wish to argue for a certain autonomy for art: the making, exhibiting and spectatorship of works of art. That is, I want to claim that there is a specific intellectual activity that constitutes the production of, and engagement with, works of art. This way of thinking *of*, and *through*, art, cannot be reduced to logical rationality but, at the same time, this does not mean that this activity should be seen to be simply irrational, nor should it be considered to be primarily affective. This means that the autonomy of art is essentially an autonomy of difference. This autonomy would neither be medium specific, nor grounded by some essential mode of presence that might constitute its internal logic. However, this is not to say that mediums, thought in terms of contextual relations between materialities, are not important. This notion of autonomy would certainly not be fixed and stable, but, rather, a condition which is constantly called into question, by works of art.

2.4 Representationalism

One essential problem with the way that Conceptual Art views the work is that the work of art is still largely thought in what Gianni Vattimo calls 'representationalist terms.' When the idea, as the fully determinable intention of the artist (or collaborative group), is given absolute primacy, the material aspects of the work are assigned to a non-essential status, becoming mere props assisting the manifestation of an ideal content. What is needed is to think the work outside of what Vattimo calls the representationalist/formalist

opposition.²⁶ Although Art & Language articulate this problem to a certain extent, their thinking is rarely able to transcend the logic of the propositional argument, their faith in the transparency of language, and the absolute primacy of the artist's intention. The following chapters in this thesis will seek to put all of these conceptions into question.

The Conceptual Art attempt to replace the silent 'profundity' of modernist-formalist conceptions of the meaning of a work of art with intellectual self-consciousness entailed an appeal to logic, in the form of a strict adoption of analytic philosophies of language, in order to rigorously put into question the language use of art's discursive practices. Art & Language strove for a more open ended, dialogical, inquiry than the closed propositional system that constituted Kosuth's art as philosophy, aiming instead toward, as Osborne observes, 'philosophy as the possibility of a new kind of art.'²⁷ Both, however, in a certain way attempted to master the language game of art. For Kosuth and Art & Language, this meant the adoption of the procedures of Anglo-American analytic philosophy and scientific positivism (for example, A. J. Ayer, and J. O. Urmson); and the linguistic theories of Frege and Wittgenstein. As Kosuth says, in "Art After Philosophy," "Continental" philosophy [by which Kosuth means existentialism and phenomenology] need not seriously be considered here.'²⁸ In an interview with Catherine Millet, published in the French journal *Art Vivant*, 25 (1971), Art & language describe their activity in the following way:

At this moment one of the essential preoccupations of Art-Language is that of putting to test and cleansing its language of idealist tendencies. For example, Art-Language is indebted to Anglo-Saxon analytic philosophical tradition, and in a certain way all analytic efforts which Art-Language has been able to make at any moment on the artistic condition proceeded in part from the analytic philosophical apparatus.²⁹

The assumption here is that 'good' language, or the 'correct' use of language, is always transparent and efficient. As Charles Green notes, this neutral, transparent, conception of language was challenged by Roger Cutforth—Ian Burn's and Mel Ramsden's early collaborator in the short lived three man group, Society for Theoretical Art and Analyses (1969)—'asserting in 1971 that "[i]t just strikes me that language is not neutral, and that

certain types of language support certain types of thinking.”³⁰ Cutforth separated from Burn and Ramsden shortly after in 1970. However, as Green observes, Art & Language’s requirement for transparent logical discourse did not necessarily translate to the production of logically coherent texts. The use of the forms of symbolic logic, Green claims, was sometimes ‘ironic, but at other times a pastiche that concealed a real lack of philosophical rigor.’³¹ Green describes the reaction of the director of Melbourne’s Pinacotheca gallery, Bruce Pollard, to Art & Language’s texts:

On another occasion, I sat down and spent a whole day with Mel and Ian’s texts, and analyzed them with the logic that I had studied at university. They didn’t make sense. When I told this to Mel he laughed and said that you weren’t meant to read them so closely; you were meant to skim-read the texts.³²

In their reaction against formalist aestheticism and the division between artist and critic, Art and Language, as Green argues, ‘fetishized extremely bureaucratic methods’ and had instituted ‘a corporate professionalism at odds with their ideals of freewheeling intervention.’³³ Rather than clarifying their position, these texts had the effect of confusion and obfuscation. In one of the seminars organised by Art & Language in Australia—coinciding with The Museum of Modern Art’s travelling exhibition, *Modern Masters*, in 1975—when asked what she thought about Art & Language, the rather astute American critic, Lucy Lippard, replied ‘I can’t pretend to understand a lot of what they do...’³⁴ The aggressive analytical nature of their communications often alienated other artists. As Lippard responds, a little later in the seminar to a New York Art & language ‘blurt’: ‘Logic has never been my strong point.’³⁵ Analytic philosophy increasingly came to be deployed, by Art & Language, as a way of maintaining an unassailable theoretical and political position within the art world, and in this short sightedness, these artists became less concerned with a genuine exploration of art’s self definition, or its language games.

2.5 Theory Wars

In a catalogue essay for the 1989 Conceptual Art survey exhibition *L’art conceptuel: une perspective*, Benjamin Buchloh contends that: ‘...Kosuth was arguing, in 1969, precisely for the continuation and expansion of modernism’s positivist legacy...’ by utilising ‘Wittgenstein’s logical positivism and language philosophy.’³⁶ Rather than constituting an

overturning of Greenbergian formalism, Buchloh argues that Kosuth had succeeded in merely updating ‘modernism’s project of self-reflexiveness.’³⁷ Although Kosuth’s intentional epistemological self-reflexivity replaced formalist perceptual self-reflexivity, Buchloh claims that:

...Kosuth stabilized the notion of a disinterested and self-sufficient art by subjecting both—the Wittgensteinian model of the language game as well as the Duchampian model of the readymade—to the strictures of a model of meaning that operates in the modernist tradition of that paradox Michel Foucault has called modernity’s “empirico-transcendental” thought.³⁸

Buchloh’s essay, “Conceptual Art 1962-1969: From the Aesthetics of Administration to the Critique of Institutions,” provoked a furious response from both Kosuth and Seth Siegelaub, and the original essay plus Kosuth’s and Siegelaub’s responses were published in *October* issues 55 (1990), and 57 (1991) respectively. The hostility between Buchloh and Kosuth, I would suggest, rests on a deeper ideological conflict than the arguably rough treatment of Kosuth’s writings and works dealt by Buchloh’s essay. Buchloh, of course, belongs to a group of theorists and art-historians clustered around the journal *October* (including Rosalind Krauss, Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe, and Annette Michelson). I think it is possible to say that a deep ideological divide, or a virtual ‘theory war’ existed between New York Art & Language and the writers of *October*. The open hostility towards the first issue of the journal, is nowhere more apparent than in the New York group published *Art-Language* vol 3, no 4, Oct 1976 (*The Fox* 4),³⁹ where *October* is described as ‘the journal of managerial idiocy,’ and a line is again drawn in the sand between analytic and continental philosophy in an essay entitled “The French Disease,” where *October* is charged with polluting the intellectual idea of art with foreign transplants; that is, the rise of semiology, that the authors of *The Fox* derided as ‘the French pox,’ ‘the Gallic disease’:

The French Pox stands ‘in opposition to Anglo-Saxon Empiricism.’ It ‘rejects’ directly observable stimulus-response linkages for some sort of ‘internal’ schemata or structure.⁴⁰

The overwhelming response of the *October* writers, on the other hand, has been to virtually ignore the historical importance of the Conceptual Art of both Kosuth and Art &

Language, and favour the related activities of what came to be described as ‘institutional critique.’ Kosuth writes, in 1988, in an essay entitled “History For”: ‘That *The Fox* was tough on *October*, has not been forgotten. No surprise then, that to this day, no member of *The Fox* editorial board has been cited, quoted, referred to, much less reproduced in *October*.’⁴¹ Buchloh’s essay may be seen as a contribution to this exclusionary discourse, or, perhaps, as a response to Kosuth’s earlier negative evaluation of Buchloh’s writing in “History For.”

As early as 1975, however, Kosuth has begun to reassess his earlier positivism. In a footnote to the essay “1975,” published in *The Fox*, vol.1, no. 2 (1975), he acknowledges that there exist ‘many, many problems with “Art after Philosophy.”’⁴² He writes:

... while objecting to the romantic paradigm of the artist—being as it is a device for rendering artists powerless in any meaningful social sense—I seemed to swallow whole the scientific ideology which by necessity must relegate the artist to such a position in the first place. It is the same ideology that we see, when described economically or politically, as culturally eclipsing our lives of their meaning.⁴³

Kosuth’s self analysis here would seem to take some of the wind out of Buchloh’s criticism. Moreover, the point that Kosuth makes seems to cast the problem differently than his earlier handling, and that of Art & Language: namely that the positivism of representational thinking cannot be seen as the answer to overcoming aesthetics, but rather, must be seen as constituting part of the same problem. However, Kosuth never develops this insight, and his philosophy of art continues, up to the present moment, to be characterised by a resolute holding on to the primacy of intention, and an explicit hostility to non-transparent language use, particularly that of poetic language.

2.6 The Primacy of Intention

Kosuth argues, In “Art After Philosophy,” that the work of art, as a tautological analytic proposition, is primarily grounded in the artist’s intention. By this he means that the stipulating power of the artist ‘to say’ that a work of art is art, forms the basis of what constitutes a definition of art. In 1996 Kosuth argues that since Conceptual Art works with meaning rather than shapes colours and materials, when one approaches the work

one encounters ‘the idea (and therefore the intention) of the artist directly.’⁴⁴ For Kosuth, there can be no separation between the intention of the artist and the work of art. The work, Kosuth argues ‘is *manifested* intention.’⁴⁵ If the intention of the artist is denied, Kosuth claims, then the artist’s responsibility for meaning is ‘nullified,’ and thus he maintains:

...without artistic intention there *is* no art. The subjective presence which stands behind a work of art and which takes responsibility for its meaning something... is what makes it authentic as a work.⁴⁶

The revolutionary idea of Conceptual Art, that the artist rather than the critic is responsible for the intellectual content of a work, along with the Duchampian act of nomination, where the work of art is posited *as* a work of art, tends to become subject to a reduction where the *only* meaning that can be read from a work of art is the meaning that the artist attributes to the original concept of the work. If intention is absolute then audience, critic and art-historian, are theoretically prohibited from mobilising any reading that differs from that of the artist. Authorial authority in these terms is sacrosanct. As Green comments, ‘This desire to police the audience now seems both distant and odd, but those artists were determined to avoid “misinterpretation.”’⁴⁷

Despite these criticisms, I wish to acknowledge the historical importance of Kosuth’s, and Art & Language’s attempts to overcome formalism and to rethink art as an intellectual, discursive, and open dialogical activity rather than mute, personal, aesthetic expression. Although one must accept that certain shock tactics were necessary, in a period ostensibly dominated by the hegemony of modernist criticism, certain problems have hampered the development of Conceptual Art’s program and ongoing validity. These, as I have indicated, have to do with the hegemonic cultural authority of scientific analytic philosophy, the assumed transparency of language, the primacy of intention, and, perhaps to a lesser extent, the supposed suppression of materiality. These problems will be worked through in the following chapters.

2.7 Post-aesthetic Theory

This thesis seeks to circumvent the problems posed by the theoretical approaches of Conceptual Art that I have identified in the preceding section by appealing to what has been recently described as ‘post-aesthetic theory.’ While the term has been used to describe the post-aesthetic ideas of Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Heidegger, Derrida, my own approach centres on the work of the latter two philosophers. In this section I will examine some of the work that has recently emerged in this field.

In a similar way to Gadamer, Krzysztof Ziarek, in *The Historicity of Experience: Modernity, the Avant-Garde, and the Event* (2001), and *The Force of Art* (2004), argues that the reduction of the work of art to an object for aesthetic experience denies the experience of the work its historicity and temporality. What Ziarek describes as Heidegger’s post-aesthetic approach, where the work of art functions as a ‘temporal event of unconcealment,’⁴⁸ enables, for him, a re-configuration of experience in the technological era. The post-aesthetic thinking of the work of art thus requires, for Ziarek, rethinking the experience of art according to Heidegger’s sense of the appropriating event (*Ereignis*). Ziarek attempts to re-think modern experience differently according to a number of issues: technology, the everyday, temporality, and sexual difference. But it is in the poetic work of the avant-garde, which radically revises our understanding of everyday experience and temporality, that constitutes, for Ziarek, the post-aesthetic movement toward a *poietic* (after the Greek word *poiēsis*) reinvention of everyday experience. However, unlike Gadamer’s critique of aesthetic consciousness in *Truth and Method*, the thrust of Ziarek’s critical focus is not only directed towards aesthetic experience, but also towards the techicisation of the everyday. The experience of the post-aesthetic artwork is put forward as an alternative to the dominant psychological, empirical and informational modes of instrumentalised experience in the age of technology.

Alison Ross, in *The Aesthetic Paths of Philosophy: Presentation in Kant, Heidegger, Lacoue-Labarthe, and Nancy* (2007), argues that Ziarek tends to overemphasise the negative aspects of technological experience and claims that, rather than functioning simply as a negative term in Heidegger’s account, technology, *poiēsis*, and art are structured by an unstable ambiguity. To some extent, I agree with Ross’ analysis here, and in chapter four I propose that in the essay “The Question Concerning Technology,” Heidegger conceives

of the essence of technology as the sending of a more original poietic revealing. However, because Ross characterises Heidegger's thought in terms of an aesthetic use of language that orients itself towards Kant's question of presentation (*Darstellung*), she finds it difficult to accept the claims of the post-aesthetic approach of recent Heidegger scholarship, which for Ross includes, in addition to Ziarek: Gianni Vattimo, Kathleen Wright and Miguel de Beistegui. While there are powerful arguments to support the view that the indeterminate notion of the rift (*Riß*) in the semantic field of world and earth deployed in "The Origin of the Work of Art," *implicitly* reproduces Kant's notion of the aesthetic idea,⁴⁹ it must be noted that Heidegger *explicitly* argues against the aesthetic attitude, particularly in the Nietzsche lectures. Although Ross designates Vattimo's perspective as post-aesthetic, his position actually seems closer to that of Ross herself. This misunderstanding perhaps stems from a far too hasty reading of Vattimo's *The End of Modernity*, in conjunction with her neglectful omission of Gadamer's project.⁵⁰

Ross accuses the post-aesthetic interpretation of Heidegger's work of taking a one sided emphasis that positions technology as negative and the artwork as positive counterforce, arguing that 'since the picture they give of the impact of technology on human existence and its fundamental worldly relations is systematically built up in reference and as a counter-image to the experience of the artwork, they abort Heidegger's own epochal approach to the meaning of being.'⁵¹ Despite his careful clarifications of Heidegger's thinking of *poiēsis* and *technē*, in terms of co-belonging, Ziarek's analysis tends to keep these terms in opposition. What is needed is a rigorous explication of the way that these terms function in Heidegger's historical understanding of the history of truth and Being in Western metaphysics. In chapter three I unpack this historical understanding where, for Heidegger, Being becomes something forgotten. My emphasis is not, however, directed towards the way that the experience of art can counter the experience of technology, but rather, how the thinking of creative practices and thinking through the work of art can enable, if not a full alternative to what Heidegger calls representational thinking, then a lateral deflection of its logic, in an opening up to questioning.

2.8 Political Aesthetics

The question of representational thinking is rigorously examined in Barbara Bolt's *Art Beyond Representation: The Performative Power of the Image*, (2004). Bolt utilizes Heidegger's meditations on art to examine the possibilities of a practice of art that—after Paul Carter—would constitute a form of 'material thinking,' which would overcome the instrumentalisation of representational thinking. Bolt, like Ziarek, argues for the poietic status of the work of art as a counter to instrumental calculative thinking. However, Bolt's emphasis falls almost exclusively on the side of the production of art, rather than its reception and ability to re-configure experience. Moreover, Bolt's position cannot be described even remotely as post-aesthetic. Indeed *Art Beyond Representation*, in the traditional manner, would seem to take the aesthetic paradigm for granted. Although in her later work, *Heidegger Reframed* (2011), Bolt acknowledges Heidegger's 'anti-aestheticism,' she casts it in terms of a move away from aesthetics towards ethics. Essentially, Bolt finds grounds to dismiss Heidegger's resistance to aesthetics, which she reads as an out-dated response to modernist conceptions of art, which have in recent times been overcome by a fusion of aesthetics and ethics in contemporary art. This recent trend in the globalised nexus of art and politics, she argues, has resulted in a 'renewed interest in aesthetics.'⁵² However, Bolt's conception of political or ethico-aesthetics, in response to what she sees the a-political modernism, uncritically reclaims eighteenth and nineteenth century notions of aesthetic emotional intuition. The assumption is that the problems associated with the subjectivist aesthetic-emotional paradigm can be overcome if aesthetic judgment, and emotional reception of the work of art, is simply seen as a carrier of political content. The risk of such a view is that the work of art is seen merely as the stimulator of feeling that leads the beholder to an engagement with political ideas that would seem to be underwritten by the special status of the artist: as a sensitive individual possessing a unique and ethically unassailable worldview. This idea that art (and the artist) provides the conscience for discursive forms of rational logic is common, and can be located in varying degrees in the writings of Bernstein, Rancière, and Nicolas Bourriaud. Bolt's argument for political aesthetics can be traced back to Schiller's idea of the 'aesthetic state,' where feeling is cultivated in 'aesthetic education' in order to widen taste, and consequently, widen freedom. Although the problem of ethics is not entirely absent in Heidegger's

thought, the extent to which it forms the basis of Heidegger's objection to the role of aesthetics and *Erlebnis*, in the thinking of the artwork, is highly questionable.

Finally, I would like to mention Vattimo's criticism—noted earlier—of the opposition between two modalities that have dominated the history of aesthetics: representationalism and formalism. According to the representational view of art, the work of art conveys a message of truth. The material concrete, physical, sensible, elements of the work are thus seen as inessential. Once the work of art has performed its presentation of truth it no longer sustains any interest for the spectator. However, if we are asked to account for the historical persistence of great works of art, then the representationalist argument proposes that their truth remains to be understood. According to the formalist view, the work of art presents the inscription of beautiful form as a value in itself. Formalism, Vattimo argues, keeps returning to representational positions in order to ground itself in a cultural logic. Aesthetic experience functions, in the representational view, as a secondary rhetorical tool, where it is reduced to a 'psychology of persuasion.'⁵³ In other words, the art work functions in much the same way as the advertisement: where aesthetic taste, and the manipulation of emotion, work to convince the viewer of something. The aesthetic elements of the work function as sweeteners to attract and emotionally arrest the viewer in order to effectively deliver the message contents of the work. Representationalism and formalism then, as Vattimo argues, 'cannot be "overcome" by means of a synthesis; rather, they can be overcome only by revising the presuppositions on which they are grounded.'⁵⁴ This, according to Vattimo, is what Heidegger does in "The Origin of the Work of Art," by rethinking the metaphysical concept of truth in terms of an event.

Ultimately, Bolt finds Heidegger's non-Cartesian conception of Being-in-the-world, characterized by our everyday 'concernful dealings' with tools, as a model on which to base a conception of artistic practice that is characterized by a spontaneous interaction with materials. Bolt calls this practical knowing activity—which she sees as a form of 'tacit knowledge'—'handability.' While this way of thinking creativity, as an exploratory engagement with materiality and process, cannot be rejected entirely, it does not lead us to a way of thinking the work of art itself. Nor can it account for the essentially different status given to works of art as opposed to tools and equipment. Moreover, the concernful dealings with equipment in the world of the workshop, elaborated in *Being and Time*,

would seem to be not entirely reconcilable with Heidegger's later thinking of the artwork, as estranged dwelling-in opening up that happens in the work.

2.9 Twisting Free from Aesthetics

The approach that this thesis takes towards the work of art is—along with Gadamer, Bernstein, and Ziarek, and in contradistinction to Ross and Bolt—essentially post-aesthetic, although I prefer to refer to it—as I have noted earlier—as a ‘twisting free from aesthetics.’ Central to my thinking through of the problematics of a post-aesthetic conception of art is Heidegger's critique of the centrality of the will, and the primacy afforded to perception in both the subjective and objective determinations of Western metaphysics. At issue here is the role that the concept of *Erlebnis*, as the model of inner meaning and feeling—that figures creativity as expression, and aesthetic experience as experience of expression—plays in Heidegger's conception of modern representational thinking (*Vorstellung*). The relation between aesthetics, *Erlebnis*, and representational thinking has been a neglected issue, not only in commentaries dealing with Heidegger's writing on the artwork, but within Heidegger scholarship in general. Moreover, it is my contention that Derrida's deconstruction of Husserl's phenomenology—where the idea of experience is regarded, not as something immediately given to consciousness, but rather always, already, structured by language and repetition—when read along with Heidegger's ideas of situatedness, placing, strife, and non-willing thinking, becomes a powerful way of rethinking the place of the work of art in a non-aesthetic relation to knowledge. In short, what is at stake is an understanding of the work of art as a twisting free from aesthetics and metaphysics, which is primarily a twisting free from thinking art in terms of expression, experience and consciousness. The problematics and limits of such a displacement, from this perspective, constitutes the largely untheorised gap that this thesis hopes to fill.

Heidegger's suspicion of the modern subject, as a subject always in an absolute proximity with itself—a suspicion which is echoed in Derrida's various early critiques of Husserlian Phenomenology (*The Problem of Genesis... Origin of Geometry, Speech and Phenomena*)—and mistrust of the pure immediate givenness of sensory phenomena to consciousness, points to the problematic nature of a number of more recent approaches to art. These theoretical positions attempt to side step the aporitic relation between aesthetics and knowledge by privileging the direct-to-the-senses immediate experience of phenomena.

This notion particularly—though not exclusively—occupies the theorisation of sound and media art. While the problematics of sound art have been re-thought within a contextual framework by Brandon LaBelle, in *Background Noise: Perspectives on Sound Art* (2006), more recently, Seth Kim-Cohen, *In the Blink of an Ear: Towards a Non-Cochlear Sonic Art* (2009), has directly challenged the hegemony of essentialist, ‘sound-in-itself,’ conceptions of sound art that privilege the assumed primacy of perception. Kim-Cohen argues—after Duchamp’s notion of ‘non-retinal’ painting—for a ‘non-cochlear sound art that takes into account the “conceptual turn” that occurred in visual art.’⁵⁵

The post-aesthetic approach to these problems involves attempting to think outside of the philosophy of consciousness and volition, and beyond the oppositions of subject/object, form/matter, and reason/lived-experience. The consideration of these problems from within a Heideggerian perspective demands a rigorous analysis of Heidegger’s conceptions of aesthetics, his retrieved Greek notions of *physis*, *alētheia*, and *technē*, and the modern conceptions of representational thinking and lived experience. This will be the task of the following two chapters leading up to an examination of Heidegger’s thinking of the work of art.

3. Heidegger's History of Western Ontology and Aesthetics

In the previous chapter we saw that *representationalism* and *formalism*—the two modalities that, as Vattimo claims, have dominated the history of aesthetics—cannot be overcome by a fusion or dialectical synthesis. The theoretical work of Conceptual Art (Kosuth and Art & Language) is certainly not oblivious to the problematics of this opposition. Yet, in adhering to a strict regime of analytic philosophy, these artists found themselves trapped in the philosophy of reflection (merely exchanging the objective side for the subjective in the subject/object opposition). In simply inverting the opposition rather than challenging it, Conceptual Art consequently made self-conscious intention the organising centre of its work. This raises the question: is it possible for art to escape, exceed or deconstruct the subject-object opposition, which is so embedded in modern philosophy? Can art perform another way of thinking that is not subject to this opposition? As, we saw previously, representationalism and formalism can only be overcome, as Vattimo argues, by putting their grounding presuppositions into question; which leads us to the work of Heidegger.

Heidegger's most well known consideration of Art, the 1936 essay, "The Origin of the Work of Art,"¹ is motivated by the necessity to think the concept of art differently, outside the history of aesthetics. In order to establish a conception of art in which truth happens in an opening up instigated by the work of art, Heidegger attempts to think art beyond the matter-form opposition that has, since Plato, determined the thinking of the creative production of the work of art; and to think it beyond the subject-object opposition that belongs to the modern philosophy of consciousness. Put simply, Heidegger thinks the work of art as both a letting be of the truth happening (event) in the work, as a work, and as a knowing that happens as a willing. But such a simple summary is inadequate because Heidegger thinks 'truth,' 'knowing,' and 'willing' in completely different ways than they are traditionally thought in Western philosophy. That is to say, Heidegger's meditation on the work of art is intimately bound up with what he calls his *Destruktion* of the history of Western ontology.²

The phenomenological-critical destruction, rather than being a destructive shattering of the tradition, functions for Heidegger as a loosening up of the solidified concepts and philosophemes of the tradition that have obstructed and concealed its own history. As such it is a careful and directed dismantling (*Abbau*), which traces ‘*concepts back to their distinctive origin*’ (EPF 117-118, IPR 85, Heidegger’s emphasis). Because the original Greek concepts derive their sense in relation to other Greek concepts, which together form a system of thinking, their appropriation by Roman-Latin thought, inevitably brings about a distortion. The translation of philosophical terminology is neither transparent nor innocent, but is a process of transplantation into a different system of thinking, that always involves an essential alteration in meaning.

The overcoming of Metaphysics cannot be achieved by simply and radically beginning again from a position of ontological innocence, since this kind of empiricism would constitute, as Heidegger maintains, ‘a retreat into one’s own common sense, which always turns out to be a rationalistically diluted and thus “generalized” contingent spiritual horizon that philosophy will always have to mistrust’ (PAA 29-30, PIE 21). Moreover, *Destruktion* is not a critique of the past but, rather, a shaking up of present day self-evidence, and the prevailing conceptions of the tradition. What I wish to demonstrate, however, is that the metaphysical conception of art—in both its representational and formalist modalities—is not necessarily the *only* way of thinking art. What Heidegger’s *Destruktion* provides is a rigorous way of attempting to think before and outside the history of Western ontology. As Samuel Weber observes:

Destruktion retraces the *enabling limits* of the Western approach to being and reveals them to be a boundary that not only *includes* certain experiences but also *excludes* others—if not, indeed, a certain experience *of* the other... the Heideggerian *Destruktion* redefines the notion of *enabling limit* itself. A limit does not simply mark out a space *within which* something can take place; it does so only by *excluding* other possibilities and other questions. Those exclusions, and the alternative possibilities they imply, are what Heidegger’s *Destruktion* seeks to render legible once again.³

It is the implication that there are alternative possibilities for thinking—that is, that our modern subjective-objective way of thinking toward things might not constitute the *only* way of thinking—that motivates this inquiry.

This chapter unpacks Heidegger's history of Being, and his conception of truth. It examines how, in Heidegger's understanding, the originary, pre-Socratic, conceptions of *physis* and *alētheia*, become misunderstood in a tradition that culminates in modern representational thinking. In order to approach Heidegger's essay "The Origin of the Work of Art," and establish the way that Heidegger attempts to think the work of art differently—in terms of the displacement of aesthetics and metaphysics—we must, as a preliminary measure, seek to understand the extent to which this thinking aims to step outside, or back before, what Heidegger designates as the history of metaphysics. This chapter has the purpose of unpacking the history of the conceptual mutation and distortion that Heidegger sees as constituting the history of the decline of the essence of truth and the forgetting of Being. This history, as Heidegger sees it, is coincident with the history of aesthetics. But before this unpacking of the history of the decline of truth can proceed, we have to come to terms with what Heidegger means by truth.

3.1 Truth as Unconcealment

In contradistinction to the aesthetic view of art, Heidegger argues that the work of art opens up a space in which the happening of truth occurs. It becomes clear that Heidegger is referring to a very different definition of the word truth (*Wahrheit*) than what we are accustomed to. We usually think of truth in terms of veracity or verification, or the idea that something conforms to an adequate representation of something actual, in terms of *adaequatio intellectus et rei* (agreement of intellect and thing). In "The Origin of the Work of Art," Heidegger says, truth happens (*geschehen*) in the work. Heidegger calls this disclosure, or revealing, unconcealment (*Unverborgenheit*). It is with this word that Heidegger translates the Greek term *alētheia*—which is usually translated simply as truth (*Wahrheit*).

The word *alētheia* became important for Heidegger in the early 1920s when he was delivering a series of special seminars for advanced students on the topic of Husserl's *Logical Investigations*.⁴ It is around this time that Heidegger begins to attempt to reconcile his

readings of Aristotle, Plato and the pre-Socratics with Husserl's phenomenological method—which discourages any appeal to the 'untested' ideas of the great philosophers. Through the course of these seminars it gradually dawned on Heidegger that the Greek notion of *alētheia* is a more original conception of the supporting attitude of thought 're-discovered' by phenomenology.⁵ This turning point, which reorients Heidegger's philosophical inquiry towards the question of Being, reinscribes the phenomenological experience of 'the things themselves' and their objective relation to consciousness, in terms of unconcealment and self-showing.

The original Greek notion of *alētheia*, Heidegger argues, has been gradually distorted and covered over throughout the history of Western Metaphysics. In the medieval period *alētheia* was translated as *veritas* and *adaequatio*. It lost the more primal meaning of unconcealment as it was originally thought in the way of the Greeks. However, Heidegger argues that the transformation of *alētheia* into *veritas* was already under way in Aristotle's determination of truth as the correctness of an assertion (*homoīōsis*), where the concept of truth is subjected to the *apophantic*, subject-predicate, structure of the proposition (S is P), and thus comes under the domination of logic. However, to go back before the beginning of metaphysics, to retrieve the original meaning of truth does not mean, for Heidegger, simply to substitute one definition of truth for another, or to simply offer a more literal translation of the Greek term. Our usual, though 'outworn,' conception of truth is, for Heidegger, ultimately grounded on the Greek notion of *alētheia*, since the predicative expression that forms the basis of propositional truth—where the matter (*Sache*) conforms to knowledge—has the character of unconcealment. Heidegger, rather, conceives of a model of truth where the matter—the entity under discussion—must come to meet us 'in its specific Being (*So-sein*)' (GP 306, BPP 215). Unconcealment thus grounds the determination and communication of truth. But Heidegger is not proposing that unconcealment constitutes here an appeal to empirical evidence of what is immediately at hand. We do not perform the uncovering. Rather, we are installed within unconcealment, and attendant to it. As Heidegger says, we are placed in a clearing (*Lichtung*) in the 'midst of beings (*Inmitten des Seienden*)' (HW 39-40, BW 177-178). Clearing is a happening, not a permanent condition. As such, it is constantly pervaded by concealment (*Verbergung*).

The Greeks thought of concealment as more primordial than unconcealment. Because of this the *a-* in *a-lētheia* indicates that it is privative: it expresses a lack, or negativity. The German *un-* corresponds to this negativity; hence Heidegger translates *alētheia* as *Unverborgenheit*. As Heidegger explains in the 1924 lecture series *Plato's Sophist*, the privative 'a-' indicates that something is 'lacking, something is taken away (*genommen*), stolen (*geraubt*)' (*P:S* 15-16, *PS* 11). In the 1929 lectures: *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, he states: 'truth is understood by the Greeks as something stolen (*Raub*), something that must be torn (*entrissen*) from concealment in a confrontation in which precisely *physis* strives to conceal itself' (*GM* 43, *FCM* 29); and in *Being and Time*:

Truth (uncoveredness [*Entdecktheit*]) is something that must always first be wrested (*abgerungen*) from entities (*Seiende*). Entities get snatched (*entrissen*) out of their hiddenness (*Verborgenheit*). The factual uncoveredness of anything is always, as it were, a kind of robbery (*Raub*) (*SZ* 222, *BT* 265, Heidegger's emphasis).

The opposite sense of *alētheia*, then, is concealment, *lēthē* and *lanthanein*, which, do not equate, as we might think, to falsity (which resonates more closely with the Greek word *pseudos*).

This concealment takes two forms according to Heidegger. As he says in "The Origin of the Work of Art," first beings 'refuse themselves (*Seiendes versagt sich*)' (*HW* 40, *BW* 178), in the sense of hiding, and, second, they are disguised, or obstructed in a way that Heidegger describes as 'dissembling' (*Verstellen*). Even back in 1924, in *Plato's Sophist*, Heidegger conceived of *alētheia* in terms of a double coveredness (*Verdecktheit*), and in *Being and Time*, this double form of coveredness still consists, on the one hand, of hiddenness, but the second form of coveredness is described as deceiving, covering up (*verdecken*), passing something off 'as something which it is *not*.' (*SZ* 33, *BT* 57). In 1929 however, in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, Heidegger, gleans from Heraclitus the idea that *physis* is self-concealing. This is the sense of the first form of concealment (*Verbergung*), as it appears in "The Origin of the Work of Art," where Heidegger says 'Beings refuse themselves (*Seiendes versagt sich*)' (*HW* 40, *BW* 178), in concealment or withdrawal.

The clearing or lighting (*Lichtung*), Heidegger says, happens only as this ‘double concealment (*zwiefache Verbergung*) ...a constant concealment in the double form of refusal and dissembling’ (*HW* 41, *BW* 179). Heidegger continues:

The essence of truth, that is, of unconcealment, is dominated throughout by a denial. Yet this denial (*Verweigern*) is not a defect or a fault... *This denial, in the form of a double concealment, belongs to the essence of truth as unconcealment.* Truth in its essence, is un-truth (*HW* 41, *BW* 179, Heidegger’s emphasis)

Does this mean that truth is essentially falsity? No, but falsity as ‘Being-false (*pseudesthai*)’ as deceiving, as covering up (*verdecken*), in the sense that Heidegger presents it in *Being and Time* (*SZ* 33, *BT* 57), belongs to the double concealment which is the event in which unconcealment as clearing happens. Truth is in a certain sense bound up with ‘un-truth,’ since the opposition between clearing and concealment is characterised by ‘original strife’ (*Ursprünglichen Streites*). What I wish to show later in chapter five is that the work of art performs this strife as a disturbance that keeps open the clearing, and resists withdrawal into concealment. The open centre, or region, Heidegger says, belongs to the conflict of world and earth. Truth happens as strife of unconcealment in the work-Being of the work, which sets up a world, and sets forth the earth. The *work* of the work of art is thus one of the ways in which, for Heidegger, truth as unconcealment happens.

3.2 The History of Aesthetics

To argue that Heidegger finds a more authentic mode of Being, or of creative, artistic activity in the philosophy of the Greeks would be a gross simplification. Even to say that Heidegger sides with the pre-Socratics against Plato and Aristotle would be misleading. Heidegger’s Marburg period of the 1920s saw an intensive engagement with the work of Aristotle, whose teachings Heidegger regards as the apex of Greek thought. The decline of Greek philosophy begins, however, Heidegger contends, with Aristotle as ‘living questioning dies out’ (*GM* 53, *FCM* 35), and schools of thought systematise and order thinking. Thought becomes uprooted:

Everything that had once grown out of the most diverse questions—extrinsically unconnected, but all the more intrinsically rooted—now becomes rootless, heaped

together in subjects according to viewpoints that can be taught and learned (*GM* 53, *FCM* 35).

With the decline of Greek thought after Aristotle, and the translation of Greek terms into Latin—*hypokeimenon* becomes *subiectum*; *hypostasis* becomes *substantia*; *symbebēkos* becomes *accidens*; *energeia* becomes *actualitas*—there occurs not only a corruption of the meaning of the words but, more importantly, the imposition of a radically different system of thought. ‘The rootlessness (*Bodenlosigkeit*) of Western thought’ Heidegger says, ‘begins with this translation’ (*HW* 8, *BW* 149).

In the Epilogue of “The Origin of the Work of Art,” written a little later than 1936 essay,⁶ Heidegger sums up the history of aesthetics as it corresponds to the history of the decline of the essence of truth (*alētheia*) in ancient ontology:

...the beautiful belongs to the truth’s propriative event (*Sichereignen der Wahrheit*). It does not exist merely relative to pleasure and purely as its object (*Gegenstand*). The beautiful does lie in form, but only because the *forma* once took its light from Being as the beingness of beings. Being at that time was appropriated (*ereignete*) as *eidos*. The *idea* fits itself into the *morphē*. The *synolon*, the unitary whole of *morphē* and *hylē*, namely the *ergon*, is in the manner of *energeia*. This mode of presence (*Anwesenheit*) becomes the *actualitas* of the *ens actu*. The *actualitas* becomes reality (*Wirklichkeit*). Reality becomes objectivity (*Gegenständlichkeit*). Objectivity becomes lived experience (*Erlebnis*) (*HW* 69, *BW* 206).

In this way, a number of historical transpositions—beginning with the Platonic *eidos/idea*, and culminating in the nineteenth century perceptual-aesthetic notion of ‘lived experience’ (*Erlebnis*)—carry the original essence of truth and art away from the primordial Greek understanding of emerging (*physis*) and unconcealment (*alētheia*). This history, as it corresponds to aesthetics, is elaborated with some modifications and additions, in Heidegger’s lecture course on Nietzsche, in the section “Six Basic Developments in the History of Aesthetics.”⁷ To summarise, the six stages are: (i) the primordial Greek essence of ‘great art’ and great philosophy, (ii) the imposition of the matter-form opposition beginning with Plato, (iii) the domination of the subject-object distinction of the modern period (Descartes), (iv) the absolute aesthetics of Hegel, (v) the ‘collective artwork’

(*Gesamtkunstwerk*) of Wagner and the privileging of ‘lived experience’ (*Erlebnis*), and finally, (vi) art as applied ‘physiology’, aesthetics experienced bodily in Nietzsche. These two summaries present the problematics of what Heidegger regards as the history of aesthetics as it corresponds to the history of the decline of the essence of truth, or—since they amount to the same thing—the forgetting of Being. What follows in this chapter will be a careful unpacking of these summaries.

3.3 Form and Matter

Aesthetics begins, according to Heidegger, with the decline of the ‘great art’ of the Greeks, and also the philosophy that accompanied it. During this period—the period that Heidegger refers to as the end of the inception—the time of Plato and Aristotle—the basic concepts that determine the boundaries for all further theorisation of art and aesthetics come into use. One of these concepts is the *hylē-morphē* (*materia-forma*, matter-form) opposition: ‘*the conceptual schema (Begriffsschema) which is used, in the greatest variety of ways, quite generally, for all art theory and aesthetics... a conceptual machinery (Begriffsmechanik) that nothing is capable of withstanding*’ (HW 12, BW 153, Heidegger’s emphasis). Heidegger argues that this conceptual pair originated, not in the realm of fine art, but rather in the production and manufacture of tools and implements. The matter-form distinction has its origin, as Heidegger says, in Plato’s ontology, where beings are differentiated from other beings in regard to their outer appearance, *eidos*: the aspect; the ‘look’ of a thing. When the idea of production governs the way in which things are apprehended, when we talk about the shaped product as in the potter forming a vessel out of clay, all forming corresponds to a model, guide or standard, ‘the thing is produced by looking to the anticipated look of what is to be produced by shaping, forming’ (GP 150, BPP 106). The not-yet-visible proto-type; the model; the anticipated look, is what is meant by the terms *eidos* and *idea*. For Plato, the *idea* is a universal ‘form’ that although imagined rather than actual, is no less real. Before actualisation, the anticipated look is called the *to ti en einai*, that which a being already was, or the essence of the thing. With Plato this essence, *idea*, is characterised by ‘what-ness’ or ‘what-Being’ (*Wassein*), *ti estin* (what is it?). In Plato’s terms, everything we see in particulars, in the aspect that something offers, and shows of itself (*eidos*), is always determined by what we have in view in advance, the dominant look (*idea*). The aspect (*eidos*) thus manifests the *idea*. According to the look, form (*morphē*) encloses the thing, as formed matter (*morphē-hylē*) with a lim-

iting boundary, which establishes the finishedness or completeness of the product. According to this designation, Heidegger argues, the conception of the thing comes to be thought in terms of the completed product: that is, as the manifestation of the ontologically prior idea as formed matter.

At the inception of philosophy, Heidegger argues, Being was thought in terms of *physis* as an emergent appearing that comes to presence of itself. With Plato, what comes to presence has a double sense, in terms of the dual meaning of *ousia*, which can refer to both a particular something that comes to presence, the *hoti estin*, and what comes to presence in what-ness, the *ti estin*. Heidegger observes that when Being is thought as what-ness with Plato, then that-ness, *hoti estin*, emerges as a concept in distinction to it. This distinction, which later becomes that of *existentia* and *essentia*, replaces the more original simple *estin*. What-ness becomes what really is, *ontōs on*, and actual beings become relegated to *mē on*, a deficient mode of Being. *Ousia* thus understood in terms of the *idea*—the look—is constant, always present, unchangeable and ideal. It is with this concept of permanence of presence that Heidegger designates as the beginning of metaphysics proper. For Plato, the look as *eidos-idea*—the anticipated look of what the product is supposed to be—is what makes the product producible in the first place. The look precedes actualisation, is always earlier, and is for Plato—in contradistinction to the actualised thing—the truly actual. It is non-sensuous—the *supersensuous*. Heidegger maintains that the end of the inception of philosophy is characterised by the institution of *eidos/idea* as the prevailing word for Being, which remains dominant from then on (Cf. the Idea [*idee*] in Hegel).

Whereas Plato thinks *ousia* as *idea*, as constant permanence, Aristotle understands this permanence as something at rest. Rest preserves the completion, or limit (*peras*) of what is moved. That which is completed and is completely at rest is the *ergon* (the work). The *ergon*, however, as Heidegger argues, is not the result of an action of making but a way of presencing: ‘presence (*Anwesenheit*), *ousia*, thus means *energeia*: to presence-as-work (*Werk als Werk-Wesen*) (presence understood verbally) in the work of work-ness (*Werkheit*)’ (NII 368, EP 5). However, although Aristotle formulates *energeia* in opposition to the *idea*, and thinks it in terms of a presencing of actual Being (that-ness), rather than a

making or producing, his conception, Heidegger argues, still accommodates the *eidos-idea*, and is thus still subsumed, to a certain extent, under the matter form opposition.

3.4 The Beautiful

Although Heidegger cites Plato's philosophy as the beginning of metaphysics, and subsequently the beginning of the decline of 'great art,' it would be wrong to contend that Heidegger dismisses Plato's thought in its entirety. A certain idea of the beautiful plays an important role in Heidegger's conception of art, and this notion of the beautiful comes directly from Plato. In the "The Origin of the Work of Art," Heidegger speaks of 'a peculiar confluence of beauty with truth' (*HW* 69, *BW* 206), and that 'beauty is one way in which truth essentially occurs as unconcealment' (*HW* 43, *BW* 181). How does this notion of beauty, which Heidegger distinguishes from aesthetic enjoyment and pleasure, differ from that which is outlined by Kant in the *Critique of Judgement*? Heidegger rarely discusses the *Third Critique*, but he does defend Kant's definition of the beautiful, as the object of disinterested pleasure, against the misinterpretations of Nietzsche and Schopenhauer. In the Nietzsche lectures he argues that 'in order to find something beautiful, we must let what encounters us, purely as it is in itself, come before us in its own stature and worth' (*NI* 109, *N* 109), and further, 'the word "beautiful" (*schön*) means appearing in the radiance (*Schein*) to the fore' (*NI* 110, *N* 110). Heidegger interprets Kant's conception of the aesthetic judgment in a manner that is not consistent with familiar interpretations of Kant's aesthetics. The beautiful is not assessed in terms of judgments of taste, but rather by way of a more direct and 'essential relation to the object' (*NI* 110, *N* 110). The object appears before us as 'pure object,' and this coming forth into appearance is what Plato calls *ekphanestaton*.

Heidegger focuses on Kant's conception of 'unconstrained favoring (*freie Kunst*)' (*NI* 109, *N* 109, *CoJ* §5), a 'free granting' that lets the beautiful be what it is, grants what belongs to it and allows what it brings to us (*NI* 109, *N* 109). Michel Haar points out that *Kunst* 'comes from *gönnen*, "to grant a gift."⁸ Yet Heidegger, in forcing an interpretation of Kant through the optics of Greek thought—a world in which things are said to encounter us—would seem to be far from offering a more tenable interpretation of the Kantian conception of the beautiful than those that he criticises. However, as Jacques Taminiaux points out, Heidegger's procedure here is to meditate on the tenuous signs in

Kant's text that bring forward the possibility of superseding their metaphysical delimitation. Thus, according to Taminiaux, it is here that the aesthetic attitude 'overcomes itself,' revealing 'something that eludes the power of subjectivity and *a fortiori* the empire of absolute subjectivity.'⁹ Kant's notion of 'favor' (*Gunst*),¹⁰ as a 'letting the phenomenon be within itself, for its own sake,' suggests to us, according to Taminiaux, that 'deeper than the correlation of subject and object, freedom consists in being open to the very unconcealing of the world, an unconcealing that precedes and exceeds the theoretical, practical, and hedonistic powers of the ego.'¹¹

The conception of the beautiful as self-showing radiance occupies an ambiguous position in Heidegger's thinking on art, which seems to be both inside and outside aesthetics. On the one hand, *ekphanestaton*, is the *idea* of the beautiful, ideal supersensuous beauty itself. Such a conception of the work of art, or of Being, by way of the *idea*, would seem to be based on an entirely metaphysical model. On the other hand, as Heidegger proposes in the "The Origin of the Work of Art," 'the beautiful belongs to truth's propriative event (*in das Sichereignen*)' (*HW* 69, *BW* 206) Here Heidegger indicates that such a conception of the beautiful belongs to a way of thinking beauty prior to its metaphysical appropriation as *eidos*, and prior to it being subsumed under the matter-form opposition. However, although this notion of the beautiful occupies an important position within Heidegger's conception of art and the overcoming of aesthetics, very little is said about how such a conception of radiance operates independently of the *eidos/idea* and the matter-form opposition. We may surmise how Heidegger maintains this distinction by examining what he refers to as a more authentic conception of appearing.

In *Introduction to Metaphysics*, Heidegger makes a distinction between three meanings of appearing in Greek philosophy up to Plato. The first, and more authentic meaning, Heidegger describes as 'the self gathering event of bringing-itself-to-stand' (*EM* 139, *IM* 195), which creates its own space by ripping space open (*aufreißen*) (*EM* 140, *IM* 195). The second sense of appearing, that of 'a look as offering to be looked at' (*EM* 139, *IM* 195), designates something already standing there occupying an already prepared space of fixed dimensions, as a foreground surface. In the first and original meaning of appearance what appears and what is are one. Heidegger finds this in Parmenides' saying that 'Being and apprehending (*Vernehmung*)... belong together' (*EM* 140, *IM* 195). However, this

does not mean that Being is to be conceived as simple apprehension. With the transformation from *physis* to *idea*, Heidegger notes a third sense of appearance: ‘appearance (*Erscheinen*) is no longer *physis*, the emerging sway (*das aufgehende Walten*), nor the self-showing of the look (*Sichzeigen des Aussehens*), but instead is the surfacing of the likeness (*Abbildes*)’ (EM 141, IM 197). In this sense of appearing now dominated by the *idea*, ‘what appears is mere appearance (*ist das Erscheinende bloße Erscheinung*), really a seeming (*Schein*), which now means a defect (*Mangel*)’ (EM 141, IM 197). From this point on, Heidegger tells us, ‘*on* and *phainomenon* (what is and what appears) are disjoined (*auseinander*)’ (EM 141, IM 197).

The self-showing of the beautiful, as *ekphanestaton*, however, belongs to the second meaning of appearance. In this sense the appearance of the beautiful occupies a position between the self-emerging sway of *physis*, and the later defective mode of mere appearance, conceived as imitation of something real and ideal. In this way Heidegger can say that ‘the beautiful does lie in form’ (HW 69, BW 206), the space of viewing is given an outline, but does not yet fall under the domination of the idea, which then transforms the truth (*alētheia*) of beauty’s self-showing into *mimēsis*: apprehending as representation.

3.5 Representational Thinking

With the transition from Greek to Latin, Heidegger maintains, the primal meanings of *ergon* and *energeia* are transposed by the Roman conceptual language onto the plane of *agere*, understood as ‘making’ in an ontic sense. *Energeia* is translated as *actualitas* (reality), and this prepares the way for the Christian thinking of *creatio*. God posited as *sum-mum ens* is interpreted as *actus purus* (pure actuality), and thus becomes creator, and then all reality is *ens creatum*, in which ‘the totality of all beings is represented in advance as something created (*Geschaffenes*) ...conceived as a unity of *materia* and *forma*’ (HW 14, BW 155). With this shift in meaning *actualitas* renders the essence of *energeia* (as presencing)—and its connection to *ousia* as presence—obscure. Instead Being is understood in terms of accomplishment in action, the result of effect, the procedure of working: ‘*ergon* becomes the *opus* of the *operari*, the *factum* of the *facere*, the *actus* of the *agere*’ (NII 375, EP 12). As Giorgio Agamben expresses, in terms similar to Heidegger, what this means for the work of art is that:

...the emphasis shifts away from what the Greeks considered the essence of the work—the fact that in it something passed from nonbeing into being, thus opening the space of truth (*alētheia*) and building a world for man's dwelling on earth—and to the *operari* of the artist, that is to the creative genius and the particular characteristics of the artistic process in which it finds expression.¹²

With the shift from *energeia* to *actualitas*, Being is not only thought in terms of what is real, but this reality is determined, as Heidegger says, by effected working, which is understood in the sense of causal making, 'the taking place (*stellt*) of consequences (*Erfolgen*)' (VA 47, QCT 162). Corresponding with this shift, artistic production is also conceived in terms of causal making, which then prepares the way for the nature of art to be skewed towards the 'genius' of the artist.

In modernity then, according to Heidegger, what is (the real) becomes an object for a subject that is certain of itself, and thus can be certain of its object. This mode of thinking, *Vorstellung*—usually translated as 'representational thinking,' in which the subject becomes the centre of all determinations, as Heidegger observes, arrives first in a systematic way with Descartes. For Descartes, the only absolute certainty for the subject that thinks is that it knows that it exists, and is certain of this for as long as it thinks.¹³ The self-certain *ego cogito*, Heidegger tells us, becomes the foundation; the *fundamentum*, the authoritative ground for all thinking and what is knowable. Descartes says *cogito me cogitare* which means the ego appears to the thinking subject—to itself—as a *me cogitare*, that is, as a representing that is always an 'I think,' an 'I represent.' In this way the thinking subject is thought along in the thinking. Heidegger observes that this allows Kant to say 'It must be possible for the "I think" to accompany all my representations' (FS 23, see also GP 179, BPP 127). The self-positing ego, the distinctive modern subject—the *subiectum*—'knows itself as the *ground* of its determinations' (GP 179, BPP 127, Heidegger's emphasis) and as 'the ground of the possibility of representing,' 'the basic condition of knowing as knowing' (GP 181, BPP 128).

The Greeks never thought in terms of representation, Heidegger tells us. Nor was the thought of the medieval period one which represented in the modern sense. As Heidegger contends, with the rise of the ego to subjecthood, all else (nature, the external world, be-

ings) become objects for this subject (*FS* 13-14). But this shift towards the modern subject begins a long time before Descartes. The Greek concept of *hypokeimenon*—that which lies before; the substance or ground—gets translated and transformed in Latin as *subiectum*—the word for what we generally understand as the modern subject—and is paired with the modern object, of which, Heidegger argues, there is no Greek correlate. At the same time we speak grammatically of a subject that has predicates (S is P). Even with the Greeks *hypokeimenon*, as what lies at the basis of an assertion, becomes ‘something shown and stated (*legomenon*)’ (*NII* 392, *EP* 27). The grammatical subject, for all intents and purposes, seems to function rather like an object. Up until the Late Middle Ages the word *obiectum* referred to something merely imagined, and not actual.¹⁴ What was, as *hypokeimenon*, something seemingly substantial, or substance-like, becomes, as *subiectum*, something essentially subjective and interiorised. Yet despite this reversal, what remains unchanged is the sense that the *subiectum* in forming the ground of its own self-certainty, as ‘a *fundamentum absolutum inconcussum veritatis* (self supported, unshakable foundation of truth, in the sense of certainty [*Gewißheit*])’ (*HW* 106-7, *QCT* 148), still carries with it the sense of *hypokeimenon* as the something that lies at the ground of the thing, as a substrate; what ‘simultaneously lies at the foundation of its own fixed qualities and changing circumstances’ (*HW* 106, *QCT* 148).

3.6 Objectification

With anthropocentric representational thinking the subject becomes the ground for certainty, and everything else—nature the external world—become *objects* for this subject. Rather than settling for the more technical word ‘*Objekt*,’ Heidegger uses the word ‘*Gegenstand*,’ which originated in the eighteenth century as the German translation of the Latin *obiectum*, and literally means ‘that which stands over against.’ As Samuel Weber observes, nature and otherness become what are ‘thrown over against the subject’ and thus the subject is ‘thrown under everything else’.¹⁵ We get a sense of this metaphor of throwing in the English word ‘object’ (literally against + throw).¹⁶ Beings appearing as objects in the modern period, ‘intrude and *impose* themselves on cognition’ (*SvG* 99, *PR* 55), such that representational thinking represents the object (*Gegenstand*) ‘in its obstinacy (*Gegenstehen*)’ (*SvG* 46, *PR* 23).

In choosing to use the word *Gegenstand*, Heidegger wishes to draw attention to the idea that, in the modern concept of the object, the entity is, before our cognition, brought to a 'stand' (*Stehen*) of 'standstill' (*Stand*). Objectification (*Gegenständlichkeit*) is carried out in a representation (*Vorstellen*)—literally 'a setting or placing before.' Something is placed before the subject, where it is consequently 'set in place' and made secure. In this way the existence of that which *is*, is made certain, secure and stable by the act of the subject representing *itself*. As Samuel Weber explains:

What provides this stability, Heidegger observes, is not so much the contents of what is thought as thinking itself, inasmuch as it seeks to enter into a reflective relation with itself—the *cogito: me cogitare*. In this sense, thinking accedes to truth as certitude by recognizing itself over-against itself; and it does this by recalling, as it were, that, however dubious the contents of its representations may be, what is beyond all doubt is the fact that representation itself is taking place.¹⁷

In such a way, Weber argues, 'thinking takes a stand against doubt by placing itself—that is, its activity of placing before, of re-pre-senting—before itself.'¹⁸ And quoting from "*Die Überwindung der Metaphysik*," Weber continues: 'the original object... is objectivity itself... but the original objectivity is the "I think" of the "I perceive"'.¹⁹ The full passage is as follows:

The object is the unity of the constancy (*Ständigkeit*) of what persists. In its standing, persistence is essentially related to the presentation of re-presentation (*Stellen des Vor-stellen*) as the guarantee of having-something-in-front-of-oneself. The original object is objectification (*Gegenständigkeit*) itself. Original objectification (*Gegenständigkeit*) is the "I think," in the sense of the "I perceive" which already presents and has presented itself in advance for everything perceivable. It is the *subiectum*. In the order of the transcendental genesis of the object (*Gegenstandes*), the subject is the first object (*Objekt*) of ontological representation. *Ego cogito* is *cogito: me cogitare* (VA 70, EP 87-88, translation modified).²⁰

What is at stake here, Weber tells us, is that the concept of the modern object is not simply objectivity, but 'the process of objectification,' and that with the subject 'taking itself as its own object... the cogito becomes the model of truth and of certitude'.²¹

Moreover, in deploying his own word *Gegenständigkeit*, rather than the more usual ‘*Gegenständlichkeit*,’ Heidegger seeks to draw our attention to what he regards as the unique mode of presencing that emerges in the modern period. That is, not just what stands over against (*Gegen-stand*), but also of what stands opposite (*Gegenständig*), and above all, in the constancy of what persists and endures (*Ständigkeit*). In using this word Heidegger emphasises that the modern mode of presencing not only has the character of objectification, it is also characterised by constant enduring presence.²² It is in this sense that Heidegger argues, in “Science and Reflection”:

Entrapping representation, which secures everything in that objectness (*Gegenständigkeit*)... is the fundamental characteristic of the representing through which modern science corresponds to the real. But then the all-decisive work (*arbeit*) that such representing performs in every science is that refining of the real which first in any way at all expressly works the real into an objectness (*Gegenständigkeit*) through which everything is recast in advance into a diversity of objects for the entrapping securing (*VA 52, QCT 168*).

