

## Kant, Art, and Time

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*Translated by Stephen Barker, with Arne De Boever*

It is common knowledge that a work of art is at once free of any attachment to its own time (that it is, I will claim using a Husserlian term, omnitemporal—rather than atemporal), and at the same time formed uniquely in, by, and out of its age: Giotto and Leonardo, as well as Marcel Duchamp, can only be seen *omnitemporally* as works *of their time*—even if, in Duchamp’s case, this was the time of worklessness (*désœuvrement*).<sup>1</sup> Giotto can no more appear in Leonardo’s time than Duchamp could in *our* time.

But of what does the omnitemporality of the “an-artist” Duchamp consist, if it is impossible to *love* a work by Duchamp in which he himself interrogates its “work”? How does one become an *amateur with Duchamp*—

1. [This provocatively enigmatic term, which literally means “out of work” or “unemployed,” took on new meaning in the work of Maurice Blanchot, for whom literature—writing in general—is feasible because writing endows words with their own allusive reality, negating all individuality and producing a state of radical neutrality. In order to maintain Blanchot’s three-part neologism, prefix–root word–suffix, “*dés-oeuvre-ment*,” I have elsewhere used “unworkness”; “worklessness,” however, now seems to be more widely accepted. The concept is vital to Stiegler’s complex sense of transductive individuation.—Trans.]

if not of Duchamp himself? The Duchampian amateur loves the an-artistic psychic individuation that Duchamp has woven into the collective individuation we ourselves share—and of which it is a sedimentary deposit, as our transindividuated, preindividual foundation. It is the process of a transindividuation that *still transindividuates us*—historically, and as the *histos* of our age, as what has *produced* our age, in the same way that Giotto and Leonardo did, yet entirely otherwise: otherwise than *every* other age.

An artist is a *transductor of individuations*, catalyzing and channeling *forces*—libidinal energies—in a *field* of collective individuation in which he designs the circuits of transindividuation typical of that age, which the artist then “performs,” fabricating it in “saying” it as much as in “showing” it—in interpreting it (and at this point it would be necessary to reopen the discussion with Marx). The artist’s *performative circuits* are thus *motifs* and *monograms* of his time.

Every psychic individual participates in the collective individuation constituting his age. But through his works (through the traces of their worklessness), the psychic individual as artist—or an-artist—in some way *coincides* with this collective individuation, and this coincidence is *sensational*. From the twentieth century onward, as it has led to the *proletarianization* of sensibility that I discussed in my previous text, it has become clear that it is impossible to understand the aesthetic life of the noetic beings that we are without inscribing it in a *genealogy of the sensible* that must be founded on the analysis of the organological becoming of this *form of technical life* (i.e., of sensational being: the being who can *exclaim* itself out of a noetically expressed sensibility, from the preindividual and transindividual foundation of which it is the inheritor). This exclamation presupposes an exteriorization of which gesture and speech are the primary manifestations.

However, this genealogy of the psychosomatic sensible presupposes a characterization of the social processes of transindividuation out of which a work can open forth and that are made possible by the organological becoming of technical artifacts of which “art” is the sublimation.

Only in inscribing a work in circuits of transindividuation from which it emerges, through which it passes (and then only because artifacts facilitate its passing), and in which it creates new circuits, motifs, and monograms by inscribing them there artifactually in time and space—only in this way is it possible to respect it as a “work.” And this always means insofar as it works beyond its time, but only by working *out of* its time (that is, also, in freeing itself from its time, like a sailor who, coming from somewhere, can go somewhere else).

The omnitemporality of the work emerges from its very temporality. This is why the work is not “atemporal”: it is *omni*temporal in that, starting from its own time, its own age—historical, protohistorical, or prehistorical—it resonates in *all* times and in all works (projecting what André Malraux called “the possible of art”). But it can perpetually and pervasively work only if it can find its source and its resources in its own time and, in some way, the means for leaving it.

Such “means” are always organological.

What, then, are Duchamp’s resources; what is the spring from which he drinks? Essential to it is the machinic turn of *sensibility*, of which *Nude Descending a Staircase* and *Fountain* are two examples, separated by five years; two versions and two examples of the question of technical reproducibility engendering, precisely at that point in time, the *loss* of instrumental aesthetic knowledge, ruining the trades of workers and the practices of art-*amateurs*, such that it will no longer be necessary to know how to read or play music or copy works. From then on, literature is no longer either a bildungsroman or an operator of a life-transformation, not an art of living as culture- or technique-of-the-self but the object and function of consumption: of the *organization* of consumption of all industrial production through the seizing of control of the organization of the sensible itself, and of the cultural *consumption* of artworks themselves in a time of worklessness.

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The proletarianization of the receiver required by the new *economic* function of the aesthetic—which is also taking place in the cognitive field—has resulted in a generalization of what Hannah Arendt describes as *cultivated philistinism*, which has become typical of our era. It is already what drove Duchamp’s work, and it is what returned with Andy Warhol and in the age of mass media, an age more ripe to receive the lesson of the kind of consumerist experience, initially avoided but subsequently rapidly on its way to becoming global, through the expansion of television (and the Internet) but also through pop culture’s increased distance to and forgetting of Dada.

How is individuation possible when *all* knowledges are transmitted by machines? Is wanting “to be a machine” the ultimate articulation of this limit question?<sup>2</sup> As for us, living as we do in the age of a *new machinic turn of sensibility* (the digital turn, which coincides with the end of mass media that are dying in a globally and industrially organized regressive move-

2. I have attempted to lay out what constitutes such a limit in Stiegler 2013. [It is worth remembering that Andy Warhol wanted “to be a machine” (Swenson 2007).—Trans.]

ment in which the technical, transitional object becomes monstrous and pathetic), we will encounter a *new age of care* in which the *amateur* is the exemplary figure—traversing, as such, the field of contemporary art, producing exhibitions such as *Amateurs*, organized by Ralph Rugoff at the CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, or *Enthusiasts*, organized by Neil Cummings and Marysia Lewandoska at Chelsea College, London, or the installation by Michel Gondry at the Centre Pompidou in Paris.

This new epoch opens up a new organological age that *requalifies* amateurs as *practitioners* as well as *critics*. But the practitioner of art is *first of all* a critic, if it is true that *to practice* is *to discern*. This is why we must try to understand, both here and in my third and final text, “The Quarrel of Amateurs,” what the past, present, and future of the amateur actually *are*—that is, the connection between *critique* and *desire*, if it is true that “amateur” derives from “*amor*,” love.

I will begin with this last question, and I will enter into it with Kant—and we will see how and why he necessarily directs us to the second question, of the amateur as lover.

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Insofar as the figure of the amateur is taken seriously—as designating a *way of individuating*—the amateur is precisely what Kantian analysis cannot allow to be thought, any more than it can allow the thought of the historical conditions for critique or the faculty of judgment as a critical faculty formed through familiarity with works that themselves presuppose a practice.

In “The Proletarianization of Sensibility,” I addressed the faculty of aesthetic judgment, as conceived by Kant, as a judgment taste that is *universal*, but only *by default*. Let us reconsider this analysis. In judging the beautiful, I am obliged:

1. to posit, in principle, that *everyone* should judge as I do, since what can appear as beautiful to me can only do so if it is universally beautiful (universality is an essential predicate of the perception of beauty); if it does not, I am no longer faced with the beautiful but with the merely agreeable;
2. to state that, *factually*, on the one hand, not everyone may agree with me in my judgment but, on the other hand, and above all, that *I can neither in fact nor in law prove its universality*: I am obliged to state that the aesthetic experience itself constitutes

an *irreducible inconsistency (déphasage)*—and thus a *necessary default (un défaut qu'il faut)*.

Such a judgment can be universal only through this default in which, as universal law, it is condemned to remain in fact “diversal,”<sup>3</sup> so to speak. This means not only that it will never produce universal agreement but also that it will never be able to require it, since it judges from the *necessity* of such an inconsistency, as the condition of psychic and collective individuation. A more contemporary name for this inconsistency is *singularity*.

If a reflective judgment such as this is not determinant, if it *tends* to universalization, if it is even in some way *potentially* universal without being able to be actually universalized, if this can never be accomplished definitively in the ultimate plenitude of its act, it is because remaining thus, *always unachieved* and thus *to come*, it opens onto the promise of a circuit of *infinite transindividuation (omnitemporal precisely because of that—Apollonian measure [mesure] that is simultaneously Dionysian excess [démésure])*.