According to Heidegger, the modern scientific experiment, as opposed to the Greek *emperia*, or the medieval *experiri, experientia, experimentum*, begins with a procedure that represents the conditions in which a certain outcome will result. Which means an imposition of a law, as the ground plan (*Grundriß*). This ground plan circumscribes the field, and thus ‘constrains the anticipatory representing of the conditions’ (*HW 81, QCT 121*). In this way the scientific experiment comes under the service of an exact plan, which is constituted by a systematic framework of interconnecting explanations by which the experiment seeks verification. This methodology, Heidegger argues, places its object toward the direction of the explanation, and in doing so, guarantees a result.

From this exposition of Heidegger’s ‘deconstruction’ of Western metaphysics, we have seen that what has been often conceived of as a continuity of thinking throughout various epochs has been ruptured by twists in meaning and distortions brought about by the very impossibility of non-obstructive translation of philosophemes between different languages. It is not that the translations from Greek to Latin to German are necessarily incorrect. Rather, Heidegger argues, ‘their correctness (*Richtigkeit*) is also what is insidious,

for through their correctness we become ensnared in historically later, modern and—today—normative representations’ (*SvG* 166, *PR* 99). Translation for Heidegger can never be absolutely adequate to what it translates, not only because words often have multiple meanings but also because each word depends on a differential network of other words which constitute meaning within a system of thought. A point often made is that Heidegger’s own translations are often extremely idiosyncratic and that his ‘history’ of metaphysics is far from definitive. However, the point that I wish to make clear is that the most important thrust of Heidegger’s argument is that modern representational thinking—characterised by the objectification and self-certainty of modern science, and the subjectification that constitutes the idea of consciousness—is not necessarily the *only* way of thinking. That is, the discontinuities that Heidegger locates at the various transitions in language, religion, and culture—Greek to Roman to Christian to modern—point always to *other possibilities* in thinking. At the same time, certain ways of thinking all that is—as substance, as formed matter, and as something made or created—have become entrenched.

The question becomes: what kind of thought would constitute an alternative to representational thinking? In what way can the practice of, and encounter with, art carry out this thinking? The traditional response to this question, however, has entailed a retreat into sensuousness and feeling that Heidegger, in the 1930s begins to describe in terms of *Erlebnis*: a superficial reaction to the instrumental calculative thinking of the exact sciences taking the form of aesthetic subjectivism. Heidegger comments on the problematic nature of this countering in *Being and Time*, where he writes: ‘when irrationalism, as the counterplay of rationalism, talks about the things to which rationalism is blind, it does so only with a squint (*schielend*)’ (*SZ* 136, *BT* 175). It is Heidegger’s intention to show that these notions do not stand in opposition to each other but, rather, in a certain way, belong to each other.

4. Lived Experience, Machination, and the Retrieval of *Technē*

In the previous chapter we saw that the decline of the history of truth and the forgetting of Being culminates, according to Heidegger, in modern representational thinking, where all that is comes to be apprehended in terms of objectification. But this instrumental and calculative approach to Being involves a counter-side: that of *Erlebnis*. As Heidegger sees it, the problem with modern subjectivist aesthetics is that the work of art is posited as an object for a subject who encounters the work in terms of sensuous apprehension (*aisthēsis*). It is in this experience of *aisthēsis*, in its particularly modern form, ‘lived experience’ (*Erlebnis*), Heidegger suggests, that the essence of art dies. Central to the notion of *Erlebnis* is the primacy of the subject-object distinction that finds its way into philosophy—and modern thought in general—with Descartes. In order to propose an alternative conception to artistic creation, Heidegger attempts to get outside and back behind Western metaphysics to retrieve what he understands as the primordial function of the work of art as a process of disclosure, or revealing, of truth. In doing so, he recovers, from the Greek word *technē*, (usually translated as art, or handicraft) a more original sense of the conception of the work of art—as the mode of knowing associated with bringing-forth (*Hervorbringen*). If the purpose of this analysis to conceive of a non-subjectivist post-aesthetic theory of art—or at the very least help us to identify certain strains of resistance to subjectivism in both contemporary art and the historical avant-garde—then *technē* must be understood as more than just a term, a substitute for ‘bringing-forth,’ a term translated and translocated from the dawn of Western philosophy onto the terrain of contemporary art. What is at stake here is a way of thinking (*epistēmē*). *Technē* must be understood in relation to a modality of thinking that not only thinks art differently, but further entails a radical rethinking of Being (*Sein*), beings, truth, essence, appearance, and ground—in short, most, if not all, of the fundamental determinations of metaphysics. The first part of this chapter sets out to examine the history of the concept of *Erlebnis*, and the decisive role it plays, in Heidegger’s thought as it culminates in the will-to-will of Nietzsche’s ‘will to power’ that Heidegger regards as the completion of representational thinking. The second section of this chapter elucidates the various renderings of *technē* in Heidegger’s writings—from the Aristotelian framework utilised in the period of funda-

mental ontology, through to the writings on technology, in order to ask: how does Heidegger conceive of art in terms of the retrieval of *technē*?

4.1 Lived Experience

In the series of lectures given on Nietzsche in 1936, Heidegger suggests that although Nietzsche's definition of the essence of art is not formulated in terms of art as 'cultural phenomenon or as a monument to civilization' (NI 75, N 77), it is still trapped within the traditional aesthetic idea of the work of art, albeit what Nietzsche calls a 'masculine aesthetics,' 'aesthetics driven to the extreme' (NI 75, N 77). That Nietzsche is able to claim that art is worth more than truth, Heidegger reasons, is a consequence of Nietzsche's view that art is a stimulant of life, and is thus able to act in excess of itself, as a pure will to power. From Heidegger's point of view, the aesthetic consideration of art is a meditation which observes the state of feeling aroused by the beautiful, where the work of art is reduced to the bearer of the beautiful and hence the provoker of the aesthetic state of feeling. Heidegger words it in the form of a tautology: 'aesthetics is consideration of man's state of feeling in its relation to the beautiful; it is consideration of the beautiful to the extent that it stands in relation to man's state of feeling' (NI 75-76, N 78). If aesthetics, as a doctrine, can be considered to be a way to knowledge at all, its epistemological procedures would appear to be short circuited, since, as Heidegger contends, 'man's state of feeling' remains 'the point of departure and the goal of the meditation' (NI 76, N 78). The work of art then becomes an object that is only accessible in terms of the states of feeling, that is, of 'lived experience' (*Erlebnis*). Heidegger claims then that, in modernity, 'the work becomes an object (*Gegenstand*) in terms of that surface which is accessible to "lived experience"' (NI 76, N 78). The knowledge associated with aesthetics is then limited to a knowledge of human behaviour in relation to the states of sensation and feeling.

Erlebnis means 'experience,' although it signifies a rather more specific sense of experience than that of the more general word *Erfahrung*, and has a very specific history in German literature and philosophy. *Erlebnis* represents, in Heidegger's work of the 1930s, an immediate and private experience. It is a subjective experience that is both unmediated and vague, but which is at the same time deeply felt. It thus epitomises the intense personal emotional aesthetic experience that came to be so highly valued by the romantics. *Erlebnis* contains within it the root *Leben*, meaning life. Although it can be traced back to

the life-philosophy (*Lebensphilosophie*) of Schleiermacher, Gadamer tells us (in *Truth and Method*) that it was not used with any frequency until the 1870s. Thus its use as a standardised term is relatively recent. It is in Wilhelm Dilthey's biography of Schleiermacher, that the word comes into a more general use, and is then finally popularised in Dilthey's *Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung* (Poetry and Experience) in 1905.¹

In *Truth and Method*, Gadamer elevates the term *Erfahrung*, as a non-subjectivised experience of art, over *aesthetic Erlebnis*. As Martin Jay observes, *Erfahrung* 'is sometimes associated with outer, sense impressions or with cognitive judgments about them (especially in the tradition associated with Immanuel Kant).'² But, as Jay says, it also comes to refer to a meaningful experience that is temporally extended and accumulative in terms of knowledge. This is much like the sense of the word 'experience' in English when we say that 'one is experienced.' It contains the root *Farht*, meaning 'journey,' and is linked to *Gefahrt* (danger). The sense of *Erfahrung*—which Gadamer draws from Hegel's *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, and *Lectures on Aesthetics*—is an experience that changes the beholder by conveying knowledge and truth. *Erlebnis*, on the other hand, refers to an experience 'that makes a special impression that gives lasting importance' (*TM* 53), 'is rounded into a significant whole...unforgettable and irreplaceable... whose meaning cannot be exhausted by conceptual determination' (*TM* 58). In this way it would seem to be the direct equivalent to Michael Fried's term 'presentness.' For Gadamer, the experience of *Erlebnis*, in disconnecting the work of art from its world, prevents the work from being a work. As Gadamer claims, 'Basing aesthetics on experience (*Erlebnis*) leads to an absolute series of points, which annihilates the unity of the work of art, the identity of the artist with himself, and the identity of the person understanding or enjoying the work of art' (*TM* 82). The subjectivised aesthetic experience of *Erlebnis* essentially provides no means for the work of art to reveal what Gadamer calls its 'claim to truth.'

4.2 *Erlebnis* in Early Heidegger

The word *Erlebnis* has a complex history in Heidegger's thought, finding its way into his thinking from a number of sources: from the life-philosophy of Bergson, James, and Dilthey, the phenomenological neo-Kantianism of Emil Lask, and lastly, but perhaps most important of all, the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl. Although Heidegger borrows much from Dilthey's concept of 'life,' and the historical analysis of man, in conceiv-

ing his formulation of Dasein in *Being and Time*, it is clear that Heidegger had by that time distanced himself from the notion of *Erlebnis* in response to the criticisms of Dilthey's project supplied by Dilthey's friend Count Yorck von Wartenburg. The concept of life appears in various forms in Heidegger's habilitation work (1916), but it is in the lecture series held in the "war-emergency semester" of 1919 (*Kriegsnotsemester*, henceforth *KNS*), "The Idea of Philosophy and the Problem of Worldview," at Freiburg, where Heidegger, as Husserl's newly appointed assistant, begins to examine the concept of *Erlebnis*. In his defence of phenomenological research, against the criticisms of neo-Kantianism—in particular that of Paul Natorp—Heidegger, in response to both worldview philosophy, and transcendental critical philosophy, attempts to develop, after Lask, the idea of a pre-theoretical 'primal something' (*Ur-etwas*) unfolding out of lived-experience. In order to establish the idea of philosophy as a primal science—the ambition of both neo-Kantianism and phenomenology—but at the same time proceeding from a starting point that would be free of pre-suppositions, Heidegger turns to the pre-theoretical experience given in life *in and for itself*. In response to the neo-Kantian value philosophy of Rickert and Windelband which—in its critical-teleological method undermines itself by first positing, in the form of fundamental and guiding axioms, what it ultimately seeks to find—Heidegger and Husserl seek a new beginning point in what is immediately given in the experience of life itself. However, it soon becomes clear that the inherited concept of lived-experience is not to be uncritically handled by Heidegger. In the KNS we first get a hint of Heidegger's dissatisfaction with the term when he writes: "The term "lived experience" (*Erlebnis*) is today so faded and worn thin that, if it were not so fitting, it would be best to leave it aside. Since it cannot be avoided, it is all the more necessary to understand its essence' (*ZBP* 66, *TDP* 55). What Heidegger's reservations imply is that he is less than happy with the word's Cartesian (subjective) and psychological (objective) overtones. Thus Heidegger wishes to wrench the term free from the idea of an experience that is essentially *inner* and reflexive, and at the same time to consider it non-objectively, i.e., not as a temporally delimited psychical process.

In the summer semester lecture series of 1920, *Phenomenology of Intuition and Expression: Theory of Philosophical Concept Formation*, Heidegger is further dismissive of the aesthetic tendency towards an ideal of harmony in Dilthey's effective complex of life, informed by the triad of lived-experience, expression and understanding (*Erlebnis*,

Ausdruck, Verstehen): ‘Lived-experience leads to expression, the latter to understanding, and understanding back to lived experience; in this way it comes full circle’ (*PAA* 169, *PIE* 129). Dilthey’s life complex, Heidegger claims, becomes fixed and personal because it ‘is ultimately determined by the ideal of humanity (*Humanitätsideal*) of Goethe and Humbolt’ (*PAA* 161, *PIE* 123), and what Heidegger calls ‘the *aesthetic consideration of history* (*aesthetische Geschichtsbetrachtung*)’ (*EPF* 92, *IPR* 67, Heidegger’s emphasis). Although Heidegger utilises the concept of *Erlebnis* in his early Freiburg lectures, he attempts to think it in a way that seeks to be more original than the subject-object opposition. He thinks *Erlebnis* in terms of the environmental experience of the envining world (*Umwelt*) as life in and for itself. Gradually this conception of life becomes ‘factic life’ in the early 1920s, and eventually transforms into the concerned and circumspective Being-in-the-world of concrete Dasein in the lead up to *Being and Time*.

Although Heidegger’s inquiry into fundamental ontology finds a certain amount of inspiration in Dilthey’s work, he argues that life (and all derivative ‘personalistic’ movements), including even phenomenology itself, fail to put into question ‘life’ itself as a kind of Being. This indicates, for Heidegger, that the basic question of Dasein’s Being has been deflected towards an anthropology by both the Greek (*zōon logon echon*)³ and Christian (theological Being) conceptions of ‘man.’ The question regarding the kind of entities that we ourselves are, Heidegger insists, cannot be answered in such an indeterminate way as ‘life... plus something else’ (*SZ* 50, *BT* 75). In *Being and Time*, *Erlebnis* is seen as an indeterminate starting point for the questioning of the Being of Dasein. Rather than something undetermined or tacitly assumed, one’s own Dasein is something encountered environmentally when it ‘looks away from “Experiences” (“*Erlebnissen*”) and the “centre of its actions,” or does not yet “see” them at all. Dasein finds ‘itself’ proximally in *what* it does, uses, expects, avoids—in those things environmentally ready-to-hand with which it is proximally *concerned*’ (*SZ* 119, *BT* 155, Heidegger’s emphasis). In such a way, Dasein is thrown into the ‘there’ and brought before itself in a state-of-mind, or *how one finds oneself* (*Befindlichkeit*). This does not in any way resemble the reflexivity of consciousness in the Cartesian tradition, rather, Heidegger contends: ‘only because the “there” has already been disclosed in a state-of-mind can immanent reflection come across “experiences” (“*Erlebnisse*”) at all’ (*SZ* 136, *BT* 175).

4.3 The Death of Art

In the early Heidegger, *Erlebnis* is regarded as general description for a pre-theoretical phenomenological starting point. However, in the work leading up to *Being and Time* the concept of *Erlebnis* is rethought in non-Cartesian, non-anthropological directions as states-of-mind (*Befindlichkeit*, *Stimmung*) understanding, and care (*Sorge*). In the 1930s, however, the word begins to be used in a quite different context, and it is deployed exclusively as a term of derision. No longer questioned ontologically—and with Heidegger's emerging interest in the work of art, and Hölderlin's poetry—the term *Erlebnis* is now regarded as central to subjectivist aesthetics. Poetry (*Dichtung*), Heidegger argues in the lecture series of 1934/35, Hölderlin's *Hymnen "Germanien" und "der Rhein,"* is not the expression of lived-experiences of the soul (*Ausdruck seelischer Erlebnisse*) (HH 32, 33), and 'expression,' Heidegger dismissively remarks, 'is also the barking of dogs' (HH 28), a 'determinate mode of being "liberal" man' (HH 28). Michael Zimmerman suggests that such rhetoric was directed at National Socialist ideologues that saw their own worldview as an aesthetic countermovement to English liberalism.⁴ In the 1935 lecture series *Introduction to Metaphysics*, Heidegger, discussing Sophocles' poem, *Antigone*, argues that the counter-violence of art (*technē*), does not take 'the form of "lived experience of the soul,"' (*"seelischer Erlebnisse"*) in which the soul of the creator wallows...' (EM 125, IM 174).

As the mid 1930s progress, Heidegger begins to conceive of *Erlebnis* as the specific aesthetic reception of art that prevents the work of art from functioning as an event in which truth happens. In both the Epilogue to "The Origin of the Work of Art" and the in the Nietzsche lectures of 1936, Heidegger associates the aesthetic experience of art, experienced as *Erlebnis*, with Hegel's famous pronouncement of the death of art. It is in his *Aesthetics*, and *Lectures on Aesthetics*, that Hegel announces the decline of the era of great art, beginning at the end of the later Middle Ages. In the section, "Six Basic Developments in the History of Aesthetics," Heidegger provides the three quotes from Hegel that he will reproduce again in the Epilogue of "the Origin of the Work of Art":

Art no longer counts for us as the highest manner in which truth obtains existence for itself. (WW. X, 1, S. 134)

One may well hope that art will continue to advance and perfect itself, but its form has ceased to be the highest need of spirit. (ebd. S. 135)

In all these relationships art is and remains for us, on the side of its highest vocation, something past. (X, 1, S. 16)

(NI 83, N 84)

Corresponding to this decline of art's power to reveal truth is the increasing dominance, in modernity, of the aesthetic experience of art. With its newly granted autonomous status art loses its function of revealing and preserving the essence of beings: its 'absolute need' (*absolutes Bedürfnis*)' (NI 82, N 84). In contrast to what Heidegger describes as the 'necessity' of living questioning at the beginning of philosophy, mere contemplation of the beautiful induces relaxation and pleasure, and, as Heidegger provocatively comments: 'art then belongs in the domain of the pastry chef' (EM 101, IM 140). Hegel's decline, or death, of art, is what Heidegger has in mind when he writes, in the Epilogue of "The Origin of the Work of Art":

Lived Experience (*das Erlebnis*) is the source that is standard not only for art appreciation and enjoyment but also for artistic creation (*Kunstschaffen*). Everything is an experience (*Erlebnis*). Yet perhaps lived experience (*Erlebnis*) is the element in which art dies. The dying occurs so slowly that it takes a few centuries. (HW 66, BW 204).

Despite Hegel's announcement, Heidegger notes in the Nietzsche lectures that art continues as the nineteenth century cult of *Erlebnis*, 'the "lived experience" as such becomes decisive' (NI 85, N 86), and 'the world is examined and evaluated on the basis of its capacity to produce the aesthetic state' (NI 90, N 90). It is not surprising that Heidegger—in keeping close to the subject of Nietzsche's writings—provides as his example the experience of the musical *Gesamtkunstwerkes* of Richard Wagner, which he describes as being characterised by 'the domination of the pure state of feeling—the tumult (*Brunst*) and delirium (*Raserie*) of the senses (*Sinne*)' (NI 85, N 86). Art becomes an 'absolute need' but the 'absolute is experienced as total dissolution into sheer feeling (*reine Gefühl*)' (NI 86, N 87). *Erlebnis* then, for Heidegger, is the experience in which art's 'absolute need,' of spirit (*Geist*) in the Hegelian sense, becomes circumvented, or degraded, by feeling and

emotion conveyed by way of aesthetic apprehension. That which constitutes great art, argues Heidegger, is ‘absolute need.’

In the lecture course of 1937-38 (*Basic Questions of Philosophy: Selected “Problems” of “Logic”*), lived experience is described as the mode of contemporary experience where the question of truth is without need or necessity. Heidegger says that at the end of Western thought, where we now stand, lived experience prevents us from questioning the most obvious, ‘what everybody always knows’ when it is said, for example, that ‘the stone *is*, the sky *is* overcast’ (*GdP* 184, *BQP* 159, Heidegger’s emphasis). And further:

...we are dealing with beings as the object of contrivances (*Machenschaft*) and of lived experiences (des *Erlebens*) and thereby are not paying attention to the Being of these beings. On account of its obviousness, Being is something forgotten (*Vergessenes*) (*GdP* 185, *BQP* 159).

Heidegger certainly agrees with Hegel that art, on the model of the ‘great art’ of the Greeks, is something past. Art comes to an end because it has become merely the aesthetic production of beautiful objects. However, as Françoise Dastur points out: Heidegger indicates—in a letter to Rudolph Krämer-Bardoni (April 25, 1960) on the subject of art—that he is not in agreement with Hegel’s conceptions of art, nor with the idea that art absolutely is finished.⁵ Although the history of art culminates and comes to its end in aesthetics, Heidegger, at the same time, points to the possibility of a transformed, non-aesthetical, non-metaphysical essence of art. In his 1960 Reclam edition of *Holzweg*, Heidegger appends a marginal note to the aforementioned sentence: ‘yet perhaps lived-experience is the element in which art dies’:

This statement does not, however, say that art is absolutely at an end. That would only be the case if experience (*Erlebnis*) remained the absolute element for art. Everything depends on getting out of experience (*aus dem Erleben*) and into Being-there [*Da-sein*], which means achieving an element for the “becoming” of art quite other than experience. (*HW* 67, *OBT* 50)

The possibility of art’s continuation, as an activity that counts for us, depends on whether it can find another way of Being, rather than merely that of an object ‘experienced’ by a

subject. It is only in this sense that art can once again become worthy of questioning and open up thinking towards a new beginning. Although Heidegger, in the late 1930s often speaks rather disparagingly about the prospects of modern art—and proposes that although art continues as instrumental culture while the true *work* of art disappears—there is equally a hope that a transformed thinking about art can function as the ‘saving power’ in the countermovement to modern nihilism. Art as an activity of the culture industry continues but authentic modern work art becomes, for Heidegger, something rare. Despite the imminent disappearance of the *work* of art in modernity, Heidegger still upholds the possibility of art—once it has ‘overcome’ aesthetics—as the unfolding of Being and the grounding of its truth.

4.4 Will-to-Will

Erlebnis comes into dominance at the end of art and the end of philosophy. As Heidegger contends, it prevents us from seeing the necessity of questioning the most obvious, such as how the copular ‘is’ functions in terms of Being. The end of philosophy, like the end of art, does not mean that philosophical work does not continue after Hegel, rather it signifies its completion, according to a certain way of thinking; according to a certain set of ideas: the ideas that constituted Western Metaphysics from its beginning. This is not to say that Heidegger is in agreement with such a completion. Rather, the completion represents the concluding end point of a cumulative reasoning of a unique and singular direction of thinking. Thus, at the end of philosophy, Heidegger calls for the transition to another beginning. This ‘leap (*Sprung*) into another knowledge’ (*GdP* 187, *BQP* 161), involving the destruction and overcoming of metaphysics, would seek to rethink philosophy from afresh. However this would not mean that it would be thought in isolation from its historical tradition. Since we have no other conceptual language in which to rethink metaphysics, than the very terms of metaphysics, the leap would involve both thinking *around* and *through* these concepts. In a similar way, Heidegger argues that ‘we must provide a new content for the word “art” and for what it intends to name, on the basis of a fundamental orientation to Being that has been won back in an originary way’ (*EM* 101, *IM* 140). Heidegger thus speaks of the necessity for the ‘overcoming of metaphysics,’ in conjunction with the ‘overcoming of aesthetics.’ However, ‘overcoming’ (*Überwindung*) needs to be thought not as, conquest, victory, replacing or usurping. Heidegger wishes us to hear, as Vattimo emphasises, a certain sense of *Verwindung*, as

torsion, twisting-free, and at the same time as incorporating what is left behind. Conversely, overcoming in the sense of replacing is what characterises, for Heidegger the object of Nietzsche's thinking of the will to power.

Nietzsche's thinking promises to be the countermovement to Hegel's absolute Knowledge as spirit of the will. Instead, Heidegger argues, it belongs to it, and completes it. In the essay "Overcoming Metaphysics," Heidegger contends that the will to power prepares the way for what he calls the final stage of the will's development in the completion of metaphysics as 'will to will' (*Wille zum Willen*). In the "Will to Power as Art" lecture, he states: 'For Nietzsche... will is nothing else than will to power, and power nothing else than the essence of will. Hence, will to power is will to will, which is to say, willing is self-willing' (*NI 33, N 37*). According to Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche, truth and art (conceived as values) both come under the dominance of the will to power where truth is thought as stability, and art is thought as 'lack of mindfulness' (*Besinnungslosigkeit*) and *Erlebnis*. The word *Besinnung*, often translated in an unsatisfactory way as 'reflection,' designates, for Heidegger, a mode of consideration or inquiry that unfolds along with Being, a directional recollection-thinking-on.⁶ It differs from reflection (*Reflexion*) in that it cannot be thought in terms of the psychic process in which the subject reflects back upon itself and its objective representation (*Vorstellen*). Under the heading of technics, in Heidegger's thinking, planning, calculative thinking, and stability come together with Nietzsche's idea of the creator-genius, who produces art as a stimulator of lived-experiences which, in turn, guarantees the business of art and culture:

The will to will (*Wille zum Willen*) presupposes as the condition of its possibility the guarantee of stability (truth) and the possibility of exaggerating drives (*Triebe*) (art). Accordingly, the will to will arranges even beings as Being. In the will to will, technology (guarantee of stability) and the unconditional lack of reflection ("experience" [*Erlebnis*]) first come to dominance.

Technology as the highest form of rational consciousness, technologically interpreted, and the lack of reflection (*Besinnungslosigkeit*) as the arranged powerlessness, opaque to itself... belong together: they are the same thing (*VA 83, EP 99*).

Together, modern technics and *Erlebnis*, obstruct *Besinnung*, the thinking of the history of Being, and prevent any relation to what is worthy of question. *Erlebnis* characterised as ‘lack of mindfulness’ (*Besinnungslosigkeit*) is here related to a certain reception of Nietzsche’s thought in the nineteenth century, characterised by the ‘Wagnerian cult,’ which interpreted his work in an aesthetic direction. Instead of being careful and mindful, Heidegger observes, this thinking loses itself in superficiality, ahistoricity, opaqueness, and the ‘chaos of life’ (VA 77, EP 94).

4.5 Machination

In the late 1930s Heidegger becomes increasingly critical of representational thinking, instrumental reason, objectification of beings and the calculative drive of modern technics, but he is also consistently critical of any humanist, anthropomorphic appeal to ‘life’ as a countermovement to rationality. In the lecture series of 1937, *Basic Questions of Philosophy: Selected “Problems” of “logic,”* Heidegger argues that *Erlebnis* is not only a superficial reaction to reason, but actually stems from the self-certainty of the Cartesian subject’s representational thinking:

Now this certainty is the germ of what today, as “lived experience” (“*Erlebnis*” und “*Erleben*”) constitutes the basic form of being human. It is one of the ironies of history that our age has discovered—admittedly, very late—the need to refute Descartes, and take issue with him and his intellectualism by appealing to “lived experience,” whereas lived experience is only a base descendant of the Cartesian *cogito ergo sum* (GdP 149, BQP 129).

Heidegger thus begins to regard *Erlebnis* as intimately connected to the machination (*Machenschaft*) of representational thinking. These two poles—*Machenschaft* and *Erlebnis*—however do not stand in opposition but, in a certain way, belong to each other; they name ‘the two poles between which the ordinary conception of truth—correctness—oscillates’ (GdP 148-49, BQP 128-129). The word *Machenschaft*, in Heidegger’s usage does not mean machination in the sense of plotting and contriving, it is rather the way in which beings are apprehended in terms of something made, according to a productionist metaphysics—from the Platonic *eidos* through to representational thinking of Cartesian subjectivity and objectification.

These comments on the relationship between *Machenschaft* and *Erlebnis* are delivered in a fairly off hand way in the lecture series of 1937. They are developed in a much more rigorous manner in the beyng-historical treatises⁷ of the same period, particularly *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)* (1937-38), translated as *Contributions to Philosophy: (from Enowning)*. In this period throughout a range of texts and lectures Heidegger refers to a general mania for *Erlebnisse* that seems to be everywhere.⁸ He speaks, in the *Beiträge*, of ‘today’s time of “lived-experience”’ of the 1930s—the period of National Socialism—in distinction to ‘the time of neo-Kantianism’ (of the 1910-20s) (*BzP* 134-5, *CP* 94). What Heidegger is striving after in the *Beiträge*, however, is the possibility of another beginning. This other beginning has an intimate relation to the first (Greek) beginning of philosophy, but the relation remains concealed. For Heidegger, The name machination points to making, where interpretation of beings brings makeability to the foreground, and thus *Machenschaft* is the current of thinking that conceives of Being in terms of being-produced. What belong to machination are *actus*, *ens creatum*, cause-effect, mechanistic, and biological ways of thinking. Since the decline of Being, from its originary thinking in terms of *physis* and *alētheia* at the inception, machination, Heidegger claims, has dominated the history of Being in Western metaphysics from Plato to Nietzsche—where it forms the ground for the interpretation of the actual as ‘will to power.’ However, it is not, as Heidegger insists, a human comportment but ‘an essential swaying of Being (*Seines*)’ (*BzP* 126, *CP* 88). It has hidden itself in various guises (in constant presence in Greek thinking, in *ordo* and *analogia entis* in the Middle Ages). Machination hides, and the more it hides, the more it offers the anthropomorphism of lived-experience—which first seems to be its utmost opposite but is really in a relation of mutual belongingness. As Michel Haar observes, the common root of *Erlebnis* and *Machenschaft*, ‘is none other than representation, the fact of relating back to oneself or producing out of oneself and before oneself either this calculated operation or else this expression of life.’⁹ Because lived-experience lies in the centrality and certainty of the ‘I’, and is characteristic of an anthropological way of thinking, it unconditionally verifies machination. In this way it prevents us from seeing machination for what it is, and this lessens the prospect of any unveiling and questioning of beings. As machination withdraws, Heidegger says, ‘beyng (*Seyn*) itself withdraws’ (*BzP* 128, *CP* 89, translation modified).

Machination and lived-experience belong both to each other, but this belongingness is concealed and ‘*non-simultaneous*’ (*Ungleichzeitigkeit*) within the “time” of the history (*Geschichte*) of being (*Seyns*)’ (BzP 128, CP 89, translation modified). Machination has a long history of the abandonment of Being, and is thus long hidden. Lived-experience, on the other hand has a relatively short historical timeframe, as a much more recent mode of concealing which begins as a reaction to Enlightenment rationality and instrumental thinking. We must recognise machination for what it is, Heidegger argues, because only then can the abandonment of Being reveal something about being itself. Machination thus has to be grasped being-historically: that is as something sent or destined.

As we have seen, the concept of lived-experience takes a dramatic turn in Heidegger’s thinking from the 1930s onward. *Erlebnis* is no longer considered as the site of inquiry into a pre-theoretical something but, rather, a mode of non-thinking that must, by necessity, be avoided. However it is important to note that one of the guiding notions of Heidegger’s later thinking, namely, the event of appropriation (*Ereignis*) developed out of the early questioning of *Erlebnis* in the KNS lecture course of 1919. Heidegger, in describing lived-experience as neither thing, nor psychic process, proposes that it constitutes an event proper to the one who experiences, where one appropriates lived-experience to oneself according to its essence. However, by the mid-1930s one could say that *Ereignis* and *Erlebnis* are almost opposed to each other, in the sense that *Ereignis* is seen as the overcoming, or twisting free, of the *Erlebnis/Machenschaft* pairing. I would go so far as to suggest that the word *Erlebnis* functions in the late Heidegger in similar way that the word ‘self-presence’ functions in Derrida’s writing. That is, that both authors see *Erlebnis* and self-presence, respectively, as concepts that prevent rigorous questioning, by setting up the immediate, inner, and self-evident, as the ultimate court of appeal. Of course, I am not suggesting a simple equivalence between these two words. Each word functions in its own unique semantic field, or textual (inscriptive) chain: Derrida – presence, present moment, immediacy, consciousness, speech, meaning-to-say, ideal, origin; Heidegger – *Erlebnis*, consciousness, expression, *Gestell*, objectification, machination. These chains cannot be reconciled or assimilated in any way. They are essentially *different* at some point in the chain.

4.6 Heidegger's Retrieval of *Technē*

In 'The Origin of the Work of Art,' Heidegger is concerned with the question: 'what is truth, that it can happen as, or even must happen as art?' (HW 44, BW 182). In assigning the work of art a causal origin, the usual view is that the work springs from the activity of the artist. This is the starting point that Nietzsche takes, and which Heidegger consequently criticises in his lecture series on the philosopher. In these lectures, Heidegger contends that inquiry into art should begin, rather, from the work of art. But since an artist cannot be an artist without the work, and the work cannot be a work of art without the artist, Heidegger begins his questioning in "The Origin of the Work of Art" from the standpoint that 'art is the origin of both artist and work' (HW 1, 44, BW 143, 182). But still the essence of art, for Heidegger is to be sought in the actual work of art itself, which is where truth happens. Because the work is not a 'mere' thing (*bloße Ding*) but, rather, something worked, Heidegger finds it necessary to turn to an inquiry into the work's createdness. However, Heidegger attempts to think createdness in terms other than the *ens creatum* of Christianity, and its derivative notions. Instead he thinks of the creative process as a 'bringing-forth' (*Hervorbringen*), or an 'eruption' (*Aufbruch*), and it is with these words that he renders the original sense of the Greek word *technē*. But to establish how this bringing forth belongs to the work Heidegger must clarify the difference between 'being created' (and creation) and 'being made' (making). He must also determine what it is that is the 'inmost essence of the work itself' in order to 'gauge how far createdness (*Geschaffensein*) belongs to the work and how far it determines the work-Being (*Werksein*) of the work' (HW 44, BW 182). *Technē*, as Heidegger maintains, has a relation to knowledge in the broad sense, as *epistēmē*. Therefore, we need to establish in what sense *technē*, as the pre-metaphysical conception of art, constitutes a mode of knowing.

From the time of the earliest iterations of his 1935-36 essay, 'The Origin of the Work of Art,' and his lecture course, *Introduction to Metaphysics* (1935), Heidegger had begun to utilise a different sense of the Greek word *technē* than he had in the period of fundamental ontology, where it was restricted to its narrow sense in Platonic-Aristotelian Philosophy: that is, as the know-how of making and producing equipment and handicrafts. *Technē* is usually interpreted as art or craft, and the word that designates both artists and craftsmen is *technitēs*. For Aristotle, *technē* is the *aretē*, or the 'intellectual virtue' of *poiēsis*.¹⁰ The ambiguous word *poiēsis*, which is often translated as 'producing' or 'mak-

ing,’ and sometimes as ‘poetry’ generally signifies a coming into existence. What Aristotle means here is that *technē* constitutes the good reasoning which results in things (tools, handicraft, art, etc.) that are well made. *Technē* then, in this respect, constitutes knowledge to do with production and fabrication. Following Aristotle, Heidegger’s position in the early lectures of the 1920s was that ‘*technē* could not be thought of as a genuine *alētheuein* (mode of disclosure)’ (P:S 41, PS 29). But in the 1930s, Heidegger stages a retrieval of the primordial sense of *technē*, as a primordial mode of disclosure that is profoundly related to *physis* and *alētheia*.

4.7 *Physis* and Wonder

The Greek word *physis* is usually translated as ‘nature,’ but such a translation is, according to Heidegger, misleading. Although the word ‘nature’ comes from the Latin word *natura*, which is closely related to *nasci* (to be born, to arise, to grow), a translation closer to the original Greek meaning for Heidegger, would be one that would be less associated with growth as such, and more with self-emergence, such as in ‘the bursting of a blossom into bloom’ (VA 15, QCT 10). *Physis* thus signifies ‘nature’ only in its most narrow sense, and even less the notion of nature as the object of the natural sciences. Rather, for Heidegger, it means the self-forming prevailing of beings as a whole. *Physis*, for Heidegger, is a concept involving the intertwining of man and nature in ‘a whole prevailing that prevails through (and around) man himself’ (GM 39, FCM 26). For the Greeks *physis* is ‘what flourishes on its own, in no way compelled, what rises and comes forward, and what goes back into itself and passes away’ (NI 79, N 81). ‘It nears him (man), sustains and overwhelms him’ (GM 39, FCM 26) so that in order to establish himself man must gain mastery over the beings (*physis*) to which he is exposed. The knowledge that is required for this ‘confrontation’ is designated by the word *technē*. In other words, *technē* names the knowledge associated with man’s encounter with and against *physis*, not in order to exploit it, but to ‘care’ for, and to grasp beings in their self-emergence. As Heidegger maintains, the work of art brings Being to stand (in the work), and as such, the work of art may be regarded as the setting-into-work (*energeia*) of the beings which are disclosed by the knowledge of *technē*. Simply put, art reveals or opens up, and keeps open, a world for us. For Heidegger this opening up, and keeping open is a knowing—‘art is knowing and hence is *technē*’ (EM 122, IM 170)—because ‘knowing is the ability to set Being into work as something that in each case *is* in such and such a way’ (EM 122, IM 170).

Technē is like *physis*, the powerful upsurge that is the emergent-abiding sway (*das aufgehend-verweilende Walten*) of beings, but it is *other* than it. In one sense, *technē* is the force that counters *physis*, enabling man to differentiate himself from *physis*. Even though the bringing-forth of *technē* is thought by Aristotle as a bringing forth that is ‘in another’ (*en alloi*)—in distinction to a bringing forth of *physis*, which is ‘in itself’ (*en heautoi*)—the bringing-forth of *technē*, Heidegger maintains: ‘happens in the midst of being that surges upward, growing of its own accord, *physis*’ (HW 47, BW 184). For Heidegger *technē* refers to a knowledge that guides man’s mastery over beings. It ‘designates that knowledge which supports and conducts every human irruption into the midst of beings (*menschlichen Aufbruch inmitten des Seienden*)’ (NI 79, N 81). The counter violence of *technē* is characterised, as Heidegger shows—in *Introduction to Metaphysics*—in Sophocles’ poem, *Antigone*, by *deinon*, the uncanny (*Unheimlich*) and violent (*Gewalt*) (EM 121-120, IM 169-170), by which man ‘holds sway’ (*walten*) over *physis*. However, by 1936—in the final published version of “The Origin of the Work of Art,” and in the first series of Nietzsche lectures—Heidegger no longer characterises *technē* in terms of primordial violence. Although *technē* is still described in terms of a self-emerging eruption, Heidegger stresses that this eruption, a going forward (*Vorgehen*) in the midst of *physis* ‘is no kind of attack: it lets what is already coming into presence arrive’ (NI 80, N 82).

In the lecture course of 1937-38 Heidegger takes a slightly different turn, and reinscribes *technē* as the basic attitude towards *thaumazein*, wonder (*Er-staunen*), the basic disposition (*Grundstimmung*) of philosophical questioning. Wonder is not to be understood as a quest for the marvellous or the exceptional. Rather, in wonder, the most usual, the everyday, becomes most unusual; like *deinon*: strange. In its most extreme form wonder knows no way out of the unusualness of the most usual, nor no way in. Wonder cannot escape this condition by penetrating the unusualness by way of explanation, as that would render it as something that is not: assimilating the other to the same. Instead, for Heidegger, wonder dwells in between the most usual and unusualness. In this between, ‘wonder (*das Er-staunen*)—understood transitively—brings forth the showing of what is most usual in its unusualness (*Gewöhnlichsten in seiner Ungewöhnlichkeit*)’ (GdP 168, BQP 145). Thus we can begin to see that *technē*, considered in the broad pre-Socratic sense, refers to a kind of knowledge that cannot be reduced to calculation, explanation or

circumscription. This is the knowledge that guides artistic creation, but it is also the knowledge that *is* artistic creation, that constitutes the work of art. Such a knowledge differs from rationality in that it constitutes a sustained questioning that knows no closure, and in this way Heidegger maintains:

Technē is a mode of proceeding *against physis*, though not yet in order to overpower it or exploit it, and above all not in order to turn use and calculation into principles, but, on the contrary, to retain the holding sway (*Walten*) of *physis* in unconcealedness (*Unverborgenheit*). Therefore, because the pure acknowledgement of beings as such, the perception of *physis* in its *alētheia*, is the disposing need (*die stimmende Not*) in the basic disposition of wonder (*in der Grundstimmung des Erstaunens*), *technē* and its carrying out become necessary as what is wholly other than *physis*—wholly other yet belonging to *physis* in the most essential way (*GdP* 179–180, *BQP* 155).

4.8 *Technē* and Machination

In the period of the 1937–38 lecture course—*Basic Questions of Philosophy: Selected “Problems” of “logic,”*—Heidegger becomes more and more concerned with the exploitative and ultimately nihilistic character of modern technology. Heidegger considered the text of the lectures to be an essential pre-requisite to his first beyng-historical treatise—*Beiträge Zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*, [*Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*].¹¹ There are indications that the thinking of the relation between art and technology was undergoing a transition in these works. I would argue that this transition, which begins in 1938 and comes to completion in the late 1940s, involves a shift from the idea of art characterised as the revealing or bringing-forth—where pre-metaphysical *technē* is regarded as the *countermovement* to technology and nihilism—to the idea that *technē*, as a mode revealing, forms *the* ultimate ground for *both* art and technology. The beginning of this transition is indicated in a short warning in the 1937/38 lecture (*GdP* / *BQP* §38) where he points to the danger posed to the basic disposition of wonder by the dual nature of *technē*: as both basic attitude towards beings, and the ground on which *homoiosis*, truth as correctness, arises. The consequences of this emerging double sense of *technē* are that, for Heidegger, the positive prospects for art as a setting-to-work of truth, the overcoming of aesthetics in the face of modern technics, become increasingly remote. Where in the

1937/38 lecture ends with Heidegger saying that art ‘will be *one* essential grounding of the essence of truth’ (*GdP* 190, *BQP* 164, Heidegger’s emphasis), in the writings of 1938 Heidegger is considerably more pessimistic. In the age of the completion of modernity art, as an activity, carries on but the *work* of art disappears. In *Mindfulness* he writes:

Art becomes a manner in which machination [*Machenschaft*] completes itself...every possibility of looking for a “meaning” of this art that could still prevail “behind” or “above” its “creations” fades. Indeed, in the gestalt of modern technicity and “history” [*Historie*] art becomes *technē* again (*B* 30, *M* 23).

Art in modernity, is not only characterised by the subjective notions of genius and ‘lived experience,’ but also in terms of the machinational, calculative goings on of the ‘art business,’ or ‘*art in general* as a means for culture-oriented politics’ (*BzP* 507, *CP* 357). But even in the era of the completion of modernity, Heidegger points to ‘the *genuine modern art*, which had to grow beyond what Hegel was able to see as art... distinguished by “creativity’s” (*Schöpfungen*) own covert installation-character (*Anlagecharakter*) that interpenetrates all beings’ (*B* 36, *M* 27-28, Heidegger’s emphasis). The authentic direction of modern art as mindfulness (*Besinnung*), lingers beside, in a parallel position to, the historicism (*Historismus*) of the art business that secures its values in a cultural aestheticism. This authentic work of art, according to Heidegger, does not simply replace aesthetics with another way of observing art, and is not apprehended as a symbolic object belonging to the anthropological sphere of culture. Rather, as mindfulness, having the character of *Dasein*, it is ‘the clearing (*Lichtung*) of being’ (*B* 37, *M* 28, translation modified).

4.9 *Poiēsis*

After the Second World War, Heidegger presents a number of lectures in which the transition of the thinking of the relation of art to technology is completed. Rather than opposing art to technology, Heidegger suggests that, since the essence of technology is nothing technical, and cannot be characterised as a means to an end; and, moreover, since its ground rather lies in revealing, we should, rather, open ourselves up to its essence. In “The Question Concerning Technology” Heidegger carries out a retrieval of the Greek word *poiēsis*, no longer understood in the Aristotelian sense of making-producing, but now as bringing-forth (*Hervorbringen*), conforming to Heidegger’s earlier translation of

technē in “The Origin of the Work of Art.” By drawing on Aristotle’s doctrine of the four causes, Heidegger demonstrates that the Greek word *aition* indicates, not cause, but ‘occasioning’ (*Ver-an-lassen*). The four ways of occasioning (material, form, *telos*, and artist/craft-worker) are co-responsible, and they are, each in their separate ways, that to which the work, or product, is indebted. They let (*lassen*) something come into presencing (*An-wesen*). *Poiēsis*, broadly thought in this new way, rather than the activity of fabricating, encompasses the self-emerging of *physis*, as well as both the metaphysical and pre-metaphysical senses of *technē*. All of these, Heidegger says, belong to *poiēsis*. They are all modes of revealing or bringing-forth. However, what distinguishes modern technology from the *poiēsis* of *physis*, or the *poiēsis* of great art, is that its revealing is a challenging (*Herausfordern*) that exploits the natural world unreasonably. Moreover, the *Ge-stell* (enframing)¹² of modern technology is an ordering that ‘drives out every other possibility of revealing (*Entbergung*)’ and ‘conceals that revealing which, in the sense of *poiēsis*, lets what presences (*Anwesende*) come forth into appearance’ (VA 31, QCT 27). Both *Ge-stell* as ‘a gathering together,’¹³ and *poiēsis*, in the later writings, are both thought in a much broader sense than they were initially in “The Origin of the Work of Art” because, as Heidegger indicates, they are related to the destiny of Being.

Enframing is experienced as a ‘destining,’ a ‘sending’ (*Schicksal*) of revealing, which allows us to dwell in its ‘free space,’ where, rather than confining us to ‘a stultified compulsion to push on blindly with technology or, what comes to the same, to rebel helplessly against it,’ Heidegger suggests that ‘we find ourselves unexpectedly taken into a freeing claim’ (VA 29, QCT 25-26). However, since destining sends revealing according to the limiting possibility of ordering, we find ourselves situated between two possibilities—*unconcealment*, and the blocking of all other possibilities in *ordering*—where we encounter the danger of misconstruing unconcealment as cause and effect and thereby not grasping Enframing as a claim. Interpreting a line from Hölderlin’s poem “Patmos,” that reads ‘But where the danger is, grows / The saving power also,’ Heidegger suggests that ‘the essence of technology must harbor the growth of the saving power’ (VA 32, QCT 28), and thus the confrontational questioning of extreme danger of enframing must come from something that shares the same essence but is different from it. The *poiēsis* of the fine arts, rather than direct human resistance, thus has the possibility of being the saving power, but only if art can twist free of aesthetics.

The new privilege afforded to the term *poiēsis* in Heidegger's later work indicates a substantial shift in his thinking regarding the essence of modern technics. Technology is no longer thought entirely in the negative sense, in terms of making and machination (*Machenschaft*), but rather, perversely, its essence seems, for Heidegger, to be in precisely what had been regarded, around 1936, as the countermovement to the will-to-will of modern technology and nihilism: that is, as revealing. In other words, the distinction between art and craft (as the making of products) that was so clear in the 1930s, now becomes, if not unclear, then at least pushed to the background, since, essentially, both are modes of revealing.

We have seen that in the 1930s Heidegger stages a retrieval of what he sees as the pre-Socratic broad meaning of *technē*, which is diametrically opposed to the previous meaning utilised in the Aristotelian framework of the 1920s. The retrieved meaning of *technē* undergoes a series of variations—from violent upsurge as countermovement to *physis*, to a letting bringing-forth into unconcealment, to the basic attitude to wonder, and, finally, to constituting a mode of revealing, which, along with *physis* and *Gestell*, is ruled by the revealing of *poiēsis*. Throughout all these permutations *technē* remains for Heidegger a mode of knowing: a knowing that constitutes a setting-to-work of Being, and an opening up and keeping open. As a mode of bringing forth, *technē* belongs to *poiēsis*, but not in the sense of making (or knowledge of producing). Rather, the knowing associated with *technē* is a poetic revealing questioning.

5. Art as Knowing and Letting

Can we conceive of art as philosophy in action? What would be the thinking that art performs? To what extent would this thinking be material or poetic: a thinking that operates beyond expression, *Erlebnis*, and consciousness? If such a thinking is made possible when art overcomes aesthetics, then how would making art, and attending to works of art, participate in this mode of thinking? The consideration of these questions entails thinking art outside the traditional (modernist) arguments. Although, as we have seen, the formalist-modernist criticism of Fried and Greenberg attempts to think art ‘self-critically,’ as an enterprise of conviction and contestation, beyond mere self-expression, its view of art remains entirely within the confines of the Kantian aesthetics of taste and formal beauty. Although the polemics of Conceptual Art opposes taste, the hand of the artist, mute visibility and morphology, its theoretical approach remains within the self-reflective grid of modern representational thinking. While formalism proposes that the artist has no need to think—at least consciously or explicitly—but gives herself over to spontaneous intuition, Conceptual Art supposes that the artist engages in self-conscious rational, intentional modes, that are of the order of scientific analytic propositional thought. However, in taking the logical-analytical counter movement to formalism, Conceptual Art would appear, at the same time, to be impatiently hostile to other modes of thinking.

As we saw earlier, a cultural-political conception of art, or a *political aesthetics*, attempts, in its most simple formulations, to break with what it sees as an impotent private subjective formalism by adopting a view of art that regards the work of art simply as a carrier of political content. It thus leaves the place and functioning of aesthetic values unquestioned, while, at the same time, subsuming the ‘work’ that the work of art does under an external explanatory framework. Both the contemporary and historical counter-movements to political aesthetics, invoke what Martin Jay calls the ‘others’ of theory,¹ against what they see as the academicisation and over-intellectualisation of art—the hijacking of art’s natural modalities by cultural theory. Within the discourse that wishes to rescue art—the encounter with the work of art, or the practice of art making—from theory, these ‘others’ take the traditional forms of (i) ineffability, where theoretical discourse is seen to be hopelessly insufficient when it comes to grasping the art object itself (theory is

always seen as a violation of the work), (ii) the primacy of direct, immediate, subjective experience, and (iii) practice as a form of tacit knowledge that defies attempts at formulation and communication.

A great deal of thinking of art and the artwork, and the practice of making art, tends to oscillate between these two poles: the anti-formalist political-cultural theory conception of art, and the reactionary anti-theory appeals to direct immediate experience. What is at stake is to find a way out of this dichotomy; to inquire into the possibility of another way of thinking the work of art; the work of art itself, and the work that it does. That is, to find what Krzysztof Ziarek calls ‘a “third” approach,’² that not only constitutes a rejection of aesthetics, but further, would seem to ‘undo the very framework that makes critique possible and valid.’³ What I want to examine is how Heidegger leads us to ways of thinking art that are other than those of both aesthetics and critical inquiry. Art is here thought as radical otherness that would not fall under the concepts of representational thinking. But nor would this otherness be dissipated in *Erlebnis*. As we have seen, in the 1930s Heidegger turns to the work of art in order to investigate the possibilities it offers for thinking the happening of truth. In order to conceive of a knowledge of Being outside and before the calculative explanatory framework of modern representational thinking, Heidegger retrieves a pre-Socratic sense of the word *technē*, which, he emphasises, is linked to *epistēmē*. Art, thought in this way, is then a modality of knowing. But knowing—perhaps not quite the right word here—is not to be thought of in terms of something that masters, pins down, or closes off. The epistemological question of how we know the outer world—of how, as inner selves, as consciousness, we access external reality—is dismissed by Heidegger as a pseudo question. Such a question presupposes the Cartesian subject. Heidegger’s rejection of the questions raised by epistemology—particularly those that occupied Neo-Kantianism—is well known, but this does not mean that Heidegger was not at all interested in any inquiry into the modalities of knowing. We might say that Heidegger, rather than being concerned with ways *of* knowing—the conditions by which knowledge becomes possible—is more interested in ways *to* knowing: the pathways brought about by a basic questioning attitude.

Although ‘knowing’ (*Wissen*) is the word that Heidegger uses in “The Origin of the Work of Art,” it should rather be thought as a happening that occurs in an opening or

clearing. The clearing is what the work of art opens up, where for Heidegger, truth is unconcealment of beings and, as such, constitutes a form of knowledge which concerns the matter (*Sache*) of the Being of beings. The work of art, as a form of disclosure, as *technē* in the authentic sense, constitutes, for Heidegger, a modality of knowing. This chapter investigates the ways that art can function as a mode of knowing that departs from normative analytical-representational, or conceptual, epistemological models. When the work of art opens up a clearing for the happening of truth, this opening up occurs as an estrangement, where what is most usual is rendered unusual. And further, knowing, which occurs in preservation (*Bewahrung*), is, for Heidegger both a willing and a letting.

5.1 Estrangement

Heidegger thinks of the creativity of the work of art in radically different terms than that of the artist as a creative force. Instead of being centred in the subjectivity of the artist, Heidegger considers creation as a kind of will-less production in which ‘the artist remains inconsequential as compared with the work, almost like a passageway that destroys itself in the creative process for the work to emerge’ (*HW* 26, *BW* 165-66). The artist is not seen as a creator, in the Christian sense, nor as an origin. Rather, art, in Heidegger’s thinking is the origin of both artist and artwork. Creating the work of art is not, as we have seen, a production—in the sense of fabrication tools and equipment, or handicrafts. But this does not mean that making art is simply a more profound or noble activity. For Heidegger, artistic production is entirely other. It is not thought in terms of the fabrication of a representation present in the mind of the artist: an eidetic image or idea, but rather as instituting the very conditions for things that already exist to disclose themselves. The artist thus opens up a world by letting something be. But this work of opening up, even as it involves acceptance, is far from passive. Rather than being spontaneous or intuitive, the process of creating involves thinking. But this kind of thinking issues from a modality that Heidegger retrieves from the Greek word *thaumazein*, which he translates as ‘wonder’ (*Er-staunen*). In the lecture series *The Basic Questions of Philosophy*, as we have seen, Heidegger characterises *thaumazein* as the basic disposition, or basic attunement (*Grundstimmung*) of philosophy ‘that transports us into the beginning of a genuine thinking (*Anfang des denkerischen Denkens*)’ (*GdP* 165, *BQP* 143). Wonder, for Heidegger, is distinct from other modes of the marvellous (amazement, admiration, astonishment and awe [*Bestaunen*]), which are simply opposed to the usual, and, moreo-

ver, emerge out of the usual as a background constituted by ‘the known, the understandable, and the explicable’ (BQP 136-37). Wonder is in contradistinction a radical underivable otherness, where ‘what is most usual (*Gewöhnlichste*) itself becomes the most unusual (*Ungewöhnlichsten*)’ (GdP 166, BQP 144).

What I want to argue is that the work of art inaugurates a disturbance in which occurs a suspension of habitual relations to the world. That is, the work instigates the condition, or rather the attunement of wonder, in which thinking and knowing happen. In *The Basic Questions of Philosophy*, Heidegger describes the pre-Socratic conception of art, as *technē*, in terms of the ‘preservation of the wondrous (*Bewahrung des Er-staunlichen*)’ which maintains *physis* in unconcealment. Thinking, or a certain pre-Aristotelian conception of knowledge, happens within the clearing opened up by the work and its preservation of the attunement of wonder. In the same sense, in “The Origin of the Work of Art,” Heidegger claims that the ‘thrust’ of the work of art—the very fact that a work of art *is* a work of art—transports us out of the realm of the commonplace and into the extraordinary. As Heidegger writes:

...the more simply does the thrust (*Stoß*) come into the open (*Offene*) that such a work is, and the more essentially is the extraordinary (*Ungeheure*) thrust to the surface (*aufgestoßen*) and what is long-familiar (*bislang geheure*) thrust down (*umgestoßen*). But this multiple thrusting (*vielfältige Stoßen*) is nothing violent, for the more purely the work is itself transported into the openness (*Offenheit*) of beings—an openness opened by itself—the more simply does it transport us out of the realm of the ordinary (*Gewöhnlichen*) (HW 54, BW 191).

The word *Stoß* is usually translated as ‘thrust’ (as it is by both Julian Young, and Albert Hofstadter)⁴. However the word can be translated into English in a number of different ways as: ‘stroke,’ ‘jolt,’ ‘kick,’ ‘knock,’ ‘push,’ ‘shove’... Gianni Vattimo renders it (or at least the English translation of his Italian) as ‘shock’ or ‘quake.’ Vattimo writes: ‘...if there is a term that can define the encounter between the reader and the work, it is “*Stoß*,” shock or quake: the artwork suspends in the reader all natural relationships, making strange everything that until that moment had appeared obvious and familiar.’⁵ *Stoß* is thought in the sense of a physical shock. We might render *Stoß* as ‘jolt,’⁶ and thus hear

Heidegger to say that ‘The setting-into-work’ of truth [that the work of art instigates] jolts up the extra-ordinary (*Un-geheure*) and at the same time jolts down the ordinary (*Geheure*) (*HW* 63, *BW* 200, translation modified). What produces the *Stoß* is not any particular form or content but the bare fact that the work of art as a work *is*: the ‘that it is’ (*Daß*) of [its] createdness,’ which is normally used up in usefulness (in equipment), and sinks back into inconspicuousness (*HW* 53, *BW* 190).

But we must observe the very important distinction— elucidated in *The Basic Questions of Philosophy*—between wonder (*Er-staunen*) and its synonyms. The extraordinary that is jolted up is not something that stands out from the ordinary. It is not a special modality of consciousness, nor an escape from boredom, in a distracted turn to spectacle. It’s not that works of art are curiosities or novelties. It is a disposition or attunement in which the usual is found to be extraordinary. It is in this attunement, and the preservation of this attunement that thinking happens. Moreover this thinking requires ‘dwelling.’ Thus, in “The Origin of the Work of Art,” Heidegger tells us that ‘Preserving (*Bewahrung*) the work, as knowing, is a sober indwelling (*Inständigkeit*) in the extraordinariness (*Ungeheuren*) of the truth that is happening in the work’ (*HW* 55, *BW* 192, translation modified).

Gerald Bruns describes the multiple thrusting or jolting (*Stoßen*)—where truth happens in the work of art in terms of radical otherness—as ‘estrangement,’ and suggests that ‘the work of art discloses the otherness of truth.’⁷ Bruns, however, stresses that estrangement must not be thought in terms of ‘romantic coloration of the commonplace,’ nor in terms of formalist or structuralist defamiliarisation ‘in which the familiar is re-experienced with a new innocence or a new awakening of the senses...’⁸ Rather than being an emancipation of consciousness, or the reconfiguration of experience in aesthetic terms, Bruns argues that estrangement emancipates the world: ‘...it is not *we* who are disconnected from beings... rather, art disconnects beings from the hold that *we* have on *them*.’⁹ In this way, Bruns suggests, in Heidegger’s thinking, the work of art ‘overturns the will-to-power’¹⁰ and ‘emancipates work and world from the claims of experience and the categories of idealism.’¹¹

Umberto Eco argues that there are two irreconcilable conceptions of the happening of truth in the work of art in “The Origin of the Work of Art.” One he regards as a kind of ‘orphanic realism,’ and the other ‘celebrates the triumph of questioning and hermeneutics.’¹² Bruns treats the essay in a similar way, observing a tension between two modes of poetic language: the orphanic and the hermetic. Although the accounts of Eco and Bruns differ in some respects, they both agree in general terms that there is an orphanic conception of the work of art, in Heidegger’s essay, that is bound up with the revelation and establishment of Being. For Bruns the orphanic dimension of poetic language is characterised by the power of the poet, and the power of the word to name things, to found worlds, and reveal true Being. Derived from romanticism, it is thought in terms that are constitutive, or worldmaking. Although Julian Young argues against a Promethean reading of “The Origin of the Work of Art” that emphasises art as world-creating, he concedes that such a reading is not unfeasible.¹³ Whereas the conception of poetry found in Heidegger’s Hölderlin essays—in particular, “Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry”—is, for Bruns, significantly orphanic, “The Origin of the Work of Art” begins to open up the possibility for a hermetic conception that paves the way to Heidegger’s later thought—particularly the important notion of *Gelassenheit*—and can be thought along the lines of the culmination of the formalist tradition, that ‘there is nothing outside of language conceived as a vast system of differences or as a text whose centre is everywhere and whose circumference is inaccessible.’¹⁴ The hermetic direction is signalled, for Bruns, by estrangement, which directs us to an interrogation of the otherness of truth and the work of art.

5.2 World and Earth

What is at work in the work of art, Heidegger tells us, in “The Origin of the Work of Art,” is a modality of disclosure: the ‘what it is’ of something and the ‘how it is.’ But this disclosure does not consist simply of imitation (of the actual), nor of the reproduction of a thing’s general (ideal) essence. What is disclosed is the particular entity in its Being, in the happening of truth, that Heidegger calls the work’s ‘work-Being.’ Work-Being, which is distinct from the ‘object-Being’ of the customary reception of the artwork, is accessed by way of two essential modalities: the work sets up (*stellt auf*) a world (*Welt*); and sets forth (*her-stellt*) the earth (*Erde*). These two features of the work of art, as Françoise Dastur points out, are, for Heidegger, different modes of placing (*stellen*) in which ‘the work of art has essentially the capacity of giving “place” to everything.’¹⁵ World is still the

set of human relations with things (the everyday environing world, *Umwelt*) in which Dasein dwells, as in *Being and Time*, except that here, in the 1930s, the notion of world is thought in terms of collectivity, as *a* world for *a* people. That is, a world for a specific people of a specific historical epoch. The earth, on the other hand, is the material background of *physis*, or rather the ground from which the self-emergence of *physis* emerges. The concept of the earth, we might say, perhaps oversimplifying, is essentially how Heidegger thinks through the disclosive character of the materiality of works of art. Materiality, however, is thought ontologically rather than aesthetically. The dimension of earth is, in one sense, Heidegger's way of thinking materiality, prior to a productionist metaphysics that thinks the idea of matter (*hylē*) as the 'from which' something is produced, or the simply extant that is not in need of being produced (see *BPP* §12). Material in the work of art is, rather, let to be in its actuality. But this 'that it is,' in normal circumstances, is, in a certain sense, undisclosable. The materiality of the earthly materials (rock, metal, wood, colours, tones, words) instantly withdraws. The work of art, which is set forth out of materials and set back into materials, brings materiality into the open—as the self-secluding (*Sichverschließende*) 'that it is'—and holds it there. But unlike the product, which sinks back into usefulness, the work of art does not 'use up' these materials; rather, its 'thrust' is to return to the earth in the form of a withdrawal. Unlike the bare stone of the earth that withdraws instantly, or the product that disappears and becomes inconspicuous in use, the work in its createdness thrusts forth its *is-ness* and abides in the open as a kind of lingering withdrawal, showing the earth as earth for the first time. The work, in this respect, constitutes a certain modality of knowing earthly materials. But this knowing is a modality of the undisclosed and unexplained, unavailable to the exactness of technical-scientific observation.

The traits—or modalities of knowing, as I have chosen to call them—of world and earth, are not, however, static components of the work. Rather, they are in a constant motion and agitation that Heidegger refers to as a strife (*Streit*). The relation between world and earth is that of a non-dialectical opposition, where the opponents strive to outdo each other, yet the conflict never resolves. Strife never ceases but, as Heidegger maintains: sustains itself in 'the continually self-overreaching gathering (*übertreibende Sammlung*) of the work's agitation (*Bewegtheit*)' (*HW* 36, *BW* 175). The work instigates this strife, and thus the work-Being of the work consists of this instigation. But how does

truth happen in the work? As we have seen truth, as *alētheia*, occurs in the opposition between clearing and the double nature of concealing as refusal and dissembling. Truth happens in the work, Heidegger says, by establishing itself in the strife, where it holds open the open region. World and earth belong to each other in much the same way that clearing and concealing do. But since the strife instigated by the work of art is just one of the ways in which truth happens, the agitation between world and earth may be thought as the specific site of the work of art's truth-happening. The primal conflict (*Ur-streit*) between clearing and concealing, on the other hand, is where the happening of truth occurs, not only in the work of art, but also in *all* the essential ways in which truth occurs.

The withdrawal (*Ent-Ziehung*), and to withdraw (*zurückziehen*), as Bruns argues, are the key words in "The Origin of the Work of Art," that prepares the way for Heidegger's later thinking on *Gelassenheit*. In terms of withdrawal and self-secluding, Heidegger's notion of earth, Bruns suggests, 'sounds the note of estrangement'¹⁶ This strangeness of the conflict between world and earth is brought out in Heidegger's notion of the rift, which means, in one sense, cleft, crack or tear, but in another sense a design or sketch—in the sense of fundamental design or plan (*Grundriß*), and outline sketch (*Auf-riß*)—in which the conflicting opponents are intimately drawn together. The rift 'brings the contest between measure and limit into a shared outline (*Umriß*)' (*HW* 51, *BW* 188). Outline here is thought in terms of the Greek *peras*: as limiting boundary. The strife that is brought into the rift, and thus set back into the earth, is fixed in place in the figure (*Gestalt*). But, in this rather complicated schema I want to draw attention to Heidegger's punning related to the first meaning of *Riß* as 'tear' or 'rip.' As we have seen, for Heidegger the authentic sense of appearing, described in *Introduction to Metaphysics*, creates its own space ripping (*Aufreißen*) space open. Truth happens in the work of art by way of a ripping or wresting. 'Wrest,' Heidegger explains—in relation to the Albrecht Dürer quote, in "The Origin of the Work of Art:" ("For in truth, art lies hidden within nature; he who can wrest [*reißen*] it from her, has it,")—"means to draw out the rift and to draw the design with the drawing pen on the drawing board (*Reißen heißt hier Herausholen des Risses und den Riß reißen mit der Reißfeder auf dem Reißbrett*' (*HW* 58, *BW* 195). The rift simultaneously draws and wrests, rips or tears. As Samuel Weber observes, 'In tearing apart, the rift "draws together," (literally: 'tears together', *reißt zusammen*).'¹⁷ Truth happens in the work as the strife between earth and world, comes to be seen, in the tearing together of

the rift. It uses the materials of the earth but it does not use them up (like products). They return in a withdrawal, and are set back into the earth.

For Heidegger then, truth is in its essence, in a certain way un-truth, which happens in the strife and *Spielraum* (leeway, or literally ‘play-space’) opened up by truth itself. Being contains itself between the belligerent traits of world and earth, and unconcealment of beings happens when a certain unity between world and earth is won. Yet, at the same time, strife never ceases. The world opens up and the earth towers and stands, but at the same time the earth withdraws in self-seclusion. But then there is the rift that tears apart and draws together, and the figure that fixes. There is no way to neatly summarise or circumscribe this entanglement of traits and movements, each one subscribing to multiple cross-currents, and depending on relations, sometimes of both unity and difference, to each other. There is no singular and simple formulation, in “The Origin of the Work of Art,” to describe how truth happens in the work, how the work happens, or how the work *works*. However, my point is that Heidegger’s thinking of the artwork can lead us to other ways of thinking about art. Such a thinking, it must be insisted, cannot be separated from the *Verwindung* of aesthetics, that is, a non-dialectical twisting free that does not eliminate aesthetics but displaces it in a way in which aesthetics can no longer govern all thinking about art.

5.3 Works of Earth

What I want to emphasise is that the strife, which opens up a space for the happening of truth, occurs in many different ways. It is not possible to derive, from Heidegger’s thought, a method of making art, or a methodological framework for the interpretation of works of art. Rather, I propose that an approach which thinks contemporary art through the optics of Heidegger’s insights, requires opening up his analysis to a bit of strife and free play, not in order to do violence to it, but to twist it, to play with it, in order to see what it offers. Here I will examine two works that are by no means exemplary, nor representative of all of what can be said. Both works relate to the earth in a certain way but this relation might only prove to be tenuous. But this connection may allow us to see them, at least superficially, as sharing a common ground. The first work is a large installation/sculptural work by British artist Antony Gormley, from 2006, entitled *Asian Field* (Plate 3). The other work is a large earthwork by Spanish artist Santiago Sierra from

2002, called *3000 Holes of 180 x 50 x 50 cm each* (Plate 4). Neither work was produced directly by the hand of the artist, but this is not the issue. Rather, both works were produced by a multitude of (non-art industry) labourers, each paid for their work. Moreover the collective labour of these groups becomes an important aspect of the work in each case.

Gormley's work consists of a very large space filled with 192,000 small figurines formed out of clay by 347 Chinese villagers. Sierra's work documents an event in which a number of African day labourers were employed for a month to dig a rectangular grid of 3000 holes of the above dimensions, with shovels, on a piece of ground in Southern Spain (Dehesa de Montenmedio, Vejer de la Frontera), facing the coast of Morocco. For *3000 Holes...* the workers—ranging between seven and 24 on any particular day—were paid the wage for day labourers stipulated by Spanish administration at 54 Euros for 8 hours work.

Both works are extremely large in scale, employ substantial workforces, and utilise the earth (in the form of soil or clay) with a particular situatedness in regard to place (Sierra's in relation to borders and crossings, Gormley's in relation to autochthonous communal belonging). If Sierra's work is to be considered an earthwork, it must be thought of as one that is only temporary. In fact the physical resulting earthwork itself is not the *work* of the work. Rather, the work consists of an event having taken place and is known to us through its documentation in textual description and photographs. The process of this work becomes more important than the result, and the physical structure is merely the residuum of the operation. Although the work is conceptual, it is certainly crucial to the work, that the work was performed, actualised, carried out. Sierra's work reveals something that we ordinarily do not see. It opens up a clearing that allows us to see something of the world of human relations. In just about all of Sierra's recent practice, what is brought out of unconcealment is alienated labour (labour disconnected from purposeful, concerned, meaning), and exploitation. It allows us to see these processes and situations in a new way by stripping them down to minimal forms. These reduced situations are almost surreptitiously tied back to 'traditional' notions of art by a minimal use of form; in the case of *3000 Holes*, the resemblance to an earthwork of the 1960s.



Plate 3. Antony Gormley, Asian Field, 2003, terracotta figurines, The Biennale of Sydney 2006. Image courtesy of Geigenot.

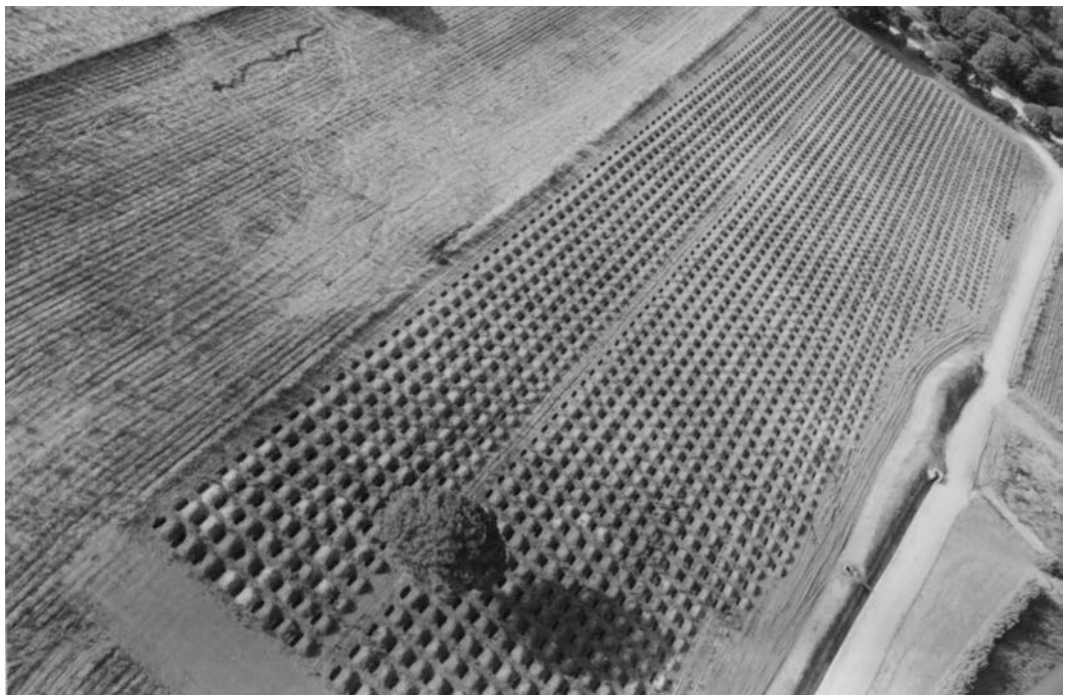


Plate 4. Santiago Sierra, 3000 Holes of 180 x 50 x 50 cm each, 2002. Dehesa de Montanmedio, Vejer de la Frontera

This use of minimal form can be seen in other instances of Sierra's work, which include tattooing a straight line across the backs of unemployed Cuban men; and shaving a ten-inch line into the heads of two heroin addicts. But in each instance, it is the world of human relations, of socio-political economic forces that is put into play, and revealed as if for the first time.

Asian Field, in contrast consists of a large physical presence. Its power can only be experienced by being there, in the space of its installation, which is presented as a vast expanse. Rather than being carried out by conscripted labour, Gormley considers it as a collaboration. The labourers, far from carrying out alienated piecework, or merely exchanging their time and their bodies for money, are given free reign—albeit limited—to produce any form of figure as long as it roughly conforms to the specified dimensions. What does Gormley's work reveal? First of all it shows the earth, which is seen as the is-ness of the clay (or terracotta). It also brings forth a connection of a people to place seen in terms of the collectivity of village life, the shared labour of the summer harvest, the deep connection to the soil and the local clay of which the figurines are made.

Asian Field with its earthly ties to the native soil of a specific historical people sets up a world. But it does so, or attempts to do so, according to the orphic dimension of world creating. The relation between the collective of workers and capital, that is made so explicit in *3000 holes*, is rendered obscure in *Asian Field*. It is a utopian gesture, which wishes to create a world that is perhaps ideal and nostalgic. *3000 Holes* certainly bears none of this nostalgia. There is no attempt here to inaugurate a world, but rather to open up and reveal a world that exists. In metaphorical terms, Gormley's work seems closer to Heidegger's notions of gathering, place and homecoming. But Sierra's work, as pure event, resonates with the most radical hermetic dimension of Heidegger's thought. It may be an extreme instance, but I think it paves the way to thinking *Gelassenheit* in social political terms.

I have chosen these two works because of their visual similarities and their extreme non-visual difference to make it clear that any assessment of the work of (visual) art does not necessarily proceed from the 'look.' My reading of these works has hopefully demonstrated two different but not entirely contradictory readings of the work-character of the

work in “The Origin of the Work of Art.” One work might be said to be conceptual and radical, the other conservative and perhaps rooted in a form of modernist universality. Both, however, fall into alignment, in different ways, with the multiple crosscurrents of the strife between world and earth.

5.4 Knowing, Willing, letting

The essential point is that the work of art jolts us out of the framework of the usual, so that the everyday becomes the most unusual, which paves the way to thinking entities in terms of radical otherness. If the work jolts us into an open region, which is a thrust [or jolt] (*Stoß*) into the extraordinary (*Un-geheure*), how is the work of art, as a form of disclosure, clearing, lighting, and opening, a knowing? For Heidegger, this knowing occurs as preserving (*Bewahrung*) the work, in a dwelling-in the extraordinariness (*Ungeheuren*), or otherness of the truth that happens in the work. Heidegger states: “This “standing-within” (*Inständigkeit*) of preservation... is a knowing (*Wissen*)” (*HW* 54-55, *BW* 192). But because the work of art transports us into the Open, and out of the realm of the ordinary, Knowing, as well as doing, prizing and looking are thought in other than usual terms. They are, in their normative forms, Heidegger says, ‘restrained.’ (*HW* 54, *BW* 191) This restraint (*Verhaltenheit*) allows the work to be what it is. Further, the restraint of the normative concept of knowing opens the space for another mode of knowing. This knowing, which is not the mere accumulation of facts or information, is initially described by Heidegger in the following terms: ‘He who truly knows beings knows what he wills to do in the midst of them (*was er inmitten des Seienden will*).’ The willing mentioned here should, as Heidegger insists, be thought in terms of the notion of resoluteness (*Entschlossenheit*) formulated in *Being and Time*. He continues:

The willing referred to, which neither merely applies knowledge nor decides beforehand, is thought in terms of the basic experience of thinking in *Being and Time*. Knowing that remains a willing, and willing that remains a knowing, is the existing human being’s ecstatic entry into the unconcealment of Being. The resoluteness (*Entschlossenheit*) intended in *Being and Time* is not the deliberate action of a subject but the opening up of human being (*Daseins*), out of its captivity in beings, to the openness of Being. However, in existence, man does not proceed from some inside to some outside; rather, the essence of *Existenz* is the out-standing standing-

within the essential sunderance (*Auseinander*) of the clearing of beings. Neither in the creation mentioned before nor the willing mentioned now do we think of the performance or act of a subject striving toward himself as his self-positing goal (*HW* 55, *BW* 192).

Heidegger certainly is not referring to the familiar concept of will derived from Aristotle's conception of action and desire (*praxis* and *orexis*), which became interpreted as *voluntas*, *appetitus intellectualis* and *agere*. Nor is this sense of the word *will* linked to Nietzsche's inverted Platonism and 'will to power' that Heidegger reinscribes as the 'will to will.' Rather, Heidegger's notion of will has the character of grasping the essence of beings—Being itself. Such a grasping of Being is for Heidegger, 'to remain knowingly exposed to its sudden advance, its presencing' (*NI* 56, *N* 59). This notion of will is distinct from determinate agency. It is rather a mode of Being that 'lets' the truth of beings come forth, in a way that is neither simply active nor passive, or, as Heidegger will remark in his later work, 'beyond the distinction between activity and passivity' (*AED* 41, *DOT* 61). The will is certainly not thought in terms of soul or *psychē*, nor in terms of lived-experience, self-consciousness, nor the Freudian concept of the unconscious. In no sense at all can this meaning of 'willing' be associated with voluntaristic self-consciousness of the modern Cartesian subject. Knowledge occurs through the work of art as a willing that, as preservation, Heidegger insists, 'does not deprive the work of its independence, does not drag it into the sphere of mere lived experience (*Erlebnis*), and does not degrade it to the role of a stimulator of such experience (*Erlebniserreger*)' (*HW* 55, *BW* 193). Preserving, instead of reducing the experience of the work of art to a private experience, rather, grounds Being within the historical sending of the happening of truth, in terms of the ecstatic-temporal constitution of Dasein. Art is thus something that happens in relation to the historical unfolding of Being. Willing is, in a sense, for Heidegger, a kind of letting, and letting is conversely a kind of willing, or rather, knowing is a willing that is grounded in questioning, and willing is resoluteness.

5.5 Resoluteness

In *Being and Time*, resoluteness is one of the ways in which human existence (Dasein): an entity which understands itself in terms of its own existence—surpasses the inauthenticity of unavoidable 'thrownness' into the given situations of the everyday world, and becomes

authentic Being-one's-Self. In the deficient mode of Being-in-the-world, Dasein makes no futural choices about itself and what it will be, but is carried along with the 'they' (*das Man*). In order to escape this 'in-authenticity' it needs to be shown itself as a possible authenticity through an existentiell modification of the they-self. In this way—through the running ahead to one's own death, and in facing one's primordial guilt in willing-to-have-a conscience (*Gewissenhabenwollen*)—Dasein becomes authentic Being-one's-self. This singularity of authentic existence, however, is not that of a more intimate and essential self, nor should it be thought as an escape from the worldly into an inner ideality. Rather than freeing itself *from* the world, authentic Dasein, Heidegger writes, 'frees itself *for* its world' (SZ 298, BT 344, my emphasis).

Resoluteness, as an appeal to Dasein's lostness in the 'they' involves, for Heidegger, 'choosing to make this choice' and 'making this decision from one's own Self (SZ 268, BT 313, Heidegger's emphasis). Many commentators have drawn attention to the apparent voluntarism of such remarks. However, as Bret W. Davis demonstrates, Heidegger's utilisation of the term *Entschlossenheit*, in *Being and Time*, is ambivalent and 'oscillates between embracing a resolute willing as the existentially decisive moment, and proposing that a shattering of the will is what is most proper to Dasein.'¹⁸ Responding authentically, in anticipatory resoluteness to the possibility of one's own possible non-existence, Davis observes, 'shatters' the purposiveness (*Umwillen*) of everyday Being-in-the-world in an ever-repeatable interruption.¹⁹ Anticipatory resoluteness (*vorlaufende Entschlossenheit*) is then characterised by a resolve to repeat, and thus hold open the possibility of one's own death. Moreover, In *Being and Time*, resoluteness (*Entschlossenheit*) is conceived by Heidegger as 'a distinctive mode of Dasein's disclosedness (*Erschlossenheit*)' (SZ 136, BT 175) Heidegger often hyphenates word resoluteness as *Ent-schlossenheit* in order to emphasise its literal meaning: 'uncoveredness.' Resoluteness, which is just as much an open letting as it is a decisive action, calls for the equiprimordial disclosure of the Self along with the "there" in Being-in-the-world, and as unclosedness brings the standing-within of preservation.

In the 1935 lecture series *Introduction to Metaphysics*, Heidegger maintains that willing is grounded in letting:

The essence of willing is traced back here to open resoluteness. But the essence of open resoluteness (*Ent-schlossenheit*) lies in the de-concealment (*Ent-borgenheit*) of human Dasein *for* the clearing of Being and by no means in an accumulation of energy for “activity” Cf. *Being and Time* §44 and §60. But the relation to Being is letting. That all willing should be grounded in letting strikes the understanding as strange. (*EM* 16, *IM* 23, Heidegger’s emphasis)

In order to account for this strangeness, Heidegger directs our attention to the 1930 lecture, “On the Essence of Truth,” where he insists that letting-be, as freedom that is ek-sistent, standing outside itself, is not possessed by the human being as a property. Rather, freedom, in a certain way, possesses the human being (*BW* 127). But this standing outside of *Existenz* is also a standing inside, as we saw in “The Origin of the Work of Art,” ‘the out-standing standing-within the essential sunderance (*Auseinander*) of the clearing of beings’ (*HW* 55, *BW* 192). This points to the indeterminate character of disclosure, as both fixing in place and letting be, which Heidegger observes in the 1956 Addendum to “The Origin of the Work of Art”: ‘this letting is nothing passive but a doing of the highest degree... in the sense of thesis, a “working” and “willing” that in the present essay is characterized as the “existing human being’s ecstatic entry into the unconcealment of Being”’ (*HW* 71, *BW* 208). Thought this way, willing is not goal oriented striving, nor must letting be thought of as neglect. Rather, both willing and letting are resolute.

Knowing is thought in terms of the questioning attitude, which, for Heidegger, consists of a ‘willing-to-know (*Wissen-wollen*)’ (*EM* 16, *IM* 22), which must always be constant learning, and being able to question, rather than the possession of knowledge or information. As Heidegger remarks in “The Origin of the Work of Art”: ‘Each answer remains in force as an answer only as long as it is rooted in questioning’ (*HW* 58, *BW* 195). The knowing that Heidegger speaks of is antithetical to the connoisseurship of the art business, or the idea that one becomes ‘cultured’ by the ‘learning’ of art and artworks. Knowing is, rather, ‘*Entschieden*sein (Being resolved, Being decided) standing within the strife that the work has fitted into the rift’ (*HW* 56, *BW* 193). With this knowing we no

longer ask the question of the works thingly character, which occupied the first section of “The Origin of the Work of Art,” and drew our attention to the inadequacy of traditional thing descriptions. As long as we ask that question we take the work as an object, we don’t let the work be a work but view it as an object that stimulates lived experiences.

5.6 Non-willing Thinking

As we saw previously, Heidegger relates *Entschlossenheit* to *Erschlossenheit* (disclosedness), which, as Davis observes is related to Heidegger’s thinking of unconcealment as *alētheia*, *Entborgenheit*, and *Unverborgenheit*, in terms of a clearing (*Lichtung*). This thinking of uncoveredness and openness, leads, as Davis elucidates, to the later reinscriptions of truth in terms of topology and location, of region, open-region and the Open.²⁰ In “A Triadic Conversation on a Country Path between a Scientist, a Scholar, and a Guide” (1944-45)²¹—this notion of resoluteness is again recollected; this time in order to clarify the way in which releasement (*Gelassenheit*) is related to non-willing. Heidegger proposes that resoluteness—in contradistinction to the traditional conception of will, which wants to actualise—is the self-openness of *Dasein* for that-which-regions (*die Gegnet*). Here Heidegger introduces an older (and regional) variant of the word ‘region’ (*Gegend*) which has the meaning ‘free expanse’ (*die freie Weite*) (AED 47, DOT 66). In this ‘triadic conversation,’ what is being threshed out by the three participants, is the possibility of thinking beyond transcendental-horizontal re-presenting (*transzendental-horizontalen Vorstellens*); a possibility that lies in the nature of thinking as indwelling releasement to that-which-regions (*inständige Gelassenheit zur Gegnet*), which constitutes the resolute (*Entschlossenheit*) coming forth of truth as dis-closure (*Unverborgenheit*). Heidegger thus conceives non-representational thinking in terms of *Gelassenheit*, which does not belong to the determining and entrapping domain of the will—as a willing to know that seeks explanation—and, at the same time, is neither mere passive acceptance, nor the submission to a divine will.²² *Gelassenheit*, lying beyond the distinction between activity and passivity, is both a kind of active letting, or wilful acceptance of the Open, and an open composed steadfastness—a receiving that gradually leads to determining—that Heidegger calls ‘indwelling,’ or ‘standing within’ (*Inständigkeit*) (AED 64, DOT 81).

If we recall that, in “The Origin of the Work of Art,” the standing within (*Inständigkeit*) preservation is a knowing and a willing, where both knowing and willing are

thought differently, it becomes apparent that preservation, in the later Heidegger, is approached as indwelling releasement in the spatial terms of *Gegnet*. If truth as the ‘*Streit und Spielraum*,’ (HW 49, [BW 186]) between unconcealing and (doubled) concealing comes forth through a resolute thinking/letting (waiting)—an indwelling releasement to that-which-regions—how does truth set itself to work in the work? Thinking this question through in terms of architectural space, Miguel de Beistegui, observes that in Heidegger’s later work, through ‘gathering’ (*Versammlung*), ‘the taking *place* of truth in the work’ occurs by way of the work clearing a space, or making-room (*Einräumen*) for things.²³ Beistegui suggests that during the 1930s Heidegger begins to rethink space in terms of ‘place’ (*Ort*). Examining the short essay from 1969, “Art and Space” (“*Die Kunst und der Raum*”), Beistegui shows that Heidegger, here, examines the possibility of space as running counter to the space of technics. In Heidegger’s later conception of space, of the event, or ‘spacing’ (*Räumen*) become sites, Beistegui argues, for ‘letting-be (*Gelassenheit*),’ which open a region/make a clearing where things which belong to it are gathered.²⁴ In “Art and Space,” Heidegger writes:

Gathering (*Versammeln*) comes to play in the place in the sense of the releasing sheltering of things in their region (*Gegend*). And the region? The older form of the word runs “that-which-regions” (*die Gegnet*). It names the free expanse (*die freie Weite*). Through it the openness is urged to let each thing merge in its resting in itself. This means at the same time: preserving, i.e., the gathering of things in their belonging together (*AED* 207-8).²⁵

Where the work of art is considered in terms of architecture in Heidegger’s writing, preserving is thought as gathering which means letting things merge in the resting of the open. That is, an openness which is not just the physical space (the void held by the building), but also the lightened space (*Lichtung*) of the clearing, that is a space for truth as unconcealment and thinking.

5.7 Displacing Aesthetics

We have seen that in “The origin of the Work of Art,” letting is associated with knowing, and with willing that is in a certain way a kind of non-willing. For Heidegger the preservers of the work of art are equally much a part of the work as the work’s creators. While

the preserver is what wilfully lets the work endure, such a description should not be limited to the work of curators and museums. I would suggest that Heidegger saw himself as a preserver—particularly in relation to Hölderlin's poetry. The notion of the preserver can thus be taken to include an 'authentic' way of receiving the work that is neither one of thematic interpretation, nor of passive contemplation but, rather, involves, as Heidegger stresses, indwelling or 'standing-within' the openness opened up by the work. In other words, what we find in the notion of preserving is the possibility of a non-aesthetic, and non-conceptual, encounter with the work of art. However, from what we have seen, the possibility of such encounters depends not only on the work's capacity to render what is the most usual—and its own existence—strange, but to keep the open space that the work of art breaks open, in a state of lingering openness. This process of estrangement interrupts the willing non-passivity of the receiver, paving the way to a thinking (that is a questioning) that is other than willing.

The displacement of aesthetics involves a rethinking of the work of art's createdness as an event that lets phenomena emerge, rather than producing an object according to a pre-conceived idea or a wilful act. This bringing-forth (*Hervorbringen*) out of concealment is, for Heidegger, named in a more original sense by the Greek words *technē* and *poiēsis*. It is my contention that Heidegger's notions of primal strife, letting, non-willing thinking, and gathering, pave the way for a reassessment of the avant-garde strategies of defamiliarisation, and creative indeterminacy. It is particularly in relation to these two ideas that Heidegger's project for the overcoming of aesthetics finds consonance (beyond his knowledge of modern art) with actual practices (that also remain unaware of his philosophy). I am arguing that, in a certain way, to a certain extent, the contingency theories of John Cage, and some of the Fluxus artists, open up possibilities for re-thinking art in terms of exceeding both aesthetics and instrumental thought. It is well known that Cage derives his notions of indeterminacy, interpenetration, change, etc., from Eastern philosophy: Zen Buddhism in particular. In this thesis I do not wish to extend my analysis into this area. Rather, I intend to examine this question in terms of Western Continental Philosophy, responding to questions opened up by Heidegger, Husserl, and Derrida. The next three chapters will address the possibilities for art when it is thought, not only outside the aesthetic conception of art, but, further, outside and before the philosophy of consciousness, through the optics of this examination of Heidegger's writings on the

work of art. I am certainly not the first to observe a correlation between Cage's notions of indeterminacy and the thinking of late Heidegger. Bruns links Cage's chance operations to Heidegger's notion of *Gelassenheit*,²⁶ and Michael Zimmerman compares *Gelassenheit* to the Zen Buddhist notion of *satori*.²⁷

Far from comprising the surrendering of will to a higher power, these strategies of chance and indeterminacy, or systems and constraints, become the practical carrying out of *Gelassenheit*. In other words, the chance operation in its rigorous form of artistic practice may be seen to be one answer to Heidegger's riddle in *Country Path Conversations*: how does one will non-willing? As Davis points out, although *Nicht-Wollen* may be translated as either 'not-willing' or 'non-willing,' the neither active nor passive middle voiced sense of non-willing, rather than the passive surrender of will, is what comes to light in Heidegger's later work. A common objection, however, to the idea of non-intentionality in art is that the process of making art can never be entirely non-intentional, since there is always the decision to begin the work in the first place. The artist cannot embark upon an artistic project by chance. At one stage of the process—even in the case of the found object or Duchampian readymade—a will to make, or a will to designate a work as a work, or a will to begin a process, must be present. Yet I would argue that this is precisely the sense of Heidegger's notion of resolute 'non-willing.' The chance operation in artistic practices is unthinkable without this idea of the artist's resolute intention to make, name, and preserve the work of art as art. As the artist Robert Morris points out, in an essay published in 1970, this non-willing, where 'the artist has stepped aside for more of the world to enter the art,' not only restricts the deployment of the arbitrary in the working process, but it involves a certain commitment, which involves 'going through with something.'²⁸

Moreover, the avant-garde practice of putting creative, or even conceptual, decision-making a step removed from the will of the artist—by letting phenomena be—allows an encounter with these phenomena that avoids the distortion of aesthetic and conceptual presuppositions. In this sense, such a practice could be said to perform a fundamental phenomenological operation. The following chapter will examine this observation through an analysis of the sonic research of Pierre Schaeffer, and the ontological investigations of the aural world carried out by John Cage, in conjunction with an inquiry into

the phenomenology of Husserl and Heidegger. Certain sound and media art practices would seem to engage us proximally with bare phenomena. Can it be said that they carry out, in a certain way, a phenomenological-ontological investigation? Do they instigate the presuppositionless conditions for a knowing that happens as a preservation of the wondrous in the most usual? Can they be conceived of as inaugurating the disposition (*Stimmung*) that, as Heidegger says, ‘transports us into this or that basic relation to beings as such,’ or ‘More precisely... transports (*Ver-setzende*) us in such a way that it co-founds the time-space (*Zeit-Raum*) of the transporting (*Versetzung*) itself’ (*GP* 154, *BQP* 134) ‘To “listen to” *Stimmung*,’ as Michel Haar observes, ‘it is necessary not only to eschew the definitions given by the rational faculty of the understanding but to take one’s distance from the egocentric *interiority* of feeling and its *intentionality*.’²⁹ What would this listening be? Would it constitute a species of concrete knowing?

6. Sound, Materiality, and Phenomenology

We have seen in the previous chapter how, in Heidegger's thinking, the work of art breaks open a space in which we are transported out of the realm of the ordinary, not to some fantastic place, but to an encounter with things come into their own for the first time. The work of art, in this sense, presents a renewed perspective on the most ordinary and self-evident. It presents us with a radical shift in perspective that would not be unlike the shift in standpoint, or attitude, that the phenomenological method requires, in order to neutralise the common-sense view of the world. As we have seen, what distinguishes the work of art from produced equipment is a certain thingness or materiality where the material elements of the earth, rather than sinking back into unobtrusiveness, are set free to be nothing but themselves. This notion of ontico-ontological materiality has a long history in the avant-garde art movements of the twentieth century—manifesting in land art, process and system art, structural-materialist cinema—but it has appeared perhaps most prominently in the disciplines of audio arts. This chapter, and the two that follow, will examine the relationship between phenomenology and artistic investigations into the phenomena. If the investigation of sound, as Don Ihde says, begins with a phenomenology, it would seem that sonic practices are uniquely placed by enabling (i) a direct encounter with the flux of phenomena, and (ii) being a way of conceiving phenomena in non-visualist, non-objectivist, terms. However, this is not to suggest that the phenomenological investigation of sound has historically been unproblematic.

Concern with the phenomenon of sound, as the material element of music, becomes the focus of two pioneering composers in the mid twentieth century: Pierre Schaeffer and John Cage. In both of these approaches we can see an initial equivalence between the aim of phenomenological observation and description—to see through to the essence of what gives itself in perception—and the questioning of the nature of sound initiated by a quest for an expanded aesthetics of music. Schaeffer's conception of *musique concrète* utilised the technology of audio recording to capture and isolate sounds in order to engage in research into the nature of sonority, and develop a form of music based on concrete sound material rather than the abstract arrangement of tones. Cage, in a similar way, wished to discover the richness of the aural world, and alert his audience's listening to the sounds of

everyday existence. As Cage often puts it, his objective was, ‘to let sounds be themselves.’ What is at stake here is the possibility for an ontological disclosure of the nature of sound through music and/or art. For Schaeffer, this consists of a laborious analysis of aural phenomena in order to establish the natural laws—culturally universal, or precultural—that would inform a new and expanded conception of musical composition. For Cage, on the other hand, research into sounds has the objective of ‘changing’ the listener, so as to sharpen their senses, or open their audition to the everyday life-world. These investigations into the nature of sound divide into two distinct approaches. The first, characterised by Schaeffer, employs, to a certain extent, the methodology of Husserl’s phenomenology in order to observe the conscious act of listening, and thus discover the fundamental and universal ground for musicality within sonority. The second, epitomised by Cage, calls for a renewed investigation into the sonic universe in order to hear the world, and thus learn to live in such a way that one becomes more attentive to our day-to-day immersed state of being with sounds: a position more consonant with the ontological direction of Heidegger’s hermeneutical phenomenology. Both directions seek to overturn the tradition which has historically assigned the sonic to a secondary status with regard to the visual. Both seek, in different ways to question the nature of sound in ontico-ontological terms, and, hardly surprisingly, both begin their inquiry from within the discipline of music. The purpose of this chapter is to attempt to untangle the ontological from the aesthetic in sound art (and art in general). In a certain way these two approaches claim to lead to a knowledge of sonority—a knowledge not based on induction from empirical facts but rather from a more original starting point.

6.1 Music and Sound Art

Although the separate approaches of Cage and Schaeffer begin from the perspective of music, the theoretical discourse that occurs in their wake often takes the name of ‘sound studies,’ and the associated practices correspondingly take the name ‘sound art,’ ‘audio arts,’ or simply ‘sound.’ There is still a great deal of confusion around the term ‘sound art.’ One view tends to designate any artistic practice, utilising sounds as material elements, that falls outside a traditional and rigidly defined discipline of music—where music is conceived as consisting of a series and combination of discrete musical tones—as sound art. According to this definition, sound art would be a broad enough category to accommodate sonically-aesthetically expanded forms of music. While such a conception

of sound art—as the spatio-temporal morphological arrangement of sonic material—can easily be accommodated by a modernist-formalist conception of art, such a conception does not fit easily into the field of post-aesthetic contemporary art practices; or, in short, how we have come to understand the function of art since the 1960s. As pioneer ‘sound artist,’ Max Neuhaus argues, ‘Much of what has been called “Sound Art” has not much to do with either sound or art.’¹ The various redefinitions and broadenings of the idea of music in the first half of the twentieth century (Luigi Russolo, Edgard Varèse, John Cage) have rendered the distinction between tone-based music, and music incorporating all sounds, as somewhat untenable. Moreover, the Duchampian shift to a more conceptual, less aesthetic conception of art, prevents us from thinking the practice of sound art (as art) merely in terms of the morphological organisation of sounds. What then differentiates sound art from music?

The prevailing (recent) definitions of sound art appear to me to be largely inadequate: being either too narrow or too broad. Either the institutional site of the work is seen as the determining factor: music takes place in performance spaces; sound art is presented in gallery spaces. Or sound art is thought of as spatialised music in the form of an installation. Joanna Demers notes that ‘The prevalent definitions of sound installations and sound art [Demers cites Christoph Cox and Daniel Warner, Randal Davis, Alan Licht, and Brandon LaBelle] assert that this difference lies in the “site specificity,” meaning that sounds are constructed to interact with the locations where they are heard.’² While I do not disagree with this definition I would argue that it is far too narrow. A minimum definition of sound art could perhaps be characterised by the requirement for a meaningful, predominately *non-aesthetic*, *non-musical*, relation between sound and something else. This something else might be an object, a location, an environment, a technological medium or media, an image, or series of images (moving or still), language, or text (social, cultural, historical). Rather than the recent definitions offered by Licht, Demers, and Cox, I prefer a conception of sound art offered by Rainer Linz in 1994:

If it’s possible to refer to the *conceptual framework* of an art practice, then that of music might be described as essentially internal; referring to its own inner workings and processes, its history and technology. Sound art on the other hand often refers to a broader and more diverse range of interdisciplinary ideas and relationships

which may be both internal and external to the work... If sound art is to establish itself as an alternative sound practice it must do so by distancing itself more and more from what we consider to be music.³

This broader definition would accommodate more conceptual works such as those of Seth Price, or those of Brandon LaBelle, where music itself becomes a kind of readymade recontextualised element in the work, at a predominately conceptual-cultural rather than a morphological level.

6.2 Sound-in-Itself

Commenting on the differences between German academic discourse on sound art, and its English equivalent, Andreas Engström and Åsa Stjerna, have noted that: ‘In the English literature, sound art is often connected to sound’s inner aesthetical qualities.’⁴ They observe that ‘The focus of sound can also be exemplified with what Christoph Cox sees as a neo-modernist trend in the arts, namely sound art’s focus on the “sound-in-itself.”’⁵ While Cox regards the sound-in-itself tendency in a positive light, the same cannot be said of Seth Kim-Cohen, by far the most outspoken critic of Minimalist inspired phenomenological approaches to sound. Kim-Cohen addresses his criticism to what he sees as an adjacency between (i) the medium specific intrinsic concerns for painting, of Greenberg, (ii) the exclusive concern with the immanent features of sound in Schaeffer, and (iii) the insistence of the value of sound-in-itself of Cage.⁶ He contrasts this to ‘the conceptual turn’ initiated by Duchamp,⁷ ‘suggested by the gallery art of the sixties, one that ignores the prepositional question, which is at its core a perceptual question—what to look at, or listen to—and focuses instead on the textual and inter-textual nature of sound.’⁸ As far as Kim-Cohen is concerned the discourses around sound art seemed to have missed the conceptual turn that occurred in the visual arts. He writes:

There is a sense among practitioners and theorists alike that sound knows what it is: sound is sound. I will try to reduce this resistance by returning attention to works and ideas stubbornly received in the untenable space of the blinking ear. The aim is to rehear them, rethink them, reexperience them starting from a non-essentialist perspective in which the thought of *sound-in-itself* is literally unthinkable. Against sound’s self-confidence—the confidence in the constitution of the son-

ic self—I propose a rethinking of definitions, a reinscription of boundaries, a reimagination of ontology: a conceptual turn toward a non-cochlear sonic art.⁹

The rather unwieldy term ‘non-cochlear sonic art,’ is, of course, the aural equivalent to Duchamp’s notion of ‘non-retinal’ painting. It signifies a turn to an intellectual encounter rather than visceral plastic celebration. Just as non-retinal painting does not occur at the site of the look, a non-cochlear sound art, for Kim-Cohen, transcends the space of listening. But this does not mean that sound and vision are disqualified from the work of art, as he makes clear: ‘A conceptual sonic art would necessarily engage both the non-cochlear and the cochlear, and the constituting trace of each in the other.’¹⁰ Statements such as this bring Kim-Cohen’s argument for non-cochlear sound art into distinct proximity with—although he does not acknowledge them—post-aesthetic theories of art.

The notion of sound-in-itself, is sometimes framed within music, and at others within sound art, and then again, sometimes evading both categories, describing itself as an investigation into sound, or sonic research. Typical of this tendency is Christoph Cox’s argument that, considered in terms of a sonic materialism, ‘sound reveals to us something different [than music]: not being *in* time but being *as* time, what Nietzsche calls “becoming” and Bergson “duration.”’¹¹ Cox’s view, I would argue, comes into proximity with what Constanze Ruhm describes as ‘the utopia of immediacy.’ This is, Ruhm argues:

the claim that sound, as opposed to the visual, might allow a higher degree of immediacy between subject and world, and between work and audience. At the heart of this claim lies the idea that the non-representational and immaterial qualities of sound have a different kind of mediated relationship with the material world than that maintained by the visible and readable...¹²

It is perhaps in the sonic practice of field recording more than any other, that the sound-in-itself tendency is most pronounced. The most notorious exponent of the Schaefferian reduced listening tradition would certainly be Francisco López, who—with the intention of prohibiting access to all visual stimuli in his performances—insists on his audience wearing blindfolds that he provides. López produces recordings of both natural and urban environments that involve minimal processing and editing. Kim-Cohen, who regards López’s practice as an extreme form of essentialism, argues that: ‘Although

López's sound-in-itself tendencies are not an isolated incident in contemporary sound practice, the fundamentalism of his approach and his written justifications render his work uniquely unavailable to non-cochlear recuperation.¹³ In this and the following chapters I wish to critically examine the claims of sound-in-itself immediacy, but, unlike Kim-Cohen, I wish to retain, to a certain extent, the notion of materiality. This entails arguing *for* materiality, and against a certain tendency typified by the conceptual turn to (in John Caputo's terms) limit, circumvent, or short-circuit, our engagement with the flux.

6.3 Sound and Vision

Within the metaphysical tradition, since Plato, sound has been regarded as a deficient mode of being. In contrast to the visual and tactile thing, sound has been, due to its invisible, ephemeral and non-enduring nature, historically cast as secondary and derivative. Consequently sound has traditionally been excluded from what counts as knowledge, and from what are thought of as real objects of knowledge: those that can be seen and touched. With Plato, Frances Dyson, observes, 'immateriality, invisibility, and ephemerality become ontological orphans,' and what develops is 'an epistemology where objects of knowledge are ideal, subsistent, immaterial forms that embody eternal order, intelligibility, and meaning.'¹⁴ With the development of this metaphysical ocularcentrism, sound comes to be thought as an attribute, or quality, of a thing, rather than as constituting a certain idea of thingness in itself. The exception, for Plato, is of course, the voice, which, being closest to the living breath (*pneuma*) of the soul—because of its immediacy, directness, and plenitude—assumes primacy over the (more material) written word. Dyson proposes that the voice, however, also suffers a process of 'abstraction and desonorisation.'¹⁵ The 'grain' of the voice recedes to the background and the ideal content of a subject's meaning-intention, as a silent inner voice, occupies the central ground of metaphysical epistemology. Dyson's critique of visualism is heavily indebted to Don Ihde, who argues that the latent visualist tradition of philosophy consists of 'at least two interwoven factors.'¹⁶ These are, for Ihde, reduction *to* vision, where knowing is identified with seeing and images, and the corresponding metaphors of light and clarity; and reduction *of* vision, where the visual itself is reduced, and with what is regarded as real is thought (for

example, in the work of Descartes) in terms of an abstract extended object, as representation in the mind.

The distinction between primary and secondary qualities—which emerged in the thought of Descartes, and is most explicitly explored in the work of John Locke (*Essay Concerning Human Understanding*)—designates solidity, extension, number, size, shape, and motion as primary qualities of an object, while sound, colour, taste, tactile texture, and smell are regarded as secondary qualities. Thus sound as a secondary quality is regarded in this tradition as subjective, and dependent on a particular sense. Consequently sound comes to be regarded as an illegitimate characteristic for objectively establishing the truth of an object. In our normal everyday understanding we often consider so-called secondary qualities, at least linguistically, as things, for instance: shadows and rainbows. Secondary qualities thus constitute, according to the tradition, the surface or skin of the world, as opposed to the depth of its underlying structure. Roger Scruton argues that sounds should not be regarded as secondary qualities because they are not qualities at all. Because objects emit sounds, rather than ‘have’ them as an intrinsic characteristic, or properties, in the way that objects have colours or feelable textures, they should rather be considered as independently existing ‘secondary objects.’¹⁷ Moreover, the causal relation between sound and object is rarely that of a one to one correspondence. Sounds are usually produced by a number of sources. For example, the sound of a cymbal will have a causal relationship not only to the cymbal but to the stick which hits it, and further, the space in which it occurs, position of the listener, the presence or absence of competing sounds, etc.

Christian Metz describes the designation of sound, as a characteristic of an object which constitutes the source of the sound, as ideological. That is, such a view is represented as ‘natural,’ although, as Metz suggests, it derives from a cultural ‘primitive substantialism.’¹⁸ This substantial framework ‘distinguishes fairly rigidly the primary qualities that determine the list of objects (substances) and the secondary qualities which correspond to attributes applicable to these objects.’¹⁹ The subject-predicate structure of Indo-European languages, Metz proposes, is in some way linked to this prevalent conception. In a similar way, in “The Origin of the Work of Art,” Heidegger links the familiar conception of a thing as substance with accidents to the S is P structure of the proposition.

Heidegger comes to ask: is the substance-accidents conception of the thing brought about by the subject-predicate relation of sentence structure, or is this sentence structure a representation of the thing structure? In answer, Heidegger proposes that both are founded on something more original.

Dyson recognises the possibility for a kind of sonic thinking that, based on a-specular aural, rather than visual metaphors, would have the potential to 'resist philosophical interrogation' and rhetorically contribute to 'rendering the cracks in Western metaphysics more apparent.'²⁰ Dyson suggests that the otherness of the body and the otherness of aurality 'both resist the categorical imperatives of Western epistemology, both refuse the boundaries and divisions, the subject-object dichotomies, the ontological identities *that* epistemology seeks to impose.'²¹ The phenomenon of sound, having no discreet identity, consisting of flows that have no edges, seems to promise a rather different phenomenological starting point than visually apprehended objects. The phenomena of sound seem to resist the metaphysical conception of objectification. It is not only sound that has received scant attention within the tradition of Western philosophy but, as Gemma Corradi Fiumara observes, also *listening*. Fiumara argues for a philosophy of listening that maintains the openness of listening through putting questioning itself into question.²²

At this point I wish to examine the phenomenological methodology of Schaeffer's sonic research, in order to evaluate its potential for, as Ihde puts it, finding 'material for a recovery of the richness of primary experience that is now forgotten or covered over in the too tightly interpreted visualist traditions.'²³ That is, in short, to examine the possibilities for, and limitations of, a philosophy of listening, encompassing a phenomenology of sound.

6.4 Acousmatic Listening

Schaeffer's concept of the *objet sonore* forms the basis of both Scruton's and Metz's conceptions of sound as object. Metz conceives the term 'aural object' to describe an object that consists of sound, and can only be encountered through audition: '...an infra-object, an object that is only aural.'²⁴ But is the term object, in both cases, too quickly arrived at? Does this not amount to a metaphysical objectification? Schaeffer's *acousmatic* listening has its origin in his insistence that to objectively evaluate a given sound one must disre-

gard the existence of its source, since identification with the source would carry visualist presuppositions. The term *acousmatic* derives from Pythagoras's pedagogical requirement that initiates must receive his teachings through acoustic means only: their teacher visually obscured behind a screen or curtain. These pupils were termed *akousmatikoi*. The acousmatic tradition philosophically seeks to overturn the traditional ontological hierarchy, where the visual faculty is privileged over the aural faculty, and restore to listening a sense of the unique existence of sound as phenomena that is not governed by, and subsumed under, the legislation of visual objects. Since the visual-material object or phenomenon is most usually considered as the originating source, or cause, of the sound event, Schaeffer insists on a listening (and compositional) practice that would actively obscure any cause-effect relation of the visual-material object and the produced sound. A sound, in *musique concrète*, is thus isolated from its world, and with this transition becomes 'for itself'; in Schaeffer's terminology: a 'sound object.'

Scruton's philosophical inquiries into the objectivity of sound, as he concedes, is governed by aesthetic considerations: '...aesthetic interest (which is our real subject in this discussion) is an interest in appearances: its object is not the underlying structure of things, but the revealed presence of the world—the world as it is encountered in our experience (the *Lebenswelt*, to use Husserl's term for it).'25 Another sound theorist who takes the Schaefferian approach, emphasising the necessity for a phenomenological analysis of sound, is Trevor Wishart. Through the advocacy of acousmatic techniques, where all social, environmental or instrumental origins are ignored, Wishart calls for the concern of the listener to be directed to the 'objective characteristics' of the sound-object, or in other words of sound 'in itself.'26 Acousmatic listening is often referred to—following Husserl's methodology of the phenomenological reduction—as *reduced listening*. Whereas the phenomenological reduction puts out of play any concern with the question of the existence of the object or phenomenon under investigation, reduced listening suspends any concern with the cause of the sonic object.