It is within that incompleteness giving access to such an infinite, and thus as *irreducible mystery*, that a work is *at work*: it works and opens up in this way. Thus at the very moment when it instantly and fully gives itself to us, it surpasses us in exceeding itself. This is why Kant can write, “We *linger* over the consideration of the beautiful because this consideration strengthens and reproduces itself” (Kant 2008: §12). But we will see that since Kant does not here specify the beautiful as proceeding from what works there *as art* (“the beautiful” designating nature as art), he can no longer think artistic judgment as the transformation of the one who judges precisely *because* he judges—as “transindividuation” in that sense.

Even if Kant does not ignore the question of history, art for him does not yet have history: it is not yet the *process of individuation that is the history of art*, and that Hegel will be able to think only by postulating his dissolving “end of History”—in the blinding prescience of a modernity that, with Charles Baudelaire and his epoch, will reverse this phenomenology of the historic forms of art.

The aesthetic judgment thought with Kant is, with regard to art, an exquisite and special sort of *belief* and, in this case, of *belief in a universal* (not a sort of knowledge, properly speaking) that is encountered even though it does not in fact exist, if “exist” (as capable of being encountered in space and time) means being the object of a determinant judgment that can be calculated.

3. “Diversity” is a concept that is also used by Patrick Chamoiseau.

But then the Kantian question of aesthetic judgment would in fact leave critique *without a voice*: without any form of expression other than an *exclamation*, and thus also *without argument*—not to mention *without discernment*, *without critique*, and *without judgment*, if this is truly what is captured by *krinon*, in the Greek sense. This *transcendental* critique of judgment would render an *analytical and empirical* critique of works, of the *time* of works, and thus of the *history* of artworks, impossible. We will see that, in a way, this is what Conrad Fiedler reproaches Kant for at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup>

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In order to move forward through these questions, my thesis will be a double one:

1. I will propose, on the one hand, that *a judgment without argumentation is not a judgment*, and thus that what Kant speaks of is perhaps not yet a judgment but the *first moment* of a *process* requiring a *second moment*.<sup>5</sup>
2. I will propose, on the other hand, that *an argument is what historically supports a judgment*, and that this support is itself inscribed in the *organological becoming* constituting the fabric and the tissue (*histos*) of the history of art (*tekhnē*), as a projection of *motifs* onto this fabric.

In the age of the second mechanical turn in sensibility, which opens the perspective of a process of *deproletarianization*, that is, a new age of *care*, it would become vital to study the histories of the faculty of judgment *organologically* in the aesthetic domain.

In contrast to such a viewpoint, the faculty of judgment, conceived by Kant as tendentially universal, is at the same time tendentially ahis-

4. I owe this reference to Jacqueline Lichtenstein, to whom I offer many thanks. See Lichtenstein 2008.

5. Georges Didi-Huberman, who does not write within the Kantian tradition, and certainly not (and even less so) within the neo-Kantian heritage, and who fundamentally influenced Erwin Panofsky, is equally opposed to this heritage in which, according to Huberman, he posits a kind of analytic moment (Huberman calls it a knowledge) *before* what I believe to be the typical synthetic moment of Kantian judgment. But I believe that however useful and even admirable this position might be, it presciently neglects the fact that there are always not just two moments but three, and that this then forms a process of transformation: individuation.

torical and as a result still part of a highly metaphysical age of aesthetic philosophy—a criticism that nevertheless leaves intact the extraordinary evidence that Kant’s theory of judgment is *reflectively open to the indeterminate*. What Kant wishes to establish is an *ante*-historical (transcendental) form of the faculty of judgment, one that simultaneously *neutralizes* the organologico-empirical givens that permit the constitution of a judgment as its historical support.

In a well-known paragraph of the “Analytic of the Sublime,” Kant concerns himself directly with theories of art:

If anyone reads me his poem, or brings me to a play, which, all said and done, fails to commend itself to my taste, then let him adduce Batteux or Lessing, or still older and more famous critics of taste, with all the host of rules laid down by them, as a proof of the beauty of his poem; let certain passages particularly displeasing to me accord completely with the rules of beauty (as set out by these critics and universally recognized): I stop my ears: I do not want to hear any reasons or any arguing about the matter. I would prefer to suppose that those rules of the critics were at fault, or at least have no application, than to allow my judgment to be determined by a priori proofs. I take my stand on the ground that my judgment is to be one of taste, and not one of understanding or reason. (Kant 2008: §33)