Brian Kane observes that Schaeffer's intrinsic investigations into sound, and his theorisation of the sound object, remain reasonably faithful to Husserl's phenomenology. Kane argues that two aspects of Schaeffer's 'hybrid discipline' cannot be satisfactorily accounted for without a consideration of Husserl's influence. These are: '(i) that a phenomenological

investigation into listening will disclose the original ground of our musical practices; (ii) that the correlate of this investigation is the discovery of an objective, yet ideal, entity—i.e., the sound object²⁷ Schaeffer's wish to overcome the scientifically dominated acoustic basis of music, and the subjective and cultural criterion of habitual musical practice follows, as Kane observes, Husserl's idea of philosophy as a rigorous science that would overcome the naïve factuality of empiricism and the subjective problems of psychology.

6.5 Phenomenology

Before examining the proximity of Schaeffer's sonic research to Husserl's phenomenology, it is essential to understand the primary motivation of phenomenological research, which is to provide, with all scientific rigour, a 'first philosophy' that would constitute the ground for both philosophy and the sciences. In order to discover the laws of a primordial science, Husserl rejects both the empiricism of the natural sciences—where such a determination would be derived inductively from facts given in the external world—particularly realism (or physicalism), and the empiricism of psychologism. The problem with realism is that only something that can be attributed physical characteristics is recognised as real. Thus something like consciousness is either simply denied any reality, or it is naturalised or physicalised. The problem with psychologism is that it is an empirical science based on induction from individual experiences, where the Real is posited in '*individual* form,' 'as having spatio-temporal existence,' in contingent 'matters of fact' (*Tatsächlichkeit*) (*Ideas I*, 52-53 §2), whereas knowledge, for Husserl, demands an essential universality that transcends individual contingent situations.

Husserl also distanced himself from neo-Kantian epistemology and its associated philosophies of value and culture, along with the idea of philosophy as a worldview that, from the phenomenological point of view, dogmatically relies upon unwarranted fundamental axioms. Contrary to *Erkenntnistheorie*, historicism, and *Weltanschauung* Philosophy, Husserl insists that phenomenology should be free from all untested philosophical ideas. As we saw in the last chapter, in Heidegger's early lecture courses, while working as Husserl's assistant, the neo-Kantianism of the German South-West School comes under sustained attack due to its reliance on a teleological-critical method where an *a priori* "ought" (*Sollen*) guides its philosophical thinking. Heidegger asks the question, which is so pertinent to phenomenology, in the KNS semester lecture: how are we to determine

the fundamental axioms without turning to other axioms that are still more fundamental? If these axioms cannot be determined deductively from logic or inductively from empirical facts, how are they to be determined? If phenomenology is to be an *a priori* science it cannot derive its truth from the theoretical. As Husserl maintains: 'In these studies we stand bodily aloof from all theories, and by "theories" we here mean anticipatory ideas of every kind' (*Ideas I* 105 §30).

To engage in a more originary or primordial scientific approach to philosophy, phenomenology turns its attention to the self-giving evidence of 'the things themselves' as they appear to living consciousness. Husserl's 'principle of all principles' by which, he says, no theory can lead us astray, insists that:

every primordial dator Intuition is a source of authority (*Rechtsquelle*) for knowledge, that whatever presents itself in "intuition" in primordial form (as it were in its bodily reality), is simply to be accepted as it gives itself to be, though only within the bounds in which it then presents itself (*Ideas I* 92 §24).

Husserl is not concerned with the facts of the physical object but with *how* things appear to us in consciousness. Phenomenology is a science of *eidetic* Being that aims at establishing knowledge, not of individual facts ('that-ness') but essential ideal universality ('what-ness'). It thus seeks to derive fundamental principles from a reduction that excludes matters of fact from the *eidos*. Husserl thus calls this reduction the 'eidetic reduction' (*Ideas I* 44, Introduction). This requires a new method of philosophical inquiry, one which is characterised by '*a new way of looking at things*' (*Ideas I* 43, Husserl's emphasis). We can see how Kane is able to claim a strong correspondence between Husserl's goals for phenomenology and Schaeffer's desire to discover the fundamentals of a new and culturally neutral form of music by way of a direct appeal to the sounds themselves. We can also see a direct relation between what Kane calls Schaeffer's 'hybrid discipline,' and Husserl's interest in the correlations between the physical thing and how it is given to us in consciousness. Both sonic research and phenomenology call for patient detailed and rigorous investigations into the matters themselves, often calling upon the combined efforts of a number of researchers. Husserl, as is often noted, expressed his preference for beginning

with the ‘small change’ of *minutiae*, rather than the ‘big bills’ of grand claims.²⁸ Schaeffer as well, was quite aware that the discovery of the fundamental laws of musicality could only come after a long and patient research into sonority.

6.6 The Phenomenological Reduction

Phenomenological reduction, put simply, is the methodological readjustment of viewpoint. As Jacques Taminiaux observes, Husserl’s “reduction” undergoes a number of metamorphoses in his writings.²⁹ Moreover, as Husserl proposes in *Ideas I*, that when we speak of ‘the phenomenological reduction’ we are speaking of a number of different methodological steps of “disconnexion” or “bracketing,” taking the form of a ‘graded reduction’ (*Ideas I* 114 §33, Husserl’s emphasis). As Taminiaux shows, the methodological procedure of the phenomenological reduction combines a ‘negative move [which] consists in suspending what blocks the way to the phenomena...’ and a positive return, ‘a *reductio*—to the specific mode of appearing of the phenomena.’³⁰ Husserl’s negative move is the *epochē*—from the Greek term meaning ‘a holding back,’ or ‘abstention.’ With the *epochē*, the question of, or the belief in, the existence of the external world is put into suspension. That is not to say that the existence of the external world is simply denied or plunged into doubt. Rather, the *epochē* is an abstention from any position taking in terms of either *for* or *against* existence. However, the natural standpoint is not disputed but rather carried along with the reduction, although it is put out of play. As Husserl says, ‘we make “no use” of it’ (*Ideas I* 108 §31, Husserl’s emphasis). Similarly, the methodology of acousmatic listening functions in Schaeffer’s sonic research as a phenomenological *epochē*. First, by removing all reference to a sound’s physical source, determinations about the sound that are uncontaminated by visual and contextual relations can be made. Thus, as Schaeffer argues, it ‘gives back to the ear alone the entire responsibility of a perception that ordinarily rests on other sensible witnesses.’³¹ The acousmatic condition performs what Husserl calls an eidetic reduction, where any spatio-temporal factual information, or in Schaeffer’s terms, ‘any relation with what is visible, touchable, measureable’³² about the sound is disregarded in favour of concentration on the essence of the sound in itself. What we arrive at in this eidetic reduction is what Schaeffer calls the sound object. Second, the acousmatic *epochē* is enforced by means of the technological intervention of recording technology. The tape recorder, by reproducing the sound disconnected from its

source, functions in a similar way to Pythagoras' curtain. But further, like Husserl's phenomenological *epochē*, the acousmatic abstention puts out of play any question regarding the existence of the phenomena. By disregarding any questions of spatio-temporal existence, the original sound event and the sound recording played back through loudspeakers are regarded as more or less ontologically equivalent.³³ This recalls André Bazin's argument that the arts of registration (photography, cinema sound recording) are processes that exclude the hand of man, and are hence natural, or at least pre-cultural. And as natural phenomena, Bazin argues for—if not the absolute ontological equivalence of the film image to the pro-filmic event (all the elements that are placed, or that fall, before the camera's field of view)—at the very least their inseparability. Thus in the acousmatic situation, Schaeffer argues, 'the differences separating direct listening (through a curtain) and indirect listening (through a speaker) in the end become negligible'³⁴ What makes Schaeffer's argument for ontological equivalence more tenable than Bazin's is that, for Husserl, the phenomena under investigation are not considered in terms of their individuality as existent things but rather as correlates of acts of consciousness. What is observed is not the actual things themselves but, rather, how things appear to us, or are heard by us, in consciousness. This Husserl calls 'ideation,' or the 'essential seeing' (*Wesensschau*) of the eidetic reduction.

6.7 Reduced Listening and the Eidetic Reduction

Schaeffer's research methodology of reduced listening performs in Husserl's terms an eidetic reduction. Similarly, Schaeffer's reduced listening, as he says, 'enables us to grasp the object for what it is and to try and describe it by reference to other objects.'³⁵ The aim of reduced listening—aided by the acousmatic abstention—is to locate the essential (and universal) form—the sound object—within arbitrary sound material. What it seeks to observe, through such a listening, is the act of listening itself. Moreover, it seeks to isolate something essential in the sound object as it occurs in consciousness in order to be led to pure musicality. The method that Schaeffer uses in his *solfège* corresponds to Husserl's method of 'essential seeing' by way of, as Kane points out, 'free variation,' in which the phenomenological investigator is able to run through the multiplicity of variants—multiple viewpoints or adumbrations (*Abschattungen*)³⁶—of an object in direct givenness, or in the imagination or *Phantasy*—in order to establish the essential form or *eidos*: the 'what' that remains the same throughout the variations. Rather than performing the free

variation of a sound in the imagination, Schaeffer utilised sound reproduction technology—first phonograph recordings, then, at a later stage, tape recordings—to isolate and replay sounds in order to run through the variants. The recorded sound thus takes the place of the fantasised sound in the imagination. But, one can sense an objection here: if the sound is captured on tape, does it not remain much the same on each subsequent playback? How does one run through the variations that would be the aural equivalent of viewing an object from different angles—in front, behind, etc.? Schaeffer had two ways of performing free variation. The first method occurs entirely within the consciousness of the listener. Although the sound signal (its physical phenomena as movement of air) does not vary—to any significant degree—in each repeated playback, the listener is able to direct herself toward different aspects of the sound. Although the sound is acoustically the same, it is heard differently in consciousness each time. As Schaeffer explains: ‘...since these repetitions are brought about in physically identical conditions, we become aware of the variations in our listening and better understand what is in general termed its “subjectivity.”’³⁷ The second method relies on external modification of the sound signal. The sound event can be recorded from different positions resulting in multiple recordings of a single event listened to alternatively, or a single recording can be submitted to transformations such as variations in playback speed, direction, volume, filtering or editing. By comparing the unaltered version with the altered, the listener is able to progressively identify the essential sonority that remains the same in each version. Like Husserl’s method of eidetic variation, the original sound—the sound as it was first perceived—is taken as a model or guide, which gives direction, and acts as the point of departure for the production of variants. At different points the variants overlap, and within this region of coincidence the general essence can be found. But one runs into boundaries where the variation is taken too far and the general form loses its identity and so, at some stage, the attempt at comparison has to be abandoned and a new sonic object is found in the altered version. For Schaeffer this is the point where a new sonorous object is given.

Running through the multiplicity of variations takes place, for Husserl, in a purely passive way that results in a ‘synthetic unity’ (*EJ* 343). Thus, as Klaus Held observes, the limits or edges, where unity can no longer be found in the variations, are not invented by consciousness, rather consciousness, in a passive way ‘bumps into them.’³⁸ Held claims, however, that Husserl never really answers the question of how these limits are set. Thus

Husserl finds it necessary to specify a second stage to the reduction that consists of an active identification of the *eidōs* as ideally identical. Only by ‘retaining-in-grasp’ all the variations can the invariant general essence be seen ‘purely for itself’ (*EJ* 343). The purely identical can be seen for itself because it is, as Husserl claims, ‘*passively preconstituted*’ but in order to be isolated ‘seeing of the *eidōs* rests in the *active intuitive apprehension* of what is preconstituted’ (*EJ* 343, Husserl’s emphasis). Without retaining in grasp we are only left with the last variation imagined. It is around this idea of the passively preconstituted sound object that Schaeffer’s *solfège* experiences difficulty, and, as Kane observes: ‘The process of phenomenological reduction lends to the sound object a strange trajectory: methodologically, one discloses the sound object only at the end of the investigation, after a series of reductions, but ontologically, the sound object is first, *a priori*.’³⁹

6.8 From Sound Object to Musical Object

Schaeffer’s sound object is, in Husserl’s terms, an ‘intentional object.’ By the term ‘intentionality’ Husserl stresses that every perception is a perception of something. The intentional object is thus the correlation in consciousness of the perception of something as a ‘what.’ The sound object is not a material object, and it is certainly not, as Schaeffer stresses, the magnetic tape on which the sound is recorded, rather, it is only an object relative to our listening. The sonic object is, as Schaeffer says, ‘a function of an intention of listening.’⁴⁰ Within Schaeffer’s research methodology, the sound object occupies the lowest stage of investigation. Through the system of *solfège*, sound objects are to be further reduced to become musical objects that are infused with meaning.

Carlos Palombini observes that the aim of *musique concrète* was to discover ‘musicality’ from research into sonority.⁴¹ In other words, Schaeffer’s research into the nature of sound had the aim of developing a new theory of music out of the sonic material. Traditionally composition proceeds from the abstract—a (Platonic) musical idea in the composer’s mind—towards the concrete (the complex reality of sounds in space). Schaeffer’s great insight was to reverse this process, moving from the contingent and particular of found sounds, or noise, towards the abstraction of form. This compositional process is broadly referred to in contemporary music theory as ‘exploratory.’ Yet, can such an approach ‘discover’ musicality without first presupposing a concept of musicality? Schaeffer’s *musique concrète* begins with the act of listening rather than notation of imag-

ined tones (which only comes at the final stage). Moreover, Schaeffer wishes to replace the traditional 'theory of music' that he sees as based on the science of acoustics, with a method that finds new musical structures in the perceptual structures of listening. In order to achieve this, Schaeffer formulates five stages of musical research which make up his program for a generalised music theory: typology, morphology characterology, analysis, and synthesis. The levels of typology—the sorting of sound objects into types—and morphology—describing the sound objects in terms of form—belong to the lower order of the sonorous. The levels of analysis—the estimation of the possibilities for the emergence of musical values (according to new criteria) in the sound material—and synthesis—the bringing together of criteria and the formation of rules for musical objects—belong to the higher order of the transition to the musical. Through, what Schaeffer calls 'musical invention,' morphology leads to analysis; and through 'musicianly invention,' typology leads toward synthesis. Underlying these terms is the foundational concept in Schaeffer's music theory which he calls, by way of a neologism, 'aucology.' As Michel Chion defines it:

The subject of aucology is the study of mechanisms of listening, properties of sound objects and their musical potential in the natural perceptual field of the ear. Concentrating on the problem of the musical functions of sound characteristics, aucology relates to *acoustics* in more or less the same way as *phonology* relates to *phonetics*.⁴²

Aucology thus corresponds to a phenomenological eidetic listening in the Husserlian sense. It seeks to find a pathway between the lower sonorous level of the sound object and the higher level of the musical object. But it must do so without any recourse to the referential musical codes that, in traditional music, occupy a place between the two levels. The question, then, is how to proceed from the lower levels of the sound object to the higher levels of musicality; to develop a 'natural' musical language, without imposing any presuppositions from cultural conventions but rather finding musicality in the natural structures of perception. In proceeding from the sonorous level directly to higher level of musicality, bypassing the intermediate level of cultural codes, the role of aucology, as Chion observes, is to 'prepare the ground for the reclaiming of musical meaning.'⁴³ This transition must occur, as Schaeffer insists, 'in accordance with the logic of the material.'⁴⁴ Here

we find Schaeffer in proximity to Greenberg's notion of self-criticism. Schaeffer's experimental music theory would seem to present, as Chion notes, a 'difficult situation.'

A severe discipline, then, this aucology which examines the object for its musical potential, but must always remain at the outer limits of music. For it starts out from below, from the sonorous, and no preconceived musical organization from above can in accordance with its own rules hold out a hand to help it haul itself up to the heights where meaning is enthroned.⁴⁵

In order to circumvent these difficulties Schaeffer introduces what might be described as a compromise. He designates by the term 'suitable object,' sound objects that seem more appropriate than others for the development of musicality. Although, as Chion observes, Schaeffer's suitable objects are 'objects which are judged "good enough," without being thought of as "musical" beforehand,'⁴⁶ is not the very distinction between suitable and non-suitable objects subject, in some way, to the imposition of presupposed musical values? Cage argues that if we accept Schaeffer's methodology of 'solfeggio [*solfège*],'⁴⁷ 'We put ourselves in the position of accepting certain sounds but not others,' and instead claims: 'I have never put in my head any idea about perfecting sounds, nor any commitment to bettering the sonorous race. I simply keep my ears open.'⁴⁸

6.9 Phenomenology's Latent Aesthetics

Schaeffer's sonic research presents us with two problems. First, does not the quest to find musicality in itself function as a goal that, in a certain way, brings theoretical presuppositions into the primary realm of immediate lived-experience? Although cultural, or at least monocultural, ideas of musical language are put out of action; does not a certain conception of music—what it is to be 'musical' in the first place—operate from the beginning, and enter into the investigation at the lowest level? Does not Schaeffer's preconception of the musical object bring into every investigation a musical aestheticising *will* that, rather than letting the phenomena give itself from itself, orders sound according to an aesthetic privilege to form?

The relation of form to presence in phenomenology is questioned by Jacques Derrida in the 1967 essay "*La Forme et le vouloir-dire: Note sur la phénoménologie du langage*,"

(“Form and Meaning: A Note on the Phenomenology of Language”),⁴⁹ where he contends that although Husserl attempts to free his concept of form from Platonic-Aristotelian philosophy, his work remains caught within metaphysics because it ultimately presents form as presence itself. That is, as Derrida insists, Being is thought as form—as presence, and the present, and the ultimate conception of form is, for Husserl the living present (*lebendige Gegenwart*). As we saw previously, Heidegger claims that metaphysics properly begins when the *eidos-idea* becomes, in Plato’s philosophy, the singular and definitive interpretation of Being.⁵⁰ When *idea* as what-ness (essentia) becomes promoted to the status of what *really* is, actual beings sink to the level of *mē on*. The imposition of form, according to Derrida, determines and limits the sense of Being in terms of presence within the closure of metaphysics.

In marginal remarks in the essay Derrida alludes to a latent aesthetics that runs through Husserl’s phenomenology. The metaphysical imposition of form, Derrida insists, ‘cannot fail to effectuate a certain subjection to the look,’ and ‘this putting-on-view’ could be shown to ‘permit a movement between the project of formal ontology’ and ‘the latent theory of the work of art’ (*SP* 108-9). In a methodology similar to *Speech and Phenomena*, Derrida traces, in Husserl’s text (predominately *Ideas I* §124), the idealising movement from a silent pre-expressive stratum of sense to the meaningful expressive speech of *Bedeutung*. The universal and conceptual form that speech expresses must, for Husserl, ‘repeat or reproduce a sense content’ that is already silently present in perception (*SP* 115, Derrida’s emphasis). From this point of view, Derrida remarks, ‘we could question the entire aesthetics latent in phenomenology’ (*SP* 115, note 8). What is this latent aesthetics that Derrida refers to? If Husserl’s phenomenology limits or reduces Being to form, in the process of ideation, by isolating the *eidos* that underlies lived-experience and gives meaning to speech in a pre-expressive wanting-to-mean, can it be likened to aesthetics?

Husserl says very little about art and aesthetics but, in his letter to Hofmannsthal, he admits to an analogy between the phenomenological attitude and aesthetic consciousness.⁵¹ And in his discussion of phantasy and the neutrality modification (the more scientific term for the abstention of the *epochē*), in *Ideas I* §111, Dürer’s engraving *Knight, Death and the Devil* is employed as an example. Both aesthetic experience and the phe-

nomenological reduction, according to Husserl, put the belief in the existence of the external world into suspension. Husserl describes the natural standpoint where one is immersed in the world as naïvely “*interested* in the world” (CM 35). In contrast, Husserl describes both aesthetic consciousness and the phenomenological attitude as disinterested. Danielle Lories observes that Husserl’s description of aesthetic consciousness ‘leans on’ Kant’s *Critique of Judgment*, translating it into phenomenological terms.⁵² For Lories, Husserl takes Kant’s idea of disinterestedness—in a similar way to Heidegger (in his Nietzsche lectures)—in a positive sense as *favour*. Husserl, however, clearly distinguishes between the aim of aesthetics—as the seeking of disinterested pleasure in appearances—and the aim of phenomenology—as a concern with the constitution of objects toward the founding of philosophical knowledge. Aesthetics and phenomenological research would appear to be parallel disciplines in Husserl’s view. But whereas the phenomenological attitude, for Husserl, is directed towards the variations of appearance with the aim of synthesising these into a unity, aesthetic consciousness is directed ‘toward what appears in its respective “manner of appearing” (*Erscheinungsweise*)’ (PICM 463), it ‘aims at the object only “for the sake of the appearance”’ (PICM 464). By this Husserl means that while the phenomenologist directs attention *through* the appearance *to* the object, the aesthetic contemplator merely directs attention to appearance itself.

Husserl clearly differentiates between objective position taking and aesthetic position taking. However, is not the concept of form, in some way, as Derrida suggests, fundamentally aesthetic? Although Husserl’s characterisation of aesthetic consciousness is undeniably complex, he seems to overlook one of Kant’s most important observations. For Kant, judgments of taste are not affective or subjective but quasi-objective. For example, I can say that I do not like the taste of a certain dish, but this does not mean that I would insist that others should not like it as well. On the other hand, if I judge that something is beautiful I am essentially of the opinion that others must find it beautiful too. By relating aesthetic consciousness to feeling rather than taste, Husserl is able to reclaim the concept of form for the methodical procedure of supposedly aesthetically neutral phenomenological seeing. Although Husserl is certainly aware of the problem of aesthetic value judgments acting as position-takings, he excludes them from the eidetic reduction essentially because he sees aesthetic contemplation and phenomenological investigation as distinct

activities. But does this mean that aesthetic position-taking can be absolutely put out of action in the eidetic reduction, which is supposed to abstain from every position-taking?

Where phenomenological research crosses over with creative practice, the problem of aesthetic pre-suppositions becomes more pronounced. Although Schaeffer's ultimate goals may be musical, he stresses the importance of avoiding aesthetic position-taking: 'If music is a unique bridge between nature and culture, let us avoid the double stumbling block of aestheticism and scientism, and trust in our hearing, which is an "inner sight."' ⁵³ It is my contention that, in the context of phenomenological sonic research—however much its aims may be musical—taste, functioning in terms of the 'suitable object,' constitutes a position-taking that would upset its ambitions to be a presupposition-free methodology. Sonic research constitutes a species of phenomenology, in that it is concerned with the material aspect of sound as it is given to consciousness, but it does so according to a *telos* of musical aesthetics. It is an approach that aims to be scientifically objective but is it guided by values that are, if not subjective, at least grounded by the quasi-objective criterion of taste? My argument is that this particular way of thinking, derived from Schaeffer's theories—which has tended to dominate the discourse of 'sound theory' in recent years—radically misconstrues the nature of sound and listening. This approach, which rigidly insists on the independent status of the sound object, as sound-in-itself, ultimately objectifies the aural event into an ideal unity, and isolates sound from its world. Moreover, it considers the sonic merely in terms of material for aesthetic contemplation.

Schaeffer's sonic research, in its acousmatic *epochē*, and ideational eidetic reduction, isolates sound from its world, and thus carries out a suppression of context. In these terms, Schaeffer's position occupies one side of what is called in sound and music studies the 'contextual debate.'⁵⁴ Brandon LaBelle notes how the suppression of a sound's reference or context marks the difference between *musique concrète* and Cage's musical practices where, for Cage, 'materiality and context form the basis for an exploded musical object, and aurality...' ⁵⁵ For LaBelle, Cage democratically opens up musical listening to reveal 'the material presence of the musical moment.'⁵⁶ Citing Cage's silent piece, *4' 33"*, LaBelle writes:

Context insists because Cage's musical object relies upon it, addressing the very space and time of its experience in all its actuality; further, listening is predicated on the formation of and belief in democratic organization, for each sound is perceived equal to another, as opposed to Schaeffer who proposes that "sound phenomena are instinctively perceived by the ear with greater or lesser importance as in an aristocratic hierarchy, and not with the equalities of a democracy."⁵⁷

One might surmise that for Schaeffer, sounds are objects, while Cage thinks of them more as processes. But this is perhaps too much of a simplification. Rather, Schaeffer thinks of the sound object as an eidetic unity that forms the raw material for music, and, as such, is already on the way to being further reduced to a repeatable ideal musical object. In contrast, Cage emphasises the actuality of unique unrepeated sound. However, I would not agree with LaBelle that this often means—as far as Cage's work is concerned—retaining its contextual and spatial relationships. Rather, I would suggest that such contextual practices are to be found in the work of later sound art practices that occur in the wake of Cage's work. Moreover, I would argue that the shift from Cage's modernist musical paradigm to the post-aesthetic field of sound art entails, not only a shift of emphasis from temporality to spatiality—in a modernist sculptural sense—but, further, a shift to a notion of situatedness and relation to *place*. The next chapter will look at the possibilities that Cage's theories and practice present as an alternative to the Schaefferian, Husserlian, and aesthetic paradigms. Cage's utilisation of non-intentionality and indeterminate operations—in order to bypass taste and memory, and let sounds be themselves—constitutes an aesthetic abstention that plays the part of a rather different kind of phenomenological *epochē*: one that opens the way to what Ihde calls the 'second phenomenology' of Heidegger. Unlike Kim-Cohen, I do not wish to argue for the abandonment of all phenomenological approaches to sonic art, but rather for a shift from 'first' to 'second' phenomenology. For Ihde, first phenomenology is characterised by Husserl's prototypical research 'addressed to the nearness of experience as a philosophy of presence.'⁵⁸ Second phenomenology begins in the wake of the first, as Heidegger's deepening of Husserl's project, which 'extends outwards towards limits and horizons,' and—where *Destruktion* constitutes a kind of *epochē*—'discerns in the sedimentation of our traditions of thought an essential embedment in *history* and *time* of experience itself.'⁵⁹ But, extending Ihde's prescription, I would argue for a direction exemplified by Cage's radical abstention from

taste and learned habits—that lets phenomena be—coupled with John Caputo’s notion of a radical hermeneutical phenomenology that takes as its starting point Husserl’s and Heidegger’s investigations into the horizon-structure of experience, and which regards the very concept of experience itself as being dependent upon a network of retentional and protentional traces. In other words, an approach that encompasses worldly situation and place, history and memory, culture and language, where perception is never really immediate but constituted by language and signification, as well as spatial and temporal horizon-structures.

7. Experimental Art: Chance and Indeterminacy

Where we have observed a direct correspondence between the work of Schaeffer and Husserl in the previous chapter, this chapter will explore an indirect but significant consonance between the work of Cage and Heidegger. There is no evidence that Cage read any of Heidegger's work,¹ yet it is unquestionable that Cage's notion of 'letting sounds be,' and Heidegger's notion of *Gelassenheit*, both have, an at least partial, origin in the work of Meister Eckhart. In this chapter I wish to investigate the correspondence between Cage's and Heidegger's thinking in regard to the role that chance operations play, not only in abstaining from the making of aesthetic judgments but, also, in a phenomenological sense of letting the phenomena show themselves from themselves.

Bret W. Davis observes that phenomenology, '...has perhaps always been in its best moments an attempt to think without either actively or passively imposing one's own biases of interpretation, that is an attempt to think non-willingly in order to let things show themselves.'² In other words, in order to encounter things as they are, and not as we think they are, or how we think they should be, requires the abstention from all presuppositions. A position similar to this aspect of phenomenology forms the basis for what developed in the 1950s neo-avant-garde as 'experimental art.' Cage explains this attitude simply:

What is the nature of an experimental action? It is simply an action the outcome of which is not foreseen.³

Michael Nyman, in *Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond*, develops his well-known definition of 'experimental music' in reference to similar statements made by Cage in the 1950s. In order to arrive at the unforeseen, Cage believed that the composer must arrive at a method that 'bypasses taste and memory.' Composing by traditional means involving taste, or aesthetic judgments, where expressive intuition and projective envisioning (or in this case internal sonic imagining), involves the creation of sounds, structures, and melodies that have, in a sense, been foreseen or fore-heard, and have a relation to what one has heard before (memory). In adopting strategies involving systems of chance and contingency, the experimental methodology aimed at overcoming the subjectivised notions of

genius and self-expression that had dominated modernist art and music. While the idea of the experimental has its roots in Dada and in particular in the work of Marcel Duchamp, the first instances of concrete group activity are perhaps the pedagogical institutions: Black Mountain College and the New School for Social Research (Cage's class). These schools formed part of the productive background in which Fluxus developed.

It could be argued that all art involves experimentation to some extent. Artists test materials and techniques, however, the experimental action defined by Cage and others is not one in which trial and error operates. Chance is not deployed in order to fortuitously arrive at a pleasing aesthetic outcome, with the option to try again if that outcome is not met. The 'trying things out' that is part of traditional art practice falls short of experimental art, which, instead, aims at the bypassing of all aesthetic decisions. In other words, experimental art consists of the deployment of rigorous contingency systems as opposed to merely following capricious subjective arbitrariness. Moreover, I would suggest that the chance operation—as it functions in the work of Cage and Duchamp, belongs to what could perhaps be called an existential phenomenological *epochē*. That is, the acceptance of chance performs an abstention that holds back from any unchecked aesthetic position taking. In Cage's work in particular, the concern is with the material background of existing sound in the world. This is why his *epochē* might be called existential rather than transcendental. The chance operation—in line with Cage's interpretation of the writings of Meister Eckhart—performs not only the letting be of *Gelassenheit*, but the Eckhartian 'detachment' (*Abgeschiedenheit*) that rids oneself of likes and dislikes. It is concerned with worldly actuality rather than any ideal essence. In a similar way the creative emphasis that Heidegger gives to his retrieval of the pre-Socratic understanding of *technē*, not only as a mode of knowing related to *epistēmē*, but also as a movement of revealing (*Hervorbringen*) and letting (*Lassen*) points to a kind of will-less production that is essentially non-subjective. Non-intentionality, I suggest, is one way in which the production of art steers a path beyond both the emotional expressivity of lived-experience, and the calculation machination of representational thinking.

7.1 Chance

One of the most thorough overviews of the use of aleatory processes in the visual arts comes from the Fluxus artist George Brecht who published a pamphlet in 1966 entitled:

"Chance Imagery."⁴ Brecht examines Surrealist practices involving automatism, and the 'automatic' painting of Jackson Pollock, but ultimately Brecht is more interested in the 'mechanical' chance procedures carried out by the Dadaists: Marcel Duchamp, Tristan Tzara, Hans Arp, and Max Ernst, where, in each case, the result of the chance operation is accepted as final, and there is no subsequent attempt to modify or correct it. Chance is not used as a stimulant for the imagination, but as a relinquishment of the arbitrary. Duchamp accepted the shapes mapped out by three falling one-metre strings for his *Trois Stoppages-Etalon* (*Three Standard Stoppages*, 1913-1914). Tzara composed poems by drawing words cut out from a newspaper out of a hat, and Arp pasted down, without alteration, scraps of paper that had been made to fall onto his canvas. Cage's utilisation of chance operations is of the same order: the final result must be accepted without appeal. The rigour of the chance operation is the rigour—no matter how simple the procedure—to adhere completely to the process. To disallow the outcome of a chance operation, or to modify its results—even one of its outcomes—would compromise the process, for it would reintroduce the volitional activity of the artist, and consequently allow aesthetic decisions into the work. In all the operations outlined above, the artist must first institute a system, or a set of rules which map occurrences onto artistic outcomes, and these decisions must be predetermined. Here certainly decision comes into play. Duchamp decides that he will use three strings, that they will be one metre in length; that the dimensions of the canvas will be such and such, that the straight edge of the stoppage will be on a certain side of the fallen string. Yet all of these decisions are at least one step removed from any possible aesthetic determination. Cage's ideas influenced Fluxus artist Dick Higgins, whose notion of 'post-cognitive' art included the strategy of placing 'the material at one remove' from the composer⁵—an idea very similar to George Brecht's notion of the 'irrelevant process,' where the 'chance-event [becomes] a compound of two or more independent events.'⁶ Brecht writes:

In general, bias in the selection of elements for a chance-image can be avoided by using a method of selection of those elements which is independent of the characteristics of interest in the elements themselves.⁷

In order for the total displacement of aesthetic values to occur authentically, all decisions relating to the system must be predetermined. Decisions on, or modifications to, the

structure must not occur during or after the process has been started. For Duchamp, chance functions as a way of neutralising taste; of making it indifferent, as he remarks to Pierre Cabanne: 'I had to beware of its [the object – readymade] "look" ... You have to approach something with an indifference, as if you have no aesthetic emotion. The choice of readymades is always based on visual indifference and at the same time, on the total absence of good or bad taste.'⁸ Taste is, according to Duchamp, 'a habit.' It is the 'repetition of something already accepted.'⁹

In "Chance Imagery," Brecht discusses the deployment of chance in Dada and Surrealism, and further, as it occurs in the work of Jackson Pollock and John Cage. Although Brecht favours what he calls the 'mechanical' chance operations of Duchamp and Cage over the automatism of Surrealism and Pollock, he does include the latter within the methodology of chance operations. But is it possible to consider automatism as an abstention from volition? One could argue that it involves a kind of 'letting things flow from within' but can we consider this as a letting in the sense of *Gelassenheit*, or is it a letting that fools itself into thinking that it is letting? I would maintain that Cage thought the latter. As did Duchamp who in 1946 stated: 'the "blank" force of Dada was very salutary. It told you "don't forget you are not quite so blank as you think you are!"'¹⁰ In an after-note written eight years after "Chance Imagery," Brecht seems to move away from the procedure of automatism, stating that, when the article was written, he had only recently met Cage, and thus 'had not seen clearly that the most important implications of chance lay in his work rather than in Pollock's.'¹¹

Cage's rejection of taste and memory stems from a basic distrust of the dominant notion of expression in art and music. First, Cage sees the function of (his) music as being the initiator of change—change in the receptive understanding of both composer and audience, and, consequently change in regard to the possibilities of what music can be. With self-expression, Cage argues, we simply repeat what we already know according to habit. With the self-expressive determinations of the ego the composer and listener are not open to change and music remains within the bounds of the usual. Second, the imposition of feelings blocks the way to the listening of sounds as sounds. This idea, Cage takes from the Zen Buddhism, which he studied under Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki: the doctrine of non-obstruction (and interpenetration). As he explains to Daniel Charles:

Emotions, like all tastes and memory, are too closely linked to the self, to the ego. The emotions show that we are touched within ourselves, and tastes evidence our way of being touched on the outside. We have made the ego into a wall and the wall doesn't even have a door through which interior and exterior could communicate! Suzuki taught me to destroy that wall. What is important is to insert the individual into the current, the flux of everything that happens, And to do that the wall has to be demolished; tastes memory, and emotions have to be weakened; all the ramparts have to be razed. You can feel an emotion; just don't think that it's so important... Take it in a way that you can then let it drop!...¹²

But this does not mean that one cannot experience music and art emotionally. As Cage continues: '...I give the impression that I am against feelings. But what I am against is the imposition of feelings.'¹³ Cage develops Suzuki's idea into his stricture of non-intentionality, which, as he says, not only governs his music but also his life. Music then, in Cage's terms, functions to facilitate the audition of sounds as sounds rather than as a vehicle which would serve to convey the composer's inner emotional affects to others. This position was also taken by the younger composers associated with Cage such as Christian Wolff:

One finds a concern for a kind of objectivity, almost anonymity—sound come into its own. The 'music' is a resultant existing simply in the sounds we hear, given no impulse by expressions of self or personality.¹⁴

Cage's operations usually consisted of submitting the variable elements of musical composition—pitch, duration, amplitude and timbre—to a series of decisions or numerical data arrived at by means of an aleatory system. Although he utilised a variety of procedures, Cage's method of choice was the casting of the *I Ching*, which involves a binary system of determinations based on the number 64, to be arrived at by the tossing of a coin. Other systems involved the utilisation of observations of slight imperfections in a sheet of paper, and in his later years Cage procured lists of random numbers from Bell Laboratories before obtaining his own computer to generate the numbers.

7.2 Indeterminacy

However, as Cage soon discovered, a score that is created by means of chance operations alone remains a fixed score. Cage developed a means of composing in which the composition remains indeterminate of its performance. Such compositions may also be created by means of chance operations but they extend the aleatory mechanisms into the sphere of performance and, to a certain extent, into improvisation on the part of the performers. This however, is not without its problems. Although intention on the part of the composer is radically suspended, a certain voluntarism on the part of the performer is brought back into the work. In other words, the performer, in attempting to improvise in the process, in the worst case, relies on what they already know (according to taste and memory), and perhaps, in the best scenario, they might indulge in a form of automatism. Abandoning the interpretation of certain events in the score to the caprice of the performer allows the performer to respond in a subjective way to the other sounds that they hear. Cage often complained that his performers were prone to backsliding into aesthetic improvisation. Yet one must sympathise with the performers, since it would appear that improvisational non-intentionality, free from taste and memory, unassisted by the imposition of an ‘irrelevant process,’ would present great difficulties for anyone, let alone trained professionals set in their ways. Cage was well aware of this problem as indicated in an interview with Bill Schoemaker in 1984:

What I would like to find is an improvisation that is not descriptive of the performer, but is descriptive of what happens, and which is characterized by absence of intention. It is at the point of spontaneity that the performer is most apt to have recourse to his memory. He is not apt to make a discovery spontaneously.¹⁵

The composition of music according to chance operations is a rigorous activity. It is ‘the highest discipline,’ according to Cage, because it suspends all aesthetic judgment, but, as Cage argues, it is the composer rather than the work that is subjected to discipline.¹⁶ Indeterminacy, on the other hand, would seem to be troubled by the lack of abstention from subjective values of taste. As Cage says: ‘chance operations are a discipline, and improvisation is rarely a discipline... Improvisation is generally playing what you know, and what you like, and what you feel...’¹⁷ Cage came up with various strategies to circumvent taste and memory in performance, such as letting the performers get in each other’s way;

giving them instruments to play that they have little or no control over; dividing time in order to reduce repetitions; and creating technical layers of complexity. But none of these strategies seem to be equal to the rigour of chance procedures. In short, non-intentionality and indeterminate improvisation, however constricted, seem to be concepts, in Cage's work, that remain opposed to each other. This is perhaps the result of a tension that existed between, on the one hand, Cage's wish to not force his emotions on an audience, and on the other hand, his politically anarchic desire to not dictate to his performers. To effectively maintain the abstention of taste would require the score to treat the performers as mere machines (as a kind of mechanical indeterminacy), yet Cage, it seems, preferred to give his performers a certain humanistic freedom, even at the cost of letting subjective decisions into the work.

7.3 Silence and Non-intentionality

Perhaps the most well known, and most notorious work, of Cage's is the so-called silent piece *4' 33"*. This piece, which was first performed on August 29, 1952, at Woodstock, N.Y. by David Tudor, consists of three sections of silence respectively 33", 2' 40", and 1' 20" in duration. David Tudor indicated the beginning of each part by closing the piano keyboard lid, and the end of each part by opening it. The initial idea for the piece came to Cage several years earlier in 1947 around the time of a lecture at Vassar College in which he said that he wished to 'compose a piece of uninterrupted silence and sell it to Muzak Co... It will be three of four and a half minutes long—those being the standard lengths of "canned" music and the title will be *Silent Prayer*.'¹⁸ But it was not until after seeing Robert Rauschenberg's white paintings—that Cage describes as 'airports for lights, shadows and particles,'¹⁹ and 'mirrors of the air,' 'airports for shadows and dust'²⁰—that, as he says, he finally had the courage to write the work.

Near the end of his life, Cage still regarded *4' 33"* as his most important work. He does not say explicitly why this is so, but it would be possible to say that *4' 33"* brings together many of Cage's ideas in the one piece. Cage, inspired by Webern, had been using silence in his compositions since the 1940s. Silence, as such, was considered, along with sound, as another musical material.²¹ But after studying Zen Buddhism with Suzuki, Cage began to think of silence as the negation of music. *4' 33"* could also be considered as a limit case or boundary work, an absolute minimalism that cannot be surpassed. The

most extreme point of 'not music.' The white paintings of Rauschenberg, which indicated to Cage that modern music was lagging behind painting, could be considered in much the same way. Another way Cage theorised *4' 33"* was a piece of pure duration—empty time to be filled. This is more in keeping with Cage's consideration of *4' 33"* as an empty frame, a blank slate which serves to open up listening to the ambient sounds of the immediate environment of the performance. This way of thinking springs from Cage's mature conception of silence, that is, after he spent some time in the anechoic chamber at Harvard University in 1951, and realised that absolute silence is an impossibility since the listening body always generates sound. The earlier conception of silence as the negative spaces in a composition had given way to a new way of thinking in which silence functioned as transparency, or letting. Finally, since anything could happen during the empty durational frame of *4' 33"*, the piece can be considered as indeterminate of its performance.

Despite its simplicity, *4' 33"* was constructed in a rigorous manner. The piece was carefully constructed over several days by the building up of many minute pieces of silence according to chance operations, which determined the durations. As Cage remarks 'it seems idiotic, but that's what I did.'²² Composing, for Cage, is always a discipline that breaks down the composer's prejudices and pre-conceived ideas in total acceptance. The gradual awakening of the composer's acceptance and awareness of 'sound come into its own,' or of 'letting sound be itself' occurs over time, and by way of the working-through of the work. Cage, however, expects this same process of change to occur in his audience, within the duration of the performance. The presentation and framing, of pure duration, as an event or performance is expected to open the audience's ears to the sounds of the world, without assistance or guidance, Zen training, or knowledge of the process of composition. A certain discipline is required, as Cage explains to Daniel Charles: 'Demanding austerity of the listener...I am giving him the chance to open himself up!'²³

There are two issues at stake here. First there is the responsibility given to the audience to complete the work. This responsibility requires that the audience member must become, as Cage says, a performer, as much as the composer becomes a listener. But with *4' 33"* the audience must also become, to some extent the composer, and to be a composer requires a certain discipline. Secondly, if we accept that works such as *4' 33"* constitute a

revealing of sounds, then how does this revealing happen through the work? Would it not be possible to argue that the same outcome, that is, the unmediated perception of sounds in the world, as sounds in themselves, could be achieved without recourse to the work, albeit with a ‘changed’ listener?

7.4 The Irrelevant Process

It is clear that Cage advocates the superimposition of different processes to arrive at a level of complexity. But does complexity itself become a goal in Cage’s work? In the mid 1940s Cage was very much influenced by the Indian art historian Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, and was fond of quoting the phrase ‘art imitates nature in her manner of operation.’²⁴ One cannot help noticing how this phrase resembles Kant’s description of art in the *Critique of Judgement*: ‘Nature proved beautiful when it wore the appearance of art; and art can only be termed beautiful, where we are conscious of it being art, while yet it has the appearance of nature’ (*CoJ* 167 §45). The similarity becomes less surprising when we observe, that the phrase from Coomaraswamy, as Kyle Gann points out, quotes St Thomas Aquinas: ‘*ars imitatur naturam in sua operatione*.’²⁵ Kant undoubtedly absorbed the idea that art appears to us—in the aesthetic experience—as if it were a product of nature—from Scholasticism. Cage, however, adopts the St Thomas phrase in slightly different sense than Kant. For Cage, under the influence of Henri Bergson, nature is not apprehended as static beauty but as flow and change.

In her essay “Chance Operations: Cagean Paradox and Contemporary Science,” N. Katherine Hayles, drawing on her work on randomness, chaos, and noise in scientific contexts, investigates the idea of chance in terms of three interpretations: intersecting worldliness, temporal asymmetry, and informational incompressibility.²⁶ Hayles understands Cage’s methods, quite rightly, as an attempt to open the possibility that would permit us ‘to grasp through our intentions a world that always exceeds and outruns those intentions,’ and ‘to subvert the anthropomorphic perspective that constructs continuity from a human viewpoint of control and isolation.’²⁷ In this way we can think of the chance operation functioning as an abstention that opens the way to a new phenomenological starting point. However, contrary to Husserl’s phenomenology, Cage’s work is concerned with worldly processes rather than intentional objects. In *Empty Words*, he writes:

To focus attention, one must ignore all the rest of creation. We have a history of doing precisely that. In changing our minds, therefore, we look for that attitude that is non-exclusive, that can include what we know together with what we do not yet imagine.²⁸

Hayles observes that the words ‘chance’ and ‘operation’—since chance is ‘in excess of our expectations,’ and operation derives from *operari* and *opus*—would seem to be at odds. As we have seen chance operations, in order to function effectively as disruption and displacement, must involve a certain rigour. But the movement of excess and rigour only comes into opposition if the chance operation itself is thought in terms of content or object, with emphasis placed on a goal which aims towards a result which may be said to ‘embody’ complexity. I would suggest that this drive to objectify the operation—or simply make of it more than it is—leads Hayles to investigate mathematical theories of chance, which, while infinitely fascinating, are not essential for an understanding of what is at stake: how chance functions as a radical disconnection from aesthetic voluntarism, and to what extent the multiplicity of processes distance the composer’s subjective decision-making from the work.

In an Interview with Cage, Daniel Charles compares the utilisation of chance operations to the approach of Xenakis, which uses probability formulae to control the direction of statistical tendencies. Cage replies: ‘What I hope for is the ability of seeing anything whatsoever... If you are in that stage of mutation, you are situated in change and immersed in process. While if you are dealing with a statistic, then you return to the world of objects...’²⁹ Charles replies in almost Heideggerian terms: ‘Indeterminacy, as you conceive it then, could not be *opposed* to what the physicists mean by that word. Your music is not *opposed* to Xenakis’ music. It is situated *before* it; it describes its *condition of possibility*.’³⁰ Because Cage seeks the unforeseen ‘anything whatever,’ the process remains radically disconnected from what it ‘lets’ emerge. The more irrelevant the process, in Brecht’s sense, the more creative subjectivity is distanced, and the more the arbitrary is put out of action. If one of the most essential outcomes of the chance operation is the acceptance of what something is, rather than what we think it should be, then the desire to find complexity, or resemblance to the operations of nature, in the result would constitute a pre-

supposition. Consequently, the emphasis on what might constitute a more authentically random procedure, where one might wish to value one procedure over another, on perhaps statistical grounds, would seem to constitute a presupposition that would be essentially contrary to Cage's experimental methodology as a way to the unforeseen. The gist of this is that 'chance' and 'operation' mean, in Cage's terms, essentially the same thing: *disconnection*. Chance is not some mystical realm to which appeals are made—however much the mysticism associated with the *I Ching* might suggest this. Chance is not free play; rather, it is an abstentional operation that allows free play to happen.

7.5 The Reception of Chance

It is not hard to see how contingency systems allow the artist to bypass aesthetic judgments of taste, but what are the implications of the utilisation of such systems in terms of their reception by an audience. Is the experience of listening to an indeterminate piece of music, or a chance derived artwork, ostensibly any different from the experience that one may receive from a work composed by subjective means? Should the work of art actively work to prevent a subjectivised response, so that the audience might open up to hear sounds as sounds? Cage had indicated in 1965 that his recent work had turned to a concern with processes: 'setting a process going which has no necessary beginning, no middle, no end, and no sections.'³¹ Here process becomes more important than objects, but if process has primacy then in what way would an audience—which is not engaged in the making of the work—encounter the process at work? This of course was a criticism made of Cage's methods by the 'minimalist' composer, Steve Reich, in "Music as a Gradual Process" (1968). Although Cage accepts the results of processes, Reich argues that these processes cannot be heard in the music itself, thus: 'the compositional processes and the sounding music have no audible connection.'³² Cage responds to this criticism in an interview in 1983 arguing that it is not necessary for the audience to understand, and thus participate, in the process because, he says, 'I'm on the side of keeping things mysterious... If I understand something, I have no further use for it.'³³ Cage somewhat ingenuously dodges the question. The aleatory processes would not be so mysterious for the composer, but they do remain so for the audience. The question becomes: if the work is not an object but a process, should—or to what extent should—the process be encountered as part of the work (which is not to say that it must be fully understood in all its causal relations)?

Robert Morris observes a trend in art since World War II where 'artists have increasingly sought to remove the arbitrary from working by finding a system according to which they could work,'³⁴ Morris cites Cage's use of chance operations as an example of this thread that has run from Duchamp through to Jasper Johns and Frank Stella and to Conceptual Art. In opposition to this thread, Morris observes the continuance of another systematising thread of methodologies that he refers to as bearing towards a phenomenological direction, where the system that orders the work is not derived from a prior and external logical system, but from 'the "tendencies" inherent in a materials/process interaction.'³⁵ In other words, forms are discovered in the activity of interacting with material properties. In this way of working, epitomised for Morris, by the work of Pollock, the material, in a certain way, determines the working process, and, more importantly for Morris, the process is made manifest in the work. This is exemplified, quite literally, in Morris' 1961 work, *Box with the Sound of its Own Making*: a ten inch cube that plays back, from a tape player concealed within it, the recorded sounds of its own construction. In other words, encountering the process in the work effects the way we read the work. Here we come back to the question: is it important that the process is seen or heard in the work? The question can be rephrased: is the process part of the work? Should it be inside or outside?

In the first case, contingency systems such as the chance operation, and the found object, put in place, in the making process, the most radical abstention from aesthetic position-taking. But if no residue remains of the operation, the conditions of the genesis of the work become obscure, and nothing would seem to offer resistance to reading the work, not only in terms of the morphological aspects of audition, but, even worse, as a product of the artist's interiority: a product of expression. In the second case, the material/process interaction makes its processes manifest, and thus provides a context for the work, and, as Morris insists, reveals information rather than purely aesthetic form. Yet it must be emphasised that the latter tendency, by inviting spontaneity (particularly in the case of Pollock), and allowing the arbitrary to enter the making process at any point, falls short of the more rigorous aesthetic abstention of the chance operation. Are the non-volitional activities of contingency systems, and the revealing of process in materi-

als/process works mutually exclusive? Can we conceive of a radically disconnecting system that, at the same time, reveals itself as such?

I would suggest that works such as Reich's early process works combine both radical aesthetic abstention and manifestation of process. Reich argues for perceptible processes that can be heard in the music as it is performed, in fact 'pieces of music that are, literally, processes.'³⁶ Such (gradual) processes include: 'pulling back a swing, releasing it, and observing it gradually come to rest.'³⁷ In the same year that "Music as a Gradual Process" was written, Reich composed a process piece entitled: *Pendulum Music: For Microphones, Amplifiers and Speakers*, which consists of three or more microphones suspended from their cables directly above speakers. The microphones are pulled back by the performers, and then let go in unison, allowing them to swing over the speakers, thus creating pulsed feedback according to changing phase relations. The piece ends shortly after the microphones come to rest. We are able to *hear* the process in such events, Reich contends, because they occur gradually and thus invite 'sustained attention.'³⁸ But, at the same time, according to Reich, the sound that one hears moves away from intentions, and what is distinctive of such processes is that 'they determine all the note-to-note details and the over all form simultaneously. One can't improvise in a musical process—the concepts are mutually exclusive.'³⁹

7.6 Processes and Systems

In the visual arts a similar attention to processes characterised the work of Hans Haacke in the early 1960s. Haacke was interested in 'real-time systems' where physical, biological or social components interact with each other. Informed by the systems theory of cybernetics, Haacke's real-time systems, such as *Condensation Cube* (1963/1965) (Plate 5), a rectangular clear plastic container containing just enough distilled water to create condensation, are physically real open systems, responding to changes in their environment. They employ physically interdependent processes that fluctuate according to cycles and feedback loops. Haacke's systems were not constructed with aesthetic considerations in mind. They do not represent attempts to solve formal problems; rather, the look of the work is accepted as the look of a system in action, without aesthetic interference on behalf of the artist. As Haacke says, 'The structuring of elements, the materials and conditions... (of the systems), became a function of their performance.'⁴⁰ In the late 1960s, Haacke

turned his attention to the social dimension of systems. In *Gallery-Goers' Birthplace and Residence Profile, Part 1* (1969), visitors were asked to indicate with a red pin, on maps of the five boroughs of New York City, their birthplace, and with a blue pin, their place of permanent residence. Haacke took photographs of each location and arranged them on the gallery wall in accordance with each location's distance from Fifth Avenue, along with other statistical information. In *Shapolsky et al. Manhattan Real-Estate Holdings, a Real-Time Social System as of May 1, 1971* (1971), Haacke displays one family's concentrated ownership of tenement buildings in the slum districts of Manhattan (Harlem and the Lower East Side). In another work, *News* (1969) (Plate 6), a teletype machine prints out real-time news agency feeds, which progressively accumulate on the floor in a heap.

Haacke's early pieces resemble Reich's processes, and one can see a direct connection between these early process pieces and the later real-time social systems that are often exclusively considered under the art-historical term of 'institutional critique.' In many ways, Haacke's process works carry out the prescriptions of Sol LeWitt, which were published in his "Paragraphs on Conceptual art" and "Sentences on Conceptual Art" in the late 1960s.⁴¹ On the one hand, LeWitt's ideas encapsulate the strong ideas of conceptual art, for example from "Paragraphs...":

The idea or concept is the most important aspect of the work... All planning and decisions are made beforehand and execution is a perfunctory affair. The idea becomes a machine that makes the art.⁴²

And from "Sentences...":

The concept and idea are different. The former implies a general direction while the latter are the components. Ideas implement the concept...⁴³

On the other hand, LeWitt's 'paragraphs' and 'sentences' resemble the non-intentional methodologies of Cage, Higgins, and Reich, for example from "Paragraphs...":

To work with a plan that is pre-set is one way of avoiding subjectivity. The plan would design the work.... In each case, however, the artist would select the basic

form and rules that would govern the solution of the problem. After that the fewer decisions made in the course of completing the work, the better,⁴⁴

And from “Sentences...”:

The artist’s will is secondary to the process he initiates from idea to completion. His willfulness may only be ego.⁴⁵

The process is mechanical and should not be tampered with. It should run its course.⁴⁶

Within these few short pages a number of extremely interesting ideas are developed. However the full impact of LeWitt’s paragraphs and sentences never really surfaces in his own work, which remains largely confined to formal geometric seriality (Plate 7). I would suggest that the most interesting elaboration of these ideas shows itself in the ‘real-time’ systems and ‘real-time social systems’ of Hans Haacke, Dan Graham, and Martha Rosler during the 1960s and 70s, and in typological systems of Marcel Broodthaers, John Baldessari, Ed Ruscha, Bas Jan Ader, Bernd and Hilla Becher (Plate 8) and others.

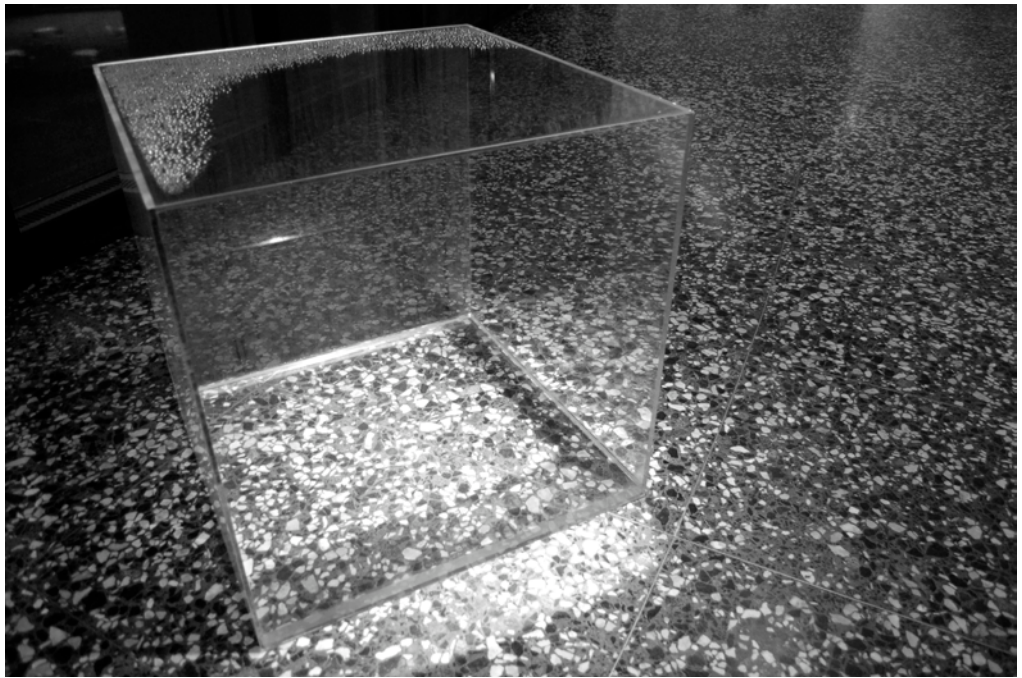


Plate 5. Hans Haacke, Condensation Cube, 1963/2008, clear acrylic plastic, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C. Image courtesy of Andrew Russeth.



Plate 6. Hans Haacke, News, 1969/2008, RSS newsfeed, paper, and printer, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA)

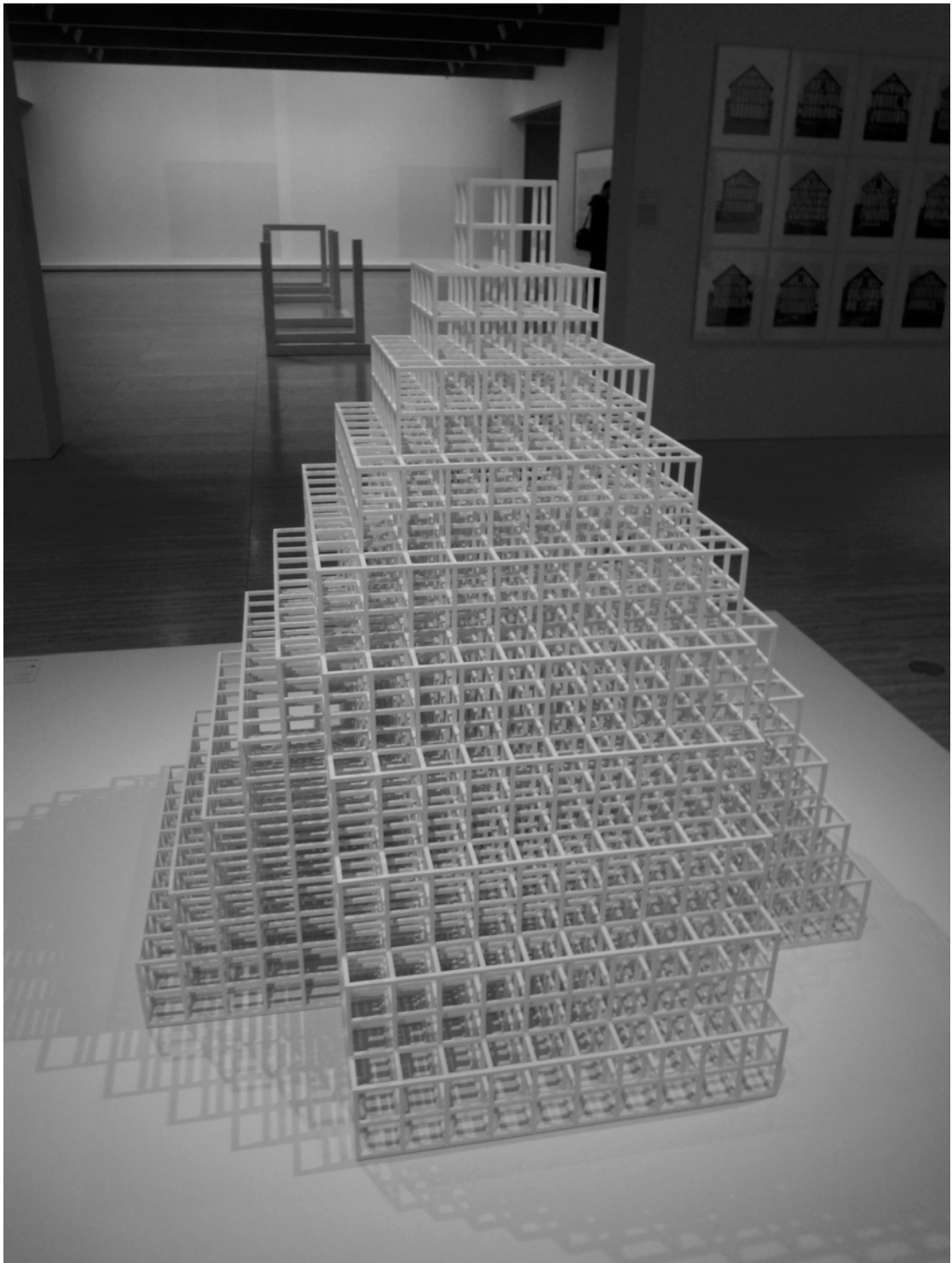


Plate 7. Sol LeWitt, Pyramid, 2005, painted wood, Art Gallery of New South Wales, John Kaldor Family Collection.

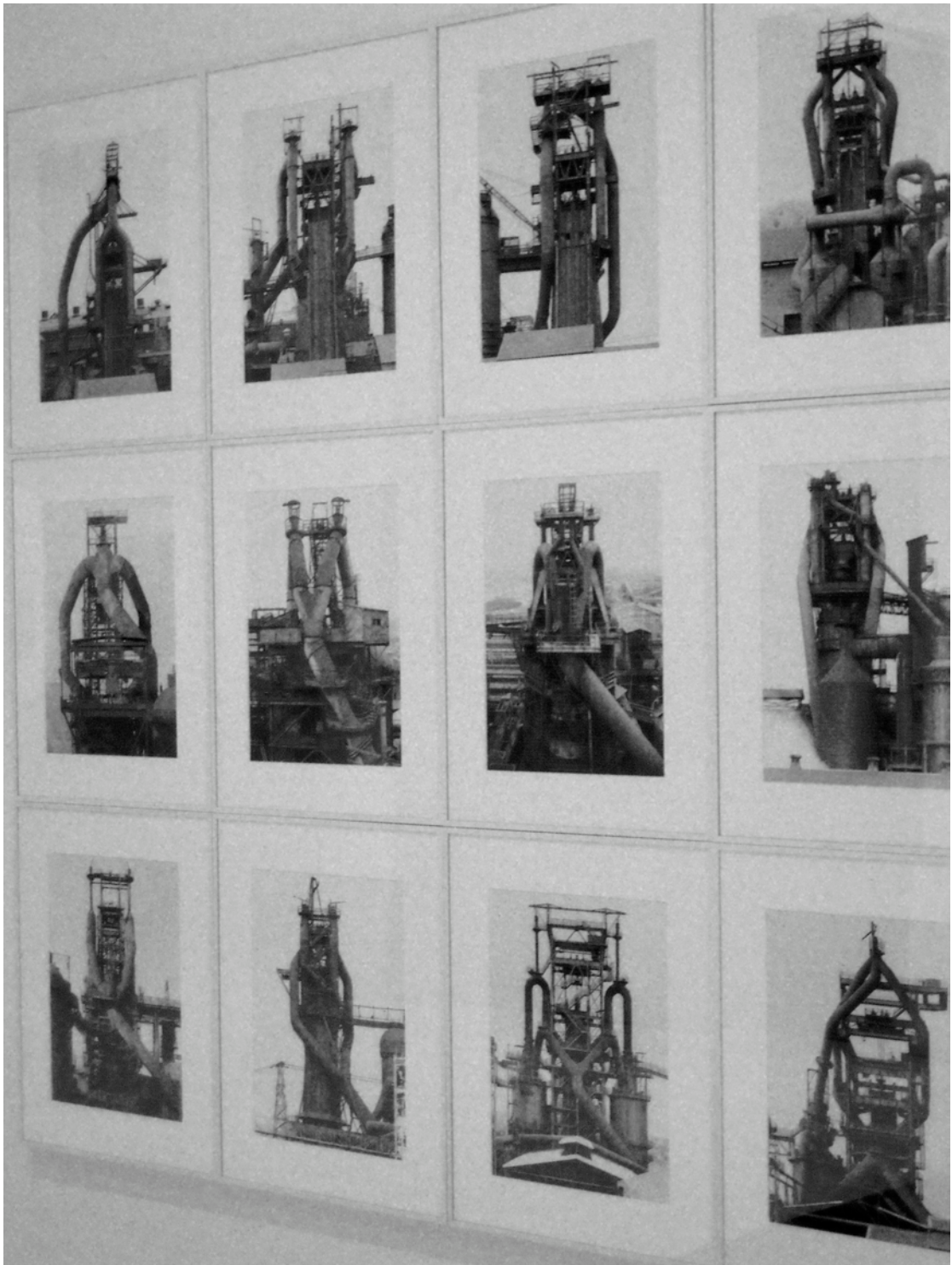


Plate 8. Bernd and Hilla Becher, Blast Furnaces, Germany, France, Luxembourg, United States, 1970-84, printed 1989. 12 gelatin silver photographs, Art Gallery of New South Wales, John Kaldor Family Collection.

7.7 Toposonics

The irrelevant process, according to Brecht, is the most effective way of avoiding bias—that is, in phenomenological terms, of avoiding pre-suppositions—and thus arriving at the unforeseen. With the irrelevant process, a certain abstraction or codification occurs between the material and the process. Outcomes are mapped to the process by a number of abstract relations. However, because there is no visible, or audible relation between the material and the process, one cannot read the process from the outcome. The irrelevant process suspends aesthetic judgment, and puts aesthetic pre-suppositions out of play, but obfuscates the process by which it does so. What Morris calls the ‘phenomenological’ method, on the other hand, shows its processes, but in allowing the arbitrary to enter, it would not seem to involve, in the same way, the restraint that is brought about by the abstentional *epochē* of the irrelevant process. But the processal models proposed by Reich, LeWitt, and Haacke, would seem to strike a balance between these two methodologies. It may be possible to say that the irrelevant process constitutes a phenomenological investigation as far as those involved in the process (composer, and perhaps at times performers) are concerned, but for others (the audience) the process is not apprehended, and the mode of audition is most likely to remain merely aesthetic.

The contextual debate in the fields of music and sound art mirrors, to a certain extent, the difference in the phenomenological approaches of Husserl and Heidegger. Or better, the two positions in the theorisation of sound art roughly correspond to what Don Ihde describes as the distinction between ‘first’ and ‘second’ phenomenology. In opposition to the decontextualised Schaefferian sound object, Cage’s democratisation of sound—where background is brought to foreground attention—paves the way for a consideration of sound that locates it in the everyday, and that reveals a sense of place, positing, as LaBelle maintains, a ‘contextualized listener.’⁴⁷

I am not convinced that Cage’s work maintains sonic contextual relations, as LaBelle argues, but a great deal of work that emerges in the wake of Cage, I think, does. Sound artist Bill Fontana works with found sound sculptures, or readymade sound installations, that generate automatic self-performance in real time. Fontana then transmits the found environmental sound (often rendered as a multichannel perspective by way of multiple microphones) to another public location where it is reproduced in accordance with a du-

plicated spatial arrangement (speaker positions match microphone positions). Fontana's work thus consists of the decontextualising and recontextualising of ambient sounds. Sounds are split from their source by the schizophrenic⁴⁸ effect of recording/broadcast technology, and re-placed in a different environment—sometimes a similar place—often separated by a substantial distance. The schizophrenic effect is doubly reinforced by hearing the de-contextualised sound repositioned in a new setting. This disjunction produces an estrangement that brings the sound into the focus of a new awareness, and forces a questioning of sound's relation to everyday space and place or, in Heidegger's terms, a gathering (*Versammlung*) that clears a lightened space to make room for things. As Heidegger says of the envining world (*Umwelt*)—utilising the form of the impersonal sentence in the German language—in the KNS lectures: '*it worlds (es weltet)*' (ZBP 73, TDP 61, Heidegger's emphasis). As Jeff Malpas argues, this conception of world is both a happening and a concrete 'there':

The "worlding" of the world is a happening of meaning and encounter—a happening that Heidegger will later refer to in terms of "disclosedness" or "unconcealing," as well as simply the "Event." But it is also a happening of the "there," and so also of place.⁴⁹

The sound work that opens up a relation to the world, the being-in of the there, can be thought, in the terms of Heidegger's later work, as indwelling releasement in terms of space and place: as that-which-regions (*Gegnet*), which is also an encounter with the meaning of a specific location.

Fontana's transpositioned (and sometimes mixed sound) coincides with everydayness. Instead of listening with a detached ear, or an inward reflection on consciousness in blind acousmatic audition, the listening experience is opened up to its relation to a dwelling-in-place, in a living situation. I would suggest that Fontana's work, in Heidegger's terms, carries out a non-intentional *letting*—in its appropriation of found sound—followed by an *estrangement* that renders the situation uncanny—in the relocated overlay— and finally an *indwelling*; a fusing of the listening experience into the situatedness of the envining world. Rather than involving the abstracted acousmatic listening of sonic research, Fontana's work provokes a listening that is enmeshed with space and place. At the same

time, Fontana's work exceeds the naïve simplicity of Cage's approach where the frame of music—as in *4'33"*, piano, pianist and hall—sets a zero point of reception. Rather, Fontana's re-located sound engages with the context in a meaningful way by setting in motion a play of memory and expectations toward the horizontal fore-structures of Being-in-the-world.

Schaeffer's sonic research, by admitting aesthetic judgments into the most basic level of categorisation of the sound object, would seem to betray its own requirements for a presupposition-free phenomenological starting point. Cage's approach, on the other hand, by imposing a radical abstention that suspends judgments of taste in the compositional process would seem to bring us closer to sounds, as they are let to be. Cage's approach would seem to be presuppositionless. But is a presuppositionless starting point possible? Such a starting point would certainly not be possible for Heidegger. Nor would it be entirely possible for Husserl—despite his own rhetoric. I would argue that Cage's positing of the listening experience as a return to zero constitutes a naïve attitude of ontological innocence. In the next chapter I will examine this claim—and with it the limits of a concrete knowledge that attends to bare experience—and ask: how do we, in these works that present phenomena and materiality to us, make our way through the flux.

8. Experience, Flux, and Repetition.

In the previous two chapters I have been examining the claims for the possibility of a form of art that performs an ontological revealing. In exceeding aesthetics, and in directing attention to actual phenomena in the here and now of concrete experience, such a practice of art could be said to let its audience in, to perform a quasi-phenomenological investigation of what is given directly to experience. In this chapter I wish to examine the limits of such a way of thinking about the work of art. When art and music frame and structure bare phenomena we experience a reduction or estrangement that leads us back to the things themselves. But how then do we approach and make sense of the flux of lived-experience? How is such knowledge—considered in the broadest sense—able to be shared, communicated, interpreted, or even described?

The object of Cage's work is asking questions that lead to a new way of knowing life and the world (our relation to our immediate environment) through sound. Cage often refers to the 'happening' of this knowing simply as *change*.

So I want to give up the traditional view that art is a means of self-expression for the view that art is a means of self-alteration, and what it alters is *mind*, and mind is in the world and is a social fact... We will change *beautifully* if we accept uncertainties of change; and this should affect any planning. This is a value.¹

Ina Blom discusses the listening experience, and the notion of change proposed by Cage, in terms of Dick Higgins' notion of 'immersion': a displacement of the boundaries dividing self and work, work and environment.

In his work, Cage clearly strives to achieve states of immersion: self-reflexive moments such as those produced by memory, knowledge, repetition, and so on, must be avoided at all costs. Only a system that will produce eternal change, eternal variation, will draw the listening subject out of the repetitive movement of the norm that frames a subjectivity reflecting back on itself.²

Blom suggests that such change depends, for Cage, on a notion of oblivion or unknowing where the new, the singular never-heard-before sonic event, can come to be heard. The quest of Cage's experimental project: to arrive at the unforeseen is, in Cage's view, hampered by repetition of the same; the already known. The mind must be empty, free from the repetition imposed by memory. This 'zero' state of mind is characterised by openness, where the listening subject must abstain from reflecting back on itself, in the Cartesian manner, else it re-establish itself as ego and thus ruin the receptive process by disturbing the zero state of mind.

In this chapter I ask: is such a zero state of experience that simply shatters the egoistic reflective model of Cartesian consciousness by returning to a state of primordial unknowing at all possible? I examine a certain tension between, on the one hand, collapsing art into the unmediated flow of life, and on the other, of arresting the flux, and reducing the other to the same. How do we, in either art or phenomenology, approach phenomena without falling into naïve empiricism, or essentialist reduction?

8.1 Without Why

As I have indicated previously, Cage's conception of letting and openness is analogous to Heidegger's notion of *Gelassenheit*. Heidegger borrows the word *Gelassenheit* (*gelāzenheit*) from Eckhart, and although Cage had not read Heidegger, he *had* immersed himself in the writings of Eckhart since the early 1950s. Thus Cage's idea of change originates not only from the tradition of Zen Buddhism, but also from Eckhart's statement quoted by Cage: 'we are made perfect by what happens to us rather than what we do.'³ A state of 'unselfconsciousness,' unknowing, or 'ignorance' is what is required, according to Eckhart, to initiate the change that brings us to perfection. But this unknowing does not come from a lack of knowledge but, instead, by overcoming self-will (*Eigenwille*), which, for Eckhart, presents an obstacle to God's revealing of true Being. The unselfconsciousness that Eckhart proposes, and the empty 'no mind' (*wu-nien*) of Zen, for Cage, are one and the same. Cage maintains that the composer and listener must remain, in the words of Eckhart: 'innocent and free to receive anew with each Now-moment a heavenly gift,'⁴ In Eckhart's terms, the word free (*ledic*), as Bret W. Davis points out, means both empty and free from creatures.⁵ But this emptiness does not mean adopting a simply passive attitude or doing nothing. We still act, but rather than acting according to our own will, all

action issues from out what Eckhart calls the ‘ground.’ However, this does not mean that willing is given over to God in absolute obedience. As Davis explains: ‘Our will must become God’s will, or better yet, says Eckhart, God’s will must become ours.’⁶

Both Cage and Heidegger extend Eckhart’s thought beyond the idea of what Davis calls ‘deferred willing,’ or giving one’s will over to a greater power. Our will, in their terms, rather than becoming God’s will, becomes open to Being. This non-willing, for both Heidegger and Cage, far from being passive or indifferent, consists, like the Buddhist ‘condition,’ as David Doris observes, of ‘a radical *involvement* with the world.’⁷ However, as Davis argues we can still find in Eckhart’s writings:

...a genuinely radical thrust that leaves both “God” and his Will behind. Eckhart intimates a passage through utter passivity that gives way to a birth of “pure activity” without subject or an object, that is, to the spontaneous generosity of living “without why.” We find this transition underway in the following lines: “Let God act as he will, and let humans stand empty/free [*ledic*].... All that ever came out of God is set into pure activity [*lüter wirken*]”⁸

In *Der Satz vom Grund* (*The Principle of Reason*), Heidegger, juxtaposes Leibniz’s principle that ‘nothing is without reason,’ against a phrase from the poet Angelus Silesius, from the poem “Ohne warum,” from the collection *The Cherubic Wanderer: Sensual Description of the Four Final Things*:

The rose is without why: it blooms because it blooms,
It pays no attention to itself, asks not whether it is seen.⁹

Silesius’ ‘rose is without why,’ as both John Caputo and Bret Davis observe, is rooted in the thought of Eckhart and, as both mention, Heidegger is well aware of this. Heidegger proposes that we must make the leap from Leibniz’s dictum to the phrase of Silesius. Cage extends Eckhart’s stricture of the ‘without why’—that one’s work should be performed for the sake of no external ends but for its own sake—to the idea of ‘purposive purposelessness.’ As Eckhart says, ‘I work because I work (*Ich wirke darum, dass iche wirke*).’¹⁰ Purposeless play, for Cage, is an affirmation of life which can only happen ‘once

one gets one's mind and one's desires out of the way and lets it act of its own accord.'¹¹ Purposeless for Cage equates to Silesius' 'without why.'

8.2 Cage, Fluxus, and the Flux

Thinking beyond a simply formal aesthetic reception of the sound material, how does one make sense of the stream of experiences? How does experience move ahead so that something about the experience becomes knowable without reducing the other to the same, or subsuming the particular under the general; without idealising and distancing ourselves from the materiality of the flux?

Cage's unknowing oblivion is, I would argue, the simple inversion or countermovement to metaphysical closure. As pure openness, it constitutes a naïve surrender to the flux that not only refuses conceptualisation, reflection, and mastery over beings, but also refuses 'thinking' in the late Heideggerian sense. Cage's *Gelassenheit* imposes silence. As Daniel Charles, in exasperation, responds to Cage: 'We are always led back to this: there is nothing to say.' Cage replies: '...If I had something to say I would say it with words.'¹² I would like to argue that the post-aesthetic experience of art must take place between the two extremes of (i) the closure of representational thinking, and (ii) the simple openness of bare experience in which we simply drift with the flux of private experience. John Caputo remarks that metaphysics has always attempted to escape the flux by making a quick and easy exit. I would argue that Cage, by prioritising the immediate and the new, seeks an easy way *into* the flux, rather than an easy escape out. Against Cage's wish to make things easy—which I would argue simply constitutes the flip side of the recollective representational thinking—I would suggest an approach, following Caputo's conception of 'radical hermeneutics,' that seeks to restore life to its original difficulty. Such an approach, as Caputo conceives it, 'situates itself in the space which is opened up by the exchange between Heidegger and Derrida,'¹³ and 'questions the authority of whatever calls itself "present."¹⁴ It becomes necessary at a certain point to leave Cage and turn to what occurred in his wake: the work of Fluxus. Ina Blom observes that:

...because Cage is fundamentally devoted to the transcendental universality and maybe also formalism of a certain strain of modern art that his principle of free play 'automatically' extends from theory of art to a general social philosophy, without

excess and without resistance... With many of the artists connected to Fluxus, the passage from art to social theory is not quite so automatic. In fact, it would seem that their main contribution would be to add friction to this passage.¹⁵

In a similar way Higgins remarks that Cage, in contradistinction to Fluxus, 'strove for nobility.'¹⁶ Cage's idea of opening his audience up to 'always new' experience, in order to sharpen and develop the powers of observation and audition, surely has its roots in early modernist theory of the Bauhaus, transmitted by artists such as Lázló Moholy-Nagy and Josef Albers.¹⁷ For Higgins, and the Fluxus artists that developed their own use of 'aleatoric structures' from Cage's pedagogy—George Brecht, Jackson Mac Low, and Richard Maxfield—what was needed, as an antidote to Cage's purity and nobility, could be described as, as Caputo puts it: 'the great project of hermeneutic troublemaking.'¹⁸ The philosophers of this project, for Caputo, include: Derrida, Heidegger, Kierkegaard, and Husserl (albeit a latent radicalised version of Husserl). If we are to consider sound-art, or any other art that deals primarily with sense-perception, as research, or as a way of directly encountering the flux, what must be avoided, first of all, is a simple unreflective empiricism that Cage's appeal to direct sensory experience—towards the opened ears of a blank mind—would seem to suggest. Thus it is necessary to re-examine the implications of Cage's project in terms of the more radical possibilities of Husserl's phenomenology. It might be that only in that way, as Derrida argues, can we avoid falling back into 'naive objectivism.'¹⁹

Philosophy has traditionally sought to escape the flux and insulate itself from the effects of contingency by striving after the ideal and universal, and to recover meaning from out of existence. However, when the work of art brings us into direct and immediate proximity to the things themselves, it would seem to leave us confounded in the flux without meaning, or access to a way of moving forward. Can strategies of art-making utilising the framing or structuring of experience lead to a non-empirical phenomenological way of knowing? Is a simple experiential reframing enough to unsettle the codes that routinely frame experience? Perhaps it is possible to say that this problematic forms the starting point of Fluxus. Unlike Cage, many of the Fluxus artists, under the influence of George Maciunas, were interested in strategies of pedagogy. As Craig Saper argues, 'Fluxus works highlighted socio-poetic interaction and encouraged epistemological experimen-

tation among participant users.²⁰ There was certainly an interest in getting close to objects and phenomena but in a way that would avoid the participant falling back into private experience. Rather, there seemed to be in Fluxus a concern with the social exchange of experience, where participants would play through the possibilities, through an engagement with open-ended interactive works, and collaborative art games. But this means something other than, on the one hand, the total immersion of immediate experience, or, on the other hand, mediate description and representation. As Higgins argues, ‘We can talk about a thing, but we cannot talk a thing, It is always something else’²¹

8.3 Ontological Innocence

Higgins’ statement points to the problem of description that stalks phenomenology: how to make explicit in words, the phenomenological description of experience that would precede the descriptive discourse. As Jean-François Lyotard observes:

In so far as this life-originating world is ante-predicative, all predication, all discourse, undoubtedly *implies* it, yet is *wide* of it, and properly speaking nothing may be said of it... The Husserlian description... is a struggle of language against itself to attain the originary... In this struggle, the defeat of the philosopher, of the logos, is assured, since the originary, once described, is thereby no longer originary.²²

Lyotard’s critique repeats the Marburg neo-Kantian philosopher Paul Natorp’s two insightful objections to Husserl’s phenomenology brought up in Heidegger’s 1919 *KNS lectures*. Heidegger, sums up Natorp’s first objection in the following way. Since the phenomenological method, as Husserl indicates in *Ideas I*, ‘operates entirely in acts of reflection (*Reflexion*)’,²³ the reflective description of lived-experiences renders them as an objectification that stands over against us, and cannot help de-vivifying them, isolating them in an act in which we ‘still the stream,’ because the experiences are no longer lived but ‘looked at.’²⁴ Natorp’s second objection is that phenomenology, as a purely descriptive science, subsumptively circumscribes what it sees into general concepts. Description thus mediates the concrete immediacy into abstractions.

Heidegger’s solution to Natorp’s objections is his linguistic-hermeneutical formulation of ‘formal indication.’ This sense of understanding, or hermeneutical intuition, which Theodore Kisiel suggests, is ‘Heidegger’s own version of the “phenomenological reduc-

tion,”²⁵ does not seek to reject Husserl’s model of reflection, but to deepen it in opposition to Natorp’s criticisms. But this means avoiding the term reflection, and instead, reinterpreting intuition in terms of the historicity and pre-understanding that is, for Heidegger, built into life. In this way Heidegger begins to develop the radical implications of Husserl’s latent conceptions of fore-structures and horizon-structures into a hermeneutic phenomenology. In the 1920 lectures, *Phänomenologie der Anschauung und des Ausdrucks*, Heidegger develops the process of phenomenological-critical *Destruktion*, in response to Natorp’s objections and Dilthey’s ‘effective complex.’ Destruction is bound to preconception, or pre-delineation (*Vorzeichnung*), in the sense that it is guided by historically situated factual understanding where meanings point to contexts. The projective character of (pre) understanding, that Heidegger further develops in *Being and Time*, would thus rule out any ontologically innocent phenomenological starting point.

Heidegger gives us two arguments against the ideal of a pre-suppositionless starting point that we have seen explicitly posited in Husserl’s phenomenology and Schaeffer’s sonic research—and implicitly assumed in Cage’s zero state of mind. First, we never simply come across Being, ‘we do not simply find it in front of us’ (*GP* 29, *BPP* 21), a certain anticipatory guidance, is required to lead us toward Being. This access is brought about by Dasein’s free projection, in an operation that Heidegger calls ‘phenomenological construction.’ Second, since Dasein is historical, since beings are not accessible in the same way for all epochs, a further critical process is required. Because Being is interpreted according to traditional horizon-structures, and concepts derived from the tradition, and, moreover, any description or interpretation cannot proceed without encountering the central ontological and logical structures of the tradition, any attempt to radically begin again must locate ‘the crucial turning points’²⁶ of the history of ontology. Pure intuition, and even the phenomenological *Wesensschau*, as Heidegger argues in *Being and Time*, is founded upon the fore-structures of understanding and interpretation: fore-having (*Vorhabe*), fore-sight (*Vorsicht*), and fore-conception (*Vorgriff*). In this way experience, understood as involvement in the world, is structured in advance. Husserl’s aspiration to encounter the naked thing, the bare phenomena, in a presuppositionless ontological innocence, or neutrality, merely conceals the set of relations by which meaning is constituted. In terms of the assumed ontological neutrality of Husserl’s transcendental and eidetic

purification of consciousness, Caputo argues: '*The very project of neutralization proceeds from an ontology of consciousness as self-neutralizing.*'²⁷

8.4 The Horizon-structure of Experience

Even though he ultimately privileges purified consciousness as the theme of phenomenological research it would be wrong to regard Husserl's theory of constitution, as an appeal to direct and neutral experience, in direct contrast to Heidegger's interpretive, circum-spective, involvement in the world of practical relations. Caputo argues that Husserl's idea of constitution contributes to a hermeneutical strategy for tracing the regularities, or patterns, in the flux. It does so by an anticipatory movement of building up expectations. Hence constitution is not arrived at by means of a pure and immediate presence but through certain fore-structures which lead to pre-understanding. Rather than a return to immediate givenness, Caputo argues that Husserl's intentional analysis is a subtle blending of potential and actual, implicit and explicit. Experience is not mute but meaningful—contextured like a language. Rather than isolating empirical atoms of sense-data, Husserl's intentional acts are bound by a pre-given horizon-structure. As Caputo observes, 'The full perceptual object is thus a complex of perceived and apperceived, present and co-present, focal and horizontal. The object appears in the interplay "between" them.'²⁸ 'The nexus of interconnected horizons,' as Donn Welton explains, 'is what constitutes the world.'²⁹ Seen this way, the task of phenomenology has less to do with uncovering ideal essences of things as correlates that occur in consciousness, and more to do with, as Caputo argues, uncovering and making explicit the 'antecedent conditions already embedded in experience.'³⁰

Following Gadamer, Dick Higgins attempts to account for the reception of avant-garde and Fluxus works, not, as they often are, in terms of shock, but as a hermeneutical shifting and fusion of horizons:

Usually the relationship between the recipient and the work is described in terms of a hermeneutic circle – idea of work, leading to manifestation of work, leading to recipient, leading to recipient's own thought processes, leading to new idea of work, leading to further thought processes, leading to modified perception of work being manifested, leading back to altered perception of the idea of work.³¹

Higgins attempts to streamline this rather complicated procedure by utilising Gadamer's notion of the 'fusion of horizons' (*Horizonverschmelzung*) in which a unity of meaning is achieved by bringing together the world of the work with the world of the interpreter.³² For Gadamer, we have an affinity to, or we belong, to a tradition. Since our consciousness is shaped by the effective-history (*Wirkungsgeschichte*) of our tradition, it also determines the sort of questions we can ask (about alien texts and traditions). We are bound to see things from a certain perspective or vantage point that has its limits. We cannot question beyond this horizon since we are grounded by it. However, our horizons, far from constituting finite limits, are able to shift. We are able to move beyond our horizon, and understand texts, traditions, and cultures other than our own by moving and changing and thus enlarging our horizon. For Higgins the work (in its performance, in its presentation) establishes a 'horizon of experience.' The recipient comes to the work with their own horizon of experience, and in the act of performance/presentation and spectatorship/audition the recipient incorporates the work's horizon and there occurs—if interpretation results in understanding—a fusion of the horizons. After the event of spectatorship/audition the horizons cease to be actively fused. But the recipient's horizon—if the work has been successful—will have changed and been permanently enlarged. The recipient instinctively matches horizons, compares expectations and participates in the process. The more actively recipients engage in the process, the more likely they are able to enjoy it.

I wish to argue, however, following Heidegger, that the play of concealment and unconcealment that happens in the work of art as strife is in excess of such formulations. Gadamer's fusion of horizons, in a very conservative way, seeks, above all, to reconcile this strife and render the hermeneutical act of interpretation safe. The 'play,' which Gadamer associates with the gap between the world of the work and the world of the spectator, is, as Caputo argues, 'made safe by recollection,' by the movement of '*Er-innerung*,' by which we appropriate the work to our own innerness.³³ Caputo regards Gadamer's idea of *fusion* as being in the same company as Hegel's *Aufhebung*. Gadamer argues that rather than the tradition belonging to us, we belong to it, and that tradition in this sense is something undergoing constant change and renewal, but he still tends to accept the tradition as it is transmitted to us. In this respect Gadamer departs from Heidegger and

moves closer to Hegel. Rather than being an attempt to overcome or twist free of the tradition, Gadamer's hermeneutics seeks to reconcile the received tradition of the present with distant traditions of the past.

What then would be a more open-ended and radical approach to the hermeneutical structure of horizons? Where does Caputo's engagement with Husserl's 'proto-hermeneutics,' and Heidegger's existential hermeneutic phenomenology lead us? It is a certain idea of 'repetition' operating implicitly with Husserl, and explicitly with Heidegger, that Caputo deploys against the reconciliatory movement of Gadamer's work. This notion of repetition that moves ahead derives from Kierkegaard, who opposes it to the 'recollection' of metaphysics: a repetition that repeats backwards in order to recover a lost presence. Kierkegaard's existential repetition, which retrieves Aristotle's idea of *kinēsis*, offers a way of engaging with the flux, by producing what it repeats. Occurring not as meaning, but in the realm of existence and actuality, Caputo argues that 'Repetition says that actuality must be continually produced, brought forth anew, again and again. Identity must be established, produced.'³⁴

8.5 Repetition

As we have seen, the encounter with the 'real,' that Cage's project promises, would be one that is immediately self-present to consciousness, and is not repeatable. Cage regards repetition as a function of memory, that not only traps the performer within the limits of learned habits but, moreover, prevents the new and unforeseen from occurring. Thus he strives for the goal proposed by Duchamp: 'to reach the impossibility of transferring from one like object to another the memory imprint.'³⁵ Like phenomenological seeing, that seeks direct access to the thing free of metaphysical presuppositions, the model of listening that Cage proposes, is one that aims to be as direct as possible and free of all retained values. However, the opposition between direct (and always new) sound and repeated sound is never quite consistent in Cage's writings and interviews. On the one hand, it is clear that Cage opposes Schoenberg's idea of repetition and variation. On the other hand, Cage often talks favourably of Erik Satie's *Vexations*—a piece which repeats the same musical phrase 840 times, requiring a performance by a number of pianists, of eighteen hours and forty minutes. The effect of performing this piece is, as Cage states, 'like a sharpening of the faculty of listening.'³⁶ In a similar way Steve Reich describes the effect

of listening to extreme gradual processes: 'I begin to perceive these minute details when I can sustain close attention and a gradual process invites my sustained attention.'³⁷ These same minute details that Reich attends to, for Cage, point to the very impossibility of repetition:

If we think that things are being repeated, it is generally because we don't pay attention to all of the details. But if we pay attention as though we were looking through a microscope to all the details, we see that there is no such thing as repetition.³⁸

Pure repetition can thus only occur within the sphere of pure ideality, which in the case of *Vexations* is the ideality of the score. As soon as Satie's repetitive music enters the world as performed sounds, there occurs ever so slight material variation so that in actuality there is not ideal repetition but a creative repetition: a repetition that alters. Over the duration of *Vexations*, the ideal component that can be communicated by musical notation or demonstration sinks to the background, and erases itself through numbing monotony. What then is foregrounded is the infinite variation of the grain of the sound. Thought in another way, both Cage's practice, taken as a whole, and the practice of Zen Buddhism, constitute a series of acts repeated for their own sake. In Zen it is said, according to Cage: 'If something is boring after two minutes, try it for four. If still boring, try it for eight, sixteen, thirty-two, and so on. Eventually one discovers that it is not boring at all but very interesting.'³⁹ Even in the monotony one finds change. According to Dick Higgins—in his essay "Boredom and Danger"—in the experience of hearing *Vexations*, boredom is soon replaced by a 'euphoria' in which the environment becomes part of the piece. Yet the initial experience of boredom is for Higgins an essential part of the shift in the perception of the audience from structure to environment. Commenting on Fluxus works, Higgins writes:

...in the context of work which attempts to involve the spectator, boredom often serves a useful function: as an opposite to excitement and as a means of bringing emphasis to what it interrupts, causing us to view both elements freshly.⁴⁰

For Husserl, intentional analysis, and indeed, constitution of the object depends, according to Caputo, on predelineation (*Vorzeichnung*), and *Abschattung*—which, as Ca-

puto points out, means not only adumbrations but also a kind of shadowing. This means that the intentional object is fore-shadowed, traced, or prepared for in advance. Thus as Caputo observes: ‘The progress of experience is not a matter of continually being amazed by what is ever new, or being confounded by the flux, but rather of filling in (*Erfüllung*) already predelineated horizons (or, alternatively, of revising expectations when we are indeed surprised).’⁴¹ The work of the anticipatory sketch of *Vor-zeichnen*, and the foreshadowing, the building up of fore-meanings, make Husserl’s intentional analysis, for Caputo, ‘a philosophy of repetition that moves forward.’⁴² Yet as Caputo makes clear, the radical implications of this proto-hermeneutics are more or less overshadowed by Husserl’s Cartesianism, which in its eidetic idealising movement, stabilises the flux, and keeping a safe distance from it, arrests its play, maintaining a transcendental standpoint outside it.⁴³

But even if we acknowledge this proto-hermeneutical structure of horizons in Husserl’s project, how does this moving back and forth between assimilation and revision of experience and horizon, differ from Gadamer’s hermeneutics? How is a synthesising repetition that moves forward any different from the Hegelian *Aufhebung* that lifts upward? For Caputo the answer lies in the idea of intentionality, and its most radical implications are carried out, not by Husserl but Heidegger. According to Kisiel, the implications of Husserl’s idea of intentionality are that:

All of our experiences, beginning with our most direct perceptions, are from the start already expressed, indeed interpreted. This Diltheyan emphasis of the intentional structures described by Husserl in *Logical Investigations* is the seminal insight of Heidegger’s hermeneutical breakthrough in 1919, leading to a pretheoretical solution to the problem of intuition and expression, and thus to a more radical conception of phenomenology...⁴⁴

But Caputo’s sense of repetition must be further distinguished from Gadamer’s horizon-structure by the way that it is informed by the radicalised reinscriptions of Husserl’s phenomenology performed by Derrida’s deconstruction. Creative repetition that moves forward is understood to be prior to the immediacy of the living present. Rather than being secondary to presence—rendering it present in another repetition—repetition produces it in the first place.

8.6 Experience and Concrete Knowing

As we have seen, the work of art that would wish to deliver us over to the flux, in immediate experience, in such a way as to bring to us unmediated access to the things themselves, risks falling, on the one hand, into a naïve empiricism, and on the other hand, into mute ineffability. If the work is to reveal something that is not a simple matter of fact, but nonetheless provides us with a primordial knowing, then this risk must surely be avoided. Husserl's phenomenology answers this demand by bracketing off the external world in the phenomenological reduction. But this reduction comes at the price of putting materiality and context out of play. Husserl's transcendental experience comes at the expense of diminishing the more radical hermeneutic strategies of repetition in predelineation.

The object of my analysis here is to question a practice of art—aural or visual—that turns to the immediacy of direct sensuous experience in order to arrive at the things themselves. Can such a practice constitute research, or a way of knowing—perhaps a concrete knowing? Such a question is perhaps a metaphysical question. As Derrida remarks in *Speech and Phenomena*: even after Husserl had freed his project from metaphysical—dogmatic, speculative—presuppositions: ‘is not idea of knowledge, and the theory of knowledge in itself metaphysical?’ (*SP* 5). Indeed, as Samuel Weber points out, the idea of universal knowledge, ‘as both *unifying* and *totalizing*,’ is essentially Cartesian.⁴⁵ As Weber observes, ‘all knowledge entails both contact with the unknown and the effort to comprehend it’⁴⁶ that is, to assimilate what is different to the same. Weber asks: ‘how is it possible to “know” for certain that in thereby assimilating the hitherto unrecognized “object” to what is familiar, we are not abandoning or losing precisely that which makes it other?’⁴⁷ On the other hand, as Rodolphe Gasché contends, a certain notion of universal validity ensures ‘the minimal condition under which Otherness as Otherness can be thought.’⁴⁸ In respect to this necessity, Gasché argues that the work of Heidegger and Derrida, although constituting an ‘overcoming of traditionalisms,’ still maintains a complex relation to philosophical tradition and its ‘striving for universality.’⁴⁹ But this is not to say that either of these philosophers simply continue this tradition. As Gasché makes clear, ‘it is merely to say, at first, that their endeavors make sense only with respect to that heritage of the tradition.’⁵⁰

The investigation taken by phenomenology towards knowledge of intentional objects is more than a concern with the empirical moment of an object present to (a particular) subject's perception, for if the objects are to be known and described they must exist outside a particular subject's consciousness. At the same time they must be given to consciousness, and reflection on them must be uncontaminated by philosophical presuppositions. But if the knowledge gained from the underlying forms isolated from experience in the phenomenological reduction is to be knowledge at all, it must be universally valid. The same experience must be able to be repeated without variation by different subjects. Since the objects of our knowledge must be *ideal* identities, yet they must be found in experience, Husserl's phenomenology must be able to locate an invariable and infinitely repeatable core of intuitive evidence in perception. As we have seen, in view of his aspirations for phenomenology to be a rigorous science, and thus, in spite of the more radical implications of his own theory of pre-delineatory horizon-structures, Husserl strives for a starting point that is free of all presuppositions. But Derrida asks: is not phenomenology constituted from within by a metaphysical presupposition? The unchecked assumption that Derrida finds operating at the deepest level in Husserl's phenomenology is the privilege given to the present in the phenomenological principle of principles, where the 'original self-giving evidence' is regarded, as Derrida sees it, 'as the source and guarantee of all value' (SP 5). The presence of the living present becomes the ultimate form of ideality and court of appeal for the phenomenological description of objects and the knowledge derived from Husserl's method. As Derrida elaborates, this notion of presence, which is certainly not a conception originating with Husserl, but a traditional concept—and hence a presupposition—is both spatial and temporal: spatial in the sense of proximity to the object of intuition; and temporal in the sense of proximity to a knife-edged moment in time. However, in seeking to uncover the metaphysical presuppositions, Derrida's deconstruction employs the various strata of Husserl's text against each other in order, not to bring the project of phenomenology tumbling down but rather, to liberate its most radical implications.

Husserl, as Derrida argues, never relinquishes this notion of presence to, or self-presence in consciousness, 'where "consciousness" means nothing other than the possibility of the self-presence of the present in the living present' (SP 9), and this living presence, Derrida insists, finds its most privileged form in 'living speech' (SP 10). On the

other hand, phenomenology constitutes a philosophy of life because the source of meaning in perception is in the act of living. But the transcendental reduction divides the concept of life into empirical or worldly life on the one hand, and transcendental self-present ideal life on the other. As we have seen, the transcendental reduction or *epochē* suspends or ‘brackets’ the worldly along with the question of the existence of the given object, and what comes under analysis is an ideal correlation of a thing in consciousness. The very ideality of the *eidos*, or essence, for Husserl, is what makes it repeatable.

In *Logical Investigations*, Husserl divides the concept of the sign into two heterogeneous elements: expression (*Ausdruck*) and indication (*Anzeichen*). For Husserl, only expression carries meaning, while indication—a mode of signification that empirically points to, or stands for things—is not inherently meaningful; does not express a ‘meaning,’ or a ‘sense.’ Expression, on the other hand, consists of a meaning intention, or intentional force, which ‘animates’ a non-sensible signifier. Pure expression takes place within the immediacy of a self-present consciousness, in the realm of what Husserl calls ‘solitary mental life,’ where expressions ‘*no longer serve to indicate anything*,’ yet they still ‘function meaningfully’ (LI 183 §1, Husserl’s emphasis). Expression, however, becomes incorporated with indication when language passes over into the sphere of intersubjective communication, or everyday speech. Derrida argues that Husserl’s distinction between these two elements of signification—a distinction that serves to retain the possibility of an ideal self-present meaning—is possible only if expression can effectively take place within the interior monologue of solitary mental life, without any contamination from indicative signification.

In our interior thinking to ourselves, Husserl argues, there is no communication, and no work for indicative signs to do, they are ‘quite purposeless (*ganz zwecklos wäre*)’ (LI 191 §8, SP 49). They are useless, according to Husserl, because our mental experience is always immediately present to us in solitary mental life. In the silent monologue that we carry on with ourselves, Husserl says, ‘one merely conceives of (*man stellt sich vor*) oneself as speaking and communicating’ (LI 191 §8, SP 49). One represents oneself—or literally places oneself before oneself. In imagining that we communicate to ourselves we represent a fiction in the form of an imaginary representation, which, as Derrida points out, is later defined by Husserl as a neutralising representation (*Vergegenwärtigung*).

Husserl's insistence that signs are useless in solitary mental life, Derrida argues, must assume that representation (in all its senses) is merely an accidental by-product that is neither essential to, nor constitutive of, effective communication. However, in effective communication, words or signs must be recognisable as essentially the same throughout all their empirical variations. In order to be repeated, the sign must have a non-worldly ideal identity. Derrida, however, reverses this metaphysical schema, arguing that the condition of ideality rests on repeatability. Since the basic element of this structure of repetition 'can only be representative' (SP 50), repeatability implies representation in all its senses: '*Vorstellung*, the locus of ideality in general, as *Vergegenwärtigung*, the possibility of reproductive repetition in general, and as *Repräsentation*, insofar as each signifying event is a substitute' (SP 50).

Thus Derrida argues, that as soon as speech, or the interior monologue is admitted to representation, even as *Vorstellung*, the distinction between the 'real' effective communication that occurs in intersubjective acts, and the imaginary communication of interior soliloquy, becomes tenuous. Both would seem to be in one aspect or another—by virtue of the repetitive structure of signs—equally illusory, and equally effective. The maintenance of this distinction—which is not exclusive to Husserl's phenomenology, but belongs to the history of metaphysics—as Derrida observes, constitutes the will to 'save presence and reduce or derive the sign' (SP 51). Since *Vorstellung*, as both locus of ideality, and imaginary representation, implies all the aspects of signification in general that Husserl wishes to exclude from expression, then it would, against Husserl's intention, depend on the possibility of repetition and re-presentation, rather than on real presence. This brings Derrida to suggest that 'The presence-of-the-present is derived from repetition and not the reverse' (SP 52), and this means that it is possible to say that repetition becomes constitutive for experience of all idealities. However, the self-proximity of lived experience to itself, and the non-necessity of any signitive operation in solitary mental life, is further justified in Husserl's texts, Derrida observes, by the temporal notion of the present as point or *stigme*. The subject does not need to communicate to itself because, Husserl argues, such mental acts are 'experienced at that very moment (*im selben Augenblick*)' (LI 191 §8). Literally 'in the blink of an eye.'

8.7 The Temporal Experience of the Event

A significant part of Derrida's critique of the centrality of perception in phenomenology centres on Husserl's *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, based on a series of lectures given by Husserl between 1904 and 1910. In this work Husserl attempts to account for perceptions of objects which are temporally extended in a relatively brief span of time. Rather than taking its cue from visual phenomena, it thus serves as a rather sophisticated investigation into the perception of sonority. Moreover, it is an analysis that would seem to radically complicate the view of consciousness immediately present to itself in the instant of the *Augenblick*. For an example, Husserl utilises the idea of the possibility of the perception of a melody. How is it, he asks, that we perceive a melody as the idea of a melody and not a series of discreet tones bearing no relation to each other? If we were to consider the perception of temporal phenomena purely in terms of a series of discreet points in time then the melody would not be comprehensible to us. Solutions to this problem involving delayed or sustained impressions, or recourse to a theory of memory, were unacceptable to Husserl. Since the idea of the 'primal impression' is central to phenomenology, Husserl was forced to keep this idea of an impressional, present, now point despite the problems that this 'knife edge' view of time poses for the problem of temporal objects. His solution involves the idea that as each note is heard, it is heard in the present, and as next note is heard—in the now—the first note is 'shoved back.' But as the note is shoved back it is retained—or retentionally modified as 'just having been.' This retaining of each note, after it occurs, Husserl calls 'retention.' The future notes that are immediately yet to come are, in much the same way, anticipated. This Husserl calls 'protention.' Perception of the temporal object is then a complex of each primal impression along with its retentions and protentions, but this collection of impulses of present, past, and future events is maintained up to a given limit—not a hard limit but a gradual attenuation where each point retentionally, or protentionally 'shades off (*sich abschattet*)' (*PIT* 51).

This spread of gradual attenuation on either side of the present, Derrida observes, is still thought in terms of the 'self-identity of the now as point' (*SP* 61) even though the flow of time—and the structure of lived experience—is not divisible into discreet moments. Derrida writes: 'Despite all the complexity of its structures, temporality has a non-

displaceable centre, an eye or living core, the punctuality of the real now' (SP 62). This traditional notion of the now is necessary for Husserl because, in maintaining the centrality of the primal impression, it establishes the possibility of objectivity and ideality for the subjective experience of time. However, as Derrida remarks, the concepts of retention and protention tend to undo the primacy of the self-presence of the now. If the primal impression of the now point is what is perceived, and only what is perceived, then the surrounding retentions and protentions must be non-perceptions—non-actualities—and thus merely reproductive. Presence would seem to be compounded with non-presence and non-perception since the continuity of the present now and the non-present retention are both admitted to the primordial impression. This continuity, Derrida argues, shifts the dividing frontier between pure presence and non-presence, to a new position between two forms of repetition: 'retention and re-presentation' (SP 67). For Derrida, this has serious consequences for Husserl's project. What is at stake is the privilege of the living present, and the present now, that forms the core of consciousness and the ground of phenomenology. If presence is allowed to be compounded with non-presence, actuality with non-actuality, then, Derrida contends, 'the other' is admitted 'into the self-identity of the *Augenblick*' (SP, 65), thus the idea that signs are 'useless,' in the self-relation of internal monologue, becomes questionable, and phenomenology's principle of principles, the primacy of self-given evidence, is threatened. Moreover, the seemingly minor contradictions, that Derrida gathers from the strata of *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness* and *Ideas I*, combine to demonstrate that Husserl's phenomenology, far from maintaining the concept of presence as a self-securing ground, in fact 'prohibits our speaking of a simple self-identity of the present' (SP 64).

8.8 Contextured Experience

I must again emphasise that Derrida's deconstruction of Husserl's phenomenology seeks to deepen and radicalise it rather than overthrow it. In a similar way to Caputo, J. Claude Evans, argues that Derrida's notion of the trace—as being older than presence—is to be found in Husserl's notions of a pre-given structure of sense that constitutes the horizon-structure of experience. Evans demonstrates that Husserl's conception of the present is inhabited by structures of retention and protention, which are a consequence of the very 'as' structure of intentionality, where the content of each retention and protention is "something as something."⁵¹ This indicates, for Evans, that what the *Augenblick* means

for Husserl, is irreducible to ‘a simple punctual instance.’⁵² It is certainly possible to take *Speech and Phenomena* as a sympathetic reading of Husserl in this respect. However, when it comes to Husserl’s principle of principles, Derrida is less accommodating. Rather than an appeal to pure presence, John Caputo regards the principle of principles as a principle of suspicion: always suspecting there is more to what gives itself. Caputo argues:

The “principle of all principles” (*Ideas I*, §24) is not a call to naked intuition, which is how it sounds, but a summons to understand givenness in all its complexity... is no short sighted empiricism which constricts experience into isolated atoms of experience. Rather it implies a wariness of the “pretentiousness” of experience...⁵³

Again, in terms of Husserl’s horizon-structure, experience is structured according to potentialities, thus the phenomena, Caputo argues, give themselves as ‘a complex of presence and absence or, better, the explicit and the implicit, the actual and the potential.’⁵⁴ Husserl’s writings of the 1920s lead to a revision of the idea of original self-giving intuitive evidence, as it is expressed in *Ideas I*.

Despite these problems, the point I wish to make is that Derrida’s analysis demonstrates—with Husserl—that there can be no pure immediacy that is not caught up in, or inhabited by, structures of retention and protention. This certainly does not mean that Derrida denies the possibility of presence, consciousness, or self-reflection, nor does it mean that nothing is present. Rather it indicates two things: that fulfilment does not absolutely depend on presence, and that what is present is unfolded by the significative action of language. As Caputo puts it:

There is nothing —i.e., we have no access to anything—outside the textual chain which links us to things...no naked contact, no raw presence-to-presence immediacy. Without the signifier, the thing slips away altogether...⁵⁵

Caputo here notes a correspondence to this Derridean standpoint, where without recourse to signs the naked thing ‘slips away,’ and Stefan George’s final line in his poem “The Word,” discussed in Heidegger’s *Unterwegs zur Sprache*: ‘Where the word breaks off no thing may be’ (*Kein ding sei wo das wort gebricht*), (US 163, OWL 60-61, and passim, George’s capitalisation). As Caputo observes, the word gives maintenance (*Unterhaltung*) to things, by allowing a retention, and a relation to things, that lets them be. Heidegger

claims that George's poem brings us to a thinking experience *with* language, in which the poet renounces the referential naming power of signs in favour of the idea of word as relation that lets things be.

...the poet has experienced that only the word makes a thing appear as the thing it is, and thus lets it be present. The word avows itself to the poet as that which holds and sustains a thing in its Being (*US* 168, *OWL* 65-66).

Both the word and the work of art grant this maintenance, by a preserving (*Bewahrung*), and as we saw, in "The Origin of the Work of Art," Heidegger grants special status, among works of art, to poetry.⁵⁶

What does it mean for the work of art to claim that the differential trace is older than presence? For one thing it means that the claim that a work of art has on us, in our experience of it, cannot be isolated from repetition and language; cannot be removed from the social world to some hermetic and unreachable realm of ineffability. While it can be said that the work of art resists circumscription by language, and is always in excess of signification, this does not mean that the primary experience of the work can be reduced to mute sensuality which casts off discursive interpretation as secondary and derivative; always falling outside the work; always unfulfilling. Moreover, there can be no pure experience in which the work gives itself, no naked encounter with bare actuality—such as in a work like Cage's *4' 33"*—that is not already inhabited by language and signs. Insofar as it would be conceived in terms of a phenomenological revealing, the notion of sound-in-itself becomes questionable—whether it is conceived as pure correlate of consciousness, or as bare empirical actuality. On the other hand, perhaps the concern with sound-in-itself has always been, fundamentally, conceived in terms of an aesthetic disposition.