The problem posed by this excerpt from the *Critique of Judgment*, which reaffirms the impossibility of constituting a science of the beautiful (a “science” being that which allows judgments to be “determined by a priori proofs”), and which thus reaffirms the fundamental liberty in which aesthetic judgment is exercised, results from the fact that it simultaneously excludes the possibility that taste could be the product of a formation—and, in fact, of a formation of *attention*.<sup>6</sup>

Consequently, *it is as if my taste could not change*. Or, in other words, the Kantian subject of the judgment of taste is not transformed by his judgment; he is not *individuated* by it and, in judging, does not *trans-individuate* (himself). But contrary to what the Kantian analysis infers in rendering the moment of critical analysis—without which there can be no true judgment—*impossible*, it must precisely be understood *as a circuit of transindividuation*, consisting of three moments:

6. The aesthetic whose principles I am outlining here is a particular case of the theory of attentional forms I put forward in *Veux-tu devenir mon ami?* (Stiegler forthcoming).

- that of *apprehensive synthesis*, presenting itself as surprehensive
- that of *comprehensive analysis* (which is also systematized with the synthesis of reproduction in the *Critique of Pure Reason*)
- and that of *intensified resynthesis* as sur-prehension, through its comprehensive and analytic moment, and as the relaunching of the process by which judgment *becomes* an individuation (that is, systematized through the synthesis Kant claims to be that of “recognition”)

It would, then, obviously be vital to articulate these three moments, linked to three syntheses of the imagination, with the question of the schematism emerging from it in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

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The argument—that is: the critique, which can be constituted only by passing through an *analytic* moment—finds itself a priori excluded from the Kantian aesthetic judgment. It is this *dogmatic* position that founds the transcendental definition of the judgment of taste.

This is certainly not what Kant says, *sensu stricto*: he simply states that this judgment cannot be determined by rules, since it is the reflective sense of judgment that leaves its object in its *constitutive indetermination*. The *de facto* result is nonetheless that taste, as a faculty that could be the object of a formation, of an education, and that would thus have been connected to the intellect, is excluded from the thinking of the judgment of taste, which is always reflective.

Fully achieved<sup>7</sup> aesthetic judgment is that of the *amateur*, who is also, like the artist, a distinguished dis-agent of transindividuation. It is the judgment of the one who judges through a *frequenting* of works, who *stays near* (*séjourne*) works, who returns to them, who lingers there, as Kant says regarding the beautiful, who awaits something of a reiteration and a repetition of their presentation—and who *knows*, at base and before all else, that a work never returns *identically*: that it is open, indeterminate, unfinished. That it is the very experience of this inconsistency (*déphasage*) that is individuation.

The amateur’s judgment is a process that always contains *three moments*:

1. The moment of *synthetic* judgment, in the course of which the judge apprehends the unity of what he is judging, but where this

7. I will specify the sense of this qualifier below.



apprehension is produced as the experience and the test of a *surprise* that is the moment of *sur*-prehension; that is, of the surpassing of the one who judges by *what* he is judging, and that exceeds him in its very default.

2. The moment of *analytic* judgment, which necessarily comes *after* the synthetic moment and tends to turn sur-prehension, produced by synthetic apprehension (that is, sur-prehension occurring only when the work works through effects that transform the judge), into an object of *comprehension*; that is, of *analytic* apprehension, and thus of appreciation and therefore of a *determination* whose aim is no longer to form the unity of all but, on the contrary, to *break it into parts* in order to understand how, why, and for whom these parts form a unity in the mind of the judge, and appear to him as a surprising whole and therefore a motive for exclamations.
3. The moment of *return* to the work and of *its* returning—of the increased and differant (*différente*) repetition of the moment of sur-prehension, and with it *of the default that exceeds analysis* but also—and interminably—reinitiates its necessity: this *impossibility of finishing*, of putting an end to the circuit, which is the circuit of transindividuation, and which generally works through encounters with other amateurs and other works, is at once the source of the omnitemporality of works and the concretization of the indetermination of Kantian aesthetic judgment, but here, precisely, as the process of individuation working through its *analytic—that is, critical—moment*, which is also a moment crisis.

The analytic moment can never exhaust the synthetic moment: the comprehensive apprehension of the work acts as a *support* for judgment but never *demonstrates* it. These analytic supports for synthetic judgment, which are also the crutches for the one who, judging a work that has transformed him—that is, that has *worked*—wants to argue to those who are similar to him, this argumentation being part of the process by which the work works. These supports can thus never be constituted in demonstrative *proofs*. It nevertheless remains the case that they constitute the arguments about the work, and about the way in which it creates the conditions through which a sur-prehension is produced that remains *irreducible* to these conditions alone, that then constitutes an *experience*—of something that can be *experienced* without being subject to *proof*.

There is sur-prehension because in aesthetic experience the one

who judges by forming the unity of the object of judgment discovers in it an *incommensurable*: an incomparable singularity, a pure originality. We have seen that because the object of aesthetic judgment is structurally incommensurable and thus incomparable, its critique remains in some way irreducibly grounded in the act of belief formed in the moment of surprehension: it appears to the judge that *his object is not on the same plane as other objects*, that it has become literally *extra-ordinary*.<sup>8</sup>

And yet we are not referring to an object of *faith* here, since this extraordinary object merely comes out of the ordinary, and since the act of belief through which it detaches itself from this “ordinary” desires *arguments*.

If it is true that there is in every analytic enterprise something that *tends* toward a determination, in the strict sense this word has in the case of a determinant judgment (namely, capable of producing demonstrative statements and apodictic utterances, but also and more generally capable of subsuming under concepts—under categories), what the *aesthetic* analysis tends toward is not, properly speaking, a determination even when, for example, it declares that a given work is part of a particular artistic movement. It tends toward what also constitutes a *condition* of determination but does not lead, in this particular case, to such a determination: it tends toward a *comparison*—to a *commensurability*—that we seek to establish among various elements and relations among these elements, that we seek to describe. These relations are precisely the supports I have mentioned.

If there is a surprehension, it is because what is to be judged is *singular* and consequently not subsumable under a concept: that is, as Kant says, subsumable into an *end*<sup>9</sup> that would also be a finality constituted a priori as the possibility of completion. This is why Kant can speak of “purposiveness without purpose” (i.e., without a rule).

In tending toward its perfection for the subject it impresses as beautiful, the artwork, and generally every object judged as beautiful, thus indicates its own end, which is translated in the subject as a feeling of pleasure. But this end is not subsumable into a concept: it is not determinable. As affect, it is what the subject projects and reflects *in and through the object*: it is a reflecting finality without any rule that could be given in a concept. It is the *finality of the irregular*, irregularity itself: the finality of a default (of rules), and of a necessary default—precisely as finality.

8. [This phenomenon results from the “mystery” of *désœuvrement*.—Trans.]

9. The “concept” of an object *is* its end, to the extent that it is also its a priori cause.

Although Kant does not think this singularity as such since he does not distinguish the singular from the particular, he indicates through the notion of “purposiveness without purpose” that at the source of all “rules for art” there is an irreducible *irregularity* that is the *singular* and the agent of all *sur*-prehension. The *synthetic* moment is that *sur*-prehension—indeterminable and interminable, thereby constituting a moment of “belief.” The *analytic* moment is that of comprehension and thus of argumentation, but that is neither a demonstration nor a determination. Rather than a determination, the analytic moment is a movement of the *increase of indetermination*: it is the movement by which the object is in-determined, the movement of an intensification of singularity through the operations of comparison and commensuration that finally always turn out to be insufficient and impossible—operations *at the limit*, by which *sur*-prehension is delayed around the object that it thus attempts to understand comprehensively and that it in some way puts to the test of its incomparability through a series of comparisons that reveal and mark it by default.

The analytic moment is the transformation of the exclamation that *sur*-prehension provokes—as a breakthrough, a hole in the stoppered horizon that is the ordinary realm of immanence—in arguments regarding what supports the synthetic moment. These arguments open up, properly speaking, the circuit of transindividuation as forces: this circuit makes *sur*-prehension circulate *through effects on and between amateurs* (most notably through operations of comparison and commensuration).

This circulation, at the core of which what Wolfgang Iser (1980) describes as an aesthetic effect is formed, is the structuration of a collective individuation through internal resonance. But such a transformation is also what, in trans-forming the subject of these operations (and his experience of *sur*-prehension) himself, *redirects* him to the experience of another, further *sur*-prehension: a *new surprise*, a new *synthesis*, emerging as difference from its repetition—and as repetition of the unity of the object thus synthesized.