We have seen how the work of art that directs us toward bare phenomena—the flux of experience—raises questions regarding access, retention and maintenance. How do we inhabit the work? How do we engage with the flux? My purpose in examining Derrida's 'deconstruction' of phenomenology is to arrive at a way of dealing with what continues to be central to the reception of the work of art: namely experience. Without context and language, the thing—the phenomenon—tends to slip away in contingency. At the same

time, we can say that there is no absolute point of immediacy that guarantees fulfilment and plenitude. This means that we cannot appeal to a notion of a *present* present prior to and beyond discourse and thought. In view of this, if Derrida can claim that ‘there never was any “perception”’ (SP 103), and that ‘perception does not exist or that what is called perception is not primordial, that somehow everything ‘begins’ with “re-presentation”’ (SP 45 n. 4), where does this leave the concept of experience? As Derrida suggests, in *Of Grammatology*, if we still wish to use the word experience, it should be used under erasure. This does not mean that the idea of experience is contested, or that it is fictitious, or non-existent. Rather, it is because the basic way that experience is generally understood is so bound up with the Cartesian subject, and the history of Western metaphysics, that any use of the word is counter-productive to the displacement or deconstruction of that tradition. Thus we should not interpret Derrida’s comments on perception as spelling the end of experience, or of the dissolution of experience in language. The work of art, like anything else, is experienced, but the particularly modernist, present-to-the-work, mode of engagement with the work might rather be rethought in terms of repetition. The experience of the work would then be thought as, a contextured and textured product. This does not mean that experience and materiality dissolve into language and conceptuality, rather, it means that, in terms of the way the work of art is encountered, the idea of immediate experience as absolute and primary should not govern the total act of reception from a position that is beyond discursive questioning. This is, to some extent, the way that Derrida himself responds to a question posed by Terry Smith in Sydney in 1999, which I will summarise in the following way: does the artistic drive to flee from discourse—in either pure opticality, absolute materiality, or dematerialisation—equate to a desire to perceive without knowing, or is art always caught up in a form of writing broadly and differentially conceived as *écriture*? Derrida answers that his thinking has attempted to open a space in which sonic, vocal, tactile or optical impressions, come to be interpreted as traces in terms of a reading-writing (*écriture*) that is not, however, hierarchically subjected to logocentric authority of verbal discourse. He further responds by saying: ‘Visual art is never totally “pure,” never free of traces, which, implicitly or not, inscribe the possibility of phonetic or even verbal discourse in the most visual and the mute aspects of so-called visual art.’⁵⁷ The drives to the purely sensual—pure opticality, pure hapticality, pure sonority—Derrida claims are, prevented from reaching pure fulfilment

in full plenitude by their own inherent spatio-temporal ‘spacing’: ‘as an interval of conjunction/disjunction, as interruption, and by reference to another trace.’⁵⁸ Thought in this way—which I suggest is the very way that Heidegger conceives of the work of art—the work functions in a space in which the work is neither dominated, assimilated or circumscribed by discourse, nor lifted above discourse in a realm of pure mute presence of non-knowing or, as Smith says, ‘at least a kind of knowing that is so transparent that it doesn’t require a translation back into the world.’⁵⁹ We might say, in short, that works of art are in some way intertwined with theory but are not reducible to theory.

8.9 The Logic of Identity

What then is at stake is the question of knowledge re-examined in the light of a thinking based in difference? Vincent Descombes describes how the criticism of phenomenology in France after 1960, taken up under the banner of structuralism, centres on what was seen as the most insidious form of the Hegelian dialectic: ‘the logic of identity.’⁶⁰ As Descombes puts it: ‘what they saw as the “logic of identity” is that form of thought which cannot represent the *other* to itself without reducing it to the *same*, and thereby subordinating difference to identity’.⁶¹ Traditionally, this reduction has been countered, Descombes continues, by the philosophers of difference: Nietzsche, Heidegger—and, as some commentators, such as Samuel Weber, and John D. Caputo, have added: Kierkegaard. As Weber argues, it is with these philosophers, along with Derrida and Gilles Deleuze, that the notion of repetition ‘confounds the traditional logic of identity.’⁶² Weber contends, that with Derrida’s reconfiguration of the self-securing Cartesian subject, where the supposed immediacy of self-presence is already inhabited by repetition and substitution: ‘the model of knowledge thus shifts from one conceived in terms of self-expression and self-production—understood as constituting the distinctively “human”—to one that has to negotiate with a notion of possibility no longer construed as a provisional mode of self-fulfillment but rather as a radical and aporetic dynamic of differentiation.’⁶³

Weber demonstrates that Derrida’s insight is displayed by a curious anomaly in the English language—one which might not turn out to be an anomaly after all. We say in English that we *recognise* rather than *cognise*. This repetition of cognition—at the heart of cognition, Weber suggests, ‘is nothing short of scandalous: it proceeds from the suspicion

that the second in a series *turns out* to be prior to all identification or constitution of the first. How can the second “precede” the first?”⁶⁴ The way in which our cognition is always inhabited by re-presentation, where, as Derrida insists, ‘the *re-* of this re-presentation does not signify the simple—repetitive or reflexive—reduplication that *befalls* a simple presence,’ (*SP* 57 n. 6), is marked elsewhere in Derrida’s writing as *iterability*. The second precedes the first, in Derrida’s notion of iterability, Weber argues, ‘because nothing can be recognized as being identical with itself—nothing can be “cognized”—without first being *re-*cognized: that is, without being repeated, compared with an earlier instance, and through that comparison being constituted as self-same.’⁶⁵ The challenge, I suggest, after Weber, is to rethink the experience of art—and of experience in general—in terms of iterability. Such a thinking would involve a displacing of the traditional notions of subjectivised aesthetics: the primacy and immediacy of perception in lived experience, as well as taste and genius. Iterability—as Weber puts it—‘irritates.’ That is, ‘it excites, impels one to leave the confines of the familiar and the consoling; it troubles, confuses, and confounds, producing precisely the effects that the Cartesian method was designed to eliminate,’ notably: temporality, memory, and forgetting.⁶⁶ This would also be, as Weber contends, a rethinking of the singular in such a way as to resist subsuming the particular under the general. Rather, the singular becomes what is left behind: the remainder. Thought in these terms, I would suggest that the experience of art is still an experience, but an experience that is already inhabited by repetition, re-presentation, and alterity. The forms of repetition that inhabit the receptive experience of the work of art are discursive and contextual. I will examine Derrida’s notion of iterability in more detail in the next chapter, along with the question of an ethics of *Gelassenheit*.

9. Against Expression: Poethics

The previous chapter examined the limits of immediate and concrete intuition, and the limits of experience in general. The traditional modernist view of art places experience as primary in any engagement with the work of art, where it becomes the ultimate court of appeal when it comes to questioning the value of a work of art. The conclusion reached was that in the wake of deconstruction it is possible to say that art can never be purely optical or sonorous, never free of discursive textual traces. So far we have seen that a twisting free from aesthetics—which is simultaneously caught up in a twisting free from a voluntarist metaphysics—entails a questioning of the guiding notions of Western metaphysics in regard to the way they determine the tradition's possibilities. A twisting free from aesthetics thus requires the displacement of the will as it functions as the purely originating source of expression, and, indeed, the notion of 'expression' itself, as much as it describes the transport of something inner to an outside. It calls for a displacement of the drive towards purity in the experience of art where perception is always considered first and primal. Finally a twisting free from aesthetics negotiates a non-willing thinking disengaged from representational thinking. In short, such a project requires putting into question the governing notions of 'expression,' 'experience,' and 'consciousness.'

What emerges from Conceptual Art is the primacy of artist's intention, which cannot be disassociated from the problematics of what Heidegger refers to as the voluntarism of 'representational thinking.' In Chapter seven I examined the strategies of Cage and Fluxus for 'bypassing taste and memory' through the use of chance operations and methodologies of indeterminacy. I have argued that such operations constitute a radical *epochē*, that suspends judgments of taste in the creative act, and institute a letting that lets phenomena be, free of subjective presuppositions. As we have seen, no work of art can be purely will-less. At some point in the process a conscious decision has to be made by the work's creator—most often along with the decision to make a work in the first place—even if this decision is limited to the simple stipulation that a given object/phenomenon is intended as a work of art. We saw that with Conceptual Art the intention of the artist is absolute. So much so that it is possible to conceive of a work as pure idea (the material elements thought of as non-essential props). Such works, it would seem, leave nothing to chance.

On the other hand, the mode of reception that works involving non-intentional operations presuppose would appear to be constituted either by an expanded morphology, or a naïve empiricism. Experience, as I have argued is pre-structured by repetition and language.

The aim of the previous three chapters has not been to demolish the project of phenomenology but, rather, to show the ways that lead to a radicalisation of its basis. A deepening of phenomenology—or as Don Ihde, describes it, a shift from ‘first’ (Husserl) to ‘second’ (Heidegger) phenomenology—involves ‘a reevaluation and reexamination of the very language in which our experience is encased and by which it is expressed.’¹ Thus, in this chapter I shift my attention from works of art which approach bare phenomena, to works which operate within the field of language, or bring language into the field of the visual. This chapter examines the implications of the restraint, or constraint, of aleatory and non-aleatory operations of non-intentionality specifically where art turns to language. It questions the limits of intention in order to displace the primacy of agency that underlies the turn to language in Conceptual Art. On the other hand, if the reception of the work of art exceeds the formalist-aesthetic paradigm, where experience is all, and, instead, ‘actively’ engages in meaning and signification, at what point must intention fold back into the work? Does the artist not have some ethical obligation to take responsibility for the meaning of the work?

9.1 Expressivity and Expressionism

As we have seen the common aesthetic notion of expression entails the projection of something inner, subjective and personal—an emotion, something envisaged, an inner hearing, or a mood—to an outside where it resonates with the empathetic emotions of an audience. Similarly, the common view of language regards speech as the voluntary expression of an inner stratum of pre-linguistic sense that is transported and made transportable by words. What both of these conceptions have in common is the model which describes the outward projection of something inside, which is always privileged as primary, original, and prior to the outside: the realm of social relations and fulfilled meaning. The root meaning of expression derives from the Latin *exprimere*, consisting of *ex*, meaning ‘out,’ and *primere*, which signifies ‘to press.’ Expression thus means to ‘press out.’

In his later work Heidegger is deeply critical of what he calls the ‘common view’ of language, the view we arrive at, seemingly naturally, ‘at first’ (*zunächst*). This view, according to Heidegger, sees terms, or word-sounds, as ‘kegs’ or ‘buckets’ in which a pre-given sense-content is able to be contained. In *What is Called Thinking*, he writes:

At first (*zunächst*), words may easily appear to be terms... What is non-sensual in the terms is their sense, their signification. Accordingly, we speak of sense-giving acts that furnish the word sound with a sense. Terms thus become either full of sense, or more meaningful. The terms are like buckets or kegs out of which we can scoop sense. (*WHD* 88, *WCT* 128-129)

As Heidegger notes, the dictionary provides us with a model of this view of language, of ‘how things look “at first,”’ with ‘its two constituents, sound-structure and sense-content.’ (*WHD* 88, *WTC* 129). But this common view, Heidegger argues, although seemingly correct, is not necessarily that which is nearest, authentically to us, in our relation to the world, ‘words are not terms, and thus are not like buckets and kegs which we scoop content that is there’ (*WHD* 89, *WCT* 130). Thus, Heidegger explains, language is not a tool or medium of expression, nor does it constitute the field of expression. Rather, ‘language speaks’ (*Die Sprache spricht*) in the context of the matter at hand. Words—rather than buckets holding static contents—are active like ‘wellsprings (*Brunnen*),’ fluid and adaptable to both historical change and context (*WHD* 89, *WTC* 130). The common ‘at first’ conception of language as expression, which is ‘correct but externally contrived’ (*EGT* 77), goes back to the time of the Greeks, where, as Heidegger contends, ‘Language is *phōnē semantikē*, a vocalization which signifies something... suggests that language attains at the outset that preponderant character which we designate with the name “expression”’ (*EGT* 77). With the term ‘expression’ (*Expression* or *Ausdruck*) many aspects of Heidegger’s later project come into view. The overcoming of aesthetics, and the overcoming of metaphysics, in certain senses require the refusal of the idea of expression. In order to get beyond the aesthetic view of art we must go beyond seeing it, Heidegger says, ‘from the point of view of expression and impression—the work as expression, and the impression as experience, (*das Werk als Expression und die Impression als Erlebnis*)’ (*WHD* 87, *WTC* 128). The way to apprehending language in terms other than the common view of expression, Heidegger claims, is to think the essence of language from the essence of Be-

ing: to think in the word *Logos* the Being of beings, but further, to think non-conceptually (*begrifflos*) (*WHD* 128, *WCT* 212), in a manner that is not captive to the system (*systema*) of Western thinking (*WHD* 129, *WTC* 213).

The essentialist drive of expressionism is governed by the desire to uncover the reality, or spiritual essence, hidden beneath the veil of representation and language. As Hal Foster argues: this notion of self-expression, which governs the idea of modern art in general, derives, ‘as Paul de Man noted, “from a binary polarity of classical banality in the history of metaphysics: the opposition of subject to object based on the spatial model of an ‘inside’ to an ‘outside’ world”’²—with the inside privileged as always prior. Expressionism not only conforms to this metaphysics of presence, it celebrates it. Thus according to Foster, expression is in a certain sense a form of representation that is covered over in such a way that “The expressionist quest for immediacy is taken up in the belief that there exists a content beyond convention, a reality beyond representation.”³

The attempt to overcome the notion of expression in modern art begins with Marcel Duchamp. As we have seen, under Duchamp’s influence the displacement of expression has taken different forms and nuances. Cage saw the egoless production of art as involving the prohibition of the desire to impose the expression of the artist’s feelings on others. The strategy of Conceptual Art was to replace expression with language and logical propositions, and to subordinate subjective notions of feeling, taste, and the humanistic valuation of the artist’s hand and eye, to the primacy of the idea. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, another strategy sought to radically break with the idea of expression by putting into question—in the wake of Barthes, Foucault, and Derrida—the primacy of originality. This strategic intervention became known as, among other terms, ‘appropriation art.’ What is common to all of these strategies is the idea of bypassing expression by appropriating and working with something that already exists, or would exist outside of any claim to inner originality. But it must also be noted that many of these responses have further involved a turn to language. We find in these works the idea that language, rather than functioning as a transportation and translation system that reduces pre-linguistic experience, is a system, that, along with experience and materiality, can be appropriated, manipulated and put into play.

9.2 Non-intentionality and Responsibility

Cage not only composed music and multimedia works but also generated a considerable amount of literature by means of chance operations, such as his mesostic⁴ poems, which can perhaps be seen as a strategy for moving towards a non-willing thinking. In one of the Charles Eliot Norton Lectures at Harvard (1988-89), a member of the audience puts a question to Cage concerning the methodology of Cage's mesostic writing. As the participant pointed out, when it came to words rather than sounds, Cage seemed to be violating his own compositional rules by censoring the results of chance operations—as Cage had stated in a previous lecture: 'I went through and eliminated all the words I didn't like.'⁵ If the results of chance operations—in order to be effective—are to be accepted as final, then why would Cage find it allowable, or even necessary, to alter the results when working with texts? Cage explains his methods in the following terms: that he is 'hunting' for ideas and in order to uncover them he must eliminate any other word that might get in the way of these ideas. Although Cage here speaks of musical or non-syntactic qualities (aesthetic qualities), the overriding determination for eliminating certain words would seem, rather, to be a concern with meaning. Cage refuses to allow the limitless generation of meaning because such a relinquishing of authorial responsibility might inadvertently misrepresent his views on certain issues: such as his objections to militarism and government. Thus Cage responds to his interlocutor:

...I don't know what it is that I will find but I'm looking in the mix for them [a series of words] and the only way that I can see them is to take out the ones that don't belong to them. And I use the word 'like'. It's because I'm in the position of writing a text that uses words. It's a different kind of language but it is every now and then highly suggestive, I think. And I want that suggestion to be in a spirit that I agree with.⁶

This raises a question that relates to the non-intentional aspirations of the chance operation and its subsequent polysemy where language and signification are involved. How can Cage maintain such an absolute distinction between the signifying capability of sounds on the one hand, and words and phrases on the other? It seems that, according to Cage, sounds can be taken as they are, in any contingent arrangement because, rather than being 'suggestive,' they merely fall into a non-meaningful, non-symbolic, regime of form, or

are, alternatively, incorruptible indices of the real, while words and language, in contrast—possessing suggestion and connotation—carry the risk of ideological determination. Words and representation call for responsibility. They are less like music and sounds, and more like mushrooms. Cage observes that while ‘music’ and ‘mushrooms’ occupy a space beside each other in the dictionary, submitting sounds to chance is harmless, but with mushrooms it is a matter of life or death. In conversation with Joan Retallack he describes his censoring of unwanted words as paying attention to the nature of language, where: ‘The sound sometimes becomes so powerful that one can put meaning aside. And vice versa.’⁷

One might argue that instead of adhering to a rigorous distinction between the sensuous non-signifying potentialities of sounds and the intelligible semiosis of language, the distinction that Cage sets up is perhaps only one of degree (sounds and images are weak and ambiguous generators of meaning). Yet the distinction seems to be strong enough, in Cage’s mind, to sanction the violation of previous rules. That is, for Cage, as soon as language enters the work, there is the necessity for ethical-political intervention in the field of non-intentionality. The question becomes: How can non-intentional chance operations using words and texts carry out, or fulfil the requirements for, political-ethical responsibility without compromising indeterminacy’s radical abstention from expression? Is it a matter of negotiation where a necessary conscious intervention would be seen, if not to force closure on interpretation, then at least to limit interpretation in a certain way: to steer it in a certain direction?

If we can say that the real as it is simply ‘let to be’ is always already inhabited and constituted by language, if all experience is to some extent ‘theory laden,’ then should not intentional intervention also occur at the level of sounds? If sounds can be said connote, evoke, or fall into relationships with each other—even aesthetic relationships—that are productive of historical and cultural second order meanings? Where are we to draw the line between contingent letting and volitional determination? This question becomes more central to Cage’s project when we take into account his analogical equations between structure—musical structure and hierarchical structure of performance ensembles—and political structures: for example, where he says: ‘the masterpieces of Western music exemplify monarchies and dictatorships.’⁸ These structural analogies come into

play in Cage's well known dissatisfaction with what he experienced as 'the political implications' of the 'sheer determination', overloaded with intention, of a Glenn Branca performance: 'if it was something political' Cage suggests, 'it would resemble Fascism.'⁹ If the composer is attentive to the analogical implications of such structures, Cage argues, then they can potentially be suggestive of 'desirable social circumstances.'¹⁰ These constituting structures presumably come before any aesthetic ordering of particulars that require aleatory techniques. Words, in the syntactical arrangement of sentence or message, on the other hand, represent for Cage 'training, enforcement, and finally the military.'¹¹ Although this does not prevent Cage from using instrumental language in a range of different textual productions (essays, lectures, interviews), in a significant number of texts he submits the syntactic structure of the written word to spatial displacements, and the spoken word to temporal compression and expansion. Moreover, he attempts to break the hold of instrumental language by use of chance operations. The question then is: how does Cage bypass the 'military' ordering of grammar without surrendering a certain ethical responsibility? As others have suggested, meaning is submitted to what Joan Retallack calls a 'poethics.'¹² In using this word, Retallack is referring not only to a poetics of responsibility, but a poetics 'with the courage of the [Epicurean] swerve, the project of the wager.'¹³ The swerve, the unpredictable shift in direction that, as Retallack proposes, redirects the geometry of attention, and has the potential of jolting us out of the default set of predispositions that Pierre Bourdieu calls the 'habitus.'¹⁴ In conversation with Charles Bernstein, Retallack describes the poethical in the following way:

The poethical level or dimension of a poem, for me, is the level or dimension that is evidently in contact with something beyond the personal story or the ego of the poet. Poethics is, I think, a notion that can keep one alerted to the idea that form has consequences, and that those consequences are never merely aesthetic.¹⁵

9.3 The Essential Drift of Poethics

In her essay, "Poethics of a Complex Realism," Joan Retallack explores the implications of reading one of Cage's untitled mesostic poems—in which, in order to preserve the history of thought in the poem, Cage transcribed the handwritten text with all of its alterations, directly to a typed version with words crossed and *uncrossed* out. The visible erasure, in conjunction with the tension between the horizontal and vertical structures of the

mesostic poem, which entice the reader to read in both directions, make it difficult to privilege one 'correct' univocal linear trajectory through the text. The multiple reading possibilities function, according to Retallack, 'within a poethics of complex realism where active processes of mutability are valued over simpler and more stable clarity.'¹⁶ They thus tend to thwart any compulsion to seek clarification by a return to authorial intention.

I would like to suggest that it is by means of these poethical texts, in which the response of the reader, viewer, or listener, is put into a playful engagement with the work, that the previously mentioned difficulties of receiving chance generated, or indeterminate, works as processes of non-intention, falls away. As Retallack argues, with these works we are encouraged to take chances in our interpretive interactions, and find delight in their complex possibilities. The reader is to some extent made responsible for the meaning of the work. Loss Pequeño Glazier observes that William Carlos Williams has argued that poetry is an activity that involves a processal thinking through rather than a recollective idealised result. As Glazier, puts it, 'As the poet works, the work discovers.'¹⁷ He quotes Jackson Mac Low: 'like the seemingly senseless [Zen] *koan*, the products of nonintentional selective or generative procedures may stimulate intuition to leaps it might never otherwise dare...'¹⁸

What becomes of the composer/author's intention in such a poethics? Intention ceases to become the organising centre of the work, which would determine a singular and privileged interpretation of the work, its performance and the singularity of the (its) event. As Gerald Bruns suggests—bringing Cage's poetic activity into an engagement with the philosophy of Stanley Cavell—there is an ethical distinction between using words to grasp and render the world identical to itself, and using words to inhabit the world. Bruns maintains, however, that for Cavell, this does not equate to the abandonment of meaning but rather:

...it means being attuned, open and responsive (responsible), to the sense we do make, taking responsibility for our words (not just control of them), accepting them and where they take us...¹⁹

Reflecting on the common interest of both Cage and Cavell in the works of Henry David Thoreau, Bruns, qualifying this notion of responsive responsibility, refers us to Cavell's essay "An Emerson Mood" where he suggests that Thoreau's calling as a writer 'depends upon his acceptance of this fact about words, his letting them come to him from their own region, and then taking that occasion for inflecting them one way instead of another then and there...'”²⁰ Cage's chance operations involving texts, which, as we have seen, Bruns regards as a practical strategy of *Gelassenheit*, would seem to require the intervention of a poethical and significative inflection in regards to certain words and phrases. Jackson Mac Low, and later, some of those described as Language (or L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E) poets: Charles Bernstein, Bruce Andrews, Ron Silliman, Clark Coolidge, Lyn Hejinian, and Steve McCaffery, utilise a variety of methods—algorithmic, acrostic, diastic and nucleic—to free the selection of words from deterministic semantic valuation. Commenting on Mac Low's diastic poetry, George Hartley writes:

There is meaning in even the smallest unit because each unit suggests a larger enveloping context. Nothing occurs in isolation. Consequently, even though Mac Low produces his works through aleatoric means, with no particular meaning in mind, the result is thoroughly—inevitably—meaningful.²¹

We might say that Mac Low's work exemplifies what Derrida means by the 'essential drift' (*LInc* 9) of signification, or the structural and syntactical excess of meaning described in "Signature Event Context." Utilising Derrida's infrastructural notions of 'iterability' and the 'undecidable,' I would like to propose that a certain poethical discursive non-intentionality not only functions within a strategy which consists of an abstention from expression, but can further be seen, in a certain way, and to a certain extent, as a necessary structural condition for all meaning and communication.

9.4 Meaning-Intention

Iterability, the possibility of repetition or repeatability that is the underlying condition of all communication, or signification, either spoken or written, happens in what Derrida describes as the 'twilight' of 'a certain indeterminability' (*MC* 2), where the signifying elements of language '*simultaneously* incline toward increasing the reserves of random indetermination *as well as* the capacity for coding and overcoding or, in other words, for

control and self-regulation' (MC 2). In this way, the tension between randomness and code both disrupts and regulates 'the restless, unstable interplay of the system' (MC 2). Due to the possibility of repetition and alteration of all signifying marks, '...a context is never determined enough to prohibit all possible random deviation' (MC 4). There is, as Derrida suggests, citing Epicurus and Lucretius, 'a chance open to some *parenklisis* or *clinamen*' (MC 4), that deflects where meaning falls.

As we have seen in the last chapter, in order for something to mean something it must be repeatable. There would be no communicable signification, no re-cognition, if something presented itself only once. Iterability is this possibility of repetition but, moreover, it is a repetition that alters, that never returns to the same place in the text, never returns an unalterable univocal meaning. In this sense, for Derrida, pure repetition is impossible, and iterability is structured by both identity and difference. This is because iterability is already divided or split. Each time a self-contained identity is constituted in a signifying element it is simultaneously split because this identity can only be maintained in accordance with a differential relation to other elements not present. Thus there is always a non-present remainder of the differential and iterable mark.

For Derrida, any utterance or signifying element can not only be taken out of context, but also radically disengaged from an originating intention. As he says in the oft quoted paragraph from "Signature Event Context":

And this is the possibility on which I want to insist: the possibility of disengagement and citational graft which belongs to the structure of every mark, spoken or written, and which constitutes every mark in writing before and outside of every horizon of semio-linguistic communication; in writing, which is to say in the possibility of its functioning being cut off, at a certain point, from its "original" desire-to-say-what-one-means [*vouloir-dire*] and from its participation in a saturable and constraining context. Every sign, linguistic or non-linguistic, spoken or written (in the current sense of this opposition), in a small or large unit, can be *cited*, put between quotation marks; in so doing it can break with every given context, engendering an infinity of new contexts in a manner which is absolutely illimitable (*LInc* 12, Derrida's emphasis).

This means that no rigorous distinction can be made between ordinary and non-ordinary language use; a distinction that J. L. Austin would seem to wish to maintain in the lectures that make up *How to do Things with Words*.²² As Derrida sees it, Austin's conception of the performative proposes that what occurs in the event of the speech act, which is in the present, and in the presence of a free consciousness, is meaningful speech, which says what it means and means what it says, assured by a fully saturated and exhaustively definable context. For Derrida, the organising centre of Austin's totalising operation is thus *intention*. Derrida seeks to undo this model of communication by focusing on the elements that Austin wishes to exclude from successful communication, even though Austin himself recognises them as structural possibilities. Austin excludes the possibility of citation or 'quotability' in the performative utterance—along with instances of non-serious intent, or non-ordinary linguistic exceptions as in the case of poetry—insisting that such a possibility would be abnormal or parasitic.

In our 'normal' manner of conducting ourselves in discursive activity we fail to see iterability at work. Or if we do, we immediately wish to close it off and eliminate its effects in order to maintain univocal self-identity to signification, and assign meaning to intentional agencies—as originating sources—purely and without residue. Non-intentional poethical texts work to unsettle this will to identity and fixity. Bruns argues that Cage's poetry lets be what 'order' would seek to exclude. In accordance with his reading of Cavell, Bruns suggests that 'a crucial link between poetry and ethics lies in allowing words (the sounds of parts of words, and with them the world of things, not to say of others), to live their own lives...' ²³ Whilst I agree with this observation I would further argue, following Derrida's analysis, that what is 'let be' in the poethical text is not limited to formal elements and referential relations to the world of things, but extends to the non-present remainders of differential iterability. It is according to the structure of iterability that Hartley can say that despite its aleatory nature, despite its abstention from expressive intention, Mac Low's poems come across as being inevitably meaningful. In other words, what non-intentional poetry demonstrates, perhaps in an extreme way, is that although intention is suspended, signification still functions, and the distinction that Austin wishes to make between normal and abnormal instances can be seen to break down. But if the structure of linguistic communication is iterable, that is, repeatable and alterable, and able to carry its meaning beyond the presence or death of its author, this

does not mean, as Derrida maintains, that intention is ruled out altogether, rather: ‘it will have its place, but from that place it will no longer be able to govern the entire scene and system of utterance [*l’énonciation*]’ (*LInc* 18).

9.5 *Vouloir Dire*

What is at stake here corresponds precisely to what is at stake in Derrida’s earlier work *Speech and Phenomena*, and the essay “Differance”; that is, the privilege given (in both phenomenology and linguistics) to the plenitude of intentional meaning; of wanting-to-say (*vouloir-dire*) that finds its perfect vehicle in living speech.²⁴ This rests on a presupposition that ‘prior to signs and outside them... something such as consciousness is possible,’ and moreover, ‘even before the distribution of its signs in space and in the world, consciousness can gather itself up in its own presence...’ (*SP* 146-7). This traditional metaphysical notion, as Derrida contends, constitutes the privilege given to consciousness, the present, and consciousness as meaning (*vouloir-dire*) in self-presence. In the translator’s introduction to *Writing and Difference*, Alan Bass points out that Derrida’s deployment of *vouloir-dire* refers to the metaphysical concept of voluntarism, the critique of which, he observes, comes from Heidegger’s confrontation with Nietzsche’s doctrine of the will. The ‘tradition of a voluntaristic metaphysics’ (*SP* 34) that Derrida locates first, in Husserl’s demarcation of expression (*Ausdruck*), of the vocal medium—as the exclusive site for meaningful signification, as that which animates a meaning-intention—and, second, in Austin’s idea of the intentional consciousness essential to the total context of all communication, which, in Derrida’s view, constitutes the metaphysical *telos* of language as ‘voluntary consciousness as meaning [*comme vouloir-dire*]’ (*SP* 36, 147). The idea of pure expression that Derrida finds in Husserl’s description of solitary mental life constitutes the voluntary exteriorisation of a pre-expressive substratum of sense, that is, a pre-linguistic inner presence in an act of self-transparency. What then are the implications of this metaphysical voluntarism for Derrida?

Those concepts that would seek to govern from the centre, Rodolphe Gasché describes as ‘desiderata,’ which, since Plato, have been ethico-teleological values ‘not only of what is but what *ought* to be.’²⁵ As Gasché observes: ‘all these desiderata of philosophy are thus concepts of unity, totality, identity, cohesion, plenitude, states of non-contradiction, in which the negative has been absorbed by the positive, states that lack, and by all rights

precede, all dissention, difference, and separation, states of peace and reconciliation.²⁶ In Derrida's terms, these values, as we have seen, not only animate hierarchical binary distinctions where the negative term is subordinate to the positive, but also emphasise a priority in which one concept precedes another in such a way that the metaphysical tradition conceives 'good to be before evil, the positive before the negative, the pure before the impure, the simple before the complex, the essential before the accidental, the imitated before the imitation, etc.' (*LInc* 93). Instead of directly submitting this idealism to criticism, Derrida, rather, puts it into question in order to discover its force and necessity, and determine—in the act of tracing each exigency back to its deployment in the text of philosophy—its 'intrinsic limit' (*LInc* 93). At many of the decisive moments in each text, meaning is, in a certain way, *found*, and any deconstructive intervention must proceed not by way of the imposition of a will, but by the necessity of what the text demands and according to its syntactical structure:

The *incision* of deconstruction, which is not a voluntary decision or an absolute beginning, does not take place just anywhere, or in an absolute elsewhere. An incision, precisely, it can be made only according to the lines of force and forces of rupture that are localizable in the discourse to be deconstructed... This analysis is *made* in the general movement of the field, and is never exhausted by the conscious calculation of a "subject" (*Pos* 82, Derrida's emphasis).

If the production of texts is liberated from any meaning-intention (of its author), then how are authors to be held responsible for what they produce? How can one, in the play, acceptance, or letting of language, bypass definitive semanticism without surrendering ethical-political responsibility? In the 'Afterword' of *Limited Inc*, in reply to a question from Gerald Graff (the book's editor), Derrida speaks, in a manner that would seem to resonate with Heidegger's *Entschlossenheit*, of how the singularity of the undecidable 'opens the field of decision.' (*LInc* 116):

It calls for a decision in the order of ethical-political responsibility. It is even its necessary condition. A decision can only come into being in a space that exceeds the calculable program that would destroy all responsibility by transforming it into a programmable effect of determinate causes. There can be no moral or political re-

sponsibility without this trial and this passage by way of the undecidable. Even if a decision seems to take only a second and not to be preceded by any deliberation, it is structured by this *experience and experiment of the undecidable* (*LInc* 116, Derrida's emphasis).

9.6 The Limits of Meaning

But how does the undecidable open up or call for an ethical-political decision? How does intention function in this drift of the undecidable? This is also very much the question of poethics, as Retallack puts it: 'How can writing and reading be integral to making sense and *newsense* (sometimes taken for *nonsense*) as we enact an ongoing poetics of everyday life?'²⁷ It is to a similar question that Derrida responds:

I try to *write* (in) the space in which is posed the question of speech and meaning. I try to write the question: (what is) meaning to say [*vouloir dire*]? Therefore it is necessary in such a space, and guided by such a question, that writing literally mean nothing. Not that it is absurd in the way that absurdity has always been in solidarity with metaphysical meaning. It simply tempts itself, tenders itself, attempts to keep itself at the point of exhaustion of meaning (*Pos* 14).

A writing that tenders itself at the boundary of the exhaustion of meaning, Derrida emphasises, is not absurd, nor, would we expect, irrational or aesthetic—either in the sense of formal autonomy, or the sense of functioning as a signifier for expression (or life) itself (wanting to express without meaning as much as wanting to mean). We are reminded of Heidegger's insistence that the irrationality of aesthetic *Erlebnis* would be the completion of representational thinking, and thus 'in solidarity with metaphysical meaning.' Derrida continues:

To risk meaning nothing is to start to play, and first to enter into the play of *différance* which prevents any word, any concept, any major enunciation from coming to summarize and to govern from the theological presence of a centre the movement and textual spacing of differences... (*Pos* 14, Derrida's emphasis).

But this play does not escape from ethical-political responsibility. On the one hand, as Niall Lucy observes, 'neither "text" nor "writing" can *avoid* being ethical-analytical.'²⁸ On

the other hand, the discourse of philosophy cannot escape, as Lucy argues, the unwanted effects of what it claims to be purely different from, namely, literature and the ‘non-serious.’ Thus there can always be other readings or misreadings of any text. An author has responsibility for their text, but since intention is dispersed across various authorial motives, desires, citations, quotations, other authors, and so forth, responsibility, as Derrida claims in “Limited Inc a b c...,” can only be limited responsibility (*LInc* 75). Language in the aleatoric poetry of the Language Poets, or of Cage, would call to be inflected according to an ethical-political decision that has only limited responsibility.

Cage and Mac Low’s insistence on nonintentional procedures has much in common with the French group Oulipo (*Ouvroir de Littérature Potentielle*). In proposing the primacy of what they call the ‘formal constraint,’ Oulipo seek to devalue traditional literary notions of inspiration and genius in the production of texts. Their work employs mathematical structures which work as constraining procedures in the generation of poetry and novels. However, since Oulipo is primarily concerned with the relation between mathematics and literature, it is essential, in their view, that the constraining system is not only brought to the foreground, but that the text successfully illustrates the mathematical theory of the constraint. In other words, the process is seen as an essential part of the work. As a consequence of their historical association with surrealism, however, in contrast to Cage and Mac Low, Oulipo polemically distance themselves from aleatorics. This is understandable when we consider the stress that some of the surrealists put on links between aleatory procedures, and the Freudian unconscious.²⁹ Chance has tended, in surrealist theories, to be regarded as a means of quasi-mystical transcendence. Queneau’s rejection of the aleatory, Jacques Roubaud observes, is a ‘rejection of the mystical belief according to which freedom may be born from the random elimination of constraints.’³⁰ There are, however, a number of contradictions in the Oulipian theorisation of ‘anti-chance.’ First, does not the adoption of a chance operation function as a constraint? How can it—despite the mystical Dada/Surrealist rhetoric—constitute the elimination of constraints? Second, Queneau insists on what he calls *voluntary*, or *conscious* approach to literature, by which he means, not that *writing* should be spontaneous or rational, but that the *formal constraint* must be consciously predetermined and voluntarily enforced. If what is conscious and voluntary is the adherence to the procedure rather than what it suspends, how cannot the same be said of aleatory systems? Further, what is meant by freedom? Are Ou-

lipo referring to a freedom *of* expression and decision, or a freedom *from* expression and decision? I have argued that recourse to the aleatory constitutes the latter, whilst the ‘arbitrary’ constitutes the former. That is, the chance operation is as much a constraint as the mathematical procedure. As Mac Low observes, both chance and what he calls ‘deterministic procedures’ are non-intentional. Indeed, Mac Low thought of procedures such as the ‘reading-through’ methods of acrostics and diastics as chance operations as late as 1961. This is understandable because, for all intents and purposes, both act as a radical constraint or abstention from taste and egoity.

Deterministic reading through procedures—such as acrostics, mesostics, diastics, or mathematical operations such as the Oulipian (s + 7) method³¹—differ from chance, however, because—assuming that the source and seed texts remain the same—they will always deliver the same results. Mac Low’s poem, number nine from the HSCH series, “Our Throng Is Too Much Involved with Dazzle,” begins with an epigraph consisting of a quote from Charles Hartshorne—American philosopher and student of both Husserl and Heidegger—which is used as the ‘seed text’ for the poem. It reads: ‘Surely a principle...illustrated in experience is worth two or a million verbally formulated principles for which a single illustration in the given is lacking.’ The first four strophes (out of nine) of the poem are as follows:

Our throng is too involved with memories.
Prepare to be altering ways of relating with clouds.

Perhaps we’ll remember the young and the immortal.

We may relate with pleasures and [quote] “pleasures” [unquote].
These constitute experience as some know it.
Could it be a diver’s experience?

Who’d call an experience a “[quote] ‘experience’ [unquote]?”
Who’d call a pleasure experienced now a “[quote] ‘pleasure’ [unquote]?”
Though no single experience is best, two might be delightfully pooled.
Or sulkily struggle.³²

The 'seed,' or 'index' is a short text by which the sequence of letters maps the space-time placement of word derived from the source texts. Often in Cage's and Mac Low's procedural texts it consists of a proper name, such as James Joyce or Ezra Pound. Mac Low's method, however, mixes non-intentionality with volition, whereby he would 'write freely' between 'nucleus words' derived from the systematic operations.³³ Mac Low's 'working from nuclei' procedure seeks to make connections between the derived words and develop the relation of the poem to the seed text. This relation between poem and seed text is exemplified in the above poem where the question of 'experience' in the seed text is repeatedly read through the source texts (of Hartshorne, Gertrude Stein, Lewis Carroll, and Gerard Manley Hopkins) and written back into the poem. Mac Low's utilisation of aleatory, reading-through, and nucleic methods, involves a strategy of iterability that constitutes a creative repetition: a repetition that alters.

Poethical texts inscribe the conditions of their own reception. They explicitly prescribe against the idea that there can be one singular univocal reading, and that such a reading could be directly attributed to an authorial intention. Part of the force of works engaging with non-intentionality, is their capacity to make explicit the implicit structure of iterability, and thus make legible that the conditions for reading the work do not involve a quest for authorial intentionality. The play of the poetic text cannot escape the pull of ethico-analytic responsibility any more than philosophy can escape the effects of literature and the 'nonserious.' What the structure of iterability shows is that any internality of an 'expressed' meaning is already marked by an externality that consists of a textual spacing of differences and a citational network of referrals to other texts. This is no less true for the work of art. Expression, or the meaning to be expressed is, as Derrida maintains, 'always already carried outside itself. It already differs (from itself) before any act of expression. And only on this condition can it "signify"' (*Pos* 33). What is given in a work of art is irreducible to an artist's intention. Consequently, the model of intentional expression cannot be a reliable means to accessing what is given in the work of the work of art, and authorial responsibility is at best a limited responsibility.

10. Conceptual Art as Poetry

Throughout the last few chapters I have attempted to elucidate various forms of philosophical naivety, which have attracted the attention of both Heidegger and Derrida. In chapter eight and nine we saw how Derrida identified, in the metaphysical aspect of Husserl's phenomenology, a consistent recourse to a pre-linguistic stratum of sense that forms the basis of expression. In chapter nine we saw a similar dismissal of the transparency of language in Heidegger's argument against the 'kegs and buckets' view of language as a simple conduit for pre-existing meaning. Further, we saw, in chapter nine, how the transparency of utterance to intention—as a wanting-to-say—is displaced in Derrida's notion of iterability. We should also be able to see that the traditional notions of truth as either a simple unveiling (*alētheia*), or as resemblance (*homoiōsis*, *adaequatio*) rely on a form of linguistic transparency. The naivety of transparency belongs to what both Heidegger and Derrida, in different ways, ascribe to a certain natural attitude. However this attitude towards language, or towards things, is certainly not the same as the natural attitude that the Husserlian *epochē* puts into suspension. My argument throughout this thesis has been that the work of art displaces this natural attitude towards language, things and experience. This work of estrangement, as my argument goes, would be the philosophical work that the work of art carries out. What I am saying is that works of art raise our vigilance toward our constant tendency to slip back into the natural attitude.

Towards the end of "The Origin of the Work of Art," Heidegger proclaims that all art is in essence poetry (*Dichtung*). Heidegger does not mean poetry (*Poesie*) in the narrow sense of poetry of the page and the voice but, rather, 'poetic composition in the wider sense' (*HW* 60-61, *BW* 198): composition which does not necessarily have to take linguistic form. Yet, Heidegger still claims a privileged position for the linguistic work in the realm of art. In order to see why this is so, Heidegger argues we need a concept of language which, employing words, and not terms, is non-transparent. However, this opacity of the poetic word, rather than just closing in on its own self-referentiality, and locking out the world, instead, in an act of naming, brings entities into the open for the first time. Openness is the consequence, not of a direct encounter with things, where, in the process of truth, the signifier effaces itself but, rather, it is an encounter with a certain

materiality or solidity of the word. 'Where there is no language,' Heidegger maintains, 'there is no openness of beings, and consequently no openness of nonbeing and of the empty' (*HW* 61, *BW* 198). Language is thus, as Heidegger puts it in *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, 'the house of Being (*Die Sprache ist das Haus des Seins*)' (*US* 166, *OWL*, 63).

10.1 Poetry as Conceptual Art

The language use of the avant-garde, Gerald Bruns argues, '...is not a purely differentiated species confined to the realm of the aesthetic, neutral, or disengaged dimension of human culture. Rather, precisely by virtue of its materiality, poetry enjoys a special ontological relation with ordinary things of the world.'¹ This ontological relation, however, involves an estrangement that breaks open an open place, and thrusts the ordinary into the unusual. Poetry, as Bruns argues, gives us access to the self-assertive thing by shattering the objectifying hold that we impose upon it, revealing its 'radical singularity.'² In Heidegger's conception of *Dichtung*, Bruns observes, 'poetry opens thinking to the withdrawal of language—holds open the possibility of a "thinking experience with language."³ This true thinking experience (*Erfahrung*) is thought in terms of a journey, an experience that transforms us, as Heidegger says: 'Experience means *eundo assequi*, to obtain something along the way, to obtain something by going on a way... He [the poet] obtains entrance into the relation of word to thing' (*US* 169, *OWL* 66). Rather than being a way to gaining knowledge, Heidegger maintains, 'Thinking cuts furrows into the soil of Being' (*US* 173, *OWL* 70).

Bruns sees poetry as a kind of conceptual art, which 'is philosophically interesting when it is innovative not just in its practices but, before everything else, in its poetics (that is, in its concepts or theories of itself)'.⁴ A poem that is '*philosophically* interesting,' is, for Bruns, one that 'is *not* self-evidently a poem but something that requires an argument, theory or conceptual context as a condition of being experienced as a poem...'⁵ In a certain way this corresponds to Heidegger's conception that the work of art possesses a certain autonomy, in the extended sense that it opens up a space for its own happening. The work founds its world and thus generates the conditions of its own reception. This autonomy of the work of art is not one that closes off, in the sense of art for art's sake, but an autonomy that always comes back to a questioning of the nature of art. According to this way of thinking, what counts as a work of art, is never a work that is self-evidently

a work of art but, rather, works that throw their own conditions of reception as art into question.

Bruns' consideration of poetry—or at least philosophically interesting poetry—as a species of conceptual art, by which he means that a poem produces a theory of itself by articulating the enabling conditions that allow it to be experienced as a poem—where what determines a poem is not its superficial resemblance to other poems but the argument that it provides for itself in terms of 'counting' as a poem—has much in common with Joseph Kosuth's argument, in "Art After Philosophy," that a conceptual work of art is a proposition which is a definition of art. As Kosuth says, after Duchamp, all art is conceptual. And as Bruns notes, Duchamp's unassisted readymades indicate the 'degree zero' of what counts as art. The readymade reduces the work of art to an act of pure nomination, such as in Robert Rauschenberg's telegram artwork *This is a Portrait of Iris Clert if I Say So*; or Donald Judd's line, quoted by Kosuth: 'If someone calls it art, it's art.' Although both Kosuth's authorial-nominal conceptualism, and the tradition of modern and contemporary poetry that Bruns argues for—from Gertrude Stein to John Cage to the Language poets—can be linked to Duchamp's thinking about art, the two interpolations have serious philosophical differences. The major difference between the two involves the conception and the use of language.

10.2 Transparency and Opacity of the Word

As we have seen in chapter two, the investigation of art's language game required, for Kosuth, and Art & Language, self-reflexive models consisting of transparent and analytical language. In both Kosuth's writings, and those of Art & Language, the opposition *transparent/opaque* is deployed with great regularity. The 'post-philosophical' activity of Conceptual Art, in constantly privileging the 'transparent' over the 'opaque,' would seem to keep alive the ancient quarrel between philosophy and poetry. For, in their view, poetic language is characterised not only by opacity to meaning, but also a kind of false profundity that is, as they see it, the result of such opacity to reference. Yet their own investigations into language, which aim at a certain transparency of meaning-generating operations, would seem to advocate a model in which the word, or sign—the very object of investigation—effaces itself in its own production. As Kosuth says: 'I'm using language to go beyond language.'⁶ It would seem that both of these opposing Duchampian legacies

have at least one philosophical reference point in common: the later writings of Wittgenstein. In this final chapter I wish to argue not only for poetry as conceptual art, but, moreover, conceptual art as poetry. This, however, means to argue not only against representational thinking, but also against aesthetics and expression. In short: against both forms of transparency: transparency to reference, and transparency to innerness. This also entails arguing for a certain materiality, which involves not only the materiality of things but also the materiality of language.

Is it possible to read Kosuth's work as poetry? Certainly not in terms of the way Kosuth thinks of poetry, where he objects that it utilises 'common language to attempt to *say the unsayable*.'⁷ In such a way, in Kosuth's view, poetry prioritises the *form* of language over its power of signification—in Kosuth's terms: opacity over transparency. If the 'unsayable' constitutes, for Wittgenstein, that which cannot be verified by language, the work of art, according to Kosuth, draws on a relation between art and language which performs the function of circumventing the limits of language by 'showing' rather than 'saying.' In a text from 1989, "The Play of the Unsayable: A Preface and Ten Remarks on Art and Wittgenstein," Kosuth observes that the later Wittgenstein of the *Philosophical Investigations*, 'attempted with his parables and language-games to construct theoretical *object-texts* which could make recognizable (show) aspects of language that, he could not assert explicitly. This aspect of philosophy, *as a process to be shown*, resists the reification of the direct philosophical assertion.'⁸ But the object-text's capacity to show would seem to depend on the capacity of language to draw attention to itself rather than efface itself in the act of reference. Thus the kind of language that would constitute a play in the language-game of art would seem to require a certain self-referential opacity rather than the self-effacing transparency of pure denotation.

10.3 Materiality and Concrete Poetry

Despite his insistence that material elements function in his work as mere props, it would be difficult to exclude a certain relation to materiality in Kosuth's later 'public' text works, where place and context play such an important role. Yet as we have seen, Kosuth has never had any time for poetry, particularly poetic activities that would seek to make incursions into visual art. In wanting to say the unsayable, Kosuth argues, in 1970, concrete poetry presents 'a kind of formalism of typography—it's cute with words, but dumb

about language. It's becoming a simplistic and pseudo-avant-garde gimmick, like a new kind of paint.'⁹ Kosuth's hostility to concrete poetry has by no means diminished over time. In his recent diatribe against Lawrence Weiner he maintains:

Words as objects suffer along with the rest of concrete poetry by having neither the integrity of a Juddian 'specific object nor the essential quality of language... the transparency of meaning-generating relations. ...concrete poetry... reifies language into dumb decoration at best... exploiting the authority of language but without generating any actual new meaning, parasitically hoping some myth of profundity can be simply borrowed from art history to mask its emptiness.¹⁰

But does concern with the morphology of words, and their spatial relation to each other, equate to a 'dumb' and merely 'decorative' use of language? Does it equate to merely an aesthetic, and non-semantic play with words?

It would be wrong to consider concrete poetry as a monolithic practice, as Marjorie Perloff argues, 'not all concretisms...are equal.'¹¹ As Perloff maintains, there is a case to distinguish between the extreme reductive concrete poetry of (the Swiss) Eugen Gomringer, or that of (the Scottish) Ian Hamilton Finlay, and the more linguistically complex work of the Brazilian *Noigandres* group (Décio Pignatari, Augusto, and Haroldo de Campos). Even though the poets of Zurich and São Paulo shared some common ground, Haroldo de Campos clearly differentiates the Brazilian concrete poetry of Noigandres from the austere orthogonal constructions of Gomringer. The work of Noigandres, in comparison, is, he says, much more complex, it is 'baroque, pluralist, multifaceted.'¹² What Haroldo means by 'baroque' is a deeply ingrained linguistic and bodily eroticism, a 'ludic space of polyphony and of language in convulsion,' of the Brazilian psyche.¹³ But above all, Brazilian concrete poetry is intersemiotic: it is concerned with the complex semiosis between the sound, shape, and semantic charge of the word-elements. The aim of Noigandres was not to empty the word of its semantic charge, but rather, to utilise that charge—in the politically enervated context of Brazil in the 1950s and 60s—in conjunction with the other elements, and thus, to not subordinate linguistic signification to sound and visual form. Thus sound, graphic shape, and semantic charge were considered to be of equal importance: the relation is, in the words of Noigandres, *verbivocovisual*. As

Haroldo maintains, ‘The word-element is used in its entirety and not mutilated through the unilateral reduction to descriptive music (*Létrisme*) or to decorative pictography (*Calligrammes*).’¹⁴ The concrete poetry of Noigandres, as Augusto de Campos maintains, ‘may be differentiated from other experiences (*zaum*, *lettrisme*, phonetic poetry) for not rejecting semantic values but rather placing them on equal footing with other material, visual, and sonorous parameters of the poem.’¹⁵ The concrete poem, according to Noigandres, is not a transparent vehicle for transmission of the objective world. Rather what it communicates is its structure. Its structure is its content. Moreover, the visual ideogrammatic syntax of this structure functions as a voluntary constraint, where ‘graphic space’ functions ‘as structural agent.’¹⁶ The radically reduced format of the concrete poem serves as a constraint that enables a particular exploration of language, where the aim is, against transparency, to develop ‘an instrument capable of bringing language closer to things.’¹⁷

10.4 A Science of the Trivial

The historical point of departure for Noigandres—although it refrains for the ideology of Symbolism—is Mallarmé’s *Un coup de dés* [“A Throw of the Dice”] of 1897, where syntax is exploded, and the white spaces of the page function as structural-semiotic elements. Traditionally, throughout the history of Western metaphysics, syntax has played a subordinate role to semanticism. For Derrida, the poetry of Mallarmé opens up, through its spacing, the possibility of displacing the opposition between truth and literature; model and *mimēsis*. In the Western philosophical tradition, what is regarded as real has always been the imitated, not that which imitates. Although, in the history of this tradition, the hierarchy of values has at different times been reversed, the temporal order of appearance, Derrida claims, has always remained the same: the imitated precedes the imitator, the double always comes after the simple which is always regarded as more real, more essential, more true. *Mimēsis*, for Derrida, is bound up with the system of truth, whether truth is conceived as *alētheia* (Derrida here thinks this as a simple unveiling, not as Heidegger thinks the term), or as *homoiōsis* or *adaequatio*, that is, in terms of resemblance. But in Mallarmé’s poem *Mimique*, Derrida argues that the reference to truth is displaced by a certain syntax. *Reference*, that is, a certain transparency taking the form of either truth as simple unveiling, or truth thought in terms of idea conforming with the essence of a thing—or transparency as it is described in *Of Grammatology*, as the ‘effacement of the signifier’ in the ‘undecomposable unity of the signified and the voice,’ which is ‘the con-

dition of the very idea of truth' (*OG* 20)—is, according to Derrida, 'displaced in the workings of a certain syntax' (*Diss* 193). This discreet and absolute displacement occurs, according to Derrida:

...whenever any writing both marks and goes back over its mark with an undecidable stroke. This double mark escapes the pertinence or authority of truth: it does not overturn it but rather inscribes it within its play as one of its functions or parts (*Diss* 193).

Mallarmé's syntax in *Mimique* provides us with, as Derrida argues, a non-metaphysical, non-dialectical form of *mimēsis*, which—in a displacement without reversal of the metaphysical ideas of truth; a displacement which is 'always an effect of language or writing' (*Diss* 211)—no longer belongs to the system of truth. This displacement occurs in the writing, by way of an undecidable that derives—whether by combining contradictory meanings under the same word, or a contextual relation with an external code—from their syntax. The undecidable that Derrida locates in Mallarmé's poem—the *hymen*—'advances according to the irreducible excess of the syntactic over the semantic' (*Diss* 221). Although one might, as Derrida suggests, be tempted to suspect that the textual play of *Mimique* might constitute a closed system, Derrida maintains that its structure is both open and closed. It constitutes a double writing 'that refers back only to itself carries us *at the same time*, indefinitely and systematically, to some other writing' (*Diss* 202, Derrida's emphasis). The self-referential, determinate, structure of its textual elements allows it to be 'grafted onto the aborescence of another text' (*Diss* 202). The supplemental structure of the graft, which Gregory Ulmer links to the collage, has as its principal effect, as he puts it: 'the problematization of all referentiality and all inside/outside oppositions.'¹⁸

Rodolphe Gasché, observes that Derrida's undecidables—which he calls 'infrastructures'—resemble syncategoremata (expressions that cannot be used by themselves but only in conjunction with other terms, such as: *and, or, not, if, every, some, only, in between*), which for Husserl, 'in contradistinction to categoremata, are unclosed expressions that have no determined and fixed meaning...' ¹⁹ But this resemblance is only superficial, Gasché observes, since syncategoremata 'never relate to themselves in the complex manner' of the undecidable.²⁰ Derrida's undecidables, which as Gasché argues, are 'syntactically re-

marked syncategoremata articulating prelogical and lateral possibilities of logic,²¹ continue Heidegger's and Husserl's investigations into 'the *a priori* of meaning (including that of Being).'²²

By opening up its radical possibilities, Derrida, in a certain way, extends Husserl's project of a 'pure logical grammar'²³—elaborated in his *Logical Investigations*—which attempts to fix the primitive essential forms of meaning, or the *a priori* laws that regulate knowing. Gasché's insight is to recognise that Husserl, on a number of occasions, refers to these forms as 'trivia': instances of the most obvious. He remarks: 'Yet these trivia, which are "intrinsically prior in the sense of Aristotle," behind whose obviousness "the hardest problems lie hidden," and which have never been thematized by the logicians, become the true object of the project of a pure logic...'²⁴ They are also, according to Gasché, 'what Heidegger has thematized under the name of the most obvious or most simple.'²⁵ Indeed, as Jeff Malpas observes, Heidegger's thinking, through the 1930s and after, proceeds by way of 'a mode of language that is itself essentially "disclosive" (and so also, in a certain fundamental sense, "phenomenological").'²⁶ Gasché's point is that Derrida's undecidables extend this investigation into the most obvious by way of a syntactical excess—that is irreducible to the semantic—that carries out a reinscription of the logical, in which it is only considered as one form of linguistic functioning among others. This reinscription occurs, as Gasché observes, by 'privileging the syntactical'—which has always been assigned a secondary or lateral place in the Western philosophy—'in the sense of remarked, doubled syntactic structures no longer suspended from semantic subject matters of whatever sort.'²⁷

It would be difficult to argue that the work of art, however—the poem, or works of visual and sound art that utilize language—proceeds so far as Derrida's project of archewriting and dissemination in reinscribing the undecidable in the text of philosophy. That would be the task of the philosopher, and it constitutes an immense interminable labour. Rather, I am arguing that what the work of art does is to turn our vigilance toward what is trivial and most obvious, and that one of the ways in which it does this is, not only by a use of language that attends to the word's opacity, but by an intervention at the level of syntax that shatters transparency through a syntactic excess.