This synthetic moment, which develops through the differentiation produced in the course of these frequent visits that are the art-amateur’s practices (which are repetitions), is what could happen to me, and what could and even must happen to others in historically given conditions, but it can also *not* happen to me and to others and in those same historical conditions. In fact, these conditions are “historical” only insofar as they are dynamic (that is, polemical), because they are constituted through a default (at the origin). That is why they are conditions of crisis. And this is

because *judgment in general (krinon)* is *essentially a crisis (krisis)*. This is singularly true for the aesthetic judgment, to the extent to which it affectively trans-forms the judge, a transformation that is always a sort of crisis-as-affect, as *e-motion* and thus movement *out* of crisis: *de-cision*, through which judges become what they are.

However, the Kantian critique of judgment does not account for this critical dimension of the crisis (as the artistic modality of transindividuation), precisely where it posits a critique of the faculty of judgment: since the Kantian aesthetic subject is *not trans-formed*, the *Critique of (the Faculty of) Judgment* does not allow the thought of the faculty of judgment as critique. In this sense, the Kantian aesthetic subject is *not yet modern*—in the sense in which we speak of modern art.

The critique of the *Critique of Judgment* that must therefore be made must not, however, lose sight of what Kant captures there quite decisively, namely, that there is in the experience of synthesis an *experience of the improbable* that projects the judge onto the plane of a *consistent inexistence* in which the object of judgment is always presented as universal *by rights* and never *in fact*, that is, as an object that *essentially* produces default: as the object of *desire*.

In this regard, if we could say that the subject judging aesthetically is a projector of *infinity*, we must then say that an aesthetic object is a projector of *consistencies*—the projector of infinity bringing to the projector of consistencies his libidinal energy (as the power to sublimate).

The difference between the synthetic and the analytic—and of what is given *in this difference itself*, that is, precisely insofar as it is a *difference*—is irreducible; but the gap itself can be reduced. If it cannot be eliminated, it can be diminished—and this with the very paradoxical result that the more one knows about the comprehensible conditions of sur-prehension, the more this sur-prehension is intensified; the more the gap is reduced, the more the abyss is expanded (including the emotion it evokes, which is the culmination of affect precisely where the analysis seems to temporarily disaffect the subject of the sur-prehension through comprehension) between these two moments of judgment as if, to the extent that the edges approach each other, the bottom of the abyss becomes increasingly immense and incommensurable each time: sublime.

Thus, in its essential negativity, the structure of the Kantian sublime already contains the Freudian question of sublimation. The judgment of the beautiful is the experience of an improbable of which the judgment of the sublime reveals a paradoxical economy (as the economy of default),

namely, that this judgment is improbable to the extent that its object is produced only *as infinity*, and that this infinity, as incommensurability, is what opens up the aesthetic subject onto the subliminal plane of what Kant calls the *suprasensible*. Such an opening, which is an elevation from—and at the heart of—immanence, is sublimation, properly speaking.

The object of desire is very generally and structurally an object that does not exist: it is an object that is intrinsically infinite. It is on the basis of this matrix that, at the synthetic moment of aesthetic judgment, we encounter (as sur-prehension) the consistency of what does not exist and whose non-being can, for example, be presented and appear as beauty—as *presence*—itself. In analytic judgment, it is a question of establishing, comprehensively, that this consistency of *what does not exist* is nonetheless a consistency *in immanence*: in the comprehensible, and *from* the comprehensible, which is also to say from and in *what exists*. This consistency is not what returns to a transcendence: it is not an object of faith nor one of piety, but of a belief, and even of a *mystery*, of a *cult*. It even constitutes a “culture.”

Aesthetic judgment, as *simultaneously* synthetic and analytic, is therefore *intrinsically mystagogic*. This means that aesthetic experience, in which aesthetic judgment is formed on the basis of an exclamation that leaves the subject staggered, mouth agape, is a sort of initiation into mystery, and into a transformative, aesthetic mystery. The mystery is transformative for the one to whom it happens by surprise, very improbably. The analysis is a (second) moment in this initiation, the moment of effective reflection, as the time of reflection in reflective judgment. But that moment is redirected to mystery as the surprise that differs in this *differance*, as a circuit of transindividuation.