10.5 Syntactical Excess

The argument for the opacity and the materiality of the sign, over imagistic transparency, is examined by Marjorie Perloff in *Radical Artifice: Writing Poetry in the Age of Media*. In a chapter appropriately titled: “Against Transparency: From the Radiant Cluster to the Word as Such,” she compares a passage from Ezra Pound’s early *Cantos*, with the opening lines of Clark Coolidge’s poem *At Egypt* (1988).²⁸ Perloff observes that while in Pound’s poem, syntax is characteristically subordinated to the image—as Pound famously puts it: ‘radiant node or cluster’—such imagery is entirely absent from Coolidge’s poem, which, in its use of ordinary, everyday, language carries out a kind of Wittgensteinian language game, where the relationship between the ‘denaturalized’ and ‘decontextualised’ words becomes a kind of puzzle. Coolidge’s poem makes language strange but it does so, Perloff suggests, not at the level of the image, but ‘at the level of phrasal and sentence structure.’²⁹ For Perloff, Coolidge’s poem is exemplary of the more radical poetics that have, since the 1960’s, ‘turned to the deconstruction of the image,’ displacing the revelatory power of the image with syntax, and the materiality of language. This, she argues, ‘is the mode of Clark Coolidge... Lyn Hejinian, Charles Bernstein, Rae Armantrout, and Bruce Andrews among others; it come to us from Gertrude Stein, from whom image was never the central concern, via Louis Zukofsky and George Oppen.’³⁰ In a similar way, Krzysztof Ziarek argues that the poetic language use of the avant-garde ‘attempts to inscribe in language, as a form of an intralingual translation, the trajectory of the unfolding of the phenomenal.’³¹ Ziarek maintains that Heidegger’s investigations into the nature of language, and especially his texts on poetry, have had an important impact on the American avant-garde poetic tradition spanning from Oppen to the language poets.

Oppen, during his twenty-five year break from poetry between 1937 and 1962, had, as Perloff observes, immersed himself in the philosophy of Heidegger and Maritain (Perloff, who has recently expressed her distaste for Heideggerian thought infiltrating the study of poetry, does not develop this observation further).³² As far back as 1929, Oppen had been particularly interested in Heidegger’s conception of the mood, or disposition of *boredom* (*Langeweile*), and incorporated this idea into the first poem in *Discrete Series*. He had come across it in Heidegger’s Acceptance Speech for the Chair of Philosophy at Freiburg in 1929. In an interview concerning that poem, Oppen recalls:

It says, “The knowledge not of sorrow, you were saying, but of boredom/ Is... Of the world, weather-swept, with which one shares the century.” The word “boredom” is a little surprising there. It means, in effect, that the knowledge of the mood of boredom is the knowledge of what is, “of the world, weather-swept.”³³

Oppen’s poetry, influenced by Heidegger, as Burton Hatlen observes, seeks the imagist ‘direct treatment of the thing.’³⁴ However, Oppen offers us a very different direct treatment than that of Pound or Williams: one which refuses the transparency of the image. Consider the second poem of *Discrete Series*:

White. From the
Under arm of T

The red globe.

Up
Down. Round
Shiny fixed
Alternatives

From the quiet

Stone floor . . .³⁵

Rather than presenting an image of an elevator—the poem’s subject matter—Oppen gives us an arrangement of discontinuous plain ordinary words. Perloff observes that Oppen’s poems are ‘composed primarily of deictics [words—like syncategoremata— whose reference depends on the circumstances of their use], the “little words I like so much” as Oppen called them.’³⁶ Perloff continues: ‘...here the possibilities of syntax rather than of image or metaphor are put into play.’³⁷ In this way Oppen’s poetry concerns the *trivia* that Husserl speaks of: the *small change* of ordinary words and things, rather than the *big bills* of philosophical thematics. For Hatlen the pure discontinuity, which is in a certain way a pure continuity, ‘lies less in its deconstruction of the connectives between things than in its deconstruction of syntax itself.’³⁸ Syntax, for Oppen, Hatlen observes, ‘constitutes the most stubborn variety of mind-imposed order.’ ‘Thus,’ Hatlen continues, ‘if we are to preserve a fidelity to the thing as it actually offers itself to us, we must be prepared

to abandon syntax itself. What will we find when we strip away all the false forms of “order” that our minds impose upon the world?’³⁹

For Ziarek, avant-garde poetics emphasises that language intends itself, or as Heidegger says ‘language speaks,’ (*Die Sprache spricht*), ‘language exhibits precisely the ways in which the world gains its being, and becomes “real,” through language.’⁴⁰ This does not mean that avant-garde poetic language performs a self-absorbed, self-referential, play of the word for its own sake—a suspicion that perhaps would be held by Kosuth. The point is that these poems of Coolidge, and Oppen, which explore, in very different ways, the possibilities of syntactical excess, are not at all meaningless. Although their content seems to be purely syntactic, they still signify. In this sense they not only reverse the priority of the semantic over the syntactic, but they break down the distinction altogether.

10.6 Conceptual Writing

After half a century of language poetry practice, a number of younger poets felt that a state of exhaustion had come into effect. The optimism of the project that Steve McCaffery once described as ‘poetic research into the endless possibilities of language,’⁴¹ seems to have been replaced, for some, by the feeling that everything had been done, or at least as far as poetry on the page can go. This feeling of completion, along with the new ease afforded by the technological means to digitally conduct, by means of the most basic search tools, obsessive-compulsive textual operations (see appendix), has resulted in the recent phenomenon of ‘conceptual writing.’ The aim of the Conceptualists—to name a few: Kenneth Goldsmith, Craig Dworkin, Caroline Bergvall, Christian Bök, and Jan Baetens—is to replace emotional expression, and the image in poetry, with strategies relating to the presentation of found texts, rigorous LeWittian processes, and a direct presentation of language in ‘uncreative writing.’ In what functions as a manifesto for conceptual writing, “Sentences on Conceptual Writing,”⁴² Kenneth Goldsmith overtly ‘plagiarises’ LeWitt’s “Paragraph’s on Conceptual Art,” Substituting the words ‘writing’ for ‘art,’ ‘uncreative writing’ for ‘conceptual art,’ etc. The found text, as an assisted, or unassisted readymade, constitutes one of the mechanical procedures specific to the ‘uncreativity’ of conceptual writing. In the recently published anthology, *Against Expression An Anthology of Conceptual Writing*, Craig Dworkin, in an essay entitled “The Fate of Echo,”

frames the argument for conceptual writing with an exposition of the practices of Conceptual Art. He writes: 'I coined the phrase "conceptual writing" as a way both to signal literary writing that could function comfortably as conceptual art and to indicate the use of text in conceptual art practices.'⁴³

In association with the readymade, Dworkin emphasises the activities of nominalism and choice over making; the conceptual work's self-description and self theorisation; the presentation of raw information; the non-retinal shift to 'art as idea'; the privilege of process over product; the de-skilling, distance from the artist's hand; the refusal of originality and aesthetic values; and, most importantly, the nomination of writing as primary artwork (in place of painting and sculpture) rather than secondary text. However, Dworkin observes that in Conceptual Art 'the supposed dematerialization of the art object was bought at the cost of the rematerialization of language.'⁴⁴ As we have seen many of the conceptual artists insisted on the transparency of language, but, as Dworkin insists, 'positing language as an alternative sculptural or painterly material cut both ways.'⁴⁵

Conceptual art—which required language, in order to replace the art object with the idea—gradually became aware of the inevitable materiality of the printed words in the gallery, however much some of those artists wished to resist such conclusions. Perhaps a good illustration of this is Kosuth's *One and Eight—A Description* series—conceived by Kosuth in 1965 but constructed and exhibited much later—consisting of sentences in neon, such as "FIVE WORDS IN RED NEON," "NEON ELECTRICAL LIGHT ENGLISH GLASS LETTERS RED LIGHT," and "NEON" (Plate 9) which depend upon a certain materiality—or at least their status as objects—to succeed at all. For conceptual writing, on the other hand, as Dworkin observes, the materiality, or opacity of language was already assumed. He writes:

In conceptual poetry, the relation of the idea to the word is necessary but not privileged: these are still poems made of words; they are not ideas *as poems*. A procedure or algorithm organizes the writing, but those procedures do not substitute for the writing.⁴⁶

Though I have stated the case put forward for conceptual writing, I wish to propose the obverse. Rather than pursue the issue from the side of poetry in the way that the concep-

tual writers do—in order for literature to benefit from the lessons of Conceptual Art—I wish for contemporary art (which, to some extent, learned these lessons in the 1960s) to benefit, in as much as it deals with language, from the tradition that culminates in Language Poetry. But this does not necessarily mean a turn (again) to texts as primary artworks. Rather, I am proposing that thinking contemporary art as a kind of poetry involves thinking it, as Heidegger says, as poetic composition in the broad sense. But then, how does an intervention at the level of syntax take place in visual art?

10.7 *Between Word and Thing*

Certain installation practice can perhaps be conceived as a poetic placing of objects beside each other in a reconstructed syntax, reminiscent of words on the page—Kosuth, in his diatribe against Weiner, cites Haim Steinbach as an artist that makes a new contribution to the use of language in art in such a way, without using words. What I am particularly interested in, however, is the space between word and object; between word and thing; or between text and image. The late 1960s and early '70s work of Marcel Broodthaers constitutes not only an investigation of the space between words and objects, but also a use of language that is antithetical to that of the historically adjacent practices of Conceptual Art. This is hardly surprising since before turning to visual art, and abandoning his former practice in 1964, Broodthaers was a poet, moreover a poet under the spell of Mallarmé. Broodthaers' 'abandonment of poetry,' however, should be seen as turn from the idea of poetry in the narrow sense to the idea of poetry in the wider sense. As I see it, his work is essentially a (broadly) poetic form of conceptual art. Benjamin Buchloh notes that the extent to which Broodthaers wished to maintain a distance between his own use of language and that of Conceptual Art, can be seen in one of his 'open letters':

Thus the first letter from the "Section Littéraire," addressed in English to a conceptual artist, begins with the reversal of the first of Sol LeWitt's "Sentences on Conceptual Art," so that it reads, "Conceptual artists are more rationalists rather than mystics... etc..."⁴⁷

LeWitt's first line in "Sentences on Conceptual Art" reads: 'Conceptual artists are mystics rather than rationalists. They leap to conclusions that logic cannot reach.'

Broodthaers' turn away from poetry, formally announced in 1964, is inaugurated in a work that consists of encasing his remaining copies of his last volume of poetry, *Pense-Bête*, in plaster. However, even before this act of destruction, Broodthaers had been erasing his poems by gluing rectangles of coloured paper that almost completely obscured the poems, preventing them from being read. As Buchloh observes, this 'erasure' anticipates his later intervention into Mallarmé's *Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard*, in 1969, where all of the lines of text are replaced by black bands which 'appear simultaneously as erasures and as elements of increased visual emphasis and spatial presence.'⁴⁸

From the beginning, Broodthaers was 'haunted by a certain painting by Magritte,' *La Trahison des images* (*Ceci n'est pas une pipe*), 1928-29, 'the one in which words figure.'⁴⁹ This painting of Magritte's displays an image of a tobacco pipe beneath which is written, in cursive script in French: 'this is not a pipe.' In this work the shown (the depicted pipe) and the said (the text) are put into an unstable relationship. As Michel Foucault observes: '*Ceci n'est pas une pipe* exemplifies the penetration of discourse into the form of things; it reveals discourse's ambiguous power to deny and to redouble.'⁵⁰ W. J. T. Mitchell commenting on the incommensurability of Rene Magritte's *La Trahison des images* (*Ceci n'est pas une pipe*), 1928-29 writes: 'It isn't simply that the words contradict the image, and vice versa, but that the very identities of words and images, the sayable and the seeable, begin to shimmer and shift in the composition, as if the image could speak and the words were on display.'⁵¹ Magritte's 'real aim,' Mitchell observes, 'is to show what cannot be pictured or made readable, the fissure in the representation itself, the bands, layers, and fault-lines of discourse, the blank space between the text and the image.'⁵² Broodthaers' *Industrial Poems* (1968-70), utilising vacuum formed plastic, that he describes as 'rebuses,' transform Magritte's incommensurability between text and image toward a radical disassociation of text, image and material-object. The *Industrial Poems*, due to their process of fabrication, resemble communicational or advertising signs—which are designed to be easily read—but instead, as Perloff observes, the image-like quality of the words, and the word-like quality of the images impede a clear reading either way. As Perloff notes:

Since the plaque (*Livre-tableau*)... supplies no useful information, it cannot function as a signboard, but neither does it make the slightest concession to aesthetic value, as has been the case in Futurist or Dada typography. The aim, on the contra-

ry, seems to be to force the viewer/reader to “see” what he or she in fact always does see... as if for the first time.⁵³

What is seen for the first time are, again, in Husserl’s terms, the trivia, the most obvious, behind which the most ‘deep-lying, widely ramifying problems’ lie hidden (*LI 2 76* §14, note 3). A concern with these forms of meaning, that are foregrounded by the work of art, have been, as Husserl says, neglected by the science of logic, due to their ‘supposed narrow obviousness and practical uselessness’ (*LI 2 76* §14, note 3). Broodthaers’ work dissolves the habitual, as Anne Marie Freybourg observes, by reorganising and recontextualising the conventional relations between object and concept, at the level of ‘insignificant abstracta.’⁵⁴

10.8 Word and Image

Les Animaux de la Ferme (Farm Animals, 1974), a lithograph which parodies the illustrated book or classroom poster, consists of illustrations of fifteen breeds of cattle. Rather than, for example, being labelled ‘Hereford,’ ‘Friesian,’ ‘Jersey,’ etc., they named ‘Chevrolet,’ ‘Cadillac,’ ‘Chrysler,’ ‘Maserati,’ and so on. The incommensurability between word and image is extended to the juxtaposition of two systems of classification. Broodthaers’ practice of affixing figures to miscellaneous objects or images (see Plate 10) can be read, as Rosalind Krauss points out, ‘as both a curatorial practice and an emptying out of the very meaning of classification.’⁵⁵ Rather than functioning as an absurd conjunction of signification, the work, as an exercise of remapping, invites multiple crossings between word and object and the space between. As Foucault writes, in “This is not a Pipe”:

On the page of an illustrated book, we seldom pay attention to the small space running above the words and below the drawings, forever serving them as a common frontier for ceaseless crossings. It is there, on these few millimetres of white, the calm sand of the page, that are established all the relations of designation, nomination, description, classification.⁵⁶

A work that would seem to explore the opposite direction to incommensurable text-image relationships is John Baldessari’s *Blasted Allegories* (1978), which consists of a number of panels containing two rows of photographs taken of random television images. Superimposed on each photo is a single word—on one panel: ‘stern, stoic, streak... you, obscure,

rest.’ Each word seems to have a determined relation to its image, yet both image and word had been arrived at by aleatory means, according to Baldessari’s set of complex rules.⁵⁷ Roland Barthes speaks of an historical reversal that differentiates the word/image relation of the contemporary press photograph with that of earlier instances, such as the illustrated book. He argues that whereas previously the picture served to illustrate the text, now the text serves to delimit the meaning of the image. Thus he says, in the 1961 essay, “The Photographic Image”: ‘...the text constitutes a parasitic message designed to connote the image, to “quicken” it with one or more second-order signifieds.’⁵⁸ In the 1964 essay, “Rhetoric of the Image,” this process of connotation, in which the text serves ‘to *fix* the floating chain of signifieds in such a way as to counter the terror of uncertain signs,’⁵⁹ Barthes names as *anchorage*. The linguistic message directs and guides the reader towards certain significations thus limiting the inherent polysemy of the photographic image. At the same time, however, the denotative status of the image—according to its construal by the natural attitude, which would regard it as a message without a code—naturalises this connotative work of textual anchorage, and in the process naturalises its message, rendering, in the same movement, the text as secondary and parasitic. Here Barthes’ analysis extends beyond a standard structuralist account. The two messages encounter each other in an interactive game where the connotative (ideological) text pretends to clarify the image (guides identification, telling us what we are looking at), directing our reading to a singular interpretation, but the real work of the text-image composite proceeds in the opposite direction. The denotative image naturalises, or as Barthes puts it, ‘innocents’ the connotative text. This leads him to say much later, in *S/Z* (1970), that connotation precedes denotation even though denotation pretends to be ‘first.’

The work of image text relations in advertising forms the basis of a project that I began in 2010. *Caprice Lulu America* (Plates 10 & 11.) utilises aleatory and constraint based methods⁶⁰ to explore the relationships between word and image. It conforms to standard block format magazine-newspaper layout, which is drawn, in part, from J. G. Ballard’s text collages of the late 1950s (Plate 12) for ‘a new kind of novel.’⁶¹ Ballard’s set of four collages, I would argue, represent a species of ‘conceptual’ concrete poetry. They employ typography, but unlike the topographical formalism of Dadaist collages, or concrete poetry, these works follow the structure of bulletins, advertisements, and other communicational presentations.

My own collages work through the interplay of headline(s) to other textual and visual elements, and aim to estrange the ideological workings between text and image, and jolt the reading out of the natural attitude by disrupting the process that would innocent the supposed denotative text. These modest pieces—that constitute the elements of a larger work—are an attempt to disrupt the natural attitude that would always assume transparent denotation as always prior to connotation. Barthes describes this attitude as a ‘return to the closure of Western discourse (scientific, critical, or philosophical), to its centralized organization, to arrange all the meanings of a text around the hearth of denotation (the hearth: centre, guardian, refuge, light of truth).’⁶² I would suggest that the jump out of the natural attitude is assisted, if not dependent on, coming across unexpected relations. Moreover, the incommensurability where the text (word + image) works at the limits of meaning, serves to foreground the systems of connotation that constitute the construction of meaning according to a certain syntax.

These collages, however, were made as a way of thinking through the construction of media works that involve the indeterminate playback of images and texts (see appendix 2). That is, the media pieces utilise computer scripting to order the spatial and temporal placement of visual, textual and audio components in real time according to aleatory procedures.⁶³ The media artist Bill Seaman uses the term ‘recombinant poetics’⁶⁴ to describe his work that utilises computer programming in order to generate continuously emerging combinations of text, images and sound. Projects such as *Architecture of Association* (2008 – ongoing), and *Passage Sets / One Pulls Pivots At The Tip Of The Tongue* (1995) (Plate 13) continuously decontextualise and recontextualise words and images according to rule-based constraints. In Seaman’s work, textual anchorage is set adrift in order to hook up word and image in new associations according to a loose grammatical and syntactical structure within the bounds of certain limits. As Anchorage is destabilised, its work is revealed, which, in turn, disrupts any monolithic reading of the image.

10.9 Work as Keeping Vigilance

There is a tendency within ambitious media art, such as Seaman’s, however, to aim for greater and greater levels of complexity, and ultimately attempt to bring the structuring and ordering operations of computer scripting closer to intuitive human thinking. When

work tends toward this extreme, the functional notion of the constraint tends to lose its relevance, and the way that the constraint is seen to operate in the work—in a self-reflexive way—tends to become obscured. This is particularly noticeable when compared with much more modest works such as Sandra Selig's, where the constraint functions as part of the work. Selig's work, *Surface of Change* (2007), consists of 15 cut book pages, taken from children's science texts from the 1960s and 70s. Each page is presented in its original form (always it consists of an image and a slab of text) except that most of the text has been meticulously sliced out, leaving a number of scattered words and sentences connected by slim bridges of the blank parts of the page. One piece (Plate 13.) consists of two figures dwarfed by a large white wall containing a grid of black dots (it could be part of a nuclear reactor). The image takes up roughly half the page. What remains of the cut out text consists of two elements separated from each other: (i) 'time,' and (ii) 'must be kept in very thick metal,' which are, due to placement, read in that order. *Surface of Change* functions as a series of poetic image-text 'subtractive' collages—much along the lines of Baldessari's work with images—that demonstrate semi-random connotative anchorage. The text and the image, and the relation between them, have been found rather than formulated. Moreover, Selig's choices have been constrained by a rule of only subtracting elements from a given page. But unlike most poetic procedures that utilise methods of constraint, the method that Selig employs—her subtractive cutting—is left materially embedded in the work.

The inclusion of text over, in, or beside photographic images would seem to limit and refine their absolutely saturated, and, at the same time, absolutely empty, field of signification. Does this mean that the text must always force closure on the interpretation of the image, or is it able to rescue, or draw out the unexpected? I would suggest that language *can* work with the photographic image in such a way but it requires a special use of language, or better, a special relation between the images and the words; a relation of *Gelassenheit*, such as in Selig's de-collages; a relation that might be called poetic. If, as Derrida maintains, the givenness of first hand experience is deficient, in need of help from the differential network of signs, then the analogue presentation of the photograph is in much the same way 'deficient' and in need of help to settle its overflowing polysemy (as direct registration of the flux). But if words anchor the image and reduce it to a univocal reading, the complexity, or flux, of the image is stabilised. The challenge then, in working

with the image-text, is to utilise language (the trace, the supplement) to assist the image, to articulate it, but at the same time, not to recollectively stabilise its flux, but to keep it in motion; to keep the play of signification open.

But one can anticipate an objection here. If the differential fabric of iterability makes possible endlessly recombinant, associative, phonic, graphic, semantic, semiotic, and psychoanalytic linkages which are infinitely repeatable, does the unconstrained celebration, or exploitation, of this *unavoidable* state of affairs, by a recombinant poetics, get us anywhere? Does the mere performance of a condition that has traditionally been suppressed by metaphysics help us twist free from metaphysics and representation? Does the disseminative drift and free play of Joycean repetition generate a limitless polysemy, which is ultimately bereft of meaning and productive only of nonsense? These are all valid questions, and I suggest that at a certain limit such recombinant strategies become problematic in this respect. I would argue that what is required of the work of art is a certain intervention that, rather than simply reproducing or unconditionally celebrating the tissue of differential traces, performs a reflexive operation that in foregrounding the illusory structure of the natural attitude, raises our vigilance toward it. In this way the work of art works to disrupt what Pierre Bourdieu calls the ‘habitus’: a unitary set of default dispositions, classificatory schemes, or tastes.⁶⁵ This natural attitude consists of, as we have seen, the belief in the transparency of the signifier; where words are considered as containers which hold pre-linguistic sense directly intuited from the immediacy of lived experience; the belief that intention is the final guarantee of meaning; and the belief in the innocence, or naturalness of the photographic message. The task of the work of art is to perform an estrangement that prevents us from falling back immediately into the habitual illusion of the natural attitude, while at the same time keeping questioning open. Yet, to avoid a meaningless drift into unlimited semiosis, the work would seem to require some guiding conceptual direction. But rather than being strictly determined as a concept, this directive would not only be generative of the work, but, to a certain extent, be generated *by* the work. George Quasha and Charles Stein, writing on the work of Gary Hill, make a distinction between ‘principle-based art’ and conceptual art. A concept, they suggest, is something that is ‘substantially in place prior the execution of the work,’⁶⁶ and reductively governs the reading of the work. The principle, on the other hand, can be prior to the work but it can also be discovered in the process of making the work but at the same time

generates and limits the meaning of the work, functioning, as Sol LeWitt says of the idea in the work, as ‘a machine that makes the art.’⁶⁷

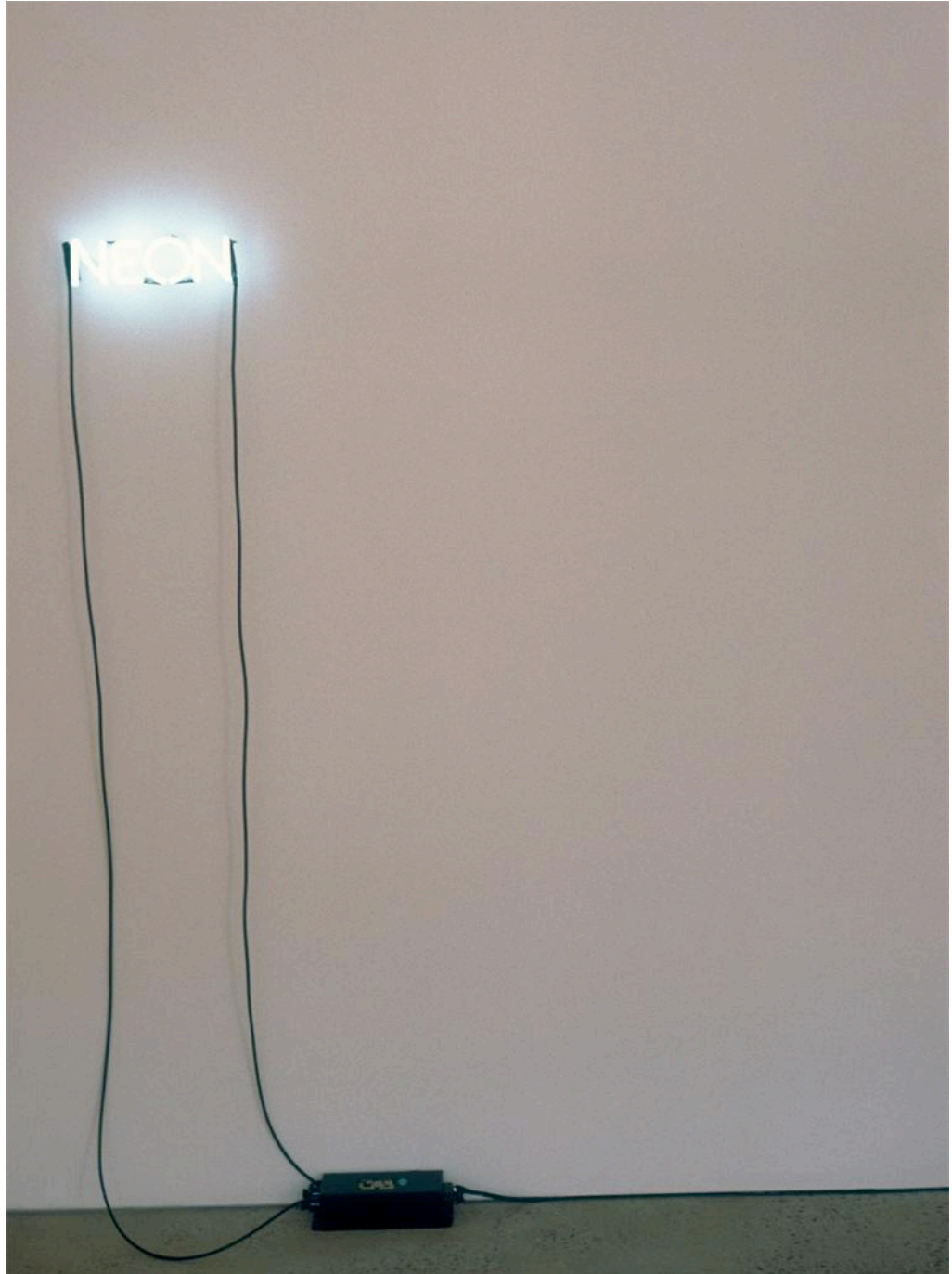


Plate 9. Joseph Kosuth, Neon (Self-Defined), 1965, neon tubing; wire and transformer, Tony Shafrazi Gallery. Image courtesy of Larry Qualls Archive.



Plate 10. Marcel Broodthaers, Panneau A, 1974-75, photographs, drawings, and water-colours. Image courtesy of Larry Qualls Archive



Plate 11. Ian Andrews, pages from Caprice Lulu America, 2011.

Image removed

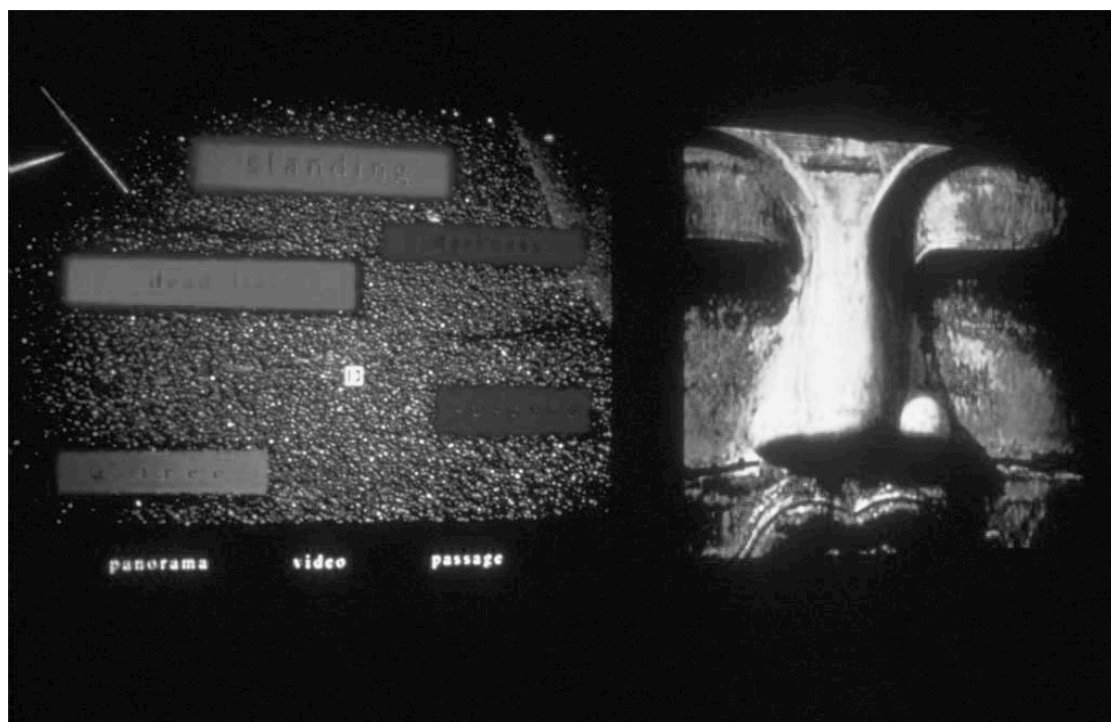


Plate 13. Bill Seaman, Passage Sets/One Pulls Pivots at the Tip of the Tongue, 1994-95. Interactive audio-visual installation, exhibited at the Guggenheim Museum, Fall 1996. Image: Larry Qualls.

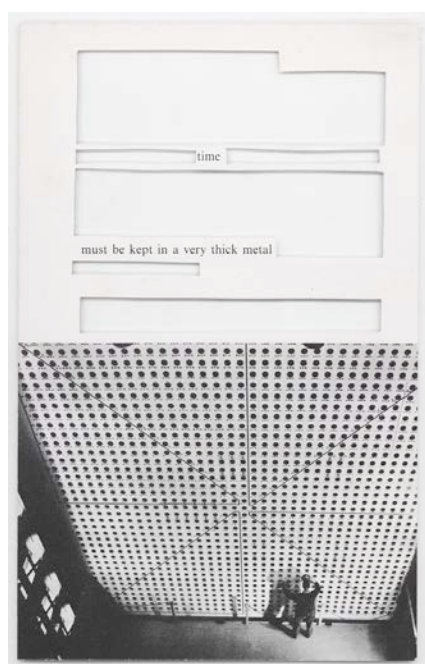


Plate 14. Sandra Selig, Surface of change 2007, cut book pages, acrylic, 15 parts, each 35 x 25 cm.

Conclusion

In arguing for a post-aesthetic approach to the work of art I am not advocating a certain form of art, nor an historical continuum or genealogy of artists or art movements that might constitute a grouping that would be labelled 'post aesthetic' and assigned a particular periodisation. What I have argued for is a post-aesthetic way of thinking about the work of art. That is, I have argued against the dominant conceptions of the artwork, or what might be called a metaphysical view of the work of art: one that is governed by, on one side, the idea of art as the celebration of form, or of subjective expression, and, on the other side, the notion of art as communicative message bearing vehicle, utilising the hard-line conceptualist model of logical and transparent language. In pursuing a post-aesthetic approach to the question of how the work of art can perform philosophical work I have argued that it is necessary to overcome both representational thinking, and the aesthetic irrationality of art for art's sake formalism. This overcoming cannot, as Vattimo argues, be achieved by means of a synthesis of these two poles in order to institute a form of aesthetic reason, or a political aesthetics. In taking this direction, which involves a third way, rather than a synthesis, and a twisting free rather than a decisive overcoming, my argument has become quite complex and is characterised by a number of turns. I will attempt to reiterate this argument here in simple terms.

Provisionally I have argued for the conceptualist/Duchampian necessity for conceiving of art as primarily dealing with meaning as opposed to the expression or exploration of purely formalistic concerns. Yet, at the same time, I am highly critical of the turn taken by certain conceptual artists toward a textual practice governed by an extremely analytical and logical model of language use, which entails the supposed dematerialisation of both art object and text. Moreover, in opposing the primacy granted to authorial intention by Kosuth, and Art & Language, I have explored the possibilities opened up by the processal/aleatory approach of artists such as Cage, Brecht, Higgins, MacLow, Haacke, LeWitt and Broodthaers. I contend that the theory associated with such practices finds consonance with Heidegger's notion of letting—which could be described as the enabling of a basic phenomenological disposition. Thus I argue that these approaches initiate a rather different kind of phenomenological reduction: one which exceeds the Husserlian/Schaefferian eidetic reduction, not only because it puts out of play all aesthetic pre-

suppositions (judgments of taste) but because it maintains a contextual relation to the world of the work. But, at the same time, I find Cage's approach a little naïve when it insists on the desirability of an empty mind—equating to the assumption of a presuppositionless phenomenological starting point: an experience characterised by a unique and unrepeatable encounter with the phenomenon, brought nearer through an aesthetic attuning of the sensory faculties. Rather, I have argued that such an experience is never simply empty but—if thought in terms of Heidegger's (and to some extent Husserl's) conception of experience—is always already contextualised through a horizontal structure involving predelineations.

Analytical Conceptual Art carries out a suppression of the modernist beholder, to which it denies all aesthetic satisfaction. It shifts the concern of art from morphology and taste to a consideration of other possibilities, and investigates the language use of the discourse of art in an open and constructive dialogue. But this overturning (in Kosuth and Art & Language) prescribes an interrogation of language from the perspective of an extremely analytical and logical approach. It seeks to master the language game of art, striving for a completely neutral and transparent descriptive language, making intention and self-consciousness agency the centre, assigning to it the first and final word when it comes to the meaning of the work of art. On the other hand, the more recent reaction to formalism of the last few decades, which appears to have forgotten some of the valuable insights of Conceptual Art, has generally assumed a journalistic form of representationalism where the work is seen as vehicle for a socio-political, or personal, message. The value of post aesthetic theory, in its Heideggerian form, is that it strives for a third way between representation and formalism, between *Vorstellung* and *Erlebnis*.

As I have shown, Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology attempts to think back behind Western metaphysics. His *Destruktion* of the history of Western ontology has the purpose of loosening up ossified concepts, and of locating the crucial historical, cultural, and linguistic turning points where philosophical thought, from particular turning points in the history of the tradition, is condemned to proceed in a certain direction—where certain questions become centralised and others become excluded. Our thinking towards art and the artwork is caught up in this tradition. However, because we do not possess a neutral and innocent philosophical language, there is no means by which we can simply,

and radically, begin again from a pre-metaphysical standpoint. My purpose, however, in engaging in a rather lengthy explication of Heidegger's dismantling of the tradition, has been to uncover, in the most rigorous way, the alternative possibilities for thinking the work of art outside what Samuel Weber calls the 'enabling limits' of Western thinking. Thus it is always necessary, in the consideration of art or phenomenology, to interrogate the tradition which, for Heidegger, culminates not only in representational thinking but also aesthetic *Erlebnis*. As we have seen, the notion of *Erlebnis* arises in the nineteenth century as an emotional countermeasure to the logic of representational thinking, constituting the subjective pole of the subject-object opposition. Both together constitute the will-to-will of modern thinking. In the English language art discourse of the early twentieth century, this is encapsulated in Bell's notion of significant form. But if we do not simply wish to invert the opposition and claim that art is purely a rational cognitive enterprise we need to think art differently. To think beyond and before this history, involves a twisting free from the tradition, to displace it rather than simply overcome it. This is, as I see it, the objective of post-aesthetic theory.

Heidegger retrieves the Greek terms *technē* and *poiēsis*, which link the production of art to an ontological-phenomenological, epistemological, modality, prior to a productionist conception of the work of art (and a productionist interpretation of Being) that is instituted at the inception of the metaphysical tradition. I have argued that Heidegger thinks *technē* as a modality of knowing linked to *epistēmē*, and to the basic disposition of wonder (*thaumazein*). As a letting be, the work of art opens up a clearing in which the event of truth can happen. What this means is that art is thought not in terms of aesthetic experience, nor as the transmission of concepts or information, but ontologically—somewhere between a phenomenology and a poetics. The work that the work performs as an event is suspended between a phenomenological mode of revealing and letting—that is not ontologically innocent but horizontal—that involves a suspension of the will, as well as a projective mode of poetic saying and setting in place. On the one hand, the work opens up a clearing by making unusual the most usual, in terms of the world of human relations bound up with history and language. On the other hand the work, in its earthly dimension, engages us with materiality, with the self-concealment of the flux. The practice of art, in terms of Heidegger's analysis, is a kind of letting that is prior to, and counter to, the metaphysical idea of production (the forming of matter in accordance with a

preconceived idea, or image, in the mind). In accordance with this view, making art, rather than being thought as ‘creation,’ is thought in terms of letting something already existing emerge from out of concealment. In one sense this constitutes an argument for the found object or text, and the indeterminate or non-intentionally generated work. The reception of art is thought by Heidegger as an indwelling preserving, which, I have argued is a non-aesthetic and non-conceptual mode of encounter with the work.

The ‘letting’ that Heidegger proposes in “The Origin of the Work of Art,” and the non-willing thinking that he strives for in the later works, can be seen as a basic phenomenological disposition that suspends the imposition of interpretive bias. My contention is that this ‘letting be’ finds consonance with John Cage’s abstention from taste and memory, carried out by the imposition of the chance operation. Yet, this is no simple passive abandonment of will. There is always the intention to make a work; to first conceive of the system; to determine its mapping onto material elements, determine its scope and rules, etc. Moreover, what we encounter is the decision to stand behind the work, to take responsibility. However, at a certain point in the process of the work, it is essential that there occurs a letting go of intention, after which all subsequent willing is suspended but, at the same time, this consists of a certain steadfast resolve to continue at all costs regardless of outcomes.

Because the investigation of sound not only engages in a direct encounter with the flux, but further, paves the way to conceiving phenomena in non-visualist, non-objectivist, terms, it would seem to provide a unique phenomenological starting point, and bridge the disciplines of phenomenology, art and aesthetics. However, I have located certain problems with Pierre Schaeffer’s phenomenological approach to sonic research. First, reduced listening in disassociating the sonic event from its world leads to the eidetic essentialism and objectification of ‘first’ phenomenology. Second, while aspiring to be a presuppositionless methodology—which in itself I have argued is untenable—sonic research would seem to be contaminated by aesthetic presuppositions. I have suggested that one response to the first issue—which forms the basis of the contextual debate in sound art—comes in the form of post-Cagean sound art practices that maintain a resonance between sound field and place. The second issue, I contend, is answered by Cage’s own version of the phenomenological *epochē*: the chance operation, or constraint, as an absten-

tion of the will. The outcome of such a shift in perspective is that all sound, for Cage, is available for consideration, and that a certain figure ground reversal occurs where background noise shifts to the foreground.

Cage's wish to introduce further variations into his pieces, by creating compositions that would be indeterminate of their performances, tends to run in a counter direction to his abstention. Here two radically incompatible notions of freedom are placed together: the composer's freedom from aesthetic decision-making, and the performer's freedom of choice to do whatever: a freedom from the dictates of score and composer. Rather than falling back on humanistic spontaneity, it would seem that indeterminacy might best be carried out during the work by the processes themselves that are set off at the beginning of the performance and allowed to run their course unobstructed by human volitional agency.

Cage's legacy poses a particular set of problems for the phenomenological consequences of sound art. First, we must consider Steve Reich's objection that Cage's processes are concealed and not audible in the work. The consequence of keeping processes mysterious is that the audience cannot access the work in the same manner as the artist/composer. Rather than obtaining access to the sonic flux, the audience are left to flounder in it, or else simply to encounter the work in terms of aesthetic experience (*Erlebnis*). Unless we consider works such as *4'33"* simply in terms of an aestheticisation of life, their ontological validity would seem to be undermined by a naïve assumption that a bare encounter with the flux is possible in the immediate presence of the here and now. What I have argued for, following Husserl and Heidegger, is a conception of experience that is never simply and immediately present, but is pre-delineated according to a structure of shifting horizons, repetition, and the fore-structures of understanding. Moreover, as Derrida has demonstrated, experience is not only constituted by repetition, but by signification and language, where cognition, as Samuel Weber observes, is always already re-cognition.

In view of these observations, Cage's listening experience, where we are always led back to a zero state of mute blankness, where 'there is nothing to say,' becomes untenable. One way forward is for sound art to concern itself with the pre-delineatory situatedness of place and the historical horizon-structures of experience. In this sense, one can see

correspondences between certain practices of sound art and visual Minimalist works that attempt to shift the encounter with the work away from an emphasis on form-for-itself, and toward the relationships between work, environment and audience, and by playing on relations, situatedness, and place in terms of an interplay between the work and the implicit historical, spatial, horizon-structures constituting localised experience. However, the radicalisation of this phenomenological model, as we have seen, brings language into the very act of constitution. If there would be no pure sensual experience of the work that is ultimately free of the implicit inscription of discursive traces, as Derrida suggests, does this mean that we must necessarily re-evaluate the experience of even the most recalcitrantly formalist works? If so, it must be argued that such a shift in perspective would be far from automatic. To jolt our encounter with things, and with the work of art itself, out of a certain natural attitude requires, I would argue, a turn towards language. This does not mean replacing the materiality of the work of art with the abstraction of the text. Rather it means allowing the play between word and thing to be brought to the surface.

I propose that this involves an implicit and explicit play of the materiality of the work with language. Not the mastery of language involving the analytical interrogation carried out by Conceptual Art, but, rather, a letting go of language that would constitute a play between the implicit fore-structures of experience and the explicit and material production of semiosis. As Heidegger insists in “The Origin of the Work of Art”: ‘*All Art, as the letting happen (*Geschehenlassen*) of the advent of the truth of beings, is, in essence, poetry (*Dichtung*),’* (HW 59, BW 197, Heidegger’s emphasis). But poetry here must not be thought, in the Romantic sense, as the irrational other of rationality, nor in terms of the logocentric privilege given to the ideality of speech and the word. Rather, in order to twist free form metaphysics, poetry necessitates a leap into another thinking. To engage in this thinking—and to encounter the work of art in ways that are other than aesthetic, or logico-discursive—means putting art into a relation with philosophy where they might be considered as neighbouring disciplines. As Heidegger says in *Introduction to Metaphysics*, ‘Philosophy can never belong to the same order as the sciences... Only poetry is of the same order as philosophical thinking, although thinking and poetry are not identical’ (EM 20, IM 28). However, we must remember here that *Dichtung* (poetry in the broader sense) does not exclusively refer to linguistic models of art, or spoken and written verse (poetry in the narrower sense).

I have opposed the idea that the generation of meaning in and through the work of art should be governed by the primacy of authorial intention: the privilege given to consciousness, the present, and conscious meaning in self-presence. Since intention is not an absolute determinant of meaning, and context is never constraining enough to prohibit aleatory swerves or deviations, there is, as Derrida says, ‘always the chance open to some *parenklisis* or *clinamen*’ (MC 4). I have argued that poethical works open themselves up to the Epicurean *clinamen*, which, as Joan Retallack suggests, counter the silent persistence of the habitus by redirecting the geometry of attention. Rather than producing simply meaningless and ethically negligent texts, poethical works inhabit language at the limits of meaning, and the responsibility of authorial intention is, as Derrida argues, limited, rather than absolute.

I have argued that such works, where imagistic description and linguistic transparency is abandoned in favour of an interrogation of syntax, engage in an encounter with the ‘trivia,’ the most simple and obvious, behind which the most difficult problems lie. Although one could argue that there is an element of this in Kosuth’s early work (e.g. the Protoinvestigations, 1965), and the work of Art & Language (e.g. Ramsden’s 100% abstract (1968), these works are too often quickly shut down by a will to mastery where authorial intention has the final say—if not in the work itself, at least in its support language. However, in line with Kosuth’s argument, we must also think of this encounter with language as an encounter with art itself; in terms of the work’s argument for itself as art. As we have seen, in line with this argument, Gerald Bruns, and the recent theoretical work of Conceptual Writing, asks us to think poetry as a species of conceptual art. I suggest that we might also think conceptual art—in the broader sense—as poetry. Not as poetry in the traditional sense, but rather as an expanded notion more in line with the non-transparent use of language adopted by a tradition that runs from Gertrude Stein through to language poetry—that is, in terms of the materiality of language, and a structural excess of syntax over semantics. However, to conceive of conceptual art—or any art that thinks—‘poetically,’ does not necessitate that such works need be comprised exclusively, or even partially, of words. Rather, a poetic conceptual art might be one utilises a sophisticated approach that contextures sensate experience and involves an implicit and

explicit play *between* language and materiality. that is, in terms of non-transparency, or the materiality of language, and of a structural excess of syntax over semantics.

Finally, I have suggested that the contemporary poethical work of art performs a material-linguistic perspective shift that raises our vigilance toward the illusory structure of a certain natural attitude. Here the work works to dislodge the natural belief in the transparency of language and the effacement of the signifier where, in lived experience, presence to consciousness occurs in perfect efficacy. Further, it works to resist the idea that all interpretation is subordinate to authorial intention. Where the poethical work of art combines word and image (or word and sound), I contend that such works suspend the belief in the natural transparency of the supposedly denotative analogic registration or image, and put into question the tendency to assume that the image's denotation operates prior to any connotation.

To be clear, displacing aesthetic experience does not mean consigning aesthetic pleasure to a position of worthlessness. Although, as I have argued, aesthetic experience may not provide us with a way of engaging in a thinking through the practice of art, or through the reception of works of art, this does not mean that it does not have a place. This thesis leaves off with a final question: would it then be possible to re-think 'aesthetic experience' itself outside of the metaphysical framework? This is a question that occupied Heidegger in his later years when he suggests, in "A Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer," that if his project is one that leaves metaphysics behind, it 'leaves it behind in such a way that we can only now give thought to the nature of aesthetics...' (OWL 42). Such a re-thinking of aesthetic experience is something that requires further examination.

Appendix 1

What follows is a piece of 'conceptual writing' that utilises this dissertation as a source text. It simply lists in order all the instances of 'I' whether they be in reference to this author or appear in quotations from other authors.

I certify	I turn to a consideration	I think it is possible to
I also certify	I provisionally place	say
I have received	I set out to show	I seemed to swallow
I certify	I suggest	I wish to acknowledge
I offer	I detail	I have indicated
I owe	I propose	I have identified
I am thankful	I prepare	I will examine
I thank	I begin	I agree
I began	I argue	I propose
I came across	I ask	I unpack
I want to argue	I suggest	I would like to mention
I want to examine	I argue	I would argue
I examine and evaluate	I am not attempting	I prefer to refer to
I concentrate on	I am not advocating	I wish to demonstrate
I am concerned with	Nor am I wishing	I wish to show
I am referring to	I am not arguing against	I think
I find it necessary to	I give the impression	I represent
I am more interested	I am against	I think
I examine	I am arguing for	I perceive
I would argue	I am convinced	I think
I borrow the term	I want to emphasise	I perceive
I am aware	I propose	I wish
I wish to emphasise	I argue	The 'I'
I want to draw attention	I use the word	I would go so far as to
to	I am referring to	suggest
I would propose	I argue	I am not suggesting
I propose	I would argue	I would argue
I argue	I find	I want to examine
I would like to argue	I identify	I want to argue
I am not, however, re-	I conceive	I have chosen to call
ferring to	I see it	I want to call attention
I am thinking of	I do not believe	to
I consider	I will attempt to show	I want to emphasise
I wish to argue	The point I wish to	I propose
I thus argue for	make	I will examine
I will show	I wish to argue	But I think
I argue for	I want to claim	I have chosen
As I see it	I can't pretend	I would suggesting
I examine how	I would suggest	I am arguing
I aim to establish		I do not wish

I would argue	I would say it	I wish
I do not disagree	I would like to argue	I am arguing
I would argue	I would argue	I like so much
I will try	I would suggest	I coined the phrase
I propose	I wish to argue	I have stated
I would argue	I begin to perceive	I wish to propose
I wish	I can sustain	I wish
I wish	I must again emphasise	I am proposing
I wish	I wish to make	I am particularly inter- ested
I would never	I will summarise	I see it
I would not agree	I will suggest	I began
I would suggest	I suggest	I would argue
I wish	I would suggest	I would suggest
I would suggest	I examine	I would suggest
I suggest	I examined	I suggest
I had to beware	I have argued	I have argued
I would maintain	I have argued	I have shown
I give the impression	I shift my attention	I accuse
I am against	I went	I see
I am against	I didn't like	I have argued
<i>I Ching</i>	I don't know	I have argued
I would like	I will find	I have suggested
I did	I'm looking	I contend
I am giving	I can see	I have argued
I would suggest	I use the word	I would argue
What I would hope for	I'm in the position	I propose
<i>I Ching</i>	I think	I have opposed
I understand	I want	I have argued
I would suggest	I agree	I have argued
I would suggest	I think	I suggest
I would argue	I would like to suggest	I have argued
I will examine	I would like to propose	I consider
I have been examining	I want to insist	I still contend
I want to give I ask	I agree	I would argue
I examine	I would further argue	I would argue
I have indicated previ- ously	I try to	I have been arguing
I work	I try to	I have been insistent
I work	I have argued	I see it.
I would argue	I have attempted	
If I had something to say	I am saying	
	I say so	
	I'm using	

Appendix 2

Media Works on CD

1. Ian Andrews, *Drive Time 1*, 2010, random video and text, duration: infinite.

Peak hour traffic seems like a special kind of performance when seen from the air. But at the same time it seems kind of senseless. If it were not heating up the earth and making dirty air we could perhaps appreciate it in terms of non-productive expenditure, the prodigious waste of a potlatch, something like Albert Speer's cathedral of light.

2. Ian Andrews, *Banding (Blackband-whiteband)*, 2010, duration: infinite.

This piece utilises sine waves of 22 frequencies related to a logarithmic series. These tones are played and superimposed in a random order that continues indefinitely. Each tone is compressed according to a specific compression algorithm independently in both left and right channels. The piece utilises the various idiosyncrasies, inadequacies, and 'primitive' audio capacities of the Adobe™ (Macromedia™) Flash authoring system and player, in order to achieve its compositional and textural complexity.

The visual component involves the generation of graphic patterns out of iterations of the words 'black armband' and 'white blindfold'—derogatory terms for the supposedly opposing versions of Australian history—and black and white bands (rectangles, lines), on alternating black and white backgrounds.

<http://ian-andrews.org>

Notes

Introduction

¹ J. M. Bernstein, *The Fate of Art: Aesthetic Alienation from Kant to Derrida and Adorno* (Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press, 1992).

² 'Practice-based research,' 'practice-led research,' and 'practice as research,' are often employed as interchangeable terms. The Creativity and Cognition Studios at the University of Technology Sydney, define the difference between practice-based and practice led research in the following way: 'If a creative artefact is the *basis* of the contribution to knowledge, the research is *practice-based*. If the research *leads* primarily to new understandings about practice, it is *practice-led*.'

<http://www.creativityandcognition.com/content/view/124/131/>, accessed 19/8/2011.

³ Katy Macleod and Lin Holdridge, eds., *Thinking Through Art: Reflections on Art as Research* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 241.

⁴ Marcel Duchamp, *The Essential Writings of Marcel Duchamp: Salt Seller, Marchand Du Sel*, ed. Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson (London: Thames & Hudson, 1975), 125. Originally published in "The Great Trouble with Art in This Country" From an interview with James Johnson Sweeney, *The Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art*, Vol. XIII, no. 4-5, 1946, pp. 19-21.

⁵ Bernstein, *The Fate of Art*, 3.

⁶ Miguel de Beistegui describes Heidegger's 'double break' with aesthetics as a 'twisting free' from *poiēsis* and *mimēsis* in de Beistegui, *Thinking with Heidegger: Displacements*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 127-29. Bret W. Davis, uses the term 'twisting free' to describe the transition in Heidegger's thinking toward non-willing. Davis tells us that "twisting free" is David Farrell Krell's translation of Heidegger's term *Herausdrehung*, and has been explicated by John Sallis to imply "not merely inversion but also displacement" (Sallis, *Echoes: After Heidegger* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990], 77), Bret W. Davis, *Heidegger and the Will: On the Way to Gelassenheit* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2007), 311 note 21. Davis utilises the term in the context of his argument to describe 'not merely inverting but displacing the will,' in the sense of Derrida's double movement of deconstruction, which has 'phases' of overturning and reinscription. Gianni Vattimo points to Heidegger's term *Verwindung* which 'indicates something analogous to *Überwindung*, or overcoming, but is distinctly different from the later both because it has none of the characteristics of a dialectical *Aufhebung* and because it contains no sense of a "leaving behind" of a past that no longer has anything to say to us.' Vattimo, *The End of Modernity*. trans. Jon R. Snyder (Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press, 1988), 164. Vattimo reminds us that Heidegger had told the French translators of *Vorträge und Aufsätze* that the term—as it appears in the essay "Overcoming Metaphysics"—'indicates a going-beyond that is both an acceptance and deepening' (*The End of Modernity*, 172). The irregular transitive verb *verwinden*, not only means to 'overcome,' or 'get over' but also to 'recover from,' in the sense of convalescence, and, further, 'to twist' or 'warp. The usual translation of the substantive *Verwindung* is 'torsion,' and *winden* means wind, twine, reel, twist, wring, wrest, or wrench.

⁷ That is, how we think existence in terms of the verb 'to be.' I take the convention which has become almost standard in Heidegger scholarship of translating *Sein* as 'Being' (capi-

talised) and *Seienden* as 'beings' (not capitalised). I also render Heidegger's adoption of the archaic spelling *Seyn* as, in the old English spelling as 'beyng,' rather than 'be-ing,' as it is sometimes translated. Hence all translations cited in this thesis that utilise differing conventions have been modified to these standards in the interest of consistency.

⁸ John Cage and Daniel Charles, *For the Birds* (Boston: M. Boyars, 1981), 148.

Chapter 1: Untangling Aesthetics

¹ The shift in meaning of the term 'aesthetics' occurs most noticeably in the work of Kant, where in the first *Critique* the word aesthetic is used in a similar sense to *aisthēsis* (e.g. 'transcendental aesthetic'). It is not until the third *Critique* that aesthetics designates the study of the beautiful and the sublime.

² Jacques Rancière, *Aesthetics and Its Discontents*, trans. Steven Corcoran (Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press, 2009), 1.

³ Bernstein, *The Fate of Art*, 1.

⁴ Alison Ross, *The Aesthetic Paths of Philosophy: Presentation in Kant, Heidegger, Lacoue-Labarthe, and Nancy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 1.

⁵ *The Fate of Art*.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 4. Bernstein's emphasis.

⁷ See also *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, and the debate with Ernst Cassirer, in which Cassirer accuses Heidegger of distorting Kant's work for his own purposes.

⁸ Monroe C. Beardsley, *Aesthetics from Classical Greece to the Present: A Short History* (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1975), 247.

⁹ J. M. Bernstein, *Classic and Romantic German Aesthetics* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), vii-ix.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, ix.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, x.

¹² Clive Bell, *Art* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes company, 192-? (first published 1914)), 49.

¹³ Clement Greenberg, "Towards a Newer Laocoon," in *Art in Theory, 1900-2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2003), 557-8. Originally published in *Partisan Review*, VII no. 4, New York (July-August 1940), 296-310.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 558.

¹⁵ Greenberg, "Modernist Painting," in *Art in Theory, 1900-2000*, 754-5. Originally published in *Forum Lectures* (Voice of America), Washington D.C., 1960. Reprinted with slight revisions in *Art & Literature*, no. 4 (Spring 1965), 193-201. The text in Harrison and Wood, is taken from the later publication.

¹⁶ For Kant, this form of reasoning takes the form of synthetic propositions *a priori*, as only these types of propositions have the power to enlarge our knowledge while, at the same time, remaining absolutely independent of experience. Up until Kant's 'Copernican revolution,' all judgments had been thought as either *analytic*—in which the predicate belongs to the subject—or *synthetic*—in which the predicate is only connected to the subject, and thus the judgment relies on an appeal to experience. Analytic judgments are explicative; Synthetic judgments are argumentative. Since analytic judgments rely on what

is known *a priori*, and can only derive knowledge from the analysis of their concepts (their own definitional meaning), they cannot add to knowledge. At the same time, empirical judgments based on experience are always synthetic—they acquire new knowledge. In order to transcend experience, and, at the same time, constitute a real acquisition of knowledge, the only propositions open to philosophy, are for Kant, synthetic propositions *a priori*. The question then is for Kant, in the first *Critique*: how are *a priori* synthetic judgments possible? (CPR 16).

¹⁷ Greenberg, “Modernist Painting,” in *Art in Theory, 1900-2000*, 755.

¹⁸ Stephen W. Melville, *Philosophy Beside Itself: On Deconstruction and Modernism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 6.

¹⁹ Greenberg, “Modernist Painting,” 759.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., my emphasis.

²³ Michael Fried, “Art and Objecthood,” first published in *Artforum* 5 (June 1967): 12-23, reproduced in *Art and Objecthood: Essays and Reviews* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 148-72, 152.

²⁴ Ibid., 167.

²⁵ Michael Fried, “An Introduction to My Art Criticism” (May 1996) in *Art and Objecthood: Essays and Reviews*, 18.

Chapter 2. After Aesthetics: Conceptual Art and Post-aesthetics

¹ Terry Smith, “Generation X: Impacts of the 1980s,” in *What Is Appropriation?: An Anthology of Writings on Australian Art in the 1980s & 1990s*, ed. Rex Butler (Brisbane: IMA Publishing, 2004), 252.

² Peter Osborne, *Conceptual Art* (London; New York: Phaidon, 2002), 15.

³ Joseph Kosuth, “1975,” first published in *The Fox* 1, no. 2 (1975): 87-96. Republished in *Art after Philosophy and After: Collected Writings, 1966-1990* (Cambridge, Ma.: MIT Press, 1993), 129-43, 130.

⁴ Art & Language was founded in 1967/68 by Terry Atkinson, Michael Baldwin, David Bainbridge, and Harold Hurrell. Other members included, Mel Ramsden, Ian Burn, Charles Harrison, and Joseph Kosuth as the American editor of the Journal *Art-Language*.

⁵ Osborne refers to the position held by Kosuth, an Art & Language, as ‘strong,’ ‘exclusive,’ and ‘restricted’ in contrast to the those conceptualists that advocated ‘an expansive, empirically diverse and historically inclusive use of the term Conceptual art.’ Peter Osborne, “Conceptual Art and/as Philosophy,” in *Rewriting Conceptual Art*, ed. Jon Bird and Michael Newman (London: Reaktion, 1999), 48-9. In this thesis I use the term ‘Conceptual Art’ (Capitalised) to refer to the work of Kosuth and Art & Language, and ‘conceptual art’ (un-capitalised) to refer the broader movement.

⁶ Marcel Duchamp, *The Essential Writings of Marcel Duchamp*, 125. Cited in “Introduction,” *Art-Language: The Journal of Conceptual Art*, 1:1 (May 1969), 1-10, reprinted in *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*, 98-104, 102.

⁷ See Charles Harrison, “Conceptual Art and the Suppression of the Beholder,” in *Essays on Art and Language* (Cambridge, Ma.: MIT Press, 2001).

⁸ Harrison, *Essays on Art and Language*, 236.

⁹ Osborne, *Conceptual Art*, 34.

¹⁰ Harrison, *Essays on Art and Language*, 2-6, 17.

¹¹ Ibid., 17.

¹² Ad Reinhardt, "Art as Art," in *Art in Theory, 1900-2000*, 806. This essay was originally published in *Art International*, VI, no.10 (Lugarno, December, 1962).

¹³ Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, trans. Michael Shaw (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 50.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Stephen W. Melville and Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe, *Seams: Art as a Philosophical Context* (Amsterdam: G+B Arts International, 1996), 2. Gilbert-Rolfe's emphasis.

¹⁶ Joseph Kosuth, "Art after Philosophy," first published in *Studio International* (London) 178, no. 915 (October 1969): 134-137; no. 916 (November 1969): pp. 160-161; no. 917 (December 1969): 212-213. Republished in *Art after Philosophy and After*, 13-45, 21.

¹⁷ Ibid., 20.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Baldwin in Michael Baldwin and Mel Ramsden, "Michael Baldwin and Mel Ramsden on Art & Language," *Art & Text*, no. 35 (Summer, 1990): 23-37, 29.

²⁰ Ramsden in Ibid., 30.

²¹ Melville, *Philosophy Beside Itself*, 16.

²² Ibid.

²³ Boris Groys, *Art Power* (Cambridge, Ma.: MIT Press, 2008), 13.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., 14-5.

²⁶ Gianni Vattimo, *Art's Claim to Truth*, trans. Luca D'Isanto (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 154-5. See the section on Vattimo towards the end of this chapter.

²⁷ Osborne, "Conceptual Art and/as Philosophy," 63.

²⁸ Kosuth, "Art After Philosophy," 14.

²⁹ Art & Language/ Catherine Millet, "Interview with *Art-Language*," *Art Vivant*, 25 (1971), trans. Maya Rabasa, in Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson, *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*, 264.

³⁰ Cutforth, unpublished letter to Robert Rooney, 24 May 1971, cited in Charles Green, *The Third Hand: Collaboration in Art from Conceptualism to Postmodernism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 53.

³¹ Green, *The Third Hand*, 53.

³² Bruce Pollard, interview by Charles Green, Melbourne, 15 March 1994, in *ibid.*

³³ Green, *The Third Hand*, 53.

³⁴ Terry Smith, ed. *Art & Language: Australia 1975* (Banbury, New York, Sydney: Art & Language Press, 1976), 177.

³⁵ Ibid., 179.

³⁶ Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, "Conceptual Art 1962-1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions," *October* 55 (Winter, 1990), 125.

³⁷ Ibid., 124.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ This issue ambiguously has the image 'Fox 4' on the cover. Unlike previous issues of *Art-Language*, and *The Fox*, no individual members are credited and authorship is implied to be that of the collective. This issue was published after the purges of the "lumpen-

headache” meetings, and, as Christopher Gilbert claims, represents the work of Mel Ramsden and Mayo Thompson. See Gilbert, “Art & Language, New York, Discusses Its Social Relations in ‘The Lumpen Headache,’” in *Conceptual Art: Theory, Myth, and Practice*, ed. Michael Corris (Cambridge, UK.: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 326-341, 338. By June 1976 Kosuth, and Sarah Charlesworth had been effectively forced from any involvement with *The Fox* and Art & Language New York, the provocation being Kosuth’s independent practice and opportunism. See Michael Corris, “Inside a New York Art Gang: Selected Documents of Art & Language,” in *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*, 477-80.

⁴⁰ *Art-Language*, vol. 3, no. 4 (October 1976) pp. 23-34, p. 25 (the use of quotation marks throughout the essay are inexplicable).

⁴¹ Joseph Kosuth, “History For,” in *Art after Philosophy and After*, 240. First published in *Flash Art* (Milan, no. 143 (November-December 1988), 100-102.

⁴² Kosuth, “1975,” 142 note 8.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Joseph Kosuth, “Intentions(s),” in *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*, 461.

⁴⁵ Ibid. Kosuth’s emphasis.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 465. Kosuth’s emphasis.

⁴⁷ Green, *The Third Hand*, 14.

⁴⁸ Krzysztof Ziarek, *The Historicity of Experience: Modernity, the Avant-Garde, and the Event* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2001), 4.

⁴⁹ See Samuel Weber, *Mass Mediauras: Form, Technics, Media* (Sydney: Power Publications, 1996), 28-9; See also Bernstein, *The Fate of Art*.

⁵⁰ The phrases that Ross quotes from *The End of Modernity*, represent Vattimo’s summation of Gadamer’s position rather than Vattimo’s own position. See Ross, *The Aesthetic Paths of Philosophy: Presentation in Kant, Heidegger, Lacoue-Labarthe, and Nancy*: 194 note 2. Gianni Vattimo, *The End of Modernity*, trans. Jon R. Snyder (Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press, 1988), 122. In *Art’s Claim to Truth*, Vattimo presents an ontological reading of the work of art that is not on opposition to Kant.

⁵¹ Ross, *The Aesthetic Paths of Philosophy*, 94.

⁵² Barbara Bolt, *Heidegger Reframed* (London: I.B. Taurus, 2011), 135.

⁵³ Vattimo, *Art’s Claim to Truth*, 154.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 155.

⁵⁵ Seth Kim-Cohen, *In the Blink of an Ear: Towards a Non-Cochlear Sonic Art* (New York: Continuum, 2009).

Chapter 3. Heidegger’s History of Western Ontology and Aesthetics

¹ “*Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes*,” originated as a lecture at Freiburg, November 13, 1935, repeated in January 1936 in Zürich, then as an expanded three-part lecture on 17th and 24th of November, and the 4th of December, 1936. All quotations from this essay are from the modified version published in the Reclam edition of 1960, which was republished in the most recent edition of *Holzwege* in 1978 published as Volume 5 of Heidegger’s *Gasamtausgabe*. English translations are from the modified version of Albert Hofstadter’s translation in *Poetry, Language Thought*, which appears in full in the revised and expanded edition of *Basic Writings*, edited by David Farrell Krell. Both Hofstadter’s translation and

Krell's modified version of it, contain the Addendum which was written in 1956 (included in the Reclam edition) but neither contain Heidegger's marginal notes, hand written in his own copy of the Reclam edition, which appear in the *Holzweg*, GA 5.

² Heidegger's process of *Destruktion* emerges from his early phenomenological work with Husserl. The concept is most widely known from §6 and §44 in *Being and Time*. However, *Destruktion* is first outlined in detail in the 1929 lecture series *Phänomenologie der Anschauung und des Ausdrucks* (English translation, *Phenomenology of Intuition and Expression*); and elaborated further in the 1923 lecture series *Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung* (translated as *Introduction to Phenomenological Research*); and in the 1927 course *Die Grundprobleme Der Phänomenologie* (translated as *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*).

³ Weber, *Mass Mediauras*, 147. Weber's emphasis.

⁴ The concept of *alētheia*, is first mentioned the habilitation work but apart from a brief appearance in the lecture course of the 'War Emergency Semester' in 1919, it does not appear in a substantial manner until 1922.

⁵ Martin Heidegger, "My Way to Phenomenology," trans. Joan Stambaugh, in *Martin Heidegger: Philosophical and Political Writings*, trans. Joan Stambaugh, ed. Manfred Stassen (New York; London: Continuum, 2003), 254.

⁶ Heidegger, in the preface of the *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes*, 1960 Reclam edition writes, 'The Epilogue was, in part, written later [than the Frankfurt lectures].' But the similarity of content in the first series of lectures on Nietzsche, "Der Wille zur Macht als Kunst" of 1936-37 suggests that much of it was written at around that time.

⁷ David Farrell Krell suggests that the "Six Basic Developments in the History of Aesthetics" is what remains of Heidegger's 1935-36 colloquium with Kurt Bauch on "overcoming aesthetics in the question of art" (N 248).

⁸ Michel Haar, *The Song of the Earth: Heidegger and the Grounds of the History of Being*, trans. Reginald Lilly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993). 51.

⁹ Jacques Taminiaux, *Poetics, Speculation, and Judgment: The Shadow of the Work of Art from Kant to Phenomenology*, trans. Michael Gendre (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 70-1.

¹⁰ Heidegger's interpretation of *Gunst* in the third *Critique*, corresponds to the sense that Meister Eckhart gives it, as 'grace' (*gratia*), a free giving and a thanking.

¹¹ Taminiaux, *Poetics, Speculation, and Judgment*, 71. Taminiaux further points out that the rootedness in nature that Kant detects in the work of art suggests a different order of subjectivity than that of the ego.

¹² Giorgio Agamben, *The Man without Content*, trans. Georgia Albert (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 70.

¹³ René Descartes, *Philosophical Writings*, trans. Peter Thomas Geach and G. E. M. Anscombe, Revised ed. (London: Nelson, 1970), 69.

¹⁴ See ZS 117, SvG 139, PR 81. The *obiectum* was 'something thrown over against... my *repraesentatio*' (ZS 117), 'thrown to the cognizing I by an imaginative cognition' (SvG 139, PR 81). It could be argued that the Greeks have a concept of presence that equates to an 'over-against': the *antikeimenon*. But Heidegger contends that the Greek concept is not equivalent to the object since the Greek 'over-against' is not 'thrown forth' from a subject (SvG 140, PR 82). Since, as Heidegger maintains, the Greeks thought of themselves as viewed (by the Gods) rather as viewing beings, the word *antikeimenon* is ren-

dered by Heidegger as ‘that which is ex-posed’ (*SvG* 140, *PR* 82). As Heidegger puts it: ‘For the Greeks, things appear... for Kant, things appear to me’ (*FS* 37).

¹⁵ Weber, *Mass Mediauras*, 48.

¹⁶ Heidegger notes that the aesthete Lessing translated *obiectum* more literally and eloquently as *Gegenwurf* (‘counter-throw’). (*SvG* 139, *PR* 81).

¹⁷ *Mass Mediauras*, 47.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 48.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ The Joan Stambaugh translation renders *Gegenständigkeit* as ‘objectivity’ which has a tendency to be misconstrued as ‘subjective impartiality’ or ‘scientific detachment.’

²¹ *Mass Mediauras*, 48.

²² It seems that Heidegger begins using the word *Gegenständigkeit* in the mid 1940s. It appears in *Überwindung der Metaphysik*, which was written between 1936 and 1946, but not in *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*, written between 1936–1938. *Gegenständigkeit*, not yet used as a term first appears in “Sketches for a History of Being as Metaphysics” in 1941 where it is rendered hyphenated as ‘*Gegen-Ständigkeit*’ (Heidegger’s emphasis—translated as *ob-jectivity* by Stambaugh) as the mode of presencing where ‘stability’ (*Beständigkeit*) grounds constancy (*Ständigkeit*) together with presence (verbal) (*Anwesen*)’ (*NII* 421, *EP* 59). Heidegger does not explicitly define *Gegenständigkeit* until the 1954 essay ‘*Wissenschaft und Besinnung*’ (Science and Reflection) and is exclusively utilised in his lecture series of 1955–56: *Der Satz vom Grund*, translated as *The Principle of Reason*. In “Science and Reflection,” Heidegger defines the word *Gegenständigkeit*, as the mode of presencing in which the real (*das Wirkliche*) appears as object.

Chapter 4. Lived Experience, Machination, and the Retrieval of *Technē*

¹ See Martin Jay, *Songs of Experience Modern American and European Variations on a Universal Theme* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 222.

² *Ibid.*, 11.

³ *Zōon logon echon* is usually translated as ‘rational animal.’ Heidegger interprets the phrase to mean: ‘that living thing whose Being is essentially determined by the potentiality for discourse’ (*SZ* 25, *BT* 47).

⁴ See Michael E. Zimmerman, *Heidegger’s Confrontation with Modernity: Technology, Politics, and Art* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 114.

⁵ Françoise Dastur, “Heidegger’s Freiburg Version of the Origin of the Work of Art,” in *Heidegger toward the Turn: Essays on the Work of the 1930s*, ed. James Risser (New York: State University of New York Press, 1999), 125.

⁶ William Lovitt, in his translation of “*Wissenschaft und Besinnung*” (“Science and Reflection”) notes: “‘Reflection’ is the translation of the noun *Besinnung*, which means recollection, reflection, consideration, deliberation. The corresponding reflexive verb, *sich besinnen*, means to recollect, to remember, to call to mind, to think on, to hit upon... reflection—from Latin *reflectere*, to bend back—intrinsically carries connotations uncomfortably close to those in Heidegger’s use of *vorstellen*, to represent or set before, and could suggest the mind’s observing itself. Moreover, reflection... lacks any marked connotation of directionality, of following after... For Heidegger *Besinnung* is a recollecting thinking-on that, as though scenting it out, follows after what is thought.’ (*QCT* 155, note 1.) Par-

vis Emad and Thomas Kalary, on the other hand, in their translation of GA 66 *Besinnung* (1938-39), employ the word ‘mindfulness’ for *Besinnung*. See the translator’s introduction of this work (M xiii-xxv).

⁷ In these works that were not prepared with academic instruction in mind—*Beiträge Zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*, (1937-38) [*Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*], and *Besinnung* (1938) [*Mindfulness*]⁷—there occurs a shift in Heidegger’s thought towards ‘an attempt to simply say the truth of Being,’ and *Ereignis* (enowning/appropriative event) becomes the ‘guiding-word’ (Editor’s Epilogue, CP 364).

⁸ As David Farrell Krell observes, the concept of *Erlebnis* comes under fire in this text in an often heavy-handed way, and Heidegger’s polemics and obdurate sarcasm surface as the shadow side of his thinking as letting-be and releasement. Krell calls this ‘odd alternating current of piety and polemic’: *paranoetic thinking*. That is, thinking that is not simply paranoid, but ‘a thinking that must surrender every noematic correlate, every no-etic structure, every conceivable being, and all guiding questions concerning beings and their grounding.’ David Farrell Krell, *Daimon Life: Heidegger and Life-Philosophy* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992), 199.

⁹ Michel Haar, *Heidegger and the Essence of Man*, trans. William Mc Neill (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 170.

¹⁰ See translator’s introduction, Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics Book Six, English and Greek*. Translated by L. H. G. Greenwood (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1909), 43.

¹¹ It was Heidegger’s directive, for the publication of his *Gesamtausgabe*, that *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)* (*Contributions to Philosophy*) be delayed until after several ‘pre-requisite’ lecture texts, most importantly *Basic Questions of Philosophy: Selected “Problems” of “logic,”* (from WS 1937/38) had been published. See editors afterword (CP 364).

¹² There have been a number of different English substitutions for *Gestell*. Samuel Weber employs ‘emplacing,’ and Jeff Malpas in *Heidegger’s Topology: Being, Place, World* (Cambridge, Ma.: MIT Press, 2006), uses ‘framework.’ These authors make the reasons for their choices quite clear. I can see advantages and disadvantages of both of these substitutions. Thus I prefer the word used by William Lovitt’s translations: ‘enframing,’ for the simple reason that it is the most commonly used.

¹³ As Heidegger says in the 1956 Addendum to “The Origin of the Work of Art,” *Ge-stell* is ‘the gathering of the bringing-forth, of the letting-come-forth-here into the rift-design as bounding outline (*peras*)’ it implies the Greek sense of *morphē* as *Gestalt*—a term Heidegger appropriated from Ernst Jünger.

Chapter 5. Art as Knowing and Letting

¹ Martin Jay, *Cultural Semantics: Keywords of Our Time* (London: Athlone, 1998) Chapter 1, “For Theory,” 15-30.

² Krzysztof Ziarek, “Art, Power, and Politics: Heidegger on *Machenschaft* and *Poiēsis*,” *Contretemps* 3, no. July (2002): 176.

³ Ziarek, “Beyond Critique? Art and Power,” in *Adorno and Heidegger: Philosophical Questions*, ed. Iain Macdonald and Krzysztof Ziarek (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 105.

⁴ Young's translation appears in Martin Heidegger, *Off the Beaten Track*, trans. Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002). Hofstadter's translation appears in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York; Sydney: Harper & Row, 1975), and forms the basis of Krell's translation in *Basic Writings from Being and Time (1927) to the Task of Thinking (1964)*, trans. David Farrell Krell, 1st ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1977).

⁵ Vattimo, *Art's Claim to Truth*, 152.

⁶ Avital Ronell translates *Stoß* as 'jolt' in Avital Ronell, *The Telephone Book: Technology, Schizophrenia, Electric Speech* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 63.

⁷ Gerald L. Bruns, *Heidegger's Estrangements: Language, Truth, and Poetry in the Later Writings* (New haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), 35.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 46.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 47.

¹² Umberto Eco, *Kant and the Platypus: Essays* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1999), 35.

¹³ Julian Young, *Heidegger's Philosophy of Art* (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 29-33. Young cites Hubert Dreyfus, 'Nihilism, Art, Technology, and Politics,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, ed. C. Guignon (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 289-316, as exemplary of the Pro-methean reading.

¹⁴ Bruns, *Heidegger's Estrangements*, xix.

¹⁵ Dastur, "Heidegger's Freiburg Version of the Origin of the Work of Art," 127.

¹⁶ *Heidegger's Estrangements*, 29.

¹⁷ Weber, *Mass Mediauras*, 26.

¹⁸ Bret W. Davis, *Heidegger and the Will: On the Way to Gelassenheit* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2007), 24.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 53.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 40.

²¹ This work was first published in abbreviated form in *Gelassenheit* in 1959. This shortened version of the last quarter of the text also appeared in volume 13 of the Heidegger *Gesamtausgabe: Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens 1910-1976*, and has been translated into English by John M. Anderson and E. Hans Freund, as "Conversation on a Country Path about Thinking," in *Discourse on Thinking* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966). The full text was published in GA 77. *Feldweg-Gespräche 1944-45*, in 1995. It has been translated as *Country Path Conversations*, trans. Bret W. Davis (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2010).

²² Davis calls the giving over of one's will to another 'deferred willing,' and argues that it is 'strictly bound to the domain of the will... regardless of whether one sacrifices one's will to the will of a political leader or that of a religious guru, or for that matter the Will of a transcendent Being, the axis of the will is merely shifted while the domain of the will itself remains in place.' Davis, *Heidegger and the Will*, 18.

²³ Miguel de Beistegui, *Thinking with Heidegger: Displacements* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 154.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 155.

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- ²⁵ Heidegger, "Art and Space," trans. Charles H. Seibert, <http://pdflibrary.wordpress.com/2008/02/12/heidegger-art-and-space/>, p. 6. Last viewed, 8/6/2011.
- ²⁶ Gerald L. Bruns, "Poethics: John Cage and Stanley Cavell at the Crossroads of Ethical Theory," in *John Cage: Composed in America*, ed. Marjorie Perloff and Charles Junkerman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 215.
- ²⁷ Michael E. Zimmerman, *Eclipse of the Self: The Development of Heidegger's Concept of Authenticity*, Rev. ed. (Athens, Oh.: Ohio University Press, 1986), 255.
- ²⁸ Robert Morris, "Some Notes on the Phenomenology of Making," *Artforum*, VIII, no. 8, April 1970, pp. 62-66, reproduced in Robert Morris, *Continuous Project Altered Daily: Writings of Robert Morris*, New ed. (MIT Press, 1995), 87.
- ²⁹ Michel Haar, *The Song of the Earth*, 41.

Chapter 6. Sound, Materiality, and Phenomenology

- ¹ Max Neuhaus, "Sound Art?," *Volume: Bed of Sound* (New York: P.S. 1, 2000), reprinted in Caleb Kelly, *Sound* (London; Cambridge, Ma.: Whitechapel Gallery; MIT Press, 2011), 73.
- ² Joanna Demers, "Field Recording, Sound Art and Objecthood," *Organised Sound* 14, no. 1 (2009): 39.
- ³ Rainer Linz, cited by Rebecca Coyle, in "Sound in Space: A Curatorial Perspective," exhibition catalogue *Sound in Space: Adventures in Australian sound art*, 26 May – 22 August 1995. Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, 13.
- ⁴ Andreas Engström and Åsa Stjerna, "Sound Art or *Klangkunst*? A Reading of the German and English Literature on Sound Art," *Organised Sound* 14, no. 1 (2009): 13.
- ⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶ Kim-Cohen, *In the Blink of an Ear: Towards a Non-Cochlear Sonic Art*, xvi-xvii.
- ⁷ Ibid., xvii.
- ⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹ Ibid., xxi.
- ¹⁰ Ibid.
- ¹¹ Christoph Cox, "From Music to Sound: Being as Time in the Sonic Arts," in *Sound*, ed. Caleb Kelly (London; Cambridge, Ma.: Whitechapel Gallery; MIT Press, 2011), 80-87, 85.
- ¹² Diedrich Diederichsen and Constanze Ruhm, eds., *Immediacy and Non-Simultaneity: Utopia of Sound* (Vienna: Schlebrügge.Editor), 15-6.
- ¹³ Kim-Cohen, *In the Blink of an Ear: Towards a Non-Cochlear Sonic Art*, 128.
- ¹⁴ Frances Dyson, *Sounding New Media: Immersion and Embodiment in the Arts and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 21.
- ¹⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁶ Don Ihde, *Listening and Voice: Phenomenologies of Sound*, 2nd ed. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), 6.
- ¹⁷ Roger Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 4.
- ¹⁸ Christian Metz, "Aural Objects," trans. Georgia Gurrieri, *Yale French Studies*, no. 60 (1975), 27.
- ¹⁹ Ibid.

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- ²⁰ Frances Dyson, "Transmitter Bodies: Aurality, Corporeality, Cuts and Signals," *NMA*, no. 8 (1990), 14
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, Dysons emphasis.
- ²² Gemma Corradi Fiumara, *The Other Side of Language: A Philosophy of Listening*, trans. Charles Lambert (London; New York: Routledge, 1990). See chapter 5: "A philosophy of Listening Within a Tradition of Questioning."
- ²³ Ihde, *Listening and Voice*, 13.
- ²⁴ Metz, "Aural Objects," 27.
- ²⁵ Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music*, 5.
- ²⁶ Trevor Wishart, *On Sonic Art*, New and rev. ed. (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1996), 67.
- ²⁷ Brian Kane, "L'objet Sonore Maintenant: Pierre Schaeffer, Sound Objects and the Phenomenological Reduction," *Organised Sound* 12, no. 1 (2007): 1.
- ²⁸ Gadamer, in his essay of 1963 "The Phenomenological Movement," in *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, remarks that Husserl taught the necessity for 'patient, descriptive, detailed work,' and would say "Not always the big bills, gentlemen; small change, small change!" *PH*, pp. 132-3.
- ²⁹ Jacques Taminiaux, *The Metamorphoses of Phenomenological Reduction*, 1st ed. (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2004), 7.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.
- ³¹ Pierre Schaeffer, "Acousmatics" excerpt from *Traité des objets musicaux* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1966) in Christoph Cox and Daniel Warner, *Audio Culture: Readings in Modern Music*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (New York: Continuum, 2004), 77.
- ³² *Ibid.*, 78.
- ³³ Cf. Dyson, *Sounding New Media*, 54, 7.
- ³⁴ Schaeffer, "Acousmatics," 78.
- ³⁵ Pierre Schaeffer, *Solfège De L'objet Sonore*, trans. Livia Bellagamba (Paris: Institut National de l'Audiovisuel, 1998), 53.
- ³⁶ *Abschattungen*, is regularly translated as 'adumbrations' or profiles, but it also carries the meaning 'shadowing off,' or 'gradation in shades.'
- ³⁷ Schaeffer, "Acousmatics," 78.
- ³⁸ Klaus Held, "Husserl's Phenomenological Method," trans. Lanei Rodemeyer, in *The New Husserl a Critical Reader*, ed. Donn Welton (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 17.
- ³⁹ Kane, "L'objet Sonore Maintenant: Pierre Schaeffer, Sound Objects and the Phenomenological Reduction," 20.
- ⁴⁰ Schaeffer, *Traité des objets musicaux*, p. 23, note 3, cited in Carlos Palombini, "Schaeffer's Sonic Object: Prolegomena," (1999), 2.
http://compmus.ime.usp.br/sbcm/1999/papers/Carlos_Palombini.html
- ⁴¹ Palombini, "Schaeffer's Sonic Object: Prolegomena," 8.
- ⁴² Michel Chion, *Guide to Sound Objects: Pierre Schaeffer and Musical Research*, trans. John Dack and Christine North. (2009), <http://modisti.com/news/?p=14239>, Date Accessed 17/10/2011.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, 105.
- ⁴⁴ Schaeffer, *Traité des objets musicaux*, p. 628, cited in *ibid.*
- ⁴⁵ Chion, *Guide to Sound Objects*, 105.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 106.

⁴⁷ Solfège, solfeggio, and solfa are more or less equivalent terms referring to the set of syllables: *doh, rey, me, fah, soh, lah*, and *ti*, used to represent the notes of the musical scale. What Cage is referring to is Schaeffer's wish to establish an inventory of sounds based on morphology and typology.

⁴⁸ Cage and Charles, *For the Birds*, 77.

⁴⁹ In Derrida, *SP* 107-128, see also *SP* 6.

⁵⁰ The *idea* begins to replace *physis*, which, according to Heidegger, had previously served to interpret being as an appearing in two different senses. First, as self-gathering of bringing-itself-to-stand; that 'creates space for itself'; 'rips (*reißt*) space open' (*IM* 195, *EM* 139-40). Second, as something that is already standing there, to proffer a foreground, a surface, a look as an offering to be looked at, and 'simply gives space an *outline* (*Aufriß*)' (*IM* 195, *EM* 140, Heidegger's emphasis).

⁵¹ Edmund Husserl, "Husserl's Letter to Hofmannsthal – Phenomenology and Pure Art," trans. Sven-Olov Wallenstein, *Site* 26-27(2009): 2.

⁵² Danielle Lories, "Remarks on Aesthetic Intentionality: Husserl or Kant," *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 14, no. 1 (2006): 38.

⁵³ Schaeffer, *Solfège De L'objet Sonore*, 15.

⁵⁴ Brandon LaBelle, *Background Noise: Perspectives on Sound Art* (New York: Continuum International, 2006), 32.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 33. Quote from Schaeffer is from the liner notes to *Pierre Schaeffer: L'Oeuvre Musicale*, p. 72.

⁵⁸ Ihde, *Listening and Voice*, 20.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, Ihde's emphasis.

Chapter 7. Experimental Art: Chance and Indeterminacy

¹ Daniel Charles asks Cage a question in reference to Heidegger. It is evident from Cage's response that he had, up to that time, no contact with Heidegger's work. *For the Birds*, 150-1, 202-3.

² Davis, *Heidegger and the Will*, 26.

³ John Cage, *Silence: Lectures and Writings*, (Lond.: Calder & Boyars, 1968), 69.

⁴ George Brecht, *Chance-Imagery*.(ubuclassics, 2004), http://www.ubu.com/historical/gb/brecht_chance.pdf, Date Accessed 3/5/2008. Originally published as: George Brecht, *Chance-Imagery*, (New York: a Great Bear Pamphlet by Something Else Press, 1966).

⁵ Dick Higgins, *A Dialectic of Centuries: Notes Towards a Theory of the New Arts* (New York: Printed Editions, 1978), 30.

⁶ Brecht, *Chance-Imagery*, 23.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Pierre Cabanne, *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp*, trans. Ron Padgett (London: Thames and Hudson, 1971), 48.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Duchamp, *The Essential Writings of Marcel Duchamp*, 125.

¹¹ Brecht, "Chance-Imagery," 25.

¹² *For the Birds*, 148.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Christian Wolff quoted in Cage, *Silence*, 68. Where Wolff's quote ends and where Cage's writing resumes remains indeterminate in this passage due to lack of concluding quotation marks.

¹⁵ Interview with Bill Shoemaker (1984) in *Conversing with Cage* (New York: Limelight Editions, 1988), 222.

¹⁶ Interview with Roy M. Close (1975), *ibid.*, 219.

¹⁷ Interview with Stanley Kauffmann (1966), *ibid.*, 223-4.

¹⁸ Brandon W. Joseph, *Random Order: Robert Rauschenberg and the Neo-Avant-Garde* (Cambridge, Ma.: MIT Press, 2007), 45.

¹⁹ *Silence*, 102.

²⁰ Cage, *I-V/John Cage* (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press, 1990), 217. A recording of this session can be heard at: "Q & A, Part 1.," http://ubu.artmob.ca/sound/cage_john/norton/Cage-John_QA-I.mp3.

²¹ C.f. Cage, *Silence*, 18, *For the Birds*, 39.

²² *I-V/John Cage*, 21.

²³ *For the Birds*, 58.

²⁴ John Cage, *A Year from Monday: New Lectures and Writings* (London: Marion Boyars, 1968), 31. Often repeated by Cage elsewhere.

²⁵ Kyle Gann, *No Such Thing as Silence: John Cage's 4'33"* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 93.

²⁶ N. Katherine Hayles, "Chance Operations: Cagean Paradox and Contemporary Science," in *John Cage: Composed in America*.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 227-8.

²⁸ John Cage, *Empty Words: Writings '73-'78*, 1st ed. (Middletown; London: Wesleyan University Press: Marion Boyars, 1979), 179.

²⁹ *For the Birds*, 147.

³⁰ *Ibid.* Charles' emphasis.

³¹ Cage, "An Interview with John Cage," Michael Kirby and Richard Schechner, *Tulane Drama Review*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (Winter, 1965) 50-72, 55.

³² Steve Reich, *Writings About Music* (Halifax: The Press of Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1974), 10.

³³ Interview with Laura Fletcher and Thomas Moore (1983), in *Conversing with Cage*, 208.

³⁴ Morris, "Some Notes on the Phenomenology of Making," 75.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 77.

³⁶ Reich, *Writings About Music*, 9.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 11.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Hans Haacke, *Hans Haacke: For Real: Works 1959-2006*, ed. Matthias Flügge and Robert Fleck (Düsseldorf: Richter, 2006).

⁴¹ "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art," *Artforum* Vol.5, no. 10, Summer 1967, pp. 79-83). "Sentences on Conceptual Art," First published in *0-9* (New York), 1969, and *Art-Language* (England), May 1969. Both appear in Alberro and Stimson, *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*.

⁴² LeWitt, "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art," in *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*, 12.

⁴³ LeWitt, "Sentences on Conceptual Art," *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*, 106.

⁴⁴ LeWitt, "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art," 13.

⁴⁵ LeWitt, "Sentences on Conceptual Art," 106.

⁴⁶ LeWitt, "Sentences on Conceptual Art," 107.

⁴⁷ LaBelle, *Background Noise*, 31.

⁴⁸ R. Murray Schafer coined the term 'schizophonia' to describe the dislocation of sounds from their 'origins' or sources imposed by twentieth century technology: 'The Greek prefix *schizo* means split, separated. Schizophonia refers to the split between an original sound and its electroacoustical transmission or reproduction.' R. Murray Schafer, *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World* (Rochester: Destiny Books, 1993), 15.

⁴⁹ Jeff. E. Malpas, *Heidegger's Topology: Being, Place, World* (Cambridge, Ma.: MIT Press, 2006), 54.

Chapter 8. Experience, Flux, and Repetition

¹ Cage, interview with C. H. Waddington (1972), *Conversing with Cage*: 215-6.

² Ina Blom, "Theories of Fluxus. Boredom and Oblivion," in *The Fluxus Reader*, ed. Ken Friedman (Chichester, West Sussex; New York: Academy Edition, 1998), 63.

³ *Silence*, 64.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Davis, *Heidegger and the Will*, 134.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 128. Passage refers to Meister Eckhart, *Deutsche Predigten und Traktate*, Trans. Joseph Quint (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1963), 336.

⁷ David Doris, "Zen Vaudeville,: A Medi(T)Ation in the Margins of Fluxus," in *The Fluxus Reader*, 93.

⁸ *Heidegger and the Will*, 134.

⁹ Angelus Silesius, *The Cherubic Wanderer: Sensual Description of the Four Final Things*, cited in Heidegger (*PR* 35).

¹⁰ Eckhart, Quint translation, p. 180, cited in John D. Caputo, *The Mystical Element in Heidegger's Thought*, Rev. reprint. ed. (New York: Fordham University Press, 1986), 123.

¹¹ *Silence*, 12.

¹² *For the Birds* 151.

¹³ John D. Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics: Repetition, Deconstruction, and the Hermeneutic Project* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 5.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁵ Blom, "Theories of Fluxus. Boredom and Oblivion," 64.

¹⁶ Dick Higgins, "Fluxus: Theory and Reception," in *The Fluxus Reader*, 222.

¹⁷ Brandon Joseph observes that it was the influence of Moholy Nagy's book, *The New Vision*, rather than Duchamp that brought Cage to an understanding of Robert Rauschenberg's *White Paintings*. Joseph, *Random Order*, 36. Cage would have come into contact with Albers' work directly through Black Mountain College.

¹⁸ Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics*, 2.

¹⁹ Jacques Derrida, (*OG* 61). Cited in Henry Staten, *Wittgenstein and Derrida* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 31; Vincent Descombes, *Modern*

French Philosophy, trans. L. Scott-Fox and J. M. Harding (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 141.

²⁰ Craig Saper, "Fluxus as Laboratory," in *The Fluxus Reader*, 136.

²¹ Higgins, *A Dialectic of Centuries*, 102-3. Cited in Doris, "Zen Vaudiville,: A Medi(T)Ation in the Margins of Fluxus," 94.

²² Jean-François Lyotard, *La phenomenology* (P.U.F), 45, cited in Vincent Descombes, *Modern French Philosophy*, trans. L. Scott-Fox and J. M. Harding (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 61.

²³ Edmund Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie* [Book One = *Ideen I*], cited in Heidegger, *TDP* 83, *ZBP* 99.

²⁴ Paul Natorp, *Allgemeine Psychologie*, Vol. I, p. 190 f., cited by Heidegger in *TDP* 85, *ZBP* 101.

²⁵ Theodore J. Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 56.

²⁶ Theodore Kisiel and Thomas Sheehan, eds., *Becoming Heidegger: On the Trail of His Early Occasional Writings, 1910-1927* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press), 170.

²⁷ Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics*, 54, Caputo's emphasis.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 40.

²⁹ Donn Welton, *The Other Husserl: The Horizons of Transcendental Phenomenology* (Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000), p. 332.

³⁰ Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics*, 39.

³¹ Higgins, "Fluxus: Theory and Reception," 229.

³² Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, pp. 305, 367, 390, and 578.

³³ *Radical Hermeneutics*, 113.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 17.

³⁵ Cage interviewed by Bill Shoemaker (1984), in, *Conversing with Cage*, 222.

³⁶ Cage interviewed by Birger Ollrogge (1985), in *ibid.*, 223.

³⁷ Reich, *Writings About Music*, 11.

³⁸ Cage interviewed by Birger Ollrogge (1985), in *Conversing with Cage*, 223.

³⁹ *Silence*, 93.

⁴⁰ Higgins, *A Dialectic of Centuries*, 44.

⁴¹ Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics*, 41.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 58.

⁴⁴ Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time*, 49.

⁴⁵ Samuel Weber, *Institution and Interpretation* (Palo Alto, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001), 240. Weber's emphasis.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 241.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Rodolphe Gasché, *Inventions of Difference: On Jacques Derrida* (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press, 1994), 63.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 62.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Joseph Claude Evans, *Strategies of Deconstruction Derrida and the Myth of the Voice* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 106.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 107.

⁵³ *Radical Hermeneutics*, 39-40.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 40.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 191.

⁵⁶ It is surprising that Derrida ignores this correspondence and relegates the final third of “The Origin of the Work of Art,” to a metaphysical notion of self-present speech, when he writes: ‘the subordination of all the arts to speech, and, if not to poetry, at least to the poem, the said, language, speech, nomination (*Sage, Dichtung, Sprache, Nennen*)’ (TP 23)

⁵⁷ Paul Patton and Terry Smith, *Jacques Derrida: Deconstruction Engaged: The Sydney Seminars* (Sydney: Power Publications, 2001), 23.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 22.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 15.

⁶⁰ Descombes, *Modern French Philosophy*, 75.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Weber, *Institution and Interpretation*, 244.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid. See also *Mass Mediauras*, 138–40.

⁶⁵ Weber, *Institution and Interpretation*, 245.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 244.

Chapter 9. Against Expression: Poethics

¹ Ihde, *Listening and Voice*, 20.

² Hal Foster, *Recodings: Art, Spectacle, Cultural Politics* (Port Townsend Wa.: Bay Press; New York: The New Press, 1999) 63. Paul de Man, *Allegories of Reading* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), p. 107.

³ Ibid., 63.

⁴ A mesostic poem is much like an acrostic text but the vertical phrase, or spine—which in Cage’s poems often consist of proper names—runs down the middle rather than the edge. The term is attributed to Norman O. Brown.

⁵ Cage, *I-V / John Cage*, 13.

⁶ Ibid., 15–6. The line ‘It’s because I’m in the position of writing a text that uses words,’ is omitted from the written text. It can be heard in the recording at http://ubu.artmob.ca/sound/cage_john/norton/Cage-John_QA-I.mp3.

⁷ John Cage, *Musicage: Cage Muses on Words, Art, Music*, ed. Joan Retallack (Hanover N.H.: Wesleyan University Press: University Press of New England, 1996) 69.

⁸ Cage, *Empty Words*, 183.

⁹ This is said in a discussion between Cage and Wim Mertens at the New Music America festival in Chicago, July 1982. Cage had heard Branca’s performance the night before. The full discussion can be heard at:

http://ubu.artmob.ca/sound/chicago_82/Chicago_82-B2_Cage-Mertens_So-that-each.mp3.

¹⁰ *Empty Words*, 183.

¹¹ Ibid. Cage writes: ‘Implicit in the use of words (when messages are put across) are training, government, enforcement, and finally the military. Thoreau said that hearing a sentence he heard feet marching, Syntax, N. [Norman] O. Brown told me, is the arrangement of the army,’ 183.

¹² Notably: Joan Retallack, Gerald L. Bruns, Marjorie Perloff, and Charles Junkerman, in

John Cage: Composed in America.

¹³ Joan Retallack, *The Poethical Wager* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 3.

¹⁴ Joan Retallack (Talk), "John Cage's Anarchic Harmony: A Poethical Wager," Chazen Museum of Art, University of Wisconsin-Madison, April 22, 2009.

http://media.sas.upenn.edu/pennsound/authors/Retallack/Madison_04-09/Retallack-Joan_Cage-Lecture_Madison_04-22-09.mp3, viewed 28/11/2011.

¹⁵ Close Listening with Charles Bernstein – Conversation Joan Retallack, with Al Filreis. Close Listening, Bard College, February 26, 2011.

http://media.sas.upenn.edu/pennsound/authors/Retallack/Close-Listening/Retallack-Joan_Complete-Conversation_Close-Listening_Bard_2-26-11.mp3, viewed 28/11/2011.

¹⁶ Retallack, *The Poethical Wager*, 267.

¹⁷ Loss Pequeño Glazier, *Digital Poetics: The Making of E-Poetries* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2002). Glazier cites Robert Creeley's comments on Williams at a poetry reading in Buffalo (5 November 1999).

¹⁸ Jackson Mac Low, *Barnesbook* (Los Angeles: Sun & Moon, 1996), 52. Cited in *ibid.*, 133.

¹⁹ Bruns, "Poethics: John Cage and Stanley Cavell at the Crossroads of Ethical Theory," 220.

²⁰ Stanley Cavell, "An Emerson Mood," in *The Senses of Walden* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1981), p. 143, cited in *ibid.*

²¹ George Hartley, <http://epc.buffalo.edu/authors/hartley/maclow/maclow.html> 1998, (last viewed 12/5/2011), originally in *Sulfur* 23 (Autumn 1988).

²² J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).

²³ Bruns, "Poethics: John Cage and Stanley Cavell at the Crossroads of Ethical Theory," 220.

²⁴ There are two words in French that can be translated by the English word 'meaning': '*sens*' and '*vouloir-dire*.' The latter has connotations of volition as it is etymologically linked to *voluntas*, and can be translated as "meaning" or "to mean" but has strong connotations toward 'want to say' or 'will to say.' Derrida translates *bedeuten*, the verbal form of the word Husserl uses for 'meaning' (*Bedeutung*) as *vouloir-dire*, a necessity since '*sens*' is reserved for the translation of the German word '*Sinn*,' and as Derrida explains in *Speech and Phenomena*, The French word '*signification*' presents problems because whereas in German and English one can say that a sign is without meaning (*bedeutungslos*), or that a sign is meaningful (*bedeutsame Zeichen*) to translate *Bedeutung* as *signification*, risks giving the sense of these expressions as the absurd 'non-signifying sign,' and the redundant 'signifying sign.' Cf. *Speech and Phenomena*, p. 17-18.

²⁵ Rodolphe Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror: Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection* (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press, 1986), 127. Gasché's emphasis.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Retallack, *The Poethical Wager*, 12. Retallack's emphasis.

²⁸ Niall Lucy, *Debating Derrida* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1995), 24. Lucy's emphasis.

²⁹ Many of the Dadaists were interested in discovering the underlying 'acausal orderedness' of chance operations. Hans Richter points out that Paul Kammerer's book *Das Gesetz der Serie* (The Law of Seriality), which attempts to determine the laws of acausal relationships, was published in 1919 when many of the artistic experiments with chance were taking place. Hans (Jean) Arp writes: "The law of chance, which embraces all other laws

and is as unfathomable to us as the depths from which all life arises, can only be comprehended by complete surrender to the Unconscious. I maintain that whoever submits to this law attains perfect life.' Quoted in Georges Hugnet: "The Dada Spirit in Painting" (1932 and 1934) in Robert Motherwell (ed.) *The Dada Painters and Poets: An Anthology* (Cambridge, Ma.: The Belknap Press of the Harvard University Press, 1989), p 140, and Hans Richter, *Dada: Art and Anti-art*, trans. David Britt (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997), p. 55.

³⁰ Jacques Roubaud, "Deux Principes parfois respectés par les travaux oulipiens," *Atlas de littérature potentielle*, p. 90, cited in Warren F. Motte, *Oulipo: A Primer of Potential Literature* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 18.

³¹ A textual constraint where each substantive is replaced by the seventh following substantive in the dictionary.

³² Jackson Mac Low, "Our Throng Is Too Much Involved with Dazzle," <http://www.chax.org/eoagh/issuetwo/maclow.htm> (last viewed 13/5/2011), originally from the Mac Low-Tardos Reading at Demolicious Poetry/Multimedia Series, June 6, 2004, Cambridge.

³³ See Mac Low's letter to Nick Piombino, "Response to Piombino," <http://epc.buffalo.edu/authors/maclow/piombino.html> (last accessed 26/5/2011).

Chapter 10. Conceptual Art as Poetry

¹ Gerald L. Bruns, *The Material of Poetry: Sketches for a Philosophical Poetics* (Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 2005), 9.

² Bruns, *Heidegger's Estrangements*, 50.

³ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁴ *The Material of Poetry*, 4.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 16. Bruns' emphasis.

⁶ Kosuth, "Art Without Space," A symposium moderated by Seth Siegelaub with Lawrence Weiner, Robert Barry, Douglas Huebler and Joseph Kosuth, 1969, in Alexander Alberro, *Lawrence Weiner* (London: Phaidon, 1998), 98.

⁷ Kosuth, "Art after Philosophy," 32, note 24. Kosuth's emphasis.

⁸ Kosuth, "The Play of the Unsayable: A Preface and Ten Remarks on Art and Wittgenstein," in *Art After Philosophy and After*, 249.

⁹ Interview with Jeanne Siegel, on WBAI-FM April 7, 1970. Thereafter published as "Joseph Kosuth: Art as Idea as Idea" in Jeanne Siegel, *Artwords: Discourse on the 60s and 70s* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1985), 221-231. Republished in "Art as Idea as Idea: An Interview with Jeanne Siegel," in *Art after Philosophy and After*, 52.

¹⁰ Kosuth, in Peter Lodermeier, Karlyn de Jongh, and Sarah Gold, eds., *Personal Structures: Time.Space.Existence* (Cologne: DuMont Buchverlag, 2009), 65.

¹¹ Marjorie Perloff, *Unoriginal Genius: Poetry by Other Means in the New Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 52.

¹² Haroldo de Campos, *Novas: Selected Writings of Haroldo De Campos*, ed. Odile Cisneros Antonio Sergio Bessa (Evanston, IL.: Northwestern University Press, 2007), 171.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 168.

¹⁴ Haroldo de Campos, "Concrete Poetry-Language-Communication," First published in the *Suplemento dominical do "Jornal do Brasil"* (Rio de Janeiro), 28 April 1957 and 5 May 1957, republished in *Novas*, 237.

¹⁵ Augusto De Campos, "Questionnaire of the Yale Symposium on Experimental, Visual and Concrete Poetry since the 1960s (April 5-7, 1995)," <http://www2.uol.com.br/augustodecampos/yaleeng.htm>.

¹⁶ Augusto de Campos, Haroldo de Campos, and Décio Pignatari, "Pilot Plan for Concrete Poetry," Originally published by the authors in *Noigandres* 4, São Paulo, 1958, reproduced in Campos, *Novas*, 217.

¹⁷ Haroldo de Campos, "Concrete Poetry-Language-Communication," in *Novas*, 236.

¹⁸ Gregory L. Ulmer, *Applied Grammatology: Post(E) Pedagogy from Jacques Derrida to Joseph Beuys* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 178.

¹⁹ Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror: Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection*, 244. Husserl derives the syncategorematic sign from the German philosopher of language, Anton Marty. See A. Marty, "Über subjektlose Sätze," *Vierteljahrschrift für wis. Philos.*, VIIIth year, 293 note. (LI 2 54).

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 245.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 249.

²² *Ibid.*, 248.

²³ Cf. Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror*, 245-6, 249, and Staten, *Wittgenstein and Derrida*, 46-47. Although Derrida describes Husserl's pure logical grammar as 'a remarkable project' (*Pos* 32), he insists that Husserl neglects to develop its most radical possibilities. Derrida extends and displaces Husserl's project beyond its domination by a relation to an object. In doing so we strike the notion of iterability and the question of whether poetic language should be excluded from 'meaningful' language because it fails to conform to the laws of grammar that promise knowledge on the basis of truth as objectivity. In this way, rather than following Saussure's linguistics, Derrida takes off where Husserl leaves off.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 247.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 248.

²⁶ Malpas, *Heidegger's Topology: Being, Place, World*, 205.

²⁷ *The Tain of the Mirror*, 250.

²⁸ Marjorie Perloff, *Radical Artifice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 80.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 78-9.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Ziarek, *The Historicity of Experience*, 68.

³² Perloff is critical of the 'free pass' given to Heidegger, in view of his entanglement with National Socialism. Further, Perloff regards Heidegger's thought as not only anti-Semitic, but also a religious ideology that most of late twentieth century French philosophy has 'fallen' for. See Marjorie Perloff, "Close Listening: Readings and Conversations at Art International Radio, Clocktower Studio, New York, November 11, 2009: Program Two: Conversation with Charles Bernstein," <http://writing.upenn.edu/pennsound/x/Perloff.php>.

³³ L.S. Dembo, "George Oppen: An Interview," *Contemporary Literature* 10(Spring, 1969): 169.

³⁴ Burton Hatlen, ed. *George Oppen: Man and Poet* (Orono, Maine: The National Poetry Foundation, University of Maine, 1981), 329.

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- ³⁵ George Oppen, *Discrete Series* (New York: The Objectivist Press, 1934), 8.
- ³⁶ Perloff, *Radical Artifice*, 84. The quote from Oppen is from L.S. Dembo, "George Oppen: An Interview," 162.
- ³⁷ Ibid.
- ³⁸ Hatlen, *George Oppen: Man and Poet*, 330.
- ³⁹ Ibid.
- ⁴⁰ *The Historicity of Experience*, 69.
- ⁴¹ *The Material of Poetry*, 24.
- ⁴² Kenneth Goldsmith, "Sentences on Conceptual Writing," http://www.ubu.com/papers/kg_ol_goldsmith.html.
- ⁴³ Craig Dworkin and Kenneth Goldsmith, eds., *Against Expression: An Anthology of Conceptual Writing* (Evanston, IL.: Northwestern University Press, 2010), xxiii.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid., xxxvi.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid.
- ⁴⁷ Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, "Open Letters, Industrial Poems," *October* 42 (Autumn, 1987): 97.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid., 79.
- ⁴⁹ Marcel Broodthaers and Irmeline Lebeer, "Ten Thousand Francs Reward," trans. Paul Schmidt, *October* 42 (Autumn, 1987): 39.
- ⁵⁰ Michel Foucault, "This is Not a Pipe," in Michel Foucault, *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, ed. James D. Faubion, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: New Press, 1998), 197.
- ⁵¹ W. J. Thomas Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 68.
- ⁵² Ibid., 69.
- ⁵³ *Radical Artifice*, 103.
- ⁵⁴ Anne Marie Freybourg, "Taken in a Moment of Optical Confusion... Film and Photography in Certain Relations (Man Ray, Duchamp, Warhol, Snow, Broodthaers), *The Readymade Boomerang: Certain Relations in 20th Century Art*, Catalogue for the Eighth Biennale of Sydney, 11 April -3 June 1990 (Sydney: Biennale of Sydney and the Museum of Contemporary Art, 1990), 127.
- ⁵⁵ Rosalind E. Krauss, *"A Voyage on the North Sea": Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2000), 33.
- ⁵⁶ Michel Foucault, "This Is Not a Pipe," in *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology* (New York: New Press, 1998), 193-4; cited in Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*, 69.
- ⁵⁷ Baldessari used a timing system to take photographs of live broadcast television at regulated intervals, words were shuffled and ordered by colour-wheel codes to obtain 'visual order by word order, and word order by visual order; to avoid my own good taste by letting the order of language, colour, and other systems take over.' John Baldessari, *Works, 1966-8* (exh. Cat.), (Eindhoven: Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum and Essen, Museum Folwang, 1981), p. 6, quoted in Howard Risatti, ed. *Postmodern Perspectives: Issues in Contemporary Art* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1990).
- ⁵⁸ Roland Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 25.
- ⁵⁹ Ibid., 38. Barthes' emphasis.

⁶⁰ Words and images are drawn from a collection randomly one at a time, and pasted down as soon as drawn starting at the top of the page. Placement is determined by relation of word to image, graphic focal points, etc. as one would work on magazine / newspaper layout, except that placement must be made permanent before all the elements are selected. Images and words are drawn until piece is considered complete. The title of the work was generated by the process.

⁶¹ *Re/Search* No 8/9 San Francisco 1984, 38-40. Ballard tells us that they are sample pages, which suggests that the project was abandoned.

⁶² Roland Barthes, *S/Z*, trans. Richard Miller, 1st American ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974), 7.

⁶³ See <http://ian-andrews.org/generative.html>

⁶⁴ The term was coined by Seaman in 1995, 'in order to define a particular approach to emergent meaning through generative virtual environments and other computer-based combinatoric media forms. Combinatoric works enable the exploration of sets of media elements in different orders and combinations.' Bill Seaman, "Recombinant Poetics | VS | OULIPO," paper delivered at VainA Conference in Paris, 2000, (Abstract), <http://www.billseaman.com/>.

⁶⁵ Pierre Bourdieu, *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action* (Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press, 1998) 7-8.

⁶⁶ George Quasha and Charles Stein, *An Art of Limina: Gary Hill's Works and Writings* (Barcelona: Ediciones Polígrafa, 2009), 29.

⁶⁷ Sol LeWitt, "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art," 12.

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