If what is produced with the sur-prehensive synthesis is of the order of consistency, what comprehensively supports this consistency is, however, of the order of existence. This existence, which supports consistency only by default—this propping up constituted through the *rules of art*, through technics, through the mechanisms of the device (*dispositif*) or the materials (including mechanisms of transindividuation in the age of *ready-made* materials)—is also what participates in the individuation of the history of art—like the faculty of judgment, thus constituting histories of arts, their works, and judgments made of them: the histories (critiques) of the faculty of judgment.

The surprise-within-the-surprise is that in passing through the comprehensive analysis, the support that would want to clarify the mystery in

fact reinforces it—except if the object finally gives way to a negative judgment (or if the critique is badly done).

The more consistency is supported, the more it consists in distinguishing itself from its support. Mystery and its supports result from the dissemination (*déhiscence*) opened up by technics as becoming and as experience (experience requires the technical exteriorization that itself opens the possibility of existence beyond mere substance). But such a dissemination is possible only because the object of desire is constituted by technicity: it supports a libidinal economy whose consistencies are the objects reflectively projected on the plane of the extra-ordinary by ordinary objects and onto these objects themselves. This economy is *essentially* what constitutes the desiring (that is *reflecting*, suprasensible) subject's ability to sublimate.

Critique can and must establish the technical support for such a consistency. And this technical support is then what constitutes the amateur, as the figure of desire par excellence: the one who loves. A critic in his own right, the amateur is precisely *not* a consumer: he discerns, he is capable of moving—at least he has the power to do so—from a state of synthetic surprehension, where objects *consist*, to a state of analytic comprehension, where they exist, and where they insist, as difference-in-repetition.

It is out of this possibility that the amateur is able to exchange with others—precisely with those with whom he shares a being-together constructed by *philia*, which at the same time opens a public space and time that are the exact opposite of an audience: this is a *critical* space and a *critical* time, a space and time of *individuation* (of psychosocial transformation) insofar as it is operated through “quantum leaps,”<sup>10</sup> crises in which space and time are undetermined and infinite through that very fact.

The epoch during which those whom Hannah Arendt calls “cultured philistines” appeared is also the one in which, at the time of Marcel Proust's *Madame Verdurin* and when Dadaism was fighting against those philistines, the foundations were provided for a *new mystagogical age* that would lead, at the very heart of modern art, to what we today conceive of as “contemporary art.” For Arendt this philistinism, which

simply consisted in being “uncultured” and commonplace, was very quickly succeeded by another development in which, on the con-

10. In physics, a quantum leap is the sudden, unforeseeable jump of an electron, atom, et cetera, from one energy level to another. In general usage, it is a sudden—surprising—highly significant advance or breakthrough, and it thus relates Kant's “purposiveness without purpose” to the unpredictability of dissemination.

trary, society began to be only too interested in all these so-called cultural values. Society began to monopolize “culture” for its own purposes, such as social position and status. This had much to do with the socially inferior position of Europe’s middle classes, which found themselves—as soon as they acquired the necessary wealth and leisure—in an uphill fight against the aristocracy and its contempt for the vulgarity of sheer moneymaking. (Arendt 1968: 202)

We should note here in passing that in this long history of social circuits of transindividuation, the opening of the era of philistinism saw a conflict between the “commoner” Denis Diderot and Count Anne-Claude-Philippe de Tubières, Count de Caylus, that could be called a “quarrel of amateurs.”

Proust’s *In Search of Lost Time* is the dramatizing of the consequences of this conflict, precisely at the moment when Dada and Duchamp, as well as James Joyce, came on the scene, a little more than a century after the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. Today, at the beginning of the next century, the current buzz leads to a “Verdurinian” lifestyle and “[recruits] from all classes of the population,” to borrow an expression Marx uses to define his concept of proletarianization (Marx 1988: 62).

Contrary to this philistinism, whether it be cultivated or uncultivated, in the exchange it attempts to install at the center of the circles by which it *initiates* being together (by initiating it into the mysteries of its passion), the amateur, to the extent that he is not mystified (gregariously and regressively) by the mystagogic experience of the object of his desire, and who as a result knows and experiences a crisis (is trans-formed)—the crisis through which a work opens—the amateur, then, experiences:

1. *the impossibility of proving* that the work in fact works;
2. *the possibility of supporting*—against mystifiers of all varieties—what is then a test, and one that must be sustained without ever being able to be proven, and then of making it shared.

The destiny of a work is precisely to assemble a public within the very feeling of this necessary default, and to make it a valued part of the organologically overdetermined historical process itself.

